



Guild of Location Managers

INFORMATION

Screen West Midlands Fam Trip

17th March 2010

We were met at Birmingham New Street by our host, Stephen Badham and set off for our first destination.

Stoneleigh Park Showground

The park has 21,000 square metres of indoor exhibition space, can host 2000 delegates in conference facilities and has 800 acres of open space. Parking for over 30,000 cars is helpful to say the least !

It's a typical showground type space that has central arenas, cattle holding pens, betting shops, but is also home to an empty bank and a variety of commercial buildings. There is also an accommodation block on site, but this is very cramped and basic.

The showground streets are broad and have a middle America feel about them.



The Royal Agricultural Society of England, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ
www.stoneleighpark.com

From here we took a short network of roads to link us to the more historic part of the estate.

Stoneleigh Abbey

The Abbey was founded by the Cistercians 1154, but very little of the Abbey remains today. In 1558 the estate was acquired by Sir Thomas Leigh, Lord Mayor of London and a house was built on the site. A west wing was added in 1714 to add a range of state apartments.

Within the grounds is a wonderful stable block with riding school. The orangery overlooks the sweeping River Avon that snakes through the 690 acre estate. In 1996 the estate was transferred to a charitable trust and extensive restoration has taken place with funding from English Heritage. Access is not available to the entire building as the upper floors have been converted into private apartments. Negotiations for filming need to take these residents into consideration.



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Stoneleigh Abbey, Kenilworth
www.stoneleighabbey.co.uk

Lord Leycester Hospital

This is a group of 14th century timber framed buildings, set around the Norman gateway into Warwick. Just rising above the buildings is the 12th century Chantry Chapel. For nearly 200 years the Hospital was the home of Warwick's mediaeval Guilds. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, it became a place of retirement for old warriors and their wives. Today it remains as an independent charity providing a home for ex-servicemen. It has never been a medical establishment.

It has been used in television productions including Tom Jones, Pride and Prejudice, Moll Flanders and surprisingly Doctor Who.

It is open to the public on Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 - 17:00. Times vary in the winter and on bank holidays.



60 High Street, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 4BH
www.lordleycester.com

Drakelow Tunnels

The Drakelow Preservation Trust say "Hidden in the slopes below Solcum Aylesbury hillfort are a remarkable network of Second World War tunnels. These tunnels are laid out in a grid pattern and extend over three miles in length. They are the largest surviving part of a wartime complex which was built in 1941 as a "shadow factory" for Birmingham's Rover works. The purpose of such "shadow factories" was to provide secure manufacturing facilities for aero engines. This would be used in the event of cataclysmic enemy bombing of industrial targets or even in the event of invasion".

The entrance is set into the rocky hillside with woodland above it; a spooky start to our underground tour.



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The space is vast and the length of the tunnels is very impressive. There is an endless network of rooms, spaces and corridors with miles of pipework and ducting snaking overhead. The broadcasting studio looks sad and is gently crumbling, but the sturdy industrial kitchen equipment looks like, with a spot of oil it will all burst back into life.

The space is damp, but is used every two weeks by an airsofting group and often hosts military re-enactments and mock warfare.



Kingsford Country Park, Kinver, Kidderminster, DY11 5SA
www.drakelow.info/tunnels

We returned to Birmingham to our boutique hotel for the night, Hotel du Vin. Once an eye hospital, this distinctive Victorian red brick building is situated in the Jewellery Quarter.

A short walk from the hotel, we were treated to a fabulous dinner at Purnells for Michelin starred fine dining. We were joined by Sindy Campbell from Film Birmingham.

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From our hotel we began a walking tour of the city centre. Over a fairly compact area we saw a wide range of buildings and architectural styles. These included :

Town Hall - *modelled on the Temple of Castor in Rome*
Victoria Square - *grand surrounds, fountains and steps*
Birmingham Council House - *vast facade with Britannia*
Centenary Square - *big public square*
Symphony Hall - *big space, world class acoustics*

Brindley Place - *contemporary canal side area*
Gas Street Basin - *heart of canal network in city centre*
Mailbox - *premier shopping mall*
Bullring - *redeveloped shopping area with striking architecture*





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Lloyds Bank

We arrived at Broad Street and to a closed branch of Lloyds Bank. This was created in 1916 under an act of Parliament as The Birmingham Municipal Bank, the first municipal bank in the country and in later years it became a Lloyds TSB. Classical in style it is built of Portland Stone and has four ionic columns. Ornate bronze lanterns flank the front door, a vast panel of studded iron and steel, with a round arched doorway.

This is a wonderful building and the spaces available include the limestone banking hall with arcaded side walls and a coffered ceiling. The balcony is a useful additional viewpoint. Carved inscriptions advise us that 'Saving is the Mother of Riches' and 'Thrift Creates Happiness'. Wise words indeed.

Upstairs are copious boardrooms, offices, panelled rooms, plain utilitarian rooms and a truly miserable staff canteen with plastic chairs. The basement holds a host of treasures. The room full of silver safe deposit boxes is a real find and each row of boxes is capped off with mirrors giving a myriad of views on the room. The lighting is deco in style. Long corridors with duplicitous mirrors, walk-in safes and serious looking security desks add to the list of useful locations.



Lloyds Bank, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1. The site is owned by the Council and scheduled for re-development. It has Grade II listed status.

For details about accessing the site, contact Film Birmingham / Screen West Midlands

From here we boarded the bus and headed south of Birmingham city centre to leafy Bournville



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Bournville

Bournville Village Trust say “George Cadbury, with his brother Richard, took over his father’s small business in 1861. Based in Birmingham City Centre, the business expanded into the manufacture of pure cocoa and then chocolate bars and filled chocolates.

By 1878, the city premises had become too cramped. The two brothers purchased land in the countryside, 4 miles out of Birmingham but with excellent canal and railway access, and embarked on the building of a new factory in what became known the world over as Bournville. Driven by a passion for social reform linked with his Quaker beliefs, George Cadbury’s objective was to provide decent quality homes in a healthy environment which could be afforded by industrial workers. Bournville has never been a factory village “tied” to the Works; fewer than half the inhabitants have a link with the Cadbury factory.

In 1900 came the founding of Bournville Village Trust, to administer and develop the village and its surroundings. The Estate today covers 1,000 acres, providing a home for some 25,000 people, and includes an exceptionally wide range of housing provision.



Bournville, Birmingham

www.bvt.org.uk and <http://bournvillevillage.com/>

University of Birmingham

This is a Redbrick university and dates back to 1825. Like all universities it has undergone vast expansion so the campus is vast and covers many architectural styles. We were only able to see a fraction of the spaces, but some of them are unexpectedly grand and prestigious.

Highlights included the Great Hall within the domed Aston Webb Building, the semi-circle of Chancellor’s Court, large and spacious science block with light filled labs, the beautiful Barber Institute of Fine Arts and a sixties area of the campus with grey concrete exteriors and unusual spiral interiors.

The open spaces between buildings are broad with leafy areas and there are mini-shopping spaces. Usefully it has its own short parade of shops and bank which feature regularly in the cash-point moments of BBC Doctors.



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Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT
www.birmingham.ac.uk

We had a very welcome and warming lunch at the Indian restaurant Lasan, crowned UK's best local restaurant by 'The F-Word'. This is situated near St Paul's Square which is a vibrant live work area with lots of red brick warehouses, bars and cafes.

From here we headed north east to Sutton Coldfield.

Sutton Park

Situated in Sutton Coldfield, this is one of the largest urban parks in Europe, covering 2,400 acres with heathland, wetlands and woodlands. Our ranger guide drove us around taking in as many areas as we could before it was dark.

The woodland has a wide range of species and is intersected by broad paths, bridle ways and dirt roads which make it a popular mountain biking area. Sailing and canoeing take place on the various ponds and lakes. The open field areas provide vast open grassland.

The site is included in English Heritage's list of historic parks and gardens and much of the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument due to sites of archaeological interest within the park. English Nature designated the park a National Nature Reserve and a SSSI. Cattle and wild ponies graze the area.



Visitor Centre, Park Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2YT
www.birmingham.gov.uk/suttonpark



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We are very grateful to Stephen Badham of Screen West Midlands and Sindy Campbell of Film Birmingham for all their time and effort in showing us around a great variety of locations.

Huge thanks to all the locations, their guides, curators and rangers who gave of their time to show us around and answer our endless questions.

Leonora Sheppard, March 2010
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