**Radicals in Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury**

Katie took us on another excellent ‘walk’, this time in Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury. Originally it was a rural area inhabited by the aristocracy, later by the ‘eccentrics’. Fitzroy Square, designed by the Adams Brothers, was named after Henry Fitzroy, 1st Duke of Grafton, the illegitimate son of Charles 11. Amongst the many living in the square over the years, there are statues of Francisco de Miranda and Virginia Woolf. Charles Dickens has a blue plaque on Cleveland Street. The original Middlesex Hospital was built by public subscription in 1745 and finally closed in 2005, all that remains is the breath takingly stunning Fitzrovia Chapel in Pearson Square, which I will definitely be visiting as soon as we are permitted. We moved on to see a statue of Olaudah Equiano who was a writer and abolitionist, born in Africa, enslaved, but bought his freedom and was active in the anti-slave trade. We approached Bloomsbury and viewed modern tiled street art of the Duchess of Bedford. She was part of the suffrage movement, took up flying at 63 and sadly died in an aircraft crash overseas, she sounded ‘quite a woman’! At the end of Mallet Street stands the Senate House Library, an art deco building. Eileen O’Shaughnessy worked there during the war, as an after thought we learnt she was George Orwell’s wife! We passed the London School of Tropical Medicine, tropical insects in brass decorate the outside. In Gower Street a statue of Dame Millicent Garrett Fawcett, a pioneer of women’s suffrage and education. She was opposed to militant action. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, including Millais lived in the area, as did Charles Darwin whose blue plaque is in Gower Street. We heard that London University is made up of many institutions under the banner of UCL. Noor Inayat Khan’s statue was installed in Gordon Square in 2012 close to where she grew up and returned to whilst training as an SOE operative. She was fluent in French and was at one time the only link between London and Paris, she was betrayed by a French colleague, sent to Dachau and shot, quite shocking. Tavistock Square, also known as the Peace Square has many statues and busts including Virginia Woolf, Louisa Aldrich Blake, a surgeon and pioneer, Gandhi and a tree for Hiroshima. Passing through Cartwright Gardens and Marchment Street we arrived at our final stop in Brunswick Square at the Foundling Museum, all that is left of the Foundling Hospital founded by Thomas Curam, a retired sea captain, who was appalled by the destitution of children. His statue is in the square. Funds were raised by many including Hogarth and Handel. It was desperately oversubscribed, the mothers had to take from a bag, a ball and depending on the colour resulted in a place or tragically not. Tracey Emin has left a sculptured ‘lost’ glove on a railing which is very moving. Katie said she was sorry we ended on a sad note, but it was good to hear that Great Ormond Street Hospital was also founded by public subscription supported by Dickens and JM Barrie, who left the royalties for Peter Pan to the hospital. Such an interesting tour.

Jane Wilsher