

'Listen to the Building'



A 'Visible symbol of London,' (New York Times) 'Home of all our hopes' describes

the historical monument; 19 Princelet street. A group of us Sociology and Criminology students set off to the home of what once held many different groups and generations of immigrants. We were so kindly greeted by the Chair of the Museum of Immigration and Diversity, Susie Symes, where she gave us a detailed historical introduction as to how this building was constructed. We were able to distinguish between the modern buildings surrounding it and the once traditional home of many migrants.

The house was originally built in 1719 for the purpose of being a family home, firstly occupied by Huguenots, which later became the home of many other groups. Upon arriving at the house we were instantly taken by the displays and works of art by primary school children attempting to recreate and imagine the experiences of the past migrants.

One of the first arrivals was the French Huguenots who fled their homes due to religious persecution. The house then moved through many other migrants and religions

such as the Jews who later joined the house and built a synagogue in the garden of the house. We were able to really get in touch with their experiences through the wonderful pieces of art and the dramatic presentations.

We felt the culture and history of the building, almost being able to travel back in time to recreate the feelings and emotions the individuals must have experienced. The authenticity of the building, for example, parts of the lino which remained from hundreds of years before, gave us a real sense of the life which once circulated the house.

This was a fantastic experience which gave us as students the opportunity to search within ourselves and contemplate the question, who am I? What is my identity? Where did I come from? What kind of prejudices do I have? It evoked questions and emotions which many other museums would not. This is a visit which would be highly recommended for individuals to really get in touch with the past and be aware of our present and future.

We would also like to say a big thank you to all the members of the organisation for their kindness and helpful attitude during our visit.

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