

# *Museums and galleries*

**London has one of the greatest collections of museums and galleries in the world.** The variety of subject, size, and interest, is vast.

Nearly all of them are places where anyone in the family can find things of interest to see and do, and the facilities for children have been greatly improved.

**Most of the big museums and galleries in London are free.** You only have to pay when there are special exhibitions. Some smaller ones charge for entry, generally fairly modestly.

Much effort and thought has been put into providing improved access for disabled visitors. Staff members are usually helpful. Many museums and galleries now provide facilities for visitors who are partially sighted to touch and feel some exhibits. In addition, many have BSL tours.

Many of these facilities are available on an occasional basis or by special arrangement, so it's worth phoning in advance, and/or looking it up on the website. We haven't tried to cover these in our descriptions, as we haven't tried them out, and our reporting is based almost entirely on experience.

Similarly, many museums and galleries have large print descriptions relating to the exhibits, which you can take around with you, and you can ask about this facility.

Patience is occasionally required to get special step-free access routes opened up. Art collections and historical artefacts are valuable, and security is important, so it is not always possible to leave particular doors open. It may also take a little time to find the right person to operate platform stair lifts to bypass steps.

**Some major museums and galleries are very large.** You would do well to look at the map/plan, either by writing in first to get a copy, or using the plans in a standard guidebook (such as the Eyewitness guide, which we recommend because of its cutaways and maps). Then you can choose some of the things of greatest interest and go and see those, while walking/wheeling the minimum necessary distance.

**In several of the big museums and galleries, there are guided tours which cover a particular topic, and these can be an excellent way of (slightly randomly) choosing what you see and learn about. Some places provide audio-guides.**

The presentation of many exhibits has been improved, and facilities, such as catering and the provision of toilets, have been upgraded. Many places now provide portable folding stools, which can be an enormous help for those who

find standing for long periods is a challenge. A few have electric buggies which can be borrowed, though you may have to say whether you have had previous experience in using these vehicles. Some need charging before use. It is therefore sensible to ring first, and make your own enquiries.

There are many guidebooks around. *London Museums and Galleries* published by Insight Guides, and the *Museums and Galleries of London* by Abigail Willis from Metro Publications, are two which stand out. They are both well presented and informative.

**One particular location needs a separate comment, and that is Exhibition Road** in Kensington. This runs from near South Kensington station in the south, to Hyde Park in the north. It is home to some of the most important museums in the country. These are the Victoria and Albert (V&A), Natural History and Science Museums. Most date back in part to the Great Exhibition of 1851. Very nearby is the Royal Albert Hall, the Albert Memorial, and Imperial College London.

During 2011, Exhibition Road was radically changed, into a step-free 'streetscape' where there are no kerbs to separate cars from pedestrians. It is therefore easy for chair and electric buggy users, and for those with pushchairs, to move around. Traffic is subject to a 20mph speed limit. It is one of the biggest tests in the UK of the step-free 'streetscape' concept.

**There are two parking areas for BB holders, each taking up to 6 cars**, outside the Science Museum and outside the Natural History Museum, opposite the V&A. The best approach to the road is via Queen's Gate and Prince Consort Road. You can also enter it easily if you come from Hyde Park. Some of the more obvious turns into Exhibition Road are banned. There's a detailed road plan at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/exhibitionroad.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/exhibitionroad.aspx) with an explanation of the whole concept. A cultural guide to what is on in the area is available at [www.exhibitionroad.com](http://www.exhibitionroad.com).

In addition there's a group of a dozen important and varied museums lying between the Euston Road (Kings Cross), and the Thames, in an area called *The Museum Mile* which is described at: [www.museum-mile.org.uk](http://www.museum-mile.org.uk).

**Apsley House** see Wellington Museum.

### **Bank of England Museum**

Threadneedle Street, EC2R 8AH Tel: 020 7601-5545

website: [www.bankofengland.co.uk](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk) e-mail: [museum@bankofengland.co.uk](mailto:museum@bankofengland.co.uk)

Historical and financial displays, including some real gold bars! The nearby Bank station has step-free access from the DLR.

The entrance is in Barthomolew Lane with +4+3 steps. There's an intercom

button to the right of the steps to attract attention, and ramps can be brought out to facilitate entry. Inside there are  $\pm 3$  to see all the exhibits, but all the steps can be bypassed by portable ramps. If you let them know in advance, some of these can be put in place before you get there. The museum is quite compact, measuring only some 20m by 80m, and there are plenty of seats. **Wheelchair toilet (D90 ST85)** at the rear of the museum. The cinema, used by groups, has chair spaces and an induction loop. The *Museum Guide* has a good plan showing where the steps are, and this can also be printed off from the website. Audioguides are available. The nearby *Phoenix* pub is accessible, as is the upmarket café/restaurant in the *Royal Exchange*.

### **Bankside Gallery**

48 Hopton Street, Bankside, SE1 9JH Tel: 020 7928-7521

website: [www.banksidegallery.com](http://www.banksidegallery.com) e-mail: [info@banksidegallery.com](mailto:info@banksidegallery.com)

Situated on the South Bank, to the east of Blackfriars Bridge and just before Tate Modern. From the Riverside Walk, a ramp near the pub bypasses the  $-7$  steps outside. The small gallery is on one floor. Ramps bypass  $+2$  steps at the entrance, and there is flat or ramped access throughout.

There's a **wheelchair toilet** in the *Founder's Arms* pub less than 100m away, and there are several in Tate Modern.

### **British Library**

96 Euston Road, NW1 2DB

Tel: 020 7412-7332 or 0843 2081-144 Textphone: 01937 546-434

website: [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) e-mail: [customer-services@bl.uk](mailto:customer-services@bl.uk) or [disability-officer@bl.uk](mailto:disability-officer@bl.uk)

The library houses the national collection of books, manuscripts and maps, as well as the National Sound Archive. Its books are available to *Registered Readers* who are doing bona fide research, and who cannot get their material through other public libraries. It contains the *John Ritblat galleries* where the Magna Carta, the Lindisfarne Gospels and Shakespeare's First Folio can be seen.

It is located on the north side of Euston Road, between Midland Road and Ossulston Street and about 400m from King's Cross station. The tube station there is 'accessible'. The roads on either side have BB spaces while Euston Road is a busy red route allowing no stopping.

From the Euston Road there are  $+4$  steps, followed by a large stepped courtyard. Just around the corner in Ossulston Street there's a ramped way in, with a step-free route running for about 100m around the edge of the courtyard. There's also a ramped way in from Midland Road.

The building measures about 100m by 200m, including a huge area for book storage. Its layout is quite confusing, partly because of the split-level GF, and because some lifts only go to two or three of the floors.

**The main entrance is flat**, with an information desk almost straight ahead in the foyer. **There are step-free routes throughout the building** and the steps to the UGF can be bypassed.

**Working upwards the flooring system is labelled, LG (lower ground), G+UG (ground and upper ground), 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors.** A plan/map of the library is available both from the information desk and the website, but it has various symbols plonked down all over it and is, in our view, quite difficult to interpret in detail. In addition it does not define which floors the various lifts go to, and doesn't make clear that in the main block of six lifts (shown in red on the library plan) only one stops on the GF.

On the map the public galleries are coloured yellow and are spread across the LGF, GF and UGF including the *Ritblat galleries* which measure roughly 40m by 40m on the UGF. There is also the *PACCAR gallery* and the Conservation display.

**From the foyer,**

- *to the left* is the shop, and just to the right of the shop is the entry to the main public galleries. Through that door you'll find lift 10 which goes to the LG/G/UG floors;
- *to the right* is a ramp down to the LG level where there's a cloakroom, and access to lifts 1/2/3 and 4/5 (D105 W150 L130) which lead to the library sections on the upper floors and to all the floors except the ground G. The ramp can be bypassed using lift 6 which goes to the LG/G/UG floors.

**The building is step-free throughout.** On the upper floors there's a route around the 'well' which contains the Kings Library. Many of the doors can be opened by buttons on the side. The UG level has a large café at the back, and there's a restaurant on the 1st floor. Both are near the public galleries. Lift 9 goes to the restaurant.

*Reader Registration* takes place on the UG level.

The **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)** are nearly all on the left side of the building where the *John Ritblat gallery* is, and on floors LG/UG/1/2/3. In the toilets near the two blocks of lifts numbered 1/2/3/4/5, there are **wheelchair cubicles** inside the mens and womens areas on floors UG/1/2/3.

There are BCF in the wheelchair cubicles in the mens and womens toilets on floor 1 near lift 9 (linking G/UG/1) by the restaurant, and in the open area part of the toilets in the mens and womens areas in the toilets on the LG.

## **British Museum**

Great Russell Street, WC1B 3DG

Tel: 020 7323-8000 Info: 020 7323-8299

website: [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org) e-mail: [information@britishmuseum.org](mailto:information@britishmuseum.org)

**It is one of the largest museums in the world**, and houses the national collection of archaeological remains covering two million years of history. A central architectural feature is the Great Court, which now has a glass roof, and incorporates the old British Library Reading Room.

In 2013/14 a new World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre is planned in the NW corner of the museum, see [www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/wcec\\_exhibition\\_panels.pdf](http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/wcec_exhibition_panels.pdf).

**The museum is approximately 200m square, with two main floors, but with exhibits and activities on as many as five other levels:**

- the north end has gallery rooms on seven levels from -1 to 5;
- the main part of the museum has galleries on just two floors; and,
- at the south end of the building there two lower floors with facilities for school parties, for meetings and for lectures.

The museum has gone to considerable lengths to make sure that almost everywhere can be reached step-free, but some of the lifts which make this possible are well hidden (for example the one to the Gallery Café, and the one between rooms 21 and 22).

The provision of accessible toilets is somewhat scattered, and slightly eccentric. When we visited early in 2011, half of them were closed.

**Parking** for up to four BB holders can be arranged in advance (*Tel: 020 7323-8299*). The spaces are in the museum forecourt off Great Russell Street with no height restriction. This is a valuable provision, although you'll often get to a voicemail (ansaphone) on option 4 when you ring, and have to leave a message to get them to ring you back. We found that one way round this was to ring earlyish in the morning, before the staff are busy with visitors.

**The museum is absolutely huge and you will get more out of a visit if you are selective in what you try to see, join an organised group and/or if you use an audio tour.**

The website has useful information, and the floor plans are quite good, although they are currently very 'busy' because they are showing the locations of exhibits highlighted in an excellent series called *A history of the world in 100 objects*. The use of plans rather than an isometric is highly commended. Plans are much easier to relate to. As always, however, the information is almost certainly put together by an able-bodied person who does not think in terms of providing clear accessibility information.

You can print the floor plans from the website via Visiting/Floor plans.

**The main museum entrance from Great Russell Street has +12 steps, bypassed by slightly hidden platform lifts (W115 L200) on either side of the steps.** If neither lift is operational, staff can take you to another way in about 40m away, giving access to an inside lift on the basement level.

**The alternative entrance from Montague Place is at level -1.** You can take the North lift to get to the main part of the museum on level 0, bypassing +12. You pass through room 24 which provides easy step-free access to the Great Court.

Coming in from Great Russell Street, the first hall is quite gloomy. You go past the South lifts, and then you reach the dazzlingly white Great Court with its four

classical porticos. In the centre is the Reading Room, which is currently used for special exhibitions.

There are nearly 100 galleries, and potentially some 4km of walking/wheeling to see all the exhibits. Almost all the museum now has step-free access via various lifts, and **where there seems to be a problem, ask one of the staff**, who are generally helpful.

To the right, as you come in, is the **information desk**, and to the left is a sales point for museum plans and itineraries, and a little further on is the desk for the audio guides. There are plans of the different floors in the museum available from the information desk, and an *Access guide* for disabled visitors. This has almost no detailed information for the mobility impaired visitor.

To make the best use of a visit, you would do well to get hold of the plan before coming, and choose which parts of the museum to have a look at. Alternatively or additionally, join one of the excellent guided tours that take place regularly, or take an audio tour. **There are displays on either side of the Great Court atrium showing the various tours and talks available on each day.**

**There are five main lifts.** All have D75+ W95+ and L120+. Note that you sometimes come in through one door and go out from another.

As you come in from the main entrance, you pass the **two South lifts** just before you get to the Great Court. These go to levels -2, -1, 0 and 3, and are particularly important for getting to the two lower floors.

Three-quarters of the way around either side of the oval shaped central construction in Great Court are the **East and West lifts**. These link to room 25 on level -2, to accessible toilets on level 1, and they go up to level 3.

The **North lift** at the Montague Place end of the building goes to levels -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

There are several platform lifts around the building to facilitate getting around split levels, but these aren't always very obvious.

**Places where steps may appear to be a problem include:**

- room 22 where there are +8 from room 23, but there's an alternative route via room 21, with a platform lift (D90 L110) to bypass the steps;
- there are now platform lifts at each end of gallery 18 to bypass the +3 steps;
- at the end of room 66 on level 3, there are +3+14 steps to level 4, but these can be bypassed by using the North lift;
- between galleries 33 and 33b on level 1 at the north end of the building, there's a platform lift to bypass +3, but at the end of the gallery there would be -17 on the east stairs to get down to the toilets. This is not clearly shown on the map;
- there's a lift to link rooms 33a (on level 1) and 95 (on level 2);
- from the Montague Place entrance the -4 in both directions (to room 34 and to the Anthropology Centre) are bypassed by platform lifts.

The **Court Restaurant** is on level 3, at the Reading Room roof level, and reached

by the East or West lifts, or from the North lift.

There are **cafés** on the GF of the Great Court (level 0), and the Gallery Café by Room 12 (in the SW corner). This is reached via +12. There is a staff operated lift (D90 W130 L130) to bypass these, but no sign saying that it is possible.

To use it you need to grab/ask a passing staff member ! Only about 25% of the Gallery Café is step-free as much of it is on a raised level +4, however there are movable tables and chairs in the step-free part.

At certain times, the cafés and restaurant get very crowded.

The various **wheelchair toilets (all D70+ ST70+)** are not particularly well signed or marked, although they are shown on the floor plans. When we visited, it was disappointing to find that nearly half of the accessible toilets were closed/locked. Four were said to be under long-term repair and refurbishment.

There are:

- **two** on the GF of Great Court (level 0) on either side of the oval structure, just before you get to the shops (coming from the main entrance). Unfortunately, these are located at the top of a flight of stairs which go down to the conventional toilets, so there's a strong temptation for non-disabled people to use them. On the east side there's a separate BCF;
- **one** off the bookshop on level 0, just before room 11. This is a unisex wheelchair toilet with BCF, but it is marked up as being for general use as well;
- **one** by/under the East stairs on level 0, between rooms 1 and 27. This is a unisex wheelchair toilet with BCF. There are other toilets alongside;
- **two** at level 1, one on either side of the oval structure and accessed only by using the East and West lifts. You might use these if you were using the restaurant on level 3;
- **one** by the North lift on level 3, where there are BCF in the womens toilets; and,
- **two** in the Clore Education Centre on level -2, reached easily from the south lifts, and with one in each direction, about 15m from the lift;
- there are also two in the Ford Centre for Young Visitors on level -1, where there are also BCF.

There are BCF on level 1 from the North lift.

**The museum is huge and has limited seating, but is a fascinating place to visit.**

**The recent provision of portable stools is immensely valuable.**

### Churchill War Rooms

Clive Steps, King Charles Street, SW1A 2AQ

Tel: 020 7930-6961 Textphone: 020 7839-4906

website: [www.iwm.org.uk/churchill](http://www.iwm.org.uk/churchill) e-mail: [cwr@iwm.org.uk](mailto:cwr@iwm.org.uk)

In the late 1930s, there was an awareness of the potential damage that bombing might cause in the event of war. Concern that the public might think their leaders

were deserting them persuaded the planners to provide a secure ‘Central War Room’. Many vital Cabinet meetings were held in these rooms, and there is an extensive Churchill museum.

The museum entrance is tucked in alongside the –15 steps from King Charles Street.

There is step-free access from St George Street and Horse Guards Road.

Significant admission charge. This includes an audio-guide, and an excellent plan/map is available.

A lift (D80 W110 L150) can bypass the –15 steps down to the rooms.

**The rooms are all on one level**, and although there are some narrowish gaps, the minimum width is W76 so most chair users can get through. Lighting levels are quite low in places. The rooms are about 100m long, and with side visits into the museum, you would go some 300m altogether. Folding stools can be borrowed. A thorough visit would take a minimum of an hour and a half. People may well want to stay longer, and there is a café at the far end. Visitors should note that there are few seats.

All three **accessible toilets** are near the entrance (so there isn’t one near the café).

Two are shown on the plan:

- opposite the lift **wheelchair toilet (D90 ST70)**; and,
- just past the Cabinet War Room, to your left **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)**

The third one is just off the shop, and is huge. When we visited there were renovations taking place.

**Cutty Sark** see the chapter on *Places of interest* under Greenwich

## **Design Museum**

28 Shad Thames, SE1 2YD Tel: 020 7403-6933 RecM: 020 7940-8790

website: [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org) e-mail: [info@designmuseum.org](mailto:info@designmuseum.org)

The museum highlights classic design from the past 100 years, and state-of-the-art innovations from around the globe. It has changing exhibitions.

Shad Thames is a continuation of the riverside walk which passes under Tower Bridge Road, and has been partly pedestrianised. To get to the museum from the Bridge it is necessary to go via Queen Elizabeth Street. From City Hall the distance is about 500m and from the southern bridge Tower it is about 1km.

There are 2 unreservable BB spaces behind the museum. Alternatively there’s a Q Park MS/UGCP with a lift, on the corner of Gainsford Street and Curlew Street. Height restriction 2m. 9 BB spaces, 3 of which are on the GF.

Significant admission charge. Folding stools available.

Entrance +5 steps with a ramped bypass. Displays on the 1st and 2nd floors, reached via a lift (D75 W110 L150). Ask staff. Coffee shop on the GF. There are **two wheelchair toilets (D80 ST70)** just outside the main mens and womens toilet areas.



### Dickens House

48 Doughty Street, WC1N 2LX Tel: 020 7405-2127

website: [www.dickensmuseum.com](http://www.dickensmuseum.com) e-mail: [info@dickensmuseum.com](mailto:info@dickensmuseum.com)

Charles Dickens house is near Corams Fields, and Doughty Street is parallel to Grays Inn Road. Admission charge.

Entrance +1 step, then two rooms of memorabilia with flat access and -1 to shop. The rest of the house has steps, -14 to the basement and wine cellar, +19 to the first floor and a further +20 to the second floor. From the GF there are two small lips into the garden. A new wing to provide lift access to all the floors together with accessible toilets is planned for completion by the end of 2012. This should make the whole museum step-free.

### Dulwich Picture Gallery

Gallery Road, Dulwich Village, SE21 7AD Tel: 020 8693-5254

website: [www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk](http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk)

This building, designed by Sir John Soane, provides a wonderful setting for an art gallery. It is located in south London, just over 3km from Brixton tube station, which is 'accessible'.

Closed on Mondays.

CP for BB holders by the main entrance from Gallery Road. It does not have marked spaces but can take four or five cars. Ring in advance to book a space. There's a smart new glass entry corridor called the Cloister. It runs past the toilets and café, with a step-free main entrance, and an alternative through the bookshop. The whole gallery is on one level, and step-free, apart from ±2 steps in the tiny mausoleum. It is quite compact. There are seats in the main part of the gallery, and folding stools are available.

The **adapted toilet (D80 ST70 but inward opening door)** with BCF is exceptionally badly designed in terms of its position. The architect has made absolutely minimal toilet provision, and the three entry doors (mens, womens and disabled/BCF) are very close together at the end of a narrow corridor with a 90degree turn. A chair user, or family with a buggy, who get to the toilet/BCF and find it occupied, will block the corridor and will probably have to back down its whole length in order to let the person in the toilet go past.

### Foundling Museum

40 Brunswick Square, WC1N 1AZ Tel: 020 7841-3600

website: [www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk)

e-mail: [enquiries@foundlingmuseum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@foundlingmuseum.org.uk)

The Museum tells the story of the Foundling Hospital, the first purpose built home for abandoned children in Britain, established in 1739. It is also London's first ever public art gallery.

Closed on Mondays. Admission charge.

It is located at the end of a cul de sac on the north side of Brunswick Square.

There is metered parking opposite, but BB holders may be able to book a space in the staff CP about 50m away. The frontage is just over 30m long. There's a ramp to bypass the +5 steps at the entrance. Using the lift (D75 W95 L130), all four floors can be accessed step-free. There's a café on the GF, with tables outside during the summer.

**Wheelchair toilet (D75 ST75)** on the LGF. Watch out, because you're in danger of setting off the alarm, as the cord hangs down in the middle of the ST space !

### **Garden Museum**

5 Lambeth Palace Road, SE1 7LB Tel: 020 7401-8865

website: [www.gardenmuseum.org.uk](http://www.gardenmuseum.org.uk)

Located just south of Lambeth Bridge, and situated in an old church, this small museum is famous for having Bligh of the Bounty buried in its garden.

Admission charge. The entrance has a 3cm ridge. Inside there is a shop, then +3 steps with a ramped bypass, to the café and museum. Flat access to the small garden with a bumpy paved surface and some very narrow paths, so that chair users can only access about 70% of it. A platform lift (D100 L140) goes up inside the church to a separate part of the exhibition bypassing +22. **Wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)** on the way to the garden.

### **Guildhall Art Gallery and Roman Amphitheatre**

Guildhall Yard, EC2V 5AE Tel: 020 7332-3700

website: [www.guildhallartgallery.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.guildhallartgallery.cityoflondon.gov.uk)

e-mail: [guildhall.artgallery@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:guildhall.artgallery@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

Built over a Roman amphitheatre, the gallery houses paintings and sculptures belonging to the Corporation of London. It is located 50m from the Guildhall, across Guildhall Yard.

Admission charge at some times of the day and it can be closed for an event. The entrance is step-free and two lifts (D90 W140 L160) to the left of the entrance connect the six levels. There are three floors of galleries, as well as the remains of a Roman Amphitheatre in the basement. One gallery floor and the balcony is above ground level, and other galleries are below ground.

**Access is step-free throughout**, though the thick carpet may hinder movement for some. It is quite compact and measures around 50m by 70m overall. There are **wheelchair toilets** by the mens (**D80 ST85**) and the womens (**D70 ST75**) on cloakroom level (level C in the lift). There's also a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST85)** on level A2 opposite the lifts but marked 'private'. We were told that there was no objection to disabled visitors using this.

### **Horniman Museum and Gardens**

100 London Road, Forest Hill, SE23 3PQ Tel: 020 8699-1872

website: [www.horniman.ac.uk](http://www.horniman.ac.uk)

A museum about world arts, craft, religion and history which is very family friendly and surrounded by attractive gardens. It is situated in a really hilly area.

Its main entrance is off the A205 South Circular Road with red lines outside indicating 'no stopping'. The entrance is 50m to the left of the main building and reached by a steep hill through the gardens.

Limited parking on site is available if requested/arranged in advance, and this can be reached from Westwood Park on the other side of the grounds from the main entrance. It can be reached from Honor Oak Road, or from Wood Vale. There are parking possibilities in the streets a little way away.

They have an exceptionally brief and well expressed 'access statement' which says "*The Museum and Gardens are both wheelchair and pushchair friendly with accessible toilets. A lift gives access to all the exhibition areas. Baby changing facilities are available in Gallery Square.*" We can confirm that this is correct, although it doesn't mention that the area is hilly!

**The museum is step-free.** A plan/map is available at the front desk. A lift (D120 W130 L200+) goes to three of the floors. A separate lift (D110 W110 L240) links the Basement (where the Aquarium is) to the LGF - although the elevator will tell you that it's the GF.

There are **wheelchair toilets**:

- by the entrance on the GF (**D75 ST145**) with BCF. It has an unusual sliding/folding door, which can be sticky to open and close;
- on the LGF (**D75 ST130**) reached from the main atrium, and in the Library (not seen). There is another wheelchair toilet (not seen) in the gardens near the museum, which was being refurbished when we visited. A café on the GF serves snacks and drinks.

## Hunterian Museum

35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2A 3PE

Tel: **020 7869-6560** for the *Textphone*: dial **18001** first

website: [www.rcseng.ac.uk/museums](http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/museums) e-mail: [museums@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:museums@rcseng.ac.uk)

The museum is on the 1st and 2nd floors of the Royal College of Surgeons building. It contains the specimens of body parts (animal and human) collected by the surgeon-scientist John Hunter from the 18thC. It is on the south side of the square.

One BB space outside the Nuffield College entrance, and three more in the NE corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The main entrance has a ramp to the left followed by +1 step, or there's a platform lift (D100 L120) at the Nuffield College entrance which is 20m further to the left.

From the main entrance, there's a lift (D75 W75 L120) to the 1st floor, past the stairs down the hallway in front of you, and about 20m on the left. Just past the staircase inside the museum there's a platform lift (D80 L120) to get to the 2nd floor. Both floors are step-free.

**Wheelchair toilet (D90 ST75)** on the GF reached by a somewhat tortuous route, but it's well-signed.

### Imperial War Museum

Lambeth Road SE1 6HZ *Tel: 020 7416-5000*

*website: [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk) e-mail: [mail@iwm.org.uk](mailto:mail@iwm.org.uk)*

A fascinating collection of historical military equipment, with numerous changing exhibitions. It is housed in a building that, more than 150 years ago, was a lunatic asylum.

BB parking can be arranged (*Tel: 020 7416-5320/1*) with no height restriction.

The main entrance is 50m from the road via a tarmac path through the Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, and has +9+1+3 steps leading to the GF. These are bypassed by using the West/Park entrance, reached by going to the right of the big guns, and then continuing nearly 100m down the right side of the building. This leads to the LGF/basement.

This way in can be quite busy and noisy if you happen to get there when a large school party is either arriving or leaving. It is also slightly disorientating to arrive in the basement, and if you want to get a better 'feel' for the place before visiting particular collections, go to the left, and take one of the lifts up to the GF where there's some open space and you can see the shape of the building.

The diagram on your ticket, which you get on entering, has an isometric, showing the main central lifts and the location of the **accessible toilets**.

There is also a lift (D80 W90 L250) by the West/Park entrance which gives access to the picnic room, where there are two **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)**.

**There is flat, ramped or lift access to the exhibits on all six floors** except to the upper story of the 1940s house.

The two central lifts (D90 W160 L150) by the main staircase serve the LGF, GF and 1st floors. A separate lift (D80 W110 L150) must be used to reach the 2nd floor. This goes from the 1st floor - turn right from either of the main lifts until you reach the far wall, and go through the door marked 'disabled lift'.

The self-service café and the shop are both step-free from the GF.

There are **wheelchair toilets (all D70+ ST70+)**, reasonably well marked on the plan, and signed. These are in the basement, and on the GF, 1st and 2nd floors as well as the 5th. The museum has gone to considerable lengths to make the building step-free via the new lifts.

### London Canal Museum

13 New Wharf Road, N1 9RT *Tel: 020 7713-0836*

*website: [www.canalmuseum.org.uk](http://www.canalmuseum.org.uk)*

This unique waterways museum is housed in a former ice warehouse built in about 1862. It features both the history of the canals, and of the ice cream trade. Located about 0.5km from Kings Cross station alongside the canal, off All Saints Street. Entrance step-free but slightly cobbled outside. Admission charge.

This small but interesting museum is on two floors and the GF is divided into a street-level gallery and a mezzanine area. At the far end of the hall there is a

platform lift (D80 L110) to access the mezzanine bypassing +9 steps. From here a separate platform lift (D100 L140) goes to the 1st floor bypassing +15. If these aren't operational there is a steep ramp to access the 1st floor. On the GF there is a cut away of a narrow boat, *Coronis Cabin*, with a door D50 and +1 en route. Alternatively there is a good virtual tour by the entrance.

There is a **wheelchair toilet (D85 ST80)** with BCF just opposite the reception desk by the entrance.

### London Transport Museum

Covent Garden Piazza, WC2E 7BB Tel: 020 7379-6344 RecM: 020 7565-7299  
Textphone: 020 7565-7310 website: [www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)

The museum is housed in the old Victorian Flower Market. It covers the development of London's transport from the 1800s and Victorian times. This includes the building of the first ever underground railway (using steam engines !). By implication the exhibition reflects much of London's social history. There are plenty of hands-on exhibits for children.

The website has limited information about access.

The museum is located in the SE corner of the Covent Garden piazza, backing on to Tavistock Street. It measures about 80m by 50m with exhibits and displays on three floors although the upper floors are relatively small. A visit could take anything from an hour and a half upwards, and in exploring around, you could walk/wheel anything from 300 to 500m.

Significant admission charge for adults, but children under 16 are free.

The museum is approached from the Piazza across a cobbled area. The entrance can be slightly confusing (or so we found !). At the ticket desk, you are given a museum plan, and children will be given a 'Stamper Trail' card. This has a diagram on the back.

You enter into a slightly anonymous corridor inside, and turn right. What you need to know (and is not properly explained) is that the exhibits are arranged chronologically. Just opposite the cloakroom is a longish grey-coloured ramp, near a well signed **accessible toilet**. What you need to do is to go up the ramp which leads to two lifts (D80 W100 L250). This takes you to level 2 where the 'trail/tour' begins. Unfortunately, the lifts are not clearly labelled to correspond with the plan/map where they are shown as lift 1. The map does, however, show the route you need to take.

You then take lift 3 (D80 W120 L130) to level 1, explore these displays and then use lift 3 again to get down to level 0 where the main exhibits are. Almost everything on level 0 is ramped (or flat). Getting inside some of the buses, where this is allowed, might be challenging.

If you need to go to the Mezzanine with the Outdoor Gallery, you can get there using lift 5.

On your way out, you mingle with people entering the museum from the ticket desk, in the 'slightly anonymous corridor'. You then go through the shop, and can

visit the Upper Deck café/bar on level 1 which is accessed using lift 4 from the shop. Lift 4 is by the exit, on the left, and is slightly hidden. Both the shop and the café/bar are slightly congested.

Lift 4 (D70 W95 L125) also goes down to the Cubic Theatre where there are occasional talks and presentations. Wheelchair spaces can be provided.

There are three **wheelchair toilets**, marked on the plan/map:

- at the start and end of the tour (**D80 ST70**), just past the bottom of the ramp to lift 1, and past the cloakroom;
- on level 0 on the opposite side of the museum from the ticket desk (**D90 ST75**). This has an internal BCF, and there's a separate BCF as well;
- on level 1 by the Upper Deck café/bar (**D80 ST70**).

### **Museum in Docklands**

No1 Warehouse, Hertsmer Road, Docklands, E14 4AL Tel: 020 7001-9844  
website: [www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands)

Housed in an old warehouse, the museum celebrates the impact of the port activity on the social and economic life of the area from Roman times to the present day. Part of the exhibition covers war-time experiences in docklands. Displays illustrate working methods and equipment in different eras, with interactive exhibits and a children's area. It all makes for a fascinating experience. The entrance is about 300m from the West India Quay DLR station. It is on the quayside, past the *Ledger Buildings* pub if you approach from Hertsmer Road. There are 4 BB spaces outside the main entrance between the trees. There is a MSCP a little over 500m away, on Hertsmer Road, just past the cinema. Step-free entrance, with an information desk, café, a children's interactive exhibition area and a hall for special exhibitions on the GF. The museum layout is organised to take you through a series of exhibits in sequence, starting at the top of the building. **Everything can be reached step-free via lifts and ramps.** The two lifts (D80 W120 L240) take you to the 3rd floor at the top of the building. The route around the exhibition is about 100m long on each floor, with exhibitions on the 3rd, 2nd and 1st floors. Getting from the 3rd to the 2nd and from the 2nd to the 1st involves the use of one of two pairs of platform lifts (D90 W105 L120). To leave the building by a step-free route, you have to take the platform lift back to the 2nd floor and find the two main lifts in order to get back to the GF.

There is an induction loop and wheelchair spaces in the lecture theatre which is on the top/3rd floor. Folding seats are available as there are virtually no benches or seats in the museum.

There are three **wheelchair toilets**:

- on the GF in the exhibition hall (**D80 ST80**) where there is a separate BCF, and in the restaurant (**D80 ST90**);
- on the 3rd floor (**D100 ST80**) with BCF.

## Museum of London

150 London Wall, EC2Y 5HN *Tel:* 020 7001-9844 (to speak to a person use 0) 020 7814-5552 (to book BB spaces); 020 7814-5660 (to book a mobility scooter or a chair) *website:* [www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk)

*e-mail:* [info@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:info@museumoflondon.org.uk) or [access@museumoflondon.org.uk](mailto:access@museumoflondon.org.uk)

The museum includes some fascinating and well presented displays covering the history of London, dating from the very earliest times. It covers war-time London, and comes right up-to-date with recent developments and discoveries. It was extensively redeveloped during 2002/3, and virtually all the displays can be seen and appreciated easily by both chair users and others. The Lord Mayor's gilded coach is magnificent.

There are three BB spaces which should be booked in advance. They are reached by taking the first left turn off London Wall, going about 150m east from the roundabout. It is just past the MSCP, and the turning is marked Goods Inward. You drive in underneath the building. A staff member will need to come down and operate the lift to provide access to the building. Having a mobile phone could be useful, as the parking area is unstaffed.

**The entrance is located on an upper level (the Podium level of the Barbican development) at the junction between London Wall and Aldersgate Street.**

There are three lifts nearby providing access to the upper (Entrance) level, and in each case they are almost underneath the overhead walkways going over the road, one in London Wall about 80m from the roundabout and opposite 140 London Wall, and the other two are on either side of Aldersgate Street near or on the roundabout. You can also approach the entrance across the Podium from the Barbican.

**From the museum foyer/entrance everything is step-free**, and there is an information desk, and a shop and café. In addition to wheelchairs to borrow, there are three mobility scooters available and plenty of fold-up portable seats.

There are two lifts just past the information desk providing access to most floors. There's another lift at the far side of the building, but it was out of service when we visited.

**There are two main levels E and L2**, each measuring something like 100m by 50m (though neither is an exact rectangle). On the lower level, L2 there's step-free access into the Garden Court area in the middle of the building.

There are there are 4 wheelchair spaces in the Weston theatre.

There are **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)** on:

- level E, near the main lifts, with separate BCF nearby;
- level L2, again with BCF, en route to the café;
- L1 en route to the Weston theatre; and,
- on U1, used for group activities.

### National Army Museum

Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, SW3 4HT Tel: 020 7730-0717

website: [www.nam.ac.uk](http://www.nam.ac.uk)

Quiet museum with an excellent *Story of the Army* gallery. Located just past the Royal Hospital, between West Road and Tite Street.

There is some BB parking off Tite Street, but you should call ahead (Tel: 020 7730-0717 Ext 2250).

Entrance +3 steps with a ramped bypass.

**There is step-free access to all of the museum**, using two lifts, five platform stairlifts and a platform lift. You can get a key to facilitate use of all the platform stairlifts, from the information/welcome desk. Folding stools are available.

The first lift (D120 W200 L135) on the right after the entrance, serves the upper levels of each floor. The other lift (D80 W100 L140), reached by a steep ramp from the GF, serves the rest of the museum. There are +7 at the exit of the *Changing the World* gallery, which can be avoided by doubling back. The main lifts do not serve the small gallery and lecture theatre on the lower level, but a platform lift (W85 L130) can be used to bypass the -8.

The museum has a shop and café. The **adapted toilet (D90 ST110 but with an inward opening door)** and BCF is on the GF quite near the entrance, and well signed. There are more BCF in the toilets on the LGF.

### National Portrait Gallery

2 St Martins Place, WC2H 0HE Tel: 020 7306-0055 RecM: 020 7312-2463

website: [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk)

Situated to the north of Trafalgar Square towards Charing Cross Road and behind the National Gallery. It houses a remarkable collection of portraits of those who have shaped British history. The gallery has been extensively modernised and extended, with much improved access. There are 5 (unreservable) BB spaces on St Martin's Street opposite the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery. Portable stools are available.

The main entrance has +2 steps, but there are alternative step-free ways in either via the Gift Shop (25m to the left of the main doors) or using a ramped route from Orange Street. **Inside, all the galleries are accessible without steps.** The plan which you can get at either entrance shows clearly which floors the various lifts go to, and these can be previewed on the website. The only slight confusion is that the Gift Shop and in entrance hall are both referred to as level -1, while the 'upper' GF approached from Orange Street is referred to as level 0. There is a short flight of stairs between the two, bypassed by a lift.

There are six lifts:

- from St Martins Lane, the lift (D80 W100 L150) in the Gift Shop goes to the main entrance (level -1, bypassing +4 steps) and the basement, level -3, which contains a café and bookshop;
- from the main entrance (level -1) a second lift (D80 W160 L170), goes to



the theatre on level –2, to the main GF (level 0) bypassing the flight of steps, and to floors 1 and 2;

- from Orange Street, three lifts (D80 W100 L140), go to the upper floors (1, 2 and 3), including the top floor where there is a restaurant with superb views (*Tel: 020 7312-2490* for bookings);
- a single lift (D75 W90 L140), near the Orange Street entrance, links level 0 with the IT gallery.

There are four **wheelchair toilets**:

- on level –3 through the bookshop and at the bottom of the stairs (**D80 ST100+**);
- on level –2 by the theatre (**D80 ST70**);
- on level 0 near the Orange Street entrance (**D90 ST75**); and,
- on the top floor by the restaurant (**D90 ST70**).

Facilities include a touch tour of various sculptures, large print guides and sound guides, induction loop in Ondaatje theatre and wheelchairs on request, as well as a good access booklet and good signage.

### National Gallery

Trafalgar Square, WC2N 5DN *Tel: 020 7747-2885*

*website: [www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk) e-mail: [information@ng-london.org.uk](mailto:information@ng-london.org.uk)*

The Gallery has interesting collections from various painting schools from the 13th to the early 20thC. It is big, with a frontage on Trafalgar Square almost 200m long and it's about 40m wide. Most of the collection is on one floor (level 2).

Limited parking is available for BB holders and pre-arranged groups (*Tel: 020 7747-2854*).

**The north side of Trafalgar Square has been pedestrianised, and the whole area has become much more wheelchair friendly.** The Portico entrance from Trafalgar Square with the big columns has +35 steps. There are step-free ways in either at the Getty entrance 40m to the right, or through the Sainsbury Wing some 80m to the left. There's also a step-free entrance from Orange Street.

**The Getty entrance leads up to a large foyer with, café and shop, toilets, and to lifts going up to the main gallery level. There's a lift at this entrance to bypass the +6 steps.**

The Sainsbury Wing has five floors, with the middle one at level 0. The top floor (level 2) contains several galleries and the link across to the main building. All floors are accessible via the lift. There's a theatre on level –1 with three wheelchair spaces.

Just inside both the Getty and Sainsbury wing entrances there's an information desk where good floor plans are available. **The main level with the majority of the galleries is level 2. Almost all the building has step-free access via the**

**various lifts**, and where there seems to be a problem, ask one of the staff, who are generally helpful. Audio guides offering a choice of ‘tours’ can be a useful help to exploring the collection, and are recommended for the casual visitor.

In terms of getting to know ‘where you are’ as you’re going round, you’ll have to get used to the very unobtrusive system of indicating the room numbers. This is done on the white notices about a metre off the ground located by the doors into the room where the origin and the dates of the paintings in the room are described. Once you’ve discovered this, finding your way is much easier.

**There are eight lifts** (all D80 W105 L140 or larger):

- **two** are in the Sainsbury wing, going to every level (-2, -1, G/0, 1 and 2);
- there’s **one** at the entrance from Trafalgar Square to get to level 0 at the Getty entrance;
- **two** separate lifts are accessed from the Getty entrance both of which go to level 2;
- **two** go from the Orange Street entrance to level 2 (and don’t get confused by the relabelling of the buttons). The lifts clearly had a different system in the past, and now both labels are there. As far as we can see, ground level=1 (level 0 on the new system) while level 2=M);
- **one** goes down from level 2 (near rooms 15 and 26) to room A, which is only open on Wednesday afternoons.

All are clearly shown on the plan, though a numbering system would help.

There are **wheelchair toilets (all D70+ ST70+)**:

- at the Getty entrance (level 0) and near the café. Also by the cloakroom on the same level;
- near the Orange Street entrance (with the female one on level 0 and the male one on level 2 near room 22);
- in the Sainsbury wing on level 1 near the restaurant, and on level -1 by the theatre.

BCF are located near the Getty entrance (level 0) both towards the café and by the cloakroom; in the Sainsbury wing at level 1, and in the level 0 womens toilets by the Orange Street entrance.

There are a number of good catering facilities, with the main restaurant on level 1 of the Sainsbury wing, and a café near the Getty entrance.

**National Maritime Museum** see chapter on *Places of interest* under Greenwich

### **Photographers Gallery**

16-18 Ramillies Street, W1F 7LW Tel: 020 7087-9300

website: [www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk](http://www.thephotographersgallery.org.uk) e-mail: [info@tpg.org.uk](mailto:info@tpg.org.uk)

On the corner with Ramillies Place, and just south of Oxford Street. Quite near the M&S at no 173 (the Pantheon branch).

The gallery moved from Great Newport Street in 2008. It is reopening during

2012 after extensive refurbishment which will improve access. It will be on several floors, linked by a new lift. Step-free to an information desk, and a GF café/bar. There will be **accessible toilets** on the 2nd and 5th floors.

The gallery presents some really interesting and unusual exhibitions.

### Queen's Gallery

Buckingham Palace Road, SW1A 1AA Tel: 020 7766-7301

website: [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

e-mail: [bookinginfo@royalcollection.org.uk](mailto:bookinginfo@royalcollection.org.uk)

Located just south of Buckingham Palace. Admission charge, and pre-booking is probably desirable. Gallery shop, and ticket counter are step-free on the GF as is the security check. The gallery is small, and has a policy to limit visitor numbers to avoid overcrowding.

To get to the lift, go between the two staircases (+17 steps) down the corridor. To the right of the cloakroom, the lift (D70 W125 L150) gives step-free access to the 1st floor which contains all the exhibits, which are from the Queen's extensive collection. **Wheelchair toilet (D90 ST80)** under the stairs on the GF. Separate BCF by the main toilets.

### Pollock Toy Museum

1 Scala Street, W1T 2HL Tel: 020 7636-3452

website: [www.pollockstoymuseum.com](http://www.pollockstoymuseum.com)

A small and fascinating museum, with entrance in Whifield Street. It occupies two small houses joined together, with small rooms connected by narrow winding staircases.

Admission charge. Entrance +1 step to two sections of the museum shop, linked by a narrow corridor (D65cm). The museum is on the 1st and 2nd floors. To visit the whole of the museum would involve ±44 steps.

### Royal Academy Of Arts

Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1J 0BD Tel: 020 7300-8000

website: [www.royalacademy.org.uk](http://www.royalacademy.org.uk)

The oldest and most prestigious fine arts institution in Britain, known particularly for its summer exhibition. In addition, it has its own permanent collection, and hosts a variety of exhibitions through the year.

Significant admission charge for most exhibitions.

The entrance from Piccadilly is just 400m from the 'accessible' Green Park tube station. Two BB spaces in the large slightly sloping courtyard outside, which should be reserved in advance (Tel: 020 7300-8028). A ramp bypasses the +4 steps at the entrance, and central doors can be opened to bypass the revolving doors.

The main exhibition on the 1st floor can be reached by a glass lift (D80 W135 L280). Flat access to some of the 1st floor galleries may be organised by going

through private rooms. Some seats are available throughout the 200m route around the main gallery. Folding stools can be borrowed. The lift also goes to the smaller 2nd floor galleries. Some exhibitions have audio guides.

Shop on 1st floor. Ramped access to the GF restaurant. There is a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST80)** with BCF, by the mens, on the GF, just to the right of the staircase.

A massive development is under way to link Burlington House with the building behind it in Burlington Gardens, which previously housed the Museum of Mankind. This is to be undertaken during the next 4 or 5 years, and it is to be hoped that the facilities for disabled visitors will be improved.

The Burlington Gardens building currently has a wooden ramp which bypasses the 4+4 steps at the entrance.

### Saatchi Gallery

Duke of York's HQ, King's Road, Chelsea, SW3 4RY Tel: **020 7811-3085**

website: [www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk](http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk) e-mail: [admin@saatchigallery.com](mailto:admin@saatchigallery.com)

The Saatchi Gallery has a series of very tall, modern, light and airy exhibition spaces built behind the traditional facade of the Duke of York's HQ building. These provide an innovative forum for exhibitions of contemporary art.

The facade is more than 100m long, and the galleries go back about 40m.

It is located about 300m from Sloane Square and less than 100m from the Peter Jones department store. Two BB parking spaces can be booked in advance (Tel: **020 7811-3085**). These are approached from Lower Sloane Street. You turn into Turk's Row (with the *Rose & Crown* pub on the corner). Then immediately right through the big gates labelled Cavalry Square. The security staff will show you where to park, and Gallery staff will lead you in step-free via the large goods lift at the back. If you're using Satnav SW3 4RY should bring you to this back entrance. If you approach from the Kings Road the front/main entrance is just over 100m away. Keep to the right of the curved wall on the edge of the square for step-free access. The gallery entrance is through a grand colonnaded portico. The +4 steps can be bypassed using the portable ramp on the far side, but there is +1 [7cm] at the main door.

Inside, the galleries are step-free throughout with two lifts linking the various levels. One (on the left) is (D75 W90 L120) while the other is (D75 W120 L120). There are very few seats in the gallery, and no internal café. We mentioned the potential value of providing some fold-up seats for people to borrow. Until that happens, if you need a seat, bring your own (!), although wheelchairs are available on loan.

There are **wheelchair cubicles/toilets**:

- on the LGF in both the mens and womens areas (**D80 ST75**) each with BCF;
- on the Mezzanine between levels 1 and 2, (**D80 ST80**), only reachable using the left hand lift.

The *Gallery Mess* winebar and restaurant is nearly 100m away, approached step-free by going back to the left of the curved wall, and then turning right. It has an **adapted toilet (D85 ST65)** with the ST reduced by the BC shelf provided. There are other restaurants in the immediate vicinity.

### Science Museum

Exhibition Road, South Kensington, SW7 2DD

Tel: 020 7942-4000 Textphone: 020 7942-4445

website: [www.sciencemuseum.org.uk](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk) e-mail: [info@sciencemuseum.ac.uk](mailto:info@sciencemuseum.ac.uk)

The museum shows centuries of continuing scientific and technological development, and includes steam engines, the first mechanical computers, and spacecraft. The various exhibitions and displays are under continual development and there are ambitious plans for a roof-top expansion by 2015. It is one of the country's most popular museums, with some excellent 'hands on' galleries for children.

Access has been carefully thought about, and the management have an ongoing programme to make all areas fully accessible. The principal problem that we encountered was in wayfinding, as the map/plan available isn't very accurate or detailed, particularly of the GF, as it doesn't attempt to show the two different levels.

We have included a GF plan here, ascribing letters to the lifts to clarify where they are and where they go.

The Exhibition Road streetscape and the BB parking is described at the start of this chapter.

Prior arrangement can be made to use the museum's own CP, and this would ensure that you have a space. The nearest 'accessible' tube station is at Earls Court.

**Flat entrance**, where you turn left into a fairly long, seemingly quite empty, foyer. After the bag check there's an information desk on the left where you can pick up the museum map.

The entrance foyer is some 50m long. Past the +14 steps to the Bridge, there are lifts at the far end. To the right is a wide ramp leading down to the lower level and bypassing -8 steps. The (lower) GF areas include the Energy Hall with some spectacular old engines, Space Exploration and Making the Modern World as well as two cafés, the step-free entrance to the shop and the IMAX cinema.

There are not many seats, and those that are there are mostly quite low and without arms.

**The museum is on six floors**, with over fifty galleries, and covers a total area of some eight acres (3.2 ha). **The main hall (at right angle from the entrance foyer) is over 250m long**, and several of the floors above are nearly as long. **There are four pairs of lifts (all D100+ W150+ L150+) providing access**

throughout, and you will find them:

- **at the end of the entrance foyer** (just past the exit door). These are the only ones going to the basement cloakroom, and they also go to floors 1,2,3 and 4. *Lift A on the plan;*
- **off the Energy Hall**, by the first café (on the right past the end of the long ramp) and these link to all the floors except the basement, including the 4th and 5th, and to the mezzanine level for the Bridge. From the Energy Hall it only looks as though there's one lift, and you have to go behind it towards the groups entrance to find the other one. *Lift B on the plan;*
- **in the centre of the building**, just past the Exploring Space exhibition (which is quite dark), linking to the basement and floors 1 to 4. *Lift C on the plan;*
- **past Making the Modern World, and at the start of the Wellcome Wing (WW)**. *Lift D on the plan.*

There are some platform lifts providing access to various mezzanine levels (for example on the GF in Making the Modern World, and on Floor 3 to the walkway in the Flight exhibition), but these are not shown on the museum map.

The museum is effectively in two parts. The main floors, linked by the first three pairs of lifts you come to, and the semi-separate Wellcome Wing (WW) linked by the fourth pair of lifts (D) at the far end of the museum. At the beginning of the **WW**, which has step-free access from the GF, two lifts on the left give access to all the Wellcome floors (basement to 3rd floor). In the basement there's a ramped link from these lifts to the picnic area and the exhibits like The Garden and The Secret Life of the Home.

The **WW is physically separated from other parts of the museum on most floors** (see the museum map/plan). To make the link shown on the map as being on Level 3 you have to use the left-hand WW lift (D) which goes to a mezzanine on Level 2 (2M), and then use the ramp which takes you on to the main Level 3 'Flight' area. This is now indicated in the lift.

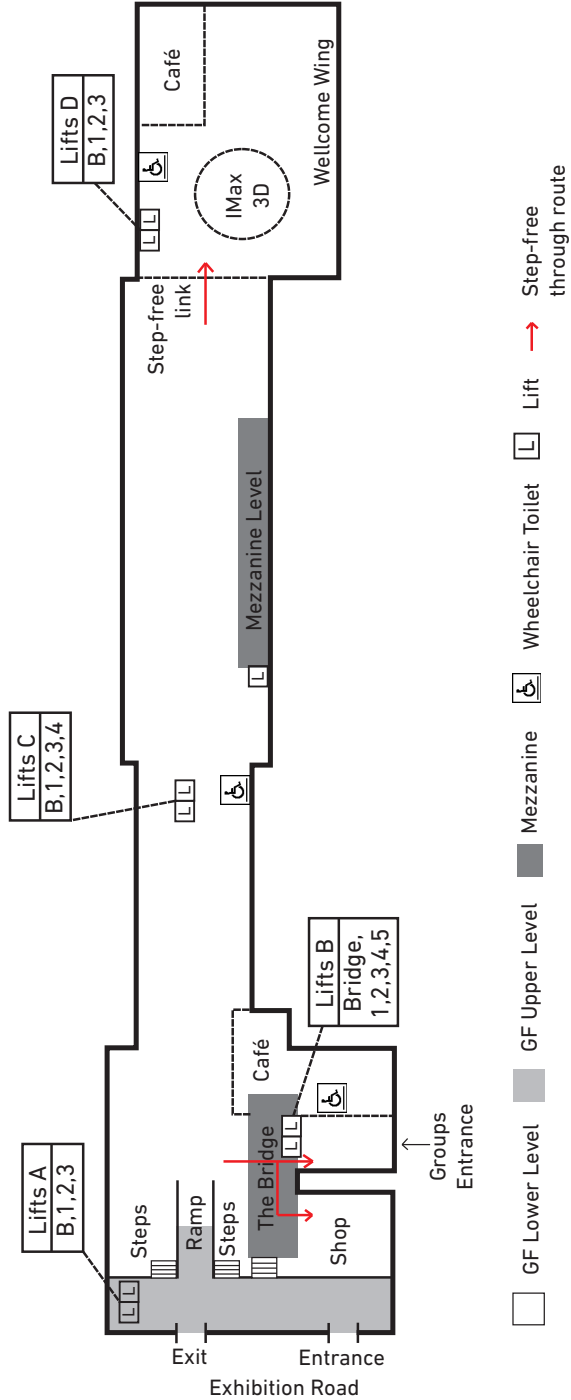
The **IMAX cinema** which is accessed from the GF by escalator has four chair spaces, reached via an internal lift, and it has an induction loop. Disabled walkers can ask for tickets in the same area/row as the wheelchair spaces, and then use the lift, thus avoiding the escalator.

The **Force Field** 'theatre' in the WW has a platform stairlift to bypass the +11, and there are chair spaces at the back. A chair user would be able to experience many of the effects, but not the jolting when the seats move suddenly.

**We reckon that more than 98% of the floor space is accessible without steps.** One attraction where steps cannot be avoided is getting into the Simulator pods on the 3rd floor. On the 1st floor the glass bridge over the Energy Hall has a ramp at one end.

# Science Museum ground floor plan

*showing which floors the lifts go to*



There are a good number of **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)** throughout the museum, which are reasonably well marked on the map. They are, however, slightly variable in terms of their accessibility in that although they just about meet our criteria D70 ST70, they only just do so, and several had big bins in them which could be a significant nuisance.

Several have BCF nearby (see the museum map). In some of those in the (new) WW, the door opens inwards, although they're all D70+ ST70+.

The wheelchair toilets are:

- **on the GF, past the café and behind the lifts (B), towards the Group entrance.** This one was absolutely stuffed with bins when we visited. There were four of them! There are two more **GF wheelchair toilets**, both with baby change facilities, on the right just past Space Exploration, and well signed, and another in the Wellcome Wing near the end on the left;
- **in the basement** there's an **adapted toilet (D70 ST60)** near the lifts from the WW (D). The ST space is restricted by the BC table. There's a **wheelchair toilet** near lifts C at the other end of the basement space;
- **on the 1st floor**, there's one near the Listening Post, and in the (separate) Wellcome Wing;
- **on the 2nd floor** it is between Mathematics and Ships, and in the (separate) Wellcome Wing;
- **on the 3rd floor** it is near Health Matters, and again in the (separate) Wellcome Wing.

The step-free access to the shop is to the right from the bottom of the ramp. There are two café's with movable chairs and tables on the GF, while the catering areas in the basement and on Level 3 are more suited to school parties having picnics. The museum exit on to Exhibition Road has a small [10cm] step.

### **Sir John Soane's Museum**

13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2A 3BP Tel: 020 7405-2107

website: [www.soane.org](http://www.soane.org)

The house was left to the nation in 1837, with a stipulation that nothing should be changed. Full of artefacts and memorabilia, and of narrow doors and gaps, it is well worth a visit to step back into the dreamy and eclectic world of this great collector and architect. Visitors are required to put even quite small bags into plastic carriers to reduce the risk of inadvertent damage to objects inside the house.

There are two BB spaces on the east side of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Because of the requirement not to change anything, providing 'access' has been a challenge.

The front entrance has +2+5+1 steps, and then 80% of the GF is flat. There are some narrow doorways, including one W52cm. The basement is -17 (winding), and the 1st floor +28.

However, there is now lift access to all three floors. The lift is well hidden and



disguised, at the back of the house. The wheelchair route starts with +1 from the pavement, which can be ramped, and then there's a platform lift outside, to take you down to the basement level. The lifts are of value to many disabled walkers. Most of the museum can only be visited if a wheelchair user is able (and willing) to transfer to a narrow (W40) chair with small wheels, thus requiring a pusher. The chair is rather like those used to transfer people into a seat on an aircraft, although it has arms. It says on the website that "If a visitors' wheelchair is less than 71cm (28") wide, and shorter than 102cm (40"), they can access the Crypt area of the Museum and may be able to gain limited access to other floors". We haven't explored this in detail, but the provision of the lift will undoubtedly make a visit possible for many people. To facilitate use of the various lifts, visitors wanting to use them are asked to ring first, as this makes it easier to ensure that there is adequate staffing.

There is seating available in most of the rooms, and there's a **wheelchair toilet (D80 ST70)** with BCF in the basement.

### Shakespeare's Globe Exhibition and Theatre

21 New Globe Walk, SE1 9DR Tel: 020 7902-1400 BO: 020 7401-9919

website: [www.shakespearesglobe.com](http://www.shakespearesglobe.com) e-mail: [info@shakespearesglobe.com](mailto:info@shakespearesglobe.com)

The theatre is a reconstruction of the open-air playhouse where Shakespeare worked. There are two BB spaces on New Globe Walk 40m from the theatre entrance.

Significant admission charge.

The exhibition entrance is on the riverside past the theatre and towards Tate Modern. Ramps bypass -7-3 steps in the ticket office area. A lift (D75 W110 L150) goes down to the huge 'Undercroft' beneath the theatre. There's an extensive and well presented exhibition covering both the theatre of Shakespeare's time and the London in which he worked. There aren't many seats. Theatre tours start from here, and use a second lift (D100 W200 L200) to reach the theatre above.

There are **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)**:

- near the first lift at the upper level:
- another on the bottom level: and,
- on the GF level near the shop and theatre foyer, where the tour finishes.

All the toilet doors are quite heavy to open.

### Tate Modern

Bankside, SE1 9TG Tel: 020 7887-8888 Textphone: 020 7887-8687

website: [www.tate.org.uk/modern](http://www.tate.org.uk/modern) e-mail: [visiting.modern@tate.org.uk](mailto:visiting.modern@tate.org.uk)

The gallery showcasing post-1900 art is housed in a huge building that used to be a power station. There's a substantial development, taking in what were three big oil storage tanks located alongside the Turbine Hall. A new angular building is being constructed above the tanks, and the project was at an early stage when we

visited.

The museum can be reached either from the south bank Thames Walk, or across the Millennium Bridge from St Paul's. Southwark tube station, which is on the 'accessible' JLE, is about 600m away.

Parking is restricted, but there are eleven BB spaces off Sumner Street at the south entrance to the building. During the development work the location of the BB spaces may change. The website says that 'reservation is essential', by ringing **020 7887-8888** or *e-mailing*: [ticketing@tate.org.uk](mailto:ticketing@tate.org.uk).

If you come from the riverside, there are two flat entrances. One is by the corner café, if you come from the west. The other is on the riverside if you come from the Millennium Bridge. Both are on the GF (Level 2). At the west end, off Holland Street, there is a wide slope some 70m long down to the bottom level (level 1), with steps and a handrail down the right hand side. At this (basement) level, there are the ticket offices for special exhibitions, and just inside the doors to the left there is an **information desk**. You can get a gallery plan there, and an access leaflet. The plan takes a little getting used to.

The four lifts (D120 W150 L250) are in the middle of the building and go to all floors. They can get quite busy. There are escalators as an alternative.

**Although step-free, the galleries are around 180m long and some 40m wide, so if you go to more than one level, there can be long distances involved as there is only one block of lifts in the main building. The new development alongside is an irregular cross between a rectangle and a pyramid. It has a 60m base, and will have eleven floors, separate lifts, and three step-free links across to the main building. The bottom galleries opened in 2012, but the extension will not be completed until 2015/16. It will double the exhibition space available. Additional accessible toilets will be included.**

A new public walkway through the building will create a direct route between the heart of Southwark and the City. Two new public squares will be built to the south and west of the gallery and it is intended to generate connections with local audiences.

There are benches scattered throughout the galleries, and a valuable provision is that you can borrow stools which can be picked up from the concourses on levels 3, 4 and 5. Very useful if you don't want to stand for long periods.

There are many interesting and provocative exhibits, and increasing use will be made in the new galleries of live art, performance, installation and film. The turbine hall provides an enormous space for some innovative art expressions. The main permanent collections are on floors 3 and 5, while the 4th floor often has special exhibitions. The descriptions of various exhibits are sometimes not designed for someone who is even slightly visually impaired, and some are not at

a very friendly height for a chair user.

There are **wheelchair toilets (D80 ST80)** on most levels, adjacent to the main toilet blocks. The ST space was blocked by a large bin in most of them when we visited. There are also wheelchair toilets in the special exhibition areas, but these are very discreetly signed, and it's easiest to ask a staff member.. Level 1 (the basement) has a **Changing Places toilet** with more extensive facilities than the usual accessible toilet, including a hoist, a bed and considerably more space. There's a baby care room facility in the toilets on level 1 and nappy-changing facilities in the toilet blocks on each floor

There are three cafés, on Level 2 (riverside), Level 4 and Level 7. In the one on Level 4 the counters are quite high. On the top floor, there's an outside balcony/gallery giving some fine views back across the river towards the City. Note the accessible *Founders Arms* pub on the riverside nearby.

### **Victoria and Albert Museum**

Cromwell Road, South Kensington, SW7 2RL

Tel: 020 7942-2000 DisEng: 020 7942-2766 Textphone: 020 7942-2002

website: [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk) e-mail: [disability@vam.ac.uk](mailto:disability@vam.ac.uk)

Vast museum of Art and Design with 11km of galleries and literally thousands of exhibits, some of them very famous. The building measures about 250m along the Cromwell Road by 200m along Exhibition Road and the museum is on several floors. Collections cover furniture, jewellery, china, prints, drawings, sculpture and dress from Britain and all over the world. There is a broad division between the galleries devoted to art and design, and those concentrating on materials and techniques.

You might take advantage of the regular, free, guided tours and specialist talks. They do not provide audio-guides, probably because of the sheer size of the collection.

The museum has an ambitious ten-year development programme (FuturePlan) which involves progressive changes and occasional gallery closures. One of the first parts of this was the opening of the Sackler Centre for arts education in what was called the Henry Cole Wing (after the V&A's first director who was a driving force behind the great Exhibition of 1851). Many more details are provided on the website.

The Exhibition Road streetscape and the BB parking is described at the start of this chapter.

The main entrance in Cromwell Road is ramped with revolving doors at the top, bypassed by a central door for chair users and others, opened by pushing the large button. An entrance in Exhibition Road marked as being for schools and groups, provides an alternative step-free access some 30m to the left of the two (smallish) revolving doors. There's a third way in from the pedestrian tunnel leading to and from the underground station, but using this involves quite a number of steps.

Access around the museum is quite complicated and poorly signed but, with a little planning, you can reach most of the exhibition areas step-free. The split levels on the GF (level 1) and on level 3 can be slightly challenging. If you need help, ask a staff member. In some cases, it's essential to use the correct lift as some of the upper galleries are only on one side of the building.

Most London guidebooks will have a summary of what is where, and if you contact the museum, they will send you a detailed floor plan in advance. These can also be obtained from an information desk near either entrance.

Our GF plan is intended to help, and we will try to 'talk you through' the basic access details. You'll then have to make your own exploration.

If you're a first time visitor, there are several easily findable, accessible and interesting exhibitions on the GF (level 1).

**Starting from the Cromwell Road (Grand) entrance**, you are on Level 1. The foyer is spacious, but the GF involves a split level, and the whole of the area around the John Madejski Garden is lower than the front of the building (by -7/8 steps). There are two ramped routes to bypass the steps. The first is to go straight ahead through the Shop, and at the end there are ramps in both directions. There's a second ramped route via room 46.

An alternative route from the foyer to other parts of the museum is to use Lift B over to the left which goes to Levels 2, 4 and 6 on the left side of the upper galleries.

**Starting from the 'accessible' Exhibition Road entrance**, turn right past the information desk. Then the internal ramp (ramp B, see diagram) is on your left through a glass door. Go down the sloped corridor to the junction which is Y-shaped. If you turn very sharp right and go on downwards, it'll lead you to level 0 (the basement or LGF). If you then turn right at the door at the end you go to the **Sackler Centre**, or, if you turn left at the end of the ramp, to Galleries 1 to 7 via a further ramp bypassing -5 steps.

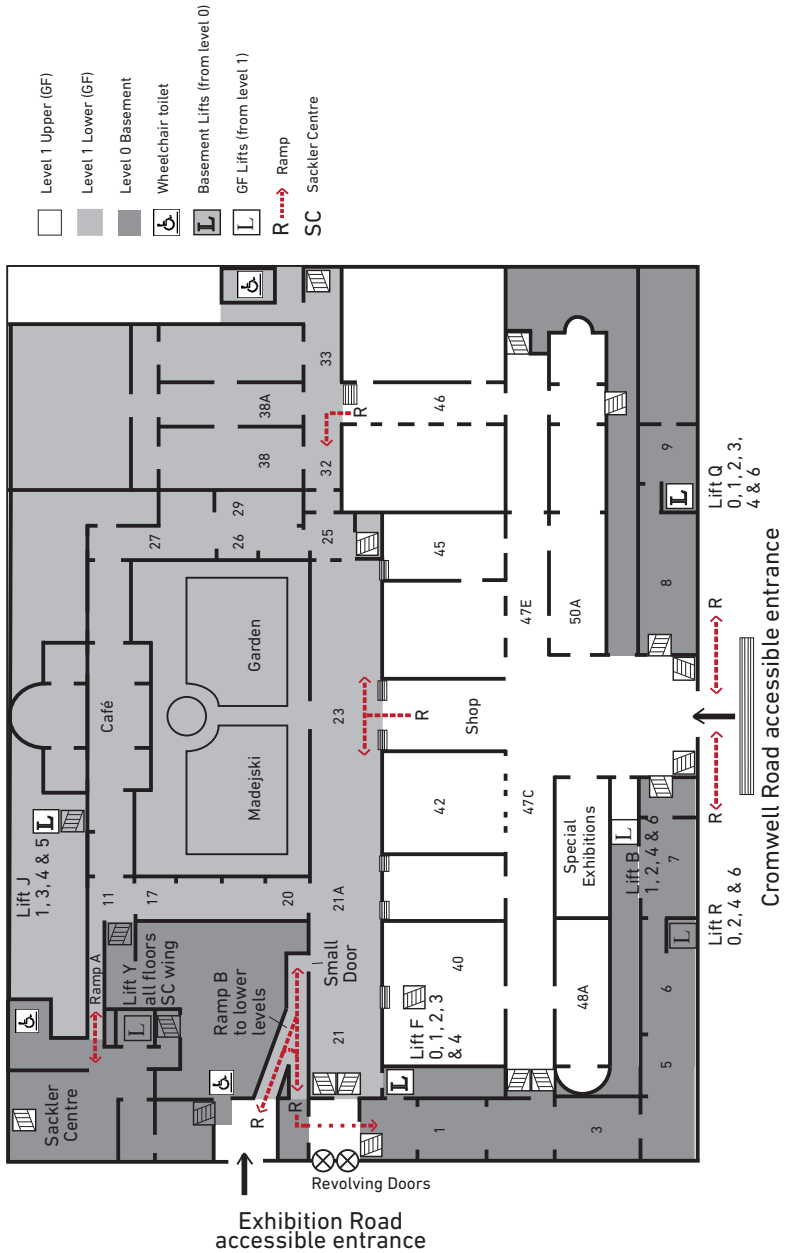
Alternatively, when you go down the first part of the ramp and come to the junction, if you go straight on, it leads you to a staff-only lift. If you go through the small (brown) door on the right of the lift, you come out on Level 1 near Gallery 21A in the lower section of the split-level floor. To get to the Cromwell Road entrance, go to Gallery 23, and use the ramps leading up through the Shop.

**If you want to get orientated, to understand the museum layout and the link between the two entrances, then follow this route:**

- go straight ahead from the foyer past the Grand entrance and through the Shop, the -8 steps at the end are ramped. Take the left turn into Gallery 23;
- from Gallery 23, go to 21A which has an open rectangular balcony in the ceiling. A little further along, in the wall on the right, there is a small door with a label *Ramp B to level 0 and 1*. Go through this door, and it gives you access to a split ramp (to the left). If you take the ramp upwards, it leads you

# V&A ground floor and basement plan

*showing which floors the lifts go to*



to the Exhibition Road entrance (go right at the top of the ramp). If you take the ramp downwards, it leads either to Galleries 1 to 7 on Level 0 (if you turn left at the end) or to the Sackler Wing (if you turn right);

- alternatively, you can reach Level 0 and the Sackler Centre by using Ramp A from Gallery 11.

**Ideally when you visit, you need to choose two or three areas which might be of particular interest.** You can then work out how to get there, and check the way with a member of staff en route. The largest floors with galleries are levels 1 and 3, but there are important collections and facilities on all seven floors. The British Galleries are on levels 2 and 4 reached via 3 of the lifts (B, F, and R). On levels 0, 2, 4 and 6 most of the galleries in use are on the Cromwell Road side of the building. Level 5 houses a lecture theatre and seminar rooms.

The routes we describe should enable you to get to any part of the GF (level 1) where there are many interesting collections and displays.

Level 3 presents particular problems because there's a split level between galleries 111 and 107 with  $\pm 4$  steps. To get to galleries 65 to 108, you need to use either lift F or J.

On the diagram, which is based around the GF (level 1), we have marked which lifts link to which floors.

#### **To get to the other floors from the Cromwell Road entrance:**

- Level 0 is reached using ramps A or B (through the Shop to the lower part of Level 1. Then go through the small door just past 21A, as described earlier for ramp B). Alternatively use lift F, or ramp A from Gallery 11;
- Levels 2, 4 and 6 on the left side of the building are reached using lift B;
- Level 0, 2, 3 and 6 on the right side of the building are reached using lift O;
- the largest part of Level 3 is reached from lifts J or F. The Cromwell Road side galleries are best reached using lift O, and there are  $\pm 4$  steps between galleries 107 and 111;
- In the Jewellery galleries, 91-93, there's a platform lift (D80 L130) to enable visitors to get to the upper level;
- Level 5 has the lecture theatre which is normally reached via +21, although there is now lift access from lift J.
- Level 6 is reached using lifts B or O and is a floor where there is a link between the left and right sides of the main building when all the galleries are being used;
- the Sackler Centre where the information desk is on level O, is reached using ramps A or B, or via lift F (from level 1). There are two lifts (Y) in the centre which provide access from level O to all the other floors.

There are **wheelchair toilets (D70+ ST70+)** in the following places:

- on the GF (Level 1), off Room 33 and via ramp A at the far end of the café in the Sackler Centre. Both have BCF;

- on Level 0 (the basement), between the bottom of the big ramp, to the right towards the shop, where there are two wheelchair toilets with BC facilities just before the entrance to both the womens and mens. There are more wheelchair toilets in the Sackler Centre described above;
- on Level 2, left side, off Room 56, with BCF;
- on level 3 near lift J;
- on Level 4, left side, off room 123 and near lift R. With BCF.

The café/restaurants are in the Morris, Gamble and Poynter rooms (level 1).

The John Madejski Garden is a pleasant area for sitting outside in the summer, accessed step-free from gallery 23 on the lower part of level 1, or from the café area.

### Wallace Collection

Hertford House, Manchester Square, W1U 3BN Tel: 020 7563-9500

website: [www.wallacecollection.org](http://www.wallacecollection.org) e-mail: [access@wallacecollection.org](mailto:access@wallacecollection.org)

Situated on the north side of Manchester Square, this is an extensive private art collection bequeathed to the nation by Lady Wallace in 1897.

A semicircular drive leads up to the entrance. There are two BB spaces (unmarked) on the side of the drive. It is advisable to phone and book in advance (Tel: 020 7563-9524). When you arrive, the staff just inside the entrance will show you where to park.

The entrance is ramped on both sides with automatic doors.

Folding stools are available to take around. Frequent tours. There is a braille map, and the audio guides have a T setting for those with a hearing aid. In addition, you can borrow a remote control device which opens some of the doors, for example to get to and from the lift. The control triggers a small circular sensor over some key doors, which are powered, and will open for you.

The lift (D80 W120 L155) goes to the LGF and 1st floors. Restaurant with ramped access on the GF towards the rear of the building. There are good floor plans on the website. The shop is on the LGF.

The **wheelchair toilet (D95 ST75)** and separate BCF are on the LGF underneath the restaurant.

Lecture theatre on the LGF with four chair spaces. An induction loop can be provided if you ask in advance.

### Wellcome Collection

183 Euston Road, NW1 2BE Tel: 020 7611-2222

website: [www.wellcomecollection.org](http://www.wellcomecollection.org) e-mail: [info@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:info@wellcomecollection.org)

The Collection is a unique mix of galleries reflecting Sir Henry Wellcome's vision of a place where people could learn more about the development of medicine through the ages.

It is situated on the corner of Euston Road and Gordon Street. The building is quite compact, measuring about 75m by 30m. Access facilities are well described on the website.

A few BB spaces are available, but you need to book in advance. The CP entrance is on Gower Place which must be approached from Gordon Street. It is on the right, and you come first to the goods entrance, followed immediately by two silver lift doors. You use the one on the right. You can either use the intercom button on the wall or ring security (*Tel: 020 7611-8532*) to gain access. Drive into the lift, which will take you and your car down to the basement L1 where you can park. It is step-free from here to the lifts. Note that Gower Place is inside the Congestion Zone.

**The main entrance is on Euston Road** about 30m from Gordon Street. There is a platform lift (D80 L120) to bypass the +11 steps. **The building is step-free almost everywhere**, and there are four main lifts (D80 W130 L140) going to all floors. Platform lifts bypass any steps (for example to get into the auditorium on L1 in the conference centre).

The GF has an information desk, café and bookshop. It also has an exhibition hall. The main exhibition level is on the 1st floor. There are **wheelchair toilets** on almost every floor (L2, L1, GF, 1st, and 2nd). There are also BCF on the GF and 1st. On the GF the loos are located past the lifts and to the right just before the cloakroom.

### **Wellington Museum (Apsley House)**

149 Piccadilly, W1J 7NT *Tel: 020 7499-5676*

The Duke of Wellington's former residence was known as *Number 1 London*, because it was the first building past the Knightsbridge tollgate. Wellington's descendants still live at Apsley House, but ten restored rooms are open to the public.

It is situated on the north side of the Hyde Park Corner roundabout, opposite the Wellington Arch, and somewhat isolated because of the swirl of traffic on almost all sides. Admission charge.

You can reach the house step-free across the roads from Grosvenor Place. The easiest alternative approach is from Hyde Park. Parking can be booked in the forecourt. The entrance has +7 steps then there are -9 to the lift (D85 W100 L105) which serves the other two floors. The main rooms are on the first floor and are step-free. In the basement there are -3 steps to a small gallery. Audio guides are available, and folding stools can be borrowed.



