

# Institute of Physics

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

**CITY BANKING HALLS and FLEET STREET**

**THURSDAY 21 May 2009**

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This visit has been organised by George Freeman

Anna Fenn took us on a very good tour of the City Churches last year and has agreed to guide us round some of the later secular, opulent buildings in the City.

## **BANKING HALLS**

Many of the City's existing buildings pose unique challenges when they become available for reuse. Notable in this latter category are the numerous banking halls that can be found throughout the City, many of which fell vacant in the 1980s. Many of these banking halls have grand façades with stepped entrances and high windows, whilst their interiors have many noteworthy features.

The Victorian penchant for historicism produced banks in **a variety of styles: Neo-Classical, Gothic, Tudor**. The 1920s and 30s saw the building of massive head offices for several banks, including that designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for the Midland Bank in Poultry, London, which is included on this tour. Also included in our tour will be some of the grand, (mostly ex-bank) buildings along Threadneedle street, Leadenhall street, Lombard Street and the impeccable Gibson Hall, completed in 1865 for the National Provincial Bank of England - it was the greatest of the City's banking halls, reflecting the classical Victorian elegance prevalent at the time.

## **FLEET STREET WALK.**

We start our afternoon walk from one of London's newest squares and take in some of the ancient hidden courtyards around St Paul's Cathedral.

On this walk we will also explore one of the City's most famous streets, Fleet Street, which until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was the home of the British newspaper industry and we'll see some of its iconic buildings. Today Fleet Street is also dominated by offices connected with law, finance and accountancy. But the area is full of surprising little squares and alleyways too, some of which we'll discover on our walk.

We will also explore parts of the atmospheric legal area behind the Royal Courts of Justice and see two or three more banking halls, also on Fleet Street. By now you will be extremely thirsty, so we will end our walk at a magnificent ex-banking hall, now converted to a Fuller's pub.

Banking halls and buildings we may see on our tour:

1. NatWest, Poultry
2. Midland Bank, Poultry
3. Threadneedle St - former 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian banking hall
4. Gibson Hall, Bishopsgate - ex National Provincial Bank
5. Leadenhall Street - City branch of the Midland. now Revolution bar
6. Leadenhall Street - former Bank of New York building, now Prism restaurant
7. Lombard Street - originally home to a forerunner of NatWest
8. Lombard Street - headquarters for Lloyds Bank from 1929
9. The Crosse Keys, Gracechurch Street, a huge banking hall from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank days, now an impressive Wetherspoon's pub.
10. Cornhill, Counting House - 1893, formerly Prescott's Bank, now a Fuller's pub, gaining an English Heritage award in 1998.

**MEET** Bank underground Station, exit 2. Coffee stall at exit 8/9 but no seats. Toilets at exit 3. Coffee bars in streets above if you wish to use them especially in King William Street.

**LUNCH** will be taken at *Counting House*, 50 Cornhill (Fuller's Ale & Pie House) where I have reserved tables upstairs in the Gallery Room – table service. (They get very busy at 13.00.)

**AFTER LUNCH** we reassemble in Paternoster Square, which is to the north of St Paul's Cathedral.

**COST** £17 each for a party 12 to 20. Refreshments at cost.

### **CONTACTS**

Before the meeting. Reinalt Vaughan-Williams [reinalt@physics.org](mailto:reinalt@physics.org) 020 8946 3399 and 07758 085741

On morning of visit. George Freeman 07941 916 944

**LATE ARRIVALS** - Please phone me to find where we are.

10.30 – 11.00	Meet
11.00 – 12.45*	Banking Halls tour
12.45 – 13.45	Lunch
13.45 – 14.00	Walk to Paternoster Square
14.00	Reassemble in Paternoster Square.
14.00 – 16.00*	Fleet Street tour

\* Times not fixed – depends on circumstances and what the group wants.