

## Postcard from London (Part 1)

London is one of my favourite cities, just like Sydney with bad weather. I usually stay at the John Howard hotel near Hyde Park, run by the former Prime Minister of Australia. This time I am staying at the Radisson, in the background below, across the Rd from Gloucester Rd Tube Station.



My room is the size of a single bed and literally isn't big enough for me to unpack my clothes. Despite this, I really like the hotel. I have my own balcony, but there are bars and a padlock preventing access.



The primary measure of a hotel is its breakfast, and this one is outstanding.



Contrary to what my daughter thinks, this is not a junket. I am here on a fact-finding mission to bring back the latest developments in UK education.



More later, have to go to yum cha.

## Postcard from London (Part 2) – A walk around and the Opera

Typical of my family, I write all this interesting stuff about London and they are more interested in yum cha.

When I was living over here, one thing I enjoyed was walking from Chinatown up Oxford Street, across Hyde Park and Knightsbridge, back to South Kensington. Thought I'd take you along.

This is Trafalgar Square.





I went to the National Portrait Gallery to see a photographic portrait exhibition. That's Peter Crouch, the footballer below.



Then up Charing Cross and into my favourite bookshops.



Oxford Street is always crowded.



Particularly around Selfridges.



There are always interesting people to photograph at Speaker's Corner, on the tip of Hyde Park.







These are new – you can hire bikes (actually they are free for the first half hour), from the many stations like this around Central London.



Mostly Middle Eastern housewives here. “Can I have 50 sofas please, one for each of my houses.”



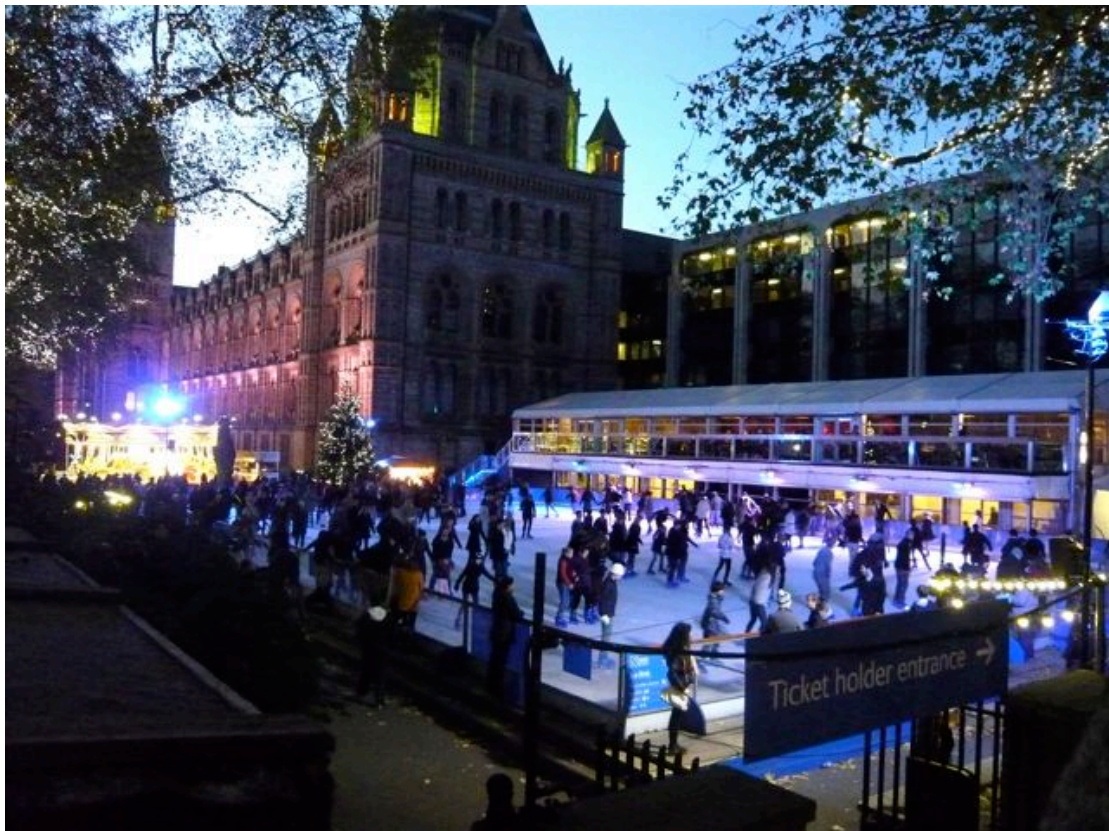
I chatted with this guy smoking a water pipe for a few minutes before I realized he didn't speak English!



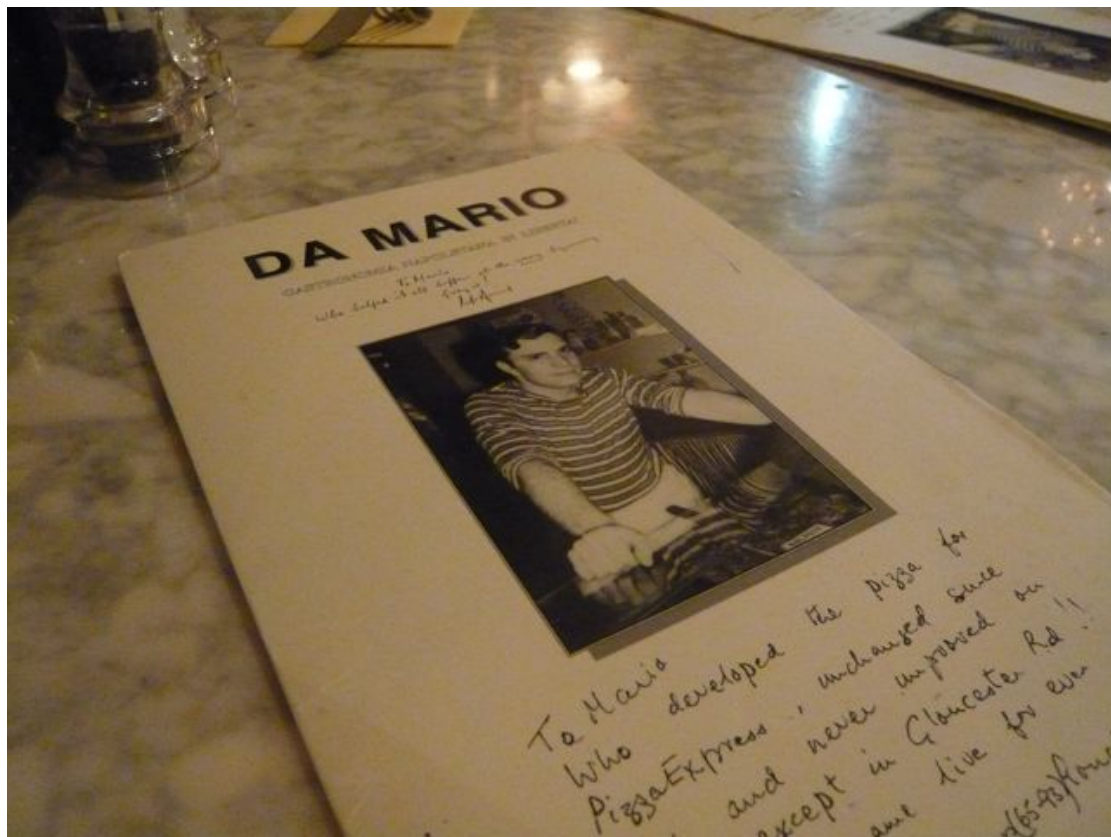
The rental market is still solid despite the financial turmoil.



The shot below is the ice skating outside the Natural History Museum. It was taken at about 4pm and it was already dark.



Had dinner with my host at one of my favourite restaurants near Imperial College. Princess Di used to come here for pizza (really).



Spent most of Monday running around. As I couldn't afford to go to Aida at Covent Garden, I bought tickets to Tosca, performed by the English National Opera at the Colloseum. What I didn't realize until they started singing was that it was a performance of an Italian opera in English. Surprisingly, it was pretty good (spoiler – they all die at the end).



No relation to my wife.

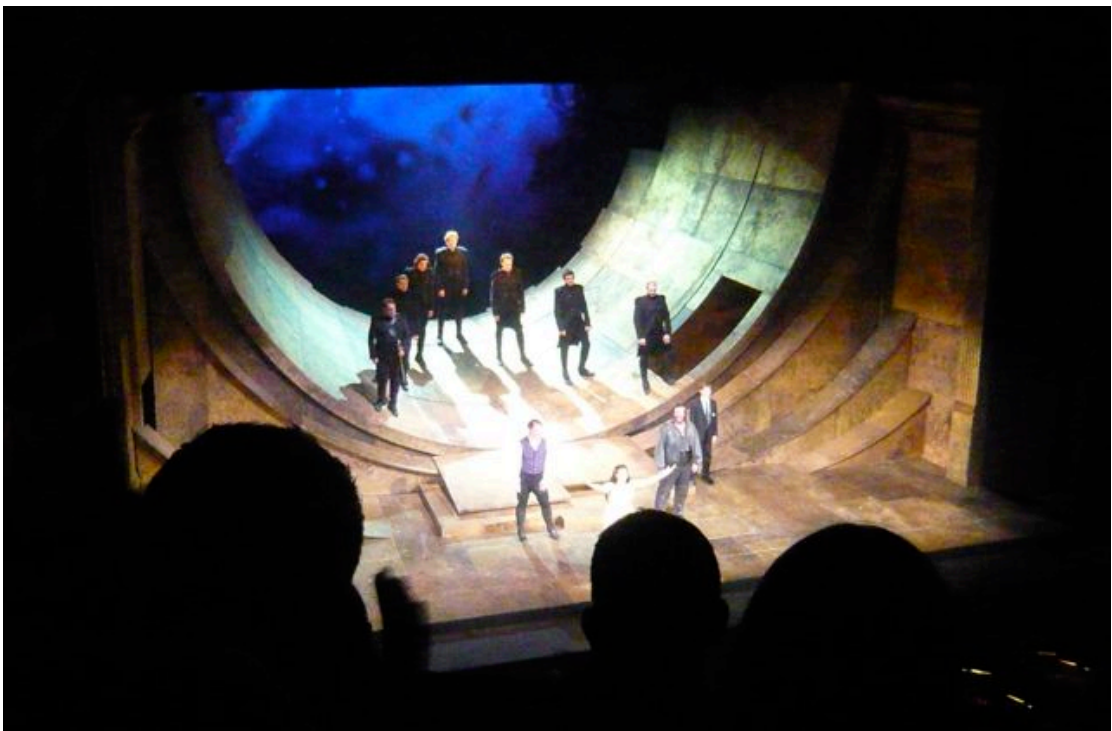


That's James Bond on the left.





The fat lady taking her applause.



Going to visit Maxeler today.