

Cotswold Aero Club visit to London

On a bright, sunny, dry Friday in October 2008 a select band of 12 club members, social committee members and partners gathered at the club for a trip to London arranged by Phil. The minibus was ready and waiting and in the nick of time one missing club member was spotted speeding into the airport from a westerly direction! After that, a quick detour to Cheltenham to pick up the birthday boy and we were on our way.

Within minutes, in true school trip style, we were eating our packed lunches and chatting.



The journey passed without incident and it seemed no time before we were being dropped right at the door of the Houses of Parliament. The first example of Phil's excellent planning was the speed with which we were allowed to enter the building. After a short wait our guide collected us and the tour began. It was a really interesting visit – so much to see and learn. Because it was a Friday, Parliament was not sitting so we were able to go into the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

It was fascinating actually to be in the places we so often see on television. Our guide was knowledgeable and helpful, but some deft question from our group (and some particularly good questions from Maria) led to him really warming to his subject! The time flew by and before long we were posing for group photos and beginning to think about the next stage of the trip.





Some of us managed to squeeze in a quick coffee stop before we all strolled over Westminster Bridge to the London Eye. Again the meticulous preparation of the organiser meant we were ushered straight onto the Eye. The views were spectacular and the whole visit was made magical by a glorious sunset over London.



Another short walk found us outside the Italian Restaurant where we were to eat. Although a little early, we were welcomed and led to our prepared long table. Joe appointed himself wine manager (well it was his birthday) but another surprise was in store. The cost of a three course meal – with wine – was included in our overall payment for the trip. How do you do it Phil?

Eventually a well-fed, happy, tired (and emotional?) party climbed into the waiting minibus for the journey home.

We restrained ourselves from singing, but a little snoring was heard!

What a fantastic day out it was.

It was so good to be transported with such ease (thanks to Brian Aston coaches and his best driver), see wonderful sights – both historic and modern, and dine with such good company.



However, the real credits go to the pre-flight planning by our leader Phil Mathews.