

Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red

Upton in Bloom's Coach Trip to the Tower of London

At 8am on Sunday 2nd November, our coach left Hanley Road car park, carrying 59 people to see the installation of 888,246 ceramic Poppies in the Tower of London moat:

Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Created by ceramic artist Paul Cummins, with setting by stage designer Tom Piper, 888,246 ceramic poppies will progressively fill the Tower's famous moat.

Historic Royal Palaces

The rain was lashing down for most of the journey, but cleared just as we got to the Tower. The traffic was horrendous! Our driver, Neil, crossed over to the south side of the Thames where it was a bit quieter and we crossed the river again over Tower Bridge and caught our first glimpse of the Poppies from the coach. We disembarked in an underground coach park at the Tower of London.

Upstairs from the coach park we were rather shocked to find out that for men, women & children it cost 50p to spend a penny!

Emerging from the coach park, in front of us was a wide, open area with a lot of people, but it was quite easy to get to the front to see the Poppies. What a sight!

There were thousands of people working their way around the footpaths and open areas to get different views of the Poppies in the moat. A lot of different nationalities were there and the vast majority were taking photographs of friends and family with the Poppies in the background. With a bit of patience, everyone could get to the front to view the Poppies.

The Poppies were 'flowering' in the grass, pouring from a window and the Tower wall, and tumbling down steps. A carpet of them was in front of Traitor's Gate.

Volunteers have planted the Poppies and the last one will be planted on 11th November, and then the task of removing them starts. All of the Poppies have been sold and the profits will be donated to six services charities. The Poppies will be there for quite a while yet as it will take a long time for all of them to be removed and packed up for delivery to their owners.

We left at 5pm and it took nearly two hours to get out of London. We arrived home at about 9.20pm. From an email received the following day '*It was so worthwhile and interesting to see the amazing display at the Tower. Impressive and moving - and to see all the crowds visiting.*'

Upton in Bloom would like to thank everyone who came with us to London, and took part in the raffle on the bus.

Jackie Surtees
Chairman, Upton in Bloom