

## GUILDHALL ART GALLERY WELCOMES GUIDE COURSE

The Guildhall itself is an imposing magnificent building but inside there are more treasures than many people may realise. As part of the latest Guiding Course run by The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage drivers, a group recently visited the Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre. It was during the 17th century that the Corporation of London first began acquiring works of art, with the Art Gallery being established in 1885. It grew and became a well known institution. By 1939 when War broke out, the collection had already outgrown its original building. In May 1941 it was burnt down during an air raid but luckily most of the works had been placed for safe keeping and survived.

In 1987 the remains of the old gallery were demolished and the present building took its place. Richard Gilbert Scott was the designer and it was during the building that the site of London's long-lost amphitheatre was discovered. Today in The Guildhall yard a grey stone set in the paving shows the original outer edge of the amphitheatre but downstairs under the Art Gallery visitors can see some of the remains for themselves. The excavations took place over a period of six years



whilst the building works continued and today visitors can stand amongst the excavations and imagine what happened on the spot many years ago, assisted by the video and sound affects.

Throughout the year there are different Special Exhibitions and Displays in addition to the year round exhibits which include portraits, views of London life, Victorian paintings and sculpture, the studio collection of Sir Matthew Smith and the huge John Singleton Copley oil painting, commissioned by the Corporation in 1783. Defeat of the Floating Batteries at Gibraltar is displayed over two floors of the Gallery and was one of the

paintings which had been moved just three weeks before the previous gallery was destroyed in the Blitz.

On the upper floor, a glass cabinet houses the marble statue of Margaret Thatcher, complete with a glass of whiskey said to be her favourite tippie. The statue was in the news back in July 2002 when a protester knocked off Mrs Thatcher's head, although no-one would know now. It was originally unveiled in May 2002 by Mrs Thatcher herself.

### OPENING HOURS

Monday - Saturday: 10.00am - 5.00pm

Sunday: 12.00noon - 4.00pm












Last admissions are 30 minutes before the advertised closing time.

Please note that Guildhall Art Gallery & Roman London's Amphitheatre is occasionally required to close at short notice due to civic or state functions. To confirm the current situation you are advised to call 020 7332 3700 or textphone 020 7332 3803 for a daily recorded message concerning notice of any additional closures occurring before those listed on the Guildhall Art Gallery closures page.

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