

Normally, **Pawn** would arrive London midday, done some grocery shopping, topped up his Oyster card, maybe seen a show, and to bed by 10. This trip, however, is different. Arrived at 10, napped, shopped, went on a visit, attended an opening, and, despite being knackered, ended up awake until late. Nothing's normal.

Arrival was Saturday, and now it's Tuesday. After a morning spent at the keyboard it's a delight to receive a text from J. Meet for coffee? Of course! Pophams is a small patisserie just downstairs from the flat, and after much discussion, we meet there about 2pm. They have the best at Pophams. I order the warm falafal with golden raisins and tomato relish, J goes for the fig & walnut croissant. Both are perfect.

Following our snack, J leads the way down from Pophams to the Regent's Canal, which traverses the city, and passes just south of here. **Pawn** has spent many hours walking the canal, which offers a Central Park like isolation from the surrounding city. But to go with someone else, especially someone who treks it often, is a very different experience. Not far from where we enter, past Canalside, under the Packington bridge, we start westward. Wenlock Basin to the left, we approach a locks. A man and boy are tightening the lock doors on the high side, to staunch the rush of water through into the pool. Upstream another man and boy in a small launch are puttering around. Lessons, both.



We continue westward, the conversation totally disconnected from the surroundings, both of us absorbed nearly equally in the chat and the views.

Roughly 100 metres from the lock, the canal narrows, and then, 200 metres further, goes through the Islington tunnel and continues underground for nearly a kilometre across the top of London. We don't follow the hidden canal, instead opting for a hidden river, Colebrooke. Along that path we encounter this odd old tree fighting with a stone long ago left leaning against it. The complex root system straining against the asphalt pavings:



Note the roots pressing up against the paving highlighted by the moss overgrowth. Here's a snap showing the rock laid across the base of the tree:



We leave the Colebrooke Row and head to the top of Islington via Astey's Row, and finally to the New River path, actually not a river at all, but a Victorian-era attempt at providing more sources of water for the neighbourhood. The ducks sure seem to appreciate it. At last we seem suddenly to find ourselves in front of J's flat, having circled a large part of Islington in the process. She goes in to teach a class (via Zoom) and I return to mine.

No shows this evening, just a quiet night in, and some reading.