

Van Gogh 29th July 2019

Who would have thought that a journey to the capital in July could flow so well? With no traffic hold-ups, we reached The Tate in two hours, the last part of our journey enlivened by commentary on new buildings along The Thames by our excellent driver, Andy.

The exhibition was a joy- not overcrowded, well organised and coherent. It was based on Van Gogh's time working in a London Art Gallery, hence The Tate as a venue. There were large scale images of Victorian London to set the scene as we entered, followed by art which had influenced Van Gogh by its faithful depiction of poverty and need, such as etchings from Gustav Dore's "Illustrations of the London Poor". There were many examples of Van Gogh's own work portraying the outcast and the impoverished.

Setting paintings by his predecessors against Van Gogh's own work took up the first rooms of the exhibition. The final room showed Van Gogh's enduring influence on those who followed. There were, for example, several "Sunflowers" amongst which were those of Winifred and Ben Nicholson. Not alike in subject but in style were several other works including two by Francis Bacon, clearly reflecting the expressionist style of the Dutch artist.

Van Gogh's work from portraits to landscapes was well represented and the 3D effect of the thickly applied paint struck the eye powerfully, unlike the flattened effect of the many prints we have all seen.

The journey back was equally stress free. We counted ourselves fortunate to have travelled on a beautiful sunny day with such ease, filling us with confidence for further coach trips to London.