


“Hey, no new entry?Â You slacker!” “Even though people aren’t writing comments, they are reading the blog and enthusing over how beautifully you write and how witty and smart you are. I assure them they are quite mistaken.”

Yes, even from across the pond, X has kept up her bitter commentary :-). Here, then, is a catchup instalment to bring things back in line.





Yesterday was mostly a work day for me, the morning at least. My friend L came to town around 14:30, on a visit to see her brother, who lives in Kensington. We’ll be hanging around a fair bit, too. After getting waylaid on her way from Paddington to Kings Cross by an ambitious but misdirected cabbie, she was glad to go marketing with me at Borough Market. L loves sea salts, and is on a first name basis with a Frenchman down at market who brings the stuff over by the tonne. Great joyous sounds erupted when she spotted him, and quite a bit of money later we had 4 big tubs of differently doctored sea salt and a great slab of herbed butter.



That butter will go nicely with our spinach ciabatta and rye cottage tin loaves. The bread vendor was also selling this stuff:



 He claimed it is Fonzerelli bread, in honour of Milwaukee’s own Home Town Hero, The Fonz. “You know Henry Winkler, He is from Milwaukee. He’s here now, up in Cambridge, signing his books. He was here, took picture with my bread!” Okay, we get it, you’re a fan. Oh look, isn’t that Potsie over there (*hurry, run*).

Also high on L’s list is balsamic sauce, a vinegar based concoction with loads of spices and flavours mixed in. Quite good on salads, breads, fruits, veggies, meats...pretty much anything one puts in one’s mouth. She loaded up on that, too. Won’t she have fun with her duty claim form. We also pick up several marinated lamb chops and other fixings, as well as strange French sausage blends. Now with the steel reinforced over the shoulder carry-bag compressing my 6’- 1” frame down to something approaching 5’-6”, we headed back to the apartment to have dinner before L heads to her brother’s place.

Dinner was boffo, along with a couple of gimlets consumed during the preparation thereof, but in order to keep L from simply dropping into slumber following her flight, we opted for a nice walk about Bloomsbury. Off we went to Russell Square and thence the British Museum. Here are some snaps:

  
  
  
  
The British Museum was open(!), which we were surprised at, as it was almost 8:00 pm when we got there. We ducked in to enjoy a visit to the mostly empty exhibit galleries. Remember this, if the museum offers evening hours, take advantage of them! Here are some more snaps from us mugging (with the) exhibits

  
  
Back home, then, by way of Lord John Russell public house, where I enjoyed some Balvenie scotch and L opted for some ale and lager:

  
  
With L packed off to her brother’s for the next few days I returned to the business of business, this morning, and then ambled off to Leicester Square to find out what I would be entertained by this evening. *War Horse* was the winner of the silent auction for my attention, and a tenth row seat in stalls will put me in a pretty good place to watch this well received and well reviewed drama making extensive use of elaborate life-sized horse puppets. Here is a video of the action:

That sorted, I then proceeded to go in search of a *still life with cheese toastie and discarded*

cocktail table:



Compliments of *Delish Cafe*:



I was on the march for the Phonica record store and their public exhibit to celebrate the first 50 years of Island Records, one of the top British record labels. It was an expansive exhibit of album art and other paraphernalia, but not very good exhibitry. There was a dearth of explanatory text, and what there was was in odd places and a bit dense. Here are some snaps. [More in the gallery](#), of course.



After dropping a bunch of cash on Island anthologies I traipsed off toward Mayfair to take in a couple of photography exhibits; Helmut Newton at Hamiltons Gallery and Diane Arbus at Timothy Taylor Gallery. Lucky for me they are right next door to each other on Carlos Place. Right next door geographically, but miles apart in artistic sensability. Hamilton, in my experience, tends towards photography from the fashion world, and Helmut Newton presents that sensability but while almost all his pieces feature nudes, they all possess a tension and power imbalance which sap them of whatever eroticism they may otherwise have had (at least in my eyes). For the second time this trip I am left cold by what Hamiltons offer.



Next door at Timothy Taylor we find a truly original master in Diane Arbus. This is a refreshing exhibit of her work, sixty prints dating from 1957 to 1971 and including sideshow performers, regular people in New York, Nudist camps, and even a nude, pregnant, self portrait. It was well curated, and featured several additional catalogues to browse. There were many pieces in the exhibit which have not been shown in the UK before, which should make this a well attended show.



Arbus is always sensitive to her subjects, and her tenderness comes through even when unapologetic, "I don't like to arrange things. If I stand in front of something, instead of arranging it, I arrange myself." What a contrast to the harsh sexual power struggles staged by Newton in his works next door. Perhaps the future will bring me back to Carlos Place, more likely for Timothy Taylor than Hamiltons.

Now down to Tate Britain, unfortunately on the verge of two new exhibits, so a little light. I shant well on it, then, but instead report on what must be the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> day of the now seemingly permanent protest, in Parliament Square, by Tamil and Sri Lankan expats and supporters. Even though the Sri Lankan government has finally declared victory over the Tamil Tiger separatists in what is most assuredly a humanitarian disaster of a scale we will not appreciate until and unless some independent group, such as Amnesty International, Oxfam or the UN/HCR are able to get in and check things out, these protesters who have snarled traffic and run up huge policing costs show no signs of backing down.



Unfortunately, in the biggest disaster of the trip so far, I was heavily jostled into a railing whilst trying to cross into the square for a closer look, and tore a ruinous gash into my favourite black linen jacket. I couldn't tell you whether it were a Tendentious Tamil or a Stroppy Sri Lankan, but whoever wot did it, the jacket is rubbish now, it is. My wings clipped, as it were, I took some more documentary snaps and slumped back home to get ready for tonight's show.

Oh, and booked a single in stalls for tomorrow night's [Donmar Warehouse](#) production of A

*Doll's House* in a new adaptation, starring Gillian Anderson and Christopher Eccleston.  
Ta1!