

A select group of members, plus a visitor, gathered at Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner, London. The sun was shining and London was buzzing. Thousands had gathered to overcome aching muscles and blisters to achieve personal goals when raising money for favourite charities in the London Marathon.



In contrast, Apsley House provided a quiet atmosphere in which to learn about the Duke of Wellington.



Armed with audio commentaries, we learned about the first Duke of Wellington and his descendants, the present Duke still having an apartment in the house.



The house was built in the late 1700s and is a showcase for the first Duke's extensive art collection and aspects of his life and work. The elaborate interior is an excellent example of lavish living in the Regency Period. The auditory commentary included anecdotes from the present Duke. These included his exploits as a child sliding down the banisters of the main staircase and the war damage to the colossal nude statue of Napoleon, when the strategically placed fig leaf fell off. Apsley House was given to the nation in 1947 and is the last surviving great London town house open to the public today.

After a cup of coffee sitting in the sunshine in Hyde Park, with the bluebells at our backs, we went our separate ways to enjoy the rest of day soaking up the vibrant London atmosphere.

