



## Time's frozen in London house

Visitors see rooms used by several generations of a fictional family of silk weavers

William Hageman

**LONDON** — Not long after Buckingham Palace was built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, a much less imposing structure went up in the Spitalfields area of London. It was a 10-room brick-terraced house, built in 1724, with nothing to make it stand out from others along Folgate Street.

Over the years, the house's fortunes — and that of Spitalfields — declined.

Then in 1979, an American artist named Dennis Severs bought it and turned it into — well, that is in the eye of the beholder. Partly a work of art, perhaps a bit of theatre, a living-history exhibit maybe. But Dennis Severs' House is not a museum; it's frozen moments in time from long ago.

Severs, who was 51 when he died in London in 1999, created a family of Huguenot silk weavers, the Jervis family, and turned each room into a look at their lives over several generations.

Visitors take a self-guided tour (in hushed tones, please, and do not touch anything) and see what each room would have looked like at a moment in time.

It is not what a museum curator would typically display.

Beds are unmade, plaster is falling from the ceiling, furniture is worn, nightclothes are strung on rope along the back stairs.

It seems that members of the Jervis family have just stepped away. Unfinished meals and half-empty wineglasses are on one table, spilled sugar cubes are on another, earrings sit on another, right where Mrs. Jervis left them.

You'll hear muffled voices in the next room, but when you investigate, the Jervises will have just left. Songbirds warble. The rooms are lit by fires or candles. (If you go, choose a sunny day.)

Everywhere are tiny details that, pieced together, take you back.

### If you go . . .

**Dennis Severs' House**  
18 Folgate St., Spitalfields, London

Open Sundays noon to 4 p.m., with last admission at 3:15 p.m. (Also open selected Mondays)

Cost: \$17.50 (10 pounds)

Nearby Underground station: Shoreditch High Street

Severs himself wrote: "Whether you see it or you don't — the house's ten rooms harbour ten 'spells' that engage the visitor's imagination in moods that dominated the

periods between 1724 and 1914. Your senses are your guides."

The house gets 10,000 to 15,000 visitors a year, says house manager Mick Pedroli.

"We can't handle any more than that. It's a very fragile building."

He doesn't advertise — go to [www.dennissevershouse.co.uk](http://www.dennissevershouse.co.uk) for details — and relies on word of mouth.

"You can be a visitor in any museum and look at things," said Pedroli, who was a friend of the late Severs.

"But this is life in London in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries."

The Dennis Severs' House has its own motto: "You either see it or you don't."

McClatchy-Tribune



WILLIAM HAGEMAN, MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

Dennis Severs' House in London is not so much a museum as frozen moments in time.

## Jack the Ripper's pub in Spitalfields is worth a stop

William Hageman

**LONDON** — Before a recent trip to the United Kingdom, I checked on the status of a favourite stop, the Spitalfields pub Ten Bells.

The Ten Bells has always been on my London itineraries, originally because of its link to Jack the Ripper, but more recently because of its charm, lack of pretence and cheap beer.

It was a welcoming dive bar.

During my pre-trip research, however, a red flag popped up. A story referred to the Ten Bells as "trendy."

Trendy. The kiss of death. Seldom compatible with charming, unpretentious and cheap.

A little history: The Ten Bells has been around for 250 years in some form, the last 160 or so at its current location on Commer-



WILLIAM HAGEMAN, MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE

Sitting under a glazed tile depiction of the Ten Bells, visitors enjoy a midday break in London's centuries-old Ten Bells pub.

cial Street. The place became a draw because that's supposedly where Jack picked up two victims.

Does that subject still come up?

"All the time," bartender Wanderson Fernandez said, especially because of a Ripper movie showing the bar.

Though Spitalfields has undergone a stunning rebirth, the Ten Bells, thankfully, has been upgraded only slightly. The ripped sofas are gone, the bathrooms are far less frightening, and the bar has been moved to the centre of the room. But its character endures. And beer's still cheap. An upscale restaurant upstairs at the Ten Bells has opened one floor above.

"This is one of the most traditional streets in London," Fernandez said. "Some people still live the life of Victorian times, like it's 200 years ago."

"Working in this bar is really special. There's a lot of history, and just being part of it is great."

McClatchy-Tribune

## London exhibits will mark 100th anniversary of start of First World War

► **England** continued from E10

• **Behind the Scenes** — Brit Movie Tours ([www.britmovietours.com](http://www.britmovietours.com)) gives tours relating to iconic British films and TV series.

These include studio tours and walking or bus tours of locations used for the filming of *Downton Abbey*, *Game of Thrones* and the James Bond and Bridget Jones movies.

• **Royal palaces** — A Historic Royal Palaces membership gives you access to the palaces, invites to special events and a magazine. Learn more about this offer at: [www.hrp.org.uk](http://www.hrp.org.uk).

• **Showtime** — An AGT Theatre Card can get you half price and priority tickets for many London stage productions. Check it out at [www.atgtickets.com](http://www.atgtickets.com)

• **A special scent** — The Perfume Studio offers a session with a perfume consultant and the chance to create your own signature fragrance. Find details at [www.visittheparfumestudio.com](http://www.visittheparfumestudio.com).

### If you go . . .

**Accommodations**  
• ME Hotel at 336-337 The Strand, London (20-7395-3400 or [www.melondonuk.com](http://www.melondonuk.com)). This fancy new hotel has a choice location on The Strand at Aldwych Street. The site previously held an office block.

**London information**  
[www.visitengland.com](http://www.visitengland.com)

### Heritage

The year 2014 marks 100 years since the start of the First World War. Attractions at sites around England, led by the **Imperial War Museums**, will be part of a four-year commemorative program of events.

Aug. 4, 1914, the day that England entered the war, will be marked on Aug. 4, 2014 with a candlelit vigil of prayer at **Westminster Abbey**.

For more information, visit [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org).

The **Imperial War Museum London** will open new First World War Galleries in the summer of 2014.

These will tell the story of people whose lives were claimed by the First World War. Learn more online at [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)

The Georgians and the Vikings will also be remembered.

The **British Library and Historic Royal Palaces** will mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accession of George I to the throne with exhibits and events, including a delectable 18<sup>th</sup>-century Chocolate Kitchen at Hampton Court Palace.

The **British Museum** will host a major Vikings exhibit from March 6 to June 22.

Melody Wren is a Guelph writer.



FRANCISCO GUERRERO, COURTESY OF ME HOTEL

The ME Hotel is a new hotel on The Strand at Aldwych Street in London.

## Rice paper butterflies put on a show

► **Outing** continued from E10

But while you're sitting among them, it's hard to remember that there is snow only steps away.

(And while you're at the garden centre, a detour into the orchid area is always fun, too.)

When you enter the Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory, in the north end of the city on Kossuth Road, there is a cloakroom to hold your coat and boots. You could get your sandals out of storage for the afternoon and bring them along.

The conservatory's 10,800-square-foot indoor tropical garden — temperatures range from 24 C to 28 C — is located through an airlock. One breath of the moist air is enough to get most visitors relaxing. Add in the tropical plants, the sound of falling water and the graceful swoop of the butterflies, and a winter's day is transformed.

The conservatory is a privately owned corporation. Its butterflies arrive in chrysalid form every two or three days from Central America and are carefully tended until they emerge.

The hatching area displays several different kinds of chrysalids. Ask the attendant to tell you the names of the butterflies and how close they are to hatching. In general, the staff is very helpful and always willing to answer questions.

The butterflies emerge as miserable shreds of wings, but soon strengthen and join the crowds of other butterflies flitting through the leaves, moving up to the roof, and down again to flowers or feeding stations.

In December and January, rice paper butterflies — they are black and white relatives of monarch butterflies — provide a show of living snowflakes. On the ground are quail — the cleaner-uppers of the conservatory — and tiny tropical finches that cluster around their own feeder and congregate in favoured places on the trees and plants.

If you can arrange your visit for a bright day, the butterflies will be more active. Many of the visitors are parents with toddlers or groups escorting elderly friends. A Family Days event with an "insect petting zoo" is planned for the weekend of Feb. 15-17.



WINNIE BUCHANAN

Three rice paper butterflies cling to a branch just centimetres from snow-covered glass windows at the Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory.

The walkways are perfect for little feet. And wheelchairs, strollers, and walkers can go easily up and down the ramps or around the edge of the greenhouse. (The conservatory has a few strollers, a walker and a wheelchair available for visitors — call ahead if you want to be sure they are available.)

Also among the visitors will be some avid photographers who enjoy the challenge of taking pictures of butterflies — so much so that they take out an annual membership and come frequently throughout the winter months. Most of the visitors, however, will be just soaking up the atmosphere and leaving any thoughts of winter behind.

There are two museum-type display areas at the conservatory. One shows interesting bugs from around the world, including an amazingly camouflaged stick insect. The other display area is a temporary "hands on" display on loan from the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. An exhibit of wildlife photography will begin Jan. 16 and continue to April 30.

To finish up your time in the tropics, you might want to visit the conservatory's well stocked gift shop or stop for a snack or lunch in the Paradise Cafe.

Winnie Buchanan is a Kitchener writer. Her Out for the Day column appears on the first Saturday of the month.

**sunwing.ca**

ALL FLIGHTS OFFER SUNWING AIRLINES' CHAMPAGNE SERVICE

*Experience Elite Service and enjoy complimentary:*  
20 kg FREE checked baggage • Bon Voyage glass of Champagne  
Hot & Fresh Bistro meals with wine • Non-alcoholic beverages  
Hot towel service • Kids backpack with games & toys  
First run movies • Headsets • Leather seating

**EXPERIENCE the DIFFERENCE**

Enjoy direct service on our award winning champagne flights, book one of our unique holiday collections and benefit from exclusive offers designed just for you by the travel experts at Sunwing.ca!

**SAVE 45% UP TO ON LAST MINUTE ALL INCLUSIVE VACATIONS**

ONE WEEK • ALL INCLUSIVE	
KITCHENER DEPARTURES	TORONTO DEPARTURES
<b>CANCUN ★★★★★ PLUS</b> <i>Relax</i> Grand Oasis Viva Ocean Spice Room • Jan 27 & Feb 03 <b>\$795</b> + \$357 taxes	<b>VARADERO ★★★★★</b> Memories Varadero Beach Resort Sunset Gardenview Terrace Room • Jan 14, 16, 21 & 22 <b>\$545</b> + \$280 taxes
<b>RIVIERA MAYA ★★★★★</b> Sandos Caracol Eco Resort & Spa Hotel Room • Jan 13 <b>\$995</b> + \$357 taxes	<b>RIVIERA MAYA ★★★★★</b> Barceló Maya Beach & Caribe Superior Room • Jan 12 <b>\$995</b> + \$357 taxes

**Selloff vacations.com**  
1-877-Selloff (735-5633)

**519-624-0777**  
#31 - 200 Franklin Blvd., Cambridge

Kitchener & Toronto departures. Savings of 45% apply to Grand Oasis Viva in Cancun, Mexico for Jan 27 & Feb 03 (Kitchener), and Memories Varadero Beach Resort in Varadero, Cuba for Jan 15 & 22, 2014 (Toronto) departures. Prices are per person, based on double occupancy for 7 night vacation packages (unless otherwise specified). Seats at the above prices are limited, capacity controlled and were available at the time of printing. All transportation taxes and fees are extra and must be pre-paid. Applicable local taxes payable in destination are extra (Cuba 25CUC). Flights are with Sunwing Airlines or Travel Service. In-flight service varies by flight time and destination. For full terms and conditions, please refer to the Sunwing Vacations 2013/14 brochure. 27 Fasken Dr. Toronto ON. Ont. Reg#2476582 | 01042014