MARGARET ATWOOD'S LONDON



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What is your earliest memory of London?
My first trip was in 1964, when I was 24. It was very different then – still post-war, darker, not yet Swinging London. Of course, I was a lot poorer and younger, so I had those kinds of adventures.

Have you ever been inspired by London in your writing?
Yes, several times. In a couple of early short stories, as I recall.

Do you have a favourite restaurant or café that you often return to?
My favourite, closest to the ROSL, is the Wolseley – and there are many in Soho that are wonderful. I am lucky to have English friends that keep finding new ones. And I love having lunch or tea in the ROSL garden – one of the nicest spots in the area, when it isn't raining.

What do you love most, and hate most, about London?
Hate most: the traffic. Like most: the people. Love most: wandering around, looking at the changes and the things that don't change.

If you have time, do you like to go shopping while you are here?
I don't like shopping much; it makes me dizzy. But can we count going to the theatre as shopping, please? It costs money, so ought to qualify – and I do love that!

What advice would you give a member coming to London for the first time?
Do the big touristy things, such as the Tower and the Abbey. Go up high somewhere, so you can get an overall view. Most of all, read some social and architectural history first, so you know what you're seeing. London has so many dimensions, so many layers – you'll be cheating yourself if you don't.

Member Margaret Atwood is the author of more than 40 works, including fiction, poetry and critical essays. She lives in Toronto, Canada. Her novel 'The Year of the Flood', £18.99 (hardback), was published last year by Bloomsbury (ISBN: 978-0747585169). Interview by Samantha Whitaker.

MAJOR ATTRACTION: the Tower of London should be on any sightseeing tour of the city



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LONDON

What's on...

Myths and Monsters

Horniman Museum
Until 5 September
This exhibition delves into the origin of mythical creatures, such as cyclopes, unicorns, yetis, dragons, and the chimera.
Tickets: £2.50-£5. Contact: 020 8699 1872 or www.horniman.ac.uk.



London Children's Ballet – Ballet Shoes

Peacock Theatre
22-25 April
London Children's Ballet brings a glorious new production of Noel Streatfeild's popular classic *Ballet Shoes*. With a cast of 55 talented dancers, aged 9-16, this is the perfect way to introduce young audiences to the joys of ballet and classical music.
Tickets: £14-£45. Contact: 0844 412 4322 or www.sadlerswells.com.

British Comic Art

Tate Britain
9 June-5 September
This groundbreaking exhibition uses visual art to explore the role of humour in British culture over the centuries. Tackling themes such as morality, politics and the absurd, it features works by famous caricaturists, including William Hogarth, George Cruikshank, David Low and Steve Bell.
Tickets: £8.50-£10. Contact: 020 7887 8888 or www.tate.org.uk.