NEH SEMINAR FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

Summer 2015

At the Institute for Historical Research, University of London and in the Netherlands

THE DUTCH REPUBLIC AND BRITAIN: THE MAKING OF MODERN SOCIETY AND A EUROPEAN WORLD ECONOMY

Programme of Visits
London, 2nd and 3rd July, 2015

Background Notes to the Visits

Compiled by
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Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and to London in particular.

Professor Gerard Koot, leader of the NEH Seminar, and I have worked together for many years on these seminars. Our aim is to devise a programme of Study Visits in support of the NEH Summer School for Teachers which is intrinsically interesting and which adds value to the seminar experience. As a former Head Teacher (Principal) myself I know how valuable such experiences can be in deepening and developing one’s subject interests and I am delighted to show you something of London and to share some of Britain’s magnificent maritime and mercantile heritage and history, and my enthusiasm for it, with you. I have great memories of your colleagues from the previous programmes and look forward to meeting and working with you.

In the London part of the seminar the intention is to focus on London as an expanding city and a port with world-wide connections. Together we will be visiting sites in the incomparable city of London in which, quite literally, more than 2000 years of close association between the city, its people and institutions and the sea are etched upon the built environment and in the hearts and minds of its people. Trade generally, then empire and its effects and after effects, have had a profound impact upon the English economy and society and Britain’s place in the world.

In the seminar you will explore some of the implications of this set of relationships both for Britain and for one of its keenest European rivals, the Netherlands. In the visits to some of London’s Museums, Galleries and other historic sites you will see art and artefacts relevant to that study and see presented some of the human narratives that are associated with those sites and objects. Some are singular and exotic whereas others are representative of the experience of cohorts of ordinary individuals such as London’s legions of sailors and dock workers down the centuries. Still others are the stories of the movers and shakers, such as Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, whose passions and energies shaped, for good or ill, the destiny of the Indian sub-continent and its teeming millions.

It has been my task and my pleasure to devise this programme which I hope you will all enjoy. You will find the staff and attendants at the various sites knowledgeable and helpful and I will be on hand myself to assist. It may be that you will wish to re-explore some of these sites in your own time, or venture to see others whether in London or further afield. In which case, please do not hesitate to ask me for help and guidance. I cannot act as your travel agent, but I can and will assist by answering questions and providing information.

I hope you find the whole seminar interesting, stimulating and enjoyable and, whether this is your first visit or a return to our capital city, that you will take away with you good memories of London.

Outline Programme

Thursday, 2nd July, 2015

08.45  Depart on foot from Schafer House. Circle Line tube to Tower Hill.

09.15  Walk to Tower Bridge. View Pool of London (compare with Rheinbeck Panorama view – see cover,) then walk to St Katharine’s Dock and environs.

10.45 approx.  Docklands Light Railway from Tower Gateway to West India Quay.

11.15 approx.  Visit West India Quay (original Georgian warehouses) then Museum of London in Docklands. Exhibits relevant to EIC and London and the development of the docks. The docks and their constant redevelopment have always been crucial to London’s role as a major trading city for at least 2000 years. The Museum unfolds that story chronologically, illustrated by many artefacts. Self-directed visit. Begin on floor 3. The galleries of main interest to us are First Port of the Empire and London, Sugar, Slavery.

          Opportunities for refreshments in and around Museum in Docklands

14.00 approx.  Embark on Docklands Light Railway again from West India Quay to Island Gardens. View Greenwich across River Thames – Sir Christopher Wren’s Old Royal Naval College and Inigo Jones’s Queen’s House. Walk through foot tunnel to Greenwich.

14.45  Opportunity to wander at will around Greenwich Palace (including the famous ‘painted hall’ where Nelson’s body lay in state after his death at the battle of Trafalgar), and to visit the famous Royal Observatory founded by Charles II in 1675 for navigational
research. This is also the site of the Prime Meridian – longitude 0° - and of Greenwich Mean Time. (Admission is free to the National Maritime Museum, the Queen's House and the Astronomy Centre at the Royal Observatory. Charges apply for Flamsteed House and the Meridian Courtyard.)

15.30-18.00

Visit to National Maritime Museum and Queen’s House Gallery. Self-directed visit. Exhibits of particular relevance are: Maritime London (gallery 8 – ground floor,) and Traders: the East India Company and Asia (on the first floor) exploring Britain’s maritime trade with Asia and focusing on the role played by the East India Company. Also of interest is the exhibition The Atlantic: Slavery, Trade, Empire.

Note: Thursday is late closing at the NMM: The Sammy Ofer Wing and ground floor galleries stay open late till 20.00. This includes the Shop, the Museum Café and outside terrace area, the Special Exhibitions gallery, Voyagers gallery and Compass Lounge, the Neptune Court 'streets' and the Explorers and Maritime London galleries.

The picture collection in the Queen’s House Gallery is also of interest. The special exhibition at the time of our visit is The Art & Science of Exploration, 1768-80. This is an exhibition of exceptional paintings, prints and drawings by specially commissioned artists on Captain Cook’s 18th-century voyages of discovery. It is said that these works influenced forever how the European public saw the Pacific.

On the first floor the exhibition is devoted to the stunning marine paintings of Willem van de Velde the Elder and the Younger in Holland and England, 1650–1700. In 1673–74, Dutch artists the van de Veldes (father and son) moved from Amsterdam to paint for the English market in London, notably for Charles II who made a room available for them in the Queen’s House as a studio.

18.00 approx. At leisure in Greenwich or return to Schafer House via DLR and Tube.
Friday, 3rd July 2015

08.45  Depart on foot from Schafer House. Metropolitan or Circle Line Tube from Euston Square to Aldgate.

09.15 – 11.00  Walking tour around City of London. Our walk will take in a number of locations relevant to the East India Company and other key City landmarks such as the Royal Exchange building and Mansion House and the sites of several of the original coffee houses.

11.00 – 12.00  Visit Bank of England Museum. The Bank of England Museum tells the story of the Bank of England from its foundation in 1694 to its role today as the United Kingdom's central bank. The role of banking in the development of international trade and of the EIC is crucial. The current Flora and Fauna exhibition examines the symbolic meaning of the plants and animals which appear within the design of the Bank building.

Short walk west along Gresham Street to Museum of London.

12.20 approx.  Arrive at Museum of London. (There are several opportunities for refreshments available within or near the museum.)

Inside the museum, the collections and permanent galleries (recently refurbished) vividly tell the story of London’s development as a city over thousands of years: from prehistoric settlements in the Thames Valley through to the founding of 'Londinium' by the Roman army, to the great world city that London is today. Galleries are arranged chronologically and the Expanding City gallery is likely to be of most interest. Make sure you see the actual Rheinbeck Panorama.

15.00 approx.  Leave Museum of London. Short walk to Mansion House station. Circle or District Line tube to South Kensington. Short walk to Victoria and Albert Museum.
15.30 approx. At leisure in Victoria and Albert Museum. The museum houses many artefacts collected by officers of the East India Company or introduced into Britain as a result of the East India trade. They are not, however, concentrated in one gallery. The V & A enjoys late night opening on Fridays until 22.00 but not all galleries remain open after 18.00 so you will need to plan what you wish to see during your visit carefully to take this into account.

Thereafter at leisure or return to Schafer House. There are many cafes and restaurants in the South Kensington area. Several possible routes back to Schafer House by tube.

Note: Every effort will be made to follow the outline detailed in the Programme of Visits but it must be recognised that circumstances beyond the control of the organisers may make changes necessary at short notice. The organisers reserve the right to make such changes. Some of the locations by virtue of their historical nature are potentially hazardous environments (e.g. uneven pavements, dark passages,) and all participants in the NEH seminar have a responsibility to be alert to relevant Health and Safety notices in the sites to be visited and to abide by their requirements. In the event of any security alert participants must obey absolutely any directions issued by officials or the police. Failure to do so may endanger yourself or others.
Walking Tours – orientation note

As you can see from the programme, the itinerary involves quite a lot of walking on both days – so I hope you’re equipped with some comfortable shoes or boots! The very best way to get to know a place is on foot and our walks will enable those of you who are new to London to begin to orientate yourselves within the city.

City symbols.

At right, the Dragon and Arms at the City boundary on London Bridge and, left, at Temple Bar in The Strand which marks the boundary between the City and Westminster. The mythological creature is sometimes referred to as a griffin but is in fact a (Tudor) Dragon.

For those who might be new to London; a brief explanation. London and the City of London are not quite the same. The name London subsumes the whole metropolitan area; ‘the City’ is more narrowly defined and has a special meaning.

‘The City’ is in fact the historical heart of London and ‘the square mile’, as it is often also known, is an area in the same place as, and only a little larger than, that of the Roman Londinium or its medieval and Tudor successors.

Unfortunately, there is little left of London’s earliest buildings, since 80% of the area was burnt down in the Great Fire of 1666.
That accident, however, provided the opportunity for Sir Christopher Wren to reveal his architectural genius, not only in St Paul’s Cathedral, but in many other city churches and, notably, down river at Greenwich.

London also suffered terribly at the hands of Goering’s Luftwaffe in World War II, and reconstruction and construction has been an almost daily fact of life ever since. Successive generations of architects have struggled to compete (mostly unsuccessfully) with Wren but several buildings are felt to be modern masterpieces, including Richard Rogers’s Lloyds Building and Norman Foster’s ‘Gherkin’ – the lattice-like, phallus-shaped structure for Swiss Re – and now ‘the Shard’, a pointed
glass lance designed by international architect Renzo Piano, recently completed adjacent to London Bridge station.

To the East, the City is bounded by The Tower of London, to the north by the Barbican and, to the west, Fleet Street (once the home of England’s national newspaper offices) and the Temple (then and now hub of the English legal system).

The road called the Strand runs parallel to the Thames due west from the City and connects it with Whitehall, which is both the name of a street and a shorthand term for all aspects of government. In and around Whitehall are found the Houses of Parliament, the Prime Minister’s official residence and office at 10 Downing Street, the old royal palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey itself and many of all the numerous government offices and departments including the old India Office – now part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

It is sometimes a matter for debate whether the direction of national affairs, especially economic affairs, is really controlled from Westminster or by ‘the City’.

Our walks will be located mainly on the north bank of the Thames, in the City, and in the former Docklands, where a new financial and business district is still growing, and then south of the river in Greenwich with all its rich historical associations.
Programme Notes in Detail

Day 1 Thursday, 2nd July 2015

Our walk today is in two parts and we begin close to two well-known tourist landmarks, Tower Bridge and the Tower of London.

Towards the end of the 19th century congestion on London Bridge, the principal river crossing had become so chaotic that it was seriously interfering with commerce. On a typical day as many as 168,000 people and 20,000 horse drawn vehicles jostled to cross London Bridge and there was no other downstream crossing. Action had to be taken. Several proposals were considered leading eventually to the opening in 1894 of the iconic (and, for the period, high tech) bridge we see today.

Next we walk to St Katharine’s Dock, built in 1828 on a site where once stood the Hospital of St Katharine (founded in 1148 by Queen Matilda,) a brewery and 1100 houses. The dock was built in response to the ever increasing volume of ships in the port of London – in 1794 the total was 13,949 ships but, in just 30 years, by 1824, this had increased to 23,618.

St Katharine’s Dock has been gentrified in recent times but sufficient remains to give us a good sense of what it was like in its heyday.

A short journey from Tower Gateway on the Docklands Light Railway will take us to our next location, West India Dock, a unique survival from a period of rapid expansion. The West India Dock was the first of London’s docks built specifically for the import and export of cargo.
Although the East India Dock basin built by the East India Company still survives, the dock itself was badly damaged in WW2 and was filled in to become the site of a power station, now demolished. Apart from some dock walls, all other traces of the East India Dock have now gone.

So West India Quay is almost all that now remains of the vast complexes of basins and warehouses that once comprised the London Docks. Here goods and produce from around the globe were imported to feed the stomachs, appetites and pockets of the mother country of the ‘Empire on which the sun never set’.

A short walk from West India Dock is Poplar High Street. Here it is possible to see two significant buildings from the East India Company’s once vast property portfolio: St Matthias Church and the Chaplain’s House.

But our main reason for visiting West India Quay, apart from the chance to see the original warehouses, is the chance to visit the Museum in Docklands.

The Museum of London in Docklands is a relatively new creation opening as a museum twelve years ago in May 2003, and is located in one of the magnificent late Georgian warehouses at the West India Dock.

No.1 Warehouse, West India Quay, was opened in 1802 – part of the first purpose built cargo handling docks. The buildings of which it formed a part originally stretched for more than a kilometre along the north side of the import dock. The warehouse initially handled vast quantities of rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, pimento and cotton from West Indian slave plantations. From 1834 to 1883 it was one of London’s largest tea warehouses. It survived a fire in 1901 and enemy action in World War II. It closed for business in 1968 as London’s docks declined but survives
now as a Grade 1 listed building, the sole major Georgian dock warehouse in any British seaport.

The benefits of such a purpose built dock were immense. It took ships, for example, only 3 or 4 days to discharge cargo in the dock compared with at least a month on the open river. Security was easier to manage, too, and, because of the tighter control, duties only became payable when the goods left the dock gates – a considerable benefit to merchants’ cash flows.

The East India Company was a mammoth global trading corporation and to support its ventures developed a huge infrastructure including its own ships, docks, shipyards and private armies.

This is a picture of the Falmouth, a typical 18th century East Indiaman. At the time they were the largest ships afloat. The Falmouth was built at Blackwall in Docklands, was armed with 30 guns and carried a crew of 99.

See the model in the Museum in Docklands
It is surprising that the story of London’s river and port and its people was so little-known for so long since, without the river, London would not have existed nor become the great international centre for commerce and trade that it was and is today.

Our self-directed visit to the Museum of London in Docklands will allow us to see the parts of the displays most relevant to the seminar and explore the history of the working river.

After our visit we will embark again on the DLR and journey to Island Gardens on the curiously named Isle of Dogs. From there we will glimpse our next destination for the day – Greenwich - which we will approach by a walk through a tunnel under the Thames, emerging in the historic heart of Greenwich close to the Cutty Sark, one of the most famous sailing ships of all time, one of the speedy tea clippers that competed to bring the new season’s tea to London in the 19th century.

**Greenwich**

Sir Christopher Wren was the architect of the Old Royal Naval College, one of Greenwich’s main attractions. Here is situated the famous Painted Hall, reputedly one of the finest banqueting rooms in Europe. The walls and ceilings took the artist Sir James Thornhill 19 years to complete. It was in this splendid setting that the body of Admiral Lord Nelson, one of England’s greatest heroes, lay in state in January 1806 after his death in the Battle of Trafalgar, October 1805.

As well as seeing something of the splendours of Wren’s architecture, in Greenwich we will be able to visit the National Maritime Museum and the Royal Observatory.

**Royal Observatory**

The Royal Observatory, home of Greenwich Mean Time and the Prime Meridian line, is one of the most important historic scientific sites in the world. It was founded by King Charles II in 1675 and is, by international decree, the official starting point for each new day, year and millennium (at the stroke of midnight GMT as measured from the Prime Meridian.)

The Observatory is part of the Royal Museums, Greenwich (which includes the National Maritime Museum) and is one of the most famous features of Maritime Greenwich – since 1997 a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visitors to the Observatory can stand in both the eastern and western hemispheres simultaneously by placing
their feet either side of the Prime Meridian - the centre of world time and space. The Observatory galleries unravel the extraordinary phenomena of time, space and astronomy, the Planetarium lets visitors explore the wonders of the heavens and Flamsteed House, Sir Christopher Wren’s original building, also has London’s only public camera obscura.

Not to be missed is the collection of navigational instruments including Harrison’s famous chronometer H4 of 1759 which enabled accurate time-keeping at sea for the first time. Some of you might have read Dava Sobel’s book “Longitude” which is her absorbing account of Harrison, a lone genius, who managed to solve the greatest scientific problem of his day and paved the way for accurate navigation so crucial to the profitability of the East India trade.

**National Maritime Museum.**

Set in a royal park, and in close proximity to Wren’s fabulous Royal Naval Hospital and the old Royal Observatory, the NMM is the world’s largest maritime museum. The museum’s purpose is to illustrate the importance of the sea, ships, time and the stars and their relationship with people.

There is much that is fascinating in this lively and accessible museum and there will be time to wander through some of the galleries. Maritime trade was at the heart of Empire and its profits made Britain one of the wealthiest European nations in the 18th century and the East India Company was only one part of that process.

The museum is progressively renewing its galleries and that of greatest relevance to us – *Traders: the East India Company and Asia* - has recently been updated. It is located on the first floor. Two other galleries are of particular interest. On the ground floor, gallery 6 – *Maritime London 1700 to Now* - is of particular relevance to the seminar as is gallery 22 on the first floor – *The Atlantic; Slavery, Trade, Empire* - dealing as it does with the slave trade, profits from which helped finance EIC activities in the eastern hemisphere.

Also interesting are the maritime pictures in the Queen’s House gallery which is also worth a visit for the architecture alone, including the marble floor of the Great Hall and the elegant Tulip Stairs of 1635.

The day ends at leisure in Greenwich or with our return to Schafer House via DLR and Tube.
Day 2 Friday 3rd July, 2015

Today we tackle ‘the City’ which is not only the heart of Britain’s financial affairs but a world financial centre too. In our walk our main focus will be on any visible remains of the East India Company. Strangely, given that the East India Company was the most powerful corporation the world has ever seen, a precursor to today’s transnational corporations, precious little physical evidence is to be seen on the ground.

Starting out as a speculative venture to import spices from the East Indies - modern day Indonesia - the Company grew to fame and fortune by trading with and then conquering and governing India. But visit London today where the Company was headquartered for over 250 years, and there is little physical evidence to mark its rise and fall, its innovations and its crimes. We have to sense what we can from documents and from the little pieces of evidence that remain.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly therefore, the original headquarters of the East India Company no longer exist – it was almost as though they were airbrushed out of history once the company became an embarrassment to the British government in the 19th century. The illustrations show the East India Company House, the exterior in 1802, the interior in 1808.
Today Lloyd's of London is the world's leading insurance market, housed in an award-winning modern building in the City of London. Its origins, however, lay in the more modest surroundings of a 17th century coffee house. The Lloyds Building now occupies much of the Leadenhall Street site where the EIC HQ formerly stood.

The walk will also take you to the East India Company's huge complex of warehouses at Cutler's Gardens (now occupied by upmarket apartments) and takes us to stand at the feet of bronze statues of key company figures such as Robert Clive and Lord Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington.

No visit to the City would be complete without at least a sight of the Bank of England. Indeed the junction at which the Bank stands commands a view along eight streets
and is the centrepiece of a fine group of neoclassical buildings including the Royal Exchange and the Mansion House.

Sometimes referred to as 'The Grand Old Lady of Threadneedle Street', the Bank was founded in 1694 to raise money for William III’s wars against the French. Legend has it that during the Gordon riots of 1780 the bank was defended against the rioters by some of the bank clerks who melted down their inkwells to make bullets for muskets. After that the Bank was defended every night by a special Army detachment of Foot Guards, an arrangement that lasted until 1973. By that time the City was under attack by another faction, the IRA.

The nickname “The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street” first appeared in print as the caption - “Political Ravishment or The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street in Danger”- to a cartoon by James Gillray published in 1797. It depicts William Pitt the Younger, the Prime Minister of the day, pretending to woo the Bank, which is personified by an elderly lady wearing a dress of £1 notes and seated on a chest of gold.

You can see the original in the Bank of England Museum, which we visit, for an introduction to the bank’s history, architecture and roles.

After our visit to the bank we will again walk but this time in a westerly direction and head for the Museum of London, where we will spend some time exploring London’s history through the rich array of objects contained in its galleries.
Arranged chronologically along a timeline, the main museum galleries tell the story of London from prehistory to the present and even anticipate what London in the future might look like. The main sections of greatest relevance to the themes of the seminar are to be found in the galleries Expanding City, the Victorian Walk and People’s City. (Anyone with an interest in the Romans, however, should certainly reserve some time to browse in the Roman Gallery.)

Our final visit of the day takes us to the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington.

The V & A (as it is familiarly known) is regarded as the world’s greatest museum of art and design and its vast collections are representative of taste, fashion and beauty in all areas of decorative and fine arts.

There is no one gallery that represents the influence of the East India Company in its entirety. Instead, items collected by members of the EIC or traded and imported by the EIC permeate many different aspects of the collections. Collect a gallery guide and plan from the information desk when you arrive. A good starting point is the Nehru Gallery, where, in an evocative architectural setting, jewellery, textiles, furniture, arms and armour, metalwork and paintings of the Mughal and British periods (16th to 19th centuries) are displayed, together with the arts of the Rajput kingdoms of the north and the Muslim Sultanates of the Deccan. The Museum’s
outstanding collections of South Asian art are judged to be the most comprehensive and important in the West. The gallery is room 41, situated on level 1.

One very important commodity well represented in the museum is cotton textiles. As soon as the British set up trading settlements in India, they were impressed by the quality of the textiles they found there. These had normally been used as goods for barter with the spice producers of Indonesia.

The painted and printed cottons, known as chintzes, were especially admired, as they had fast, bright colours - superior to anything produced in Europe at that time. It was textiles, therefore, rather than spices which soon came to dominate trade between India and Britain.

The local designs on the painted cottons were considered unsuitable for British tastes, and specifications came from England as to how they should be modified. The result was a hybrid, so called 'exotic' style, usually based on flowering tree patterns, which was used on wall-hangings, bedspreads and clothing throughout the eighteenth century. Seen on the left is a chintz dress, made of fabric from the Coromandel Coast, India; tailoring British; date, around 1770-1780. Museum no. 229&A-1927.

Another feature of the influence of the East India trade on taste and décor was the way that new and exotic materials were introduced into households – initially only of the rich but later permeating society more widely.

Local materials such as ivory (with no thought for its provenance), ebony and rosewood were used to great effect in objects small and large, and beautifully crafted desks and chairs were produced, especially in Bengal and Vizagapatam on the east coast.

Elegant European styles of furniture were copied by Indian craftsmen using local materials, as in this ivory chair, right. This chair, its pair and the accompanying table are of solid ivory. They were made in Murshidabad, the nawabi capital of Bengal and a famous centre of ivory-carving. Furniture makers there made small quantities of western-style pieces, possibly only as commissions. These pieces were part of a special gift to Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India. Their western forms and exotic working reflect the blend of tastes at Indian courts at this time. Ivory Chair, around 1785. Museum no. 1075-1882

The museum possesses many images of India as a consequence of the activities of the EIC. Some were private commissions, some ‘official’ company records, some (such as the portrait miniatures, for example,) intensely personal. All give us fascinating glimpses into the life and times of those associated with the EIC.
For those interested in the history of photography, mention should be made of the work of Linnaeus Tripe (1822-1902) many of whose photographs, preserved in the V & A, give us such a vivid view of the world of the British in India in the mid-19th Century. His work is currently the focus of a special exhibition in room 38a. No charge.

Linnaeus joined the East India Company army in 1838, progressing rapidly and becoming a Lieutenant in 1840 when he joined his own regiment at Palaveram in the south of India. On leave in England in the 1850s he became interested in the newly discovered techniques of photography which at first was a hobby. Later in life, however, he became in effect the official EIC photographer. This came about because the EIC needed to record accurately its possessions in India. Casting about for a way of achieving that, in 1855 the Court of Directors of the EIC in London drew up a directive claiming ‘photography as a means by which representations may be obtained of scenes and buildings, with the advantages of perfect accuracy, small expenditure of time, and moderate cash’. They asked that photography be the main means of recording architecture. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General, recommended Tripe for the role and the result is a stunning set of images.

The image on the left shows the outer Prakurum, or corridor around the the Temple of the god Sundareshawara. in Madurai, 1858, and that on the right shows The Pagoda Jewels, also from Madurai, in 1860.
After our visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum, members of the group are free to return to Schafer House by Tube, to relax and unwind or socialise according to inclination, energy levels and state of feet. For those wishing to explore further in the V & A the good news is that Friday is late opening, until 22.00 – though not all the galleries remain open until then.

For those who are museumed out there are plenty of restaurants in the area and Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park are both only a short walk north from the museum.