

VISIT TO LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY

25th MAY 2023

An enthusiastic group of members and guests enjoyed a fascinating visit to the new Lambeth Palace Library, located in the grounds of the historic Palace, near to Westminster Bridge on the south of the River Thames.

Founded in 1610, the Library is the historic archive of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the Church of England. Housing a wealth of history, rare books, and other material, the Library's collections were previously stored in out-dated accommodation inside the Palace and in warehousing in Bermondsey.

During our guided tour we discovered how the new building, opened in 2021 at a cost of some £23.5m, contains more than 20,000 linear metres of shelving in a high tech, temperature controlled environment. Starting in the striking entrance hall, we were taken to see the multi-space reading room and then to the roof terrace with wonderful views over the surrounding area and across the Thames to the north. Perhaps most interesting of all was the state of the art studio for the conservation of paper, parchment and other materials where we watched the conservators at their painstaking work.

An added treat was an exhibition themed on Royal Coronations going back to the Middle Ages. A special display included the Coronation Charter of Henry I, the Cope and Mitre worn by Archbishop Fisher in 1953, and the Bibles on which Elizabeth II and Charles III swore their Coronation oaths.

After the tour, we adjourned to a delightful Italian restaurant nearby for lunch and refreshment.

With many thanks to the very knowledgeable and attentive team at the Library and to our Chairman and Hon. Secretary for arranging such an interesting visit.

Clare Johnstone
Candlewick Ward Club Member