

Another day in London and I find myself in Piccadilly Circus for the first time this visit. The first time really out of my neighbourhood, for that matter. Here's an obligatory tourist shot of Piccadilly:



Then it was off Leicester Square to find the National Portrait Gallery. I saw an ad in Vanity Fair for an exhibition of portraits from the magazine's first century:



Now where is that gallery?? I wandered quite a bit before I found it. Meanwhile, came across some interesting sights. Here is an incongruous image of Chinese lanterns hanging in front of The Crooked Surgeon:



Remember I commented on the over-courteous construction sites? Well, here is further proof of just how seriously they take it:



Finally found the gallery, and the show was a treat. Also got to see the "Photographic Portrait Prize 2007" show, which had some really sharp up and comers on display.



One of the odd things about Central London is how close everything is. From Piccadilly Circus to Leicester Square is just a couple of blocks, and then to the NPG is a couple more, then from NPG to Trafalgar Square is only a block or so. You just keep stumbling from one to another, whether you mean to or not. I didn't plan on going to Trafalgar today, but took a wrong turn out of the NPG and found myself there. I'll go back another day, but for today got another obligatory tourist shot (of tourists getting their own obligatory...)



At Covent Garden found mysterious queues of foreign kids in various places. They just as oddly dispersed, but I found another large crowd making all sorts of racket. Took me a moment to realize that there was a busker in their midst who was urging them on in competition with another large crowd getting the same treatment from another busker on the other side of the Garden. Quite a little shoutfest going there.





Now, why was it I came here? Oh yeah, the big heart:





The shops put this up to attract valentines celebrating folk to come and get their photos snapped under the pink boughs. Hopefully they'll shop a bit too. Not far away a pub in St. Paul's is advertising a "Sad & Single" event tonight, for the other half (or two thirds). Then off across the Waterloo bridge (locals several steps behind me, "What bridge is this? Mum, do you know what bridge this is?" "Wish I did." Alas they were too far back for me to tell) to the Old Vic. Got an 11th row center seat to see "Speed The Plow" a week from Saturday, or Saturday week, as the locals would say. Ooh goody! Back to the flat to rest up a bit. It has been a cold day for traipsing around, and it will be good to get back. **Note to self:** Regardless how easy it looks, never try to briskly ascend the staircase from the Bakerloo line into Marylebone Station! I felt like the guy on the "[Danger of Death](#)" placard. Ta!