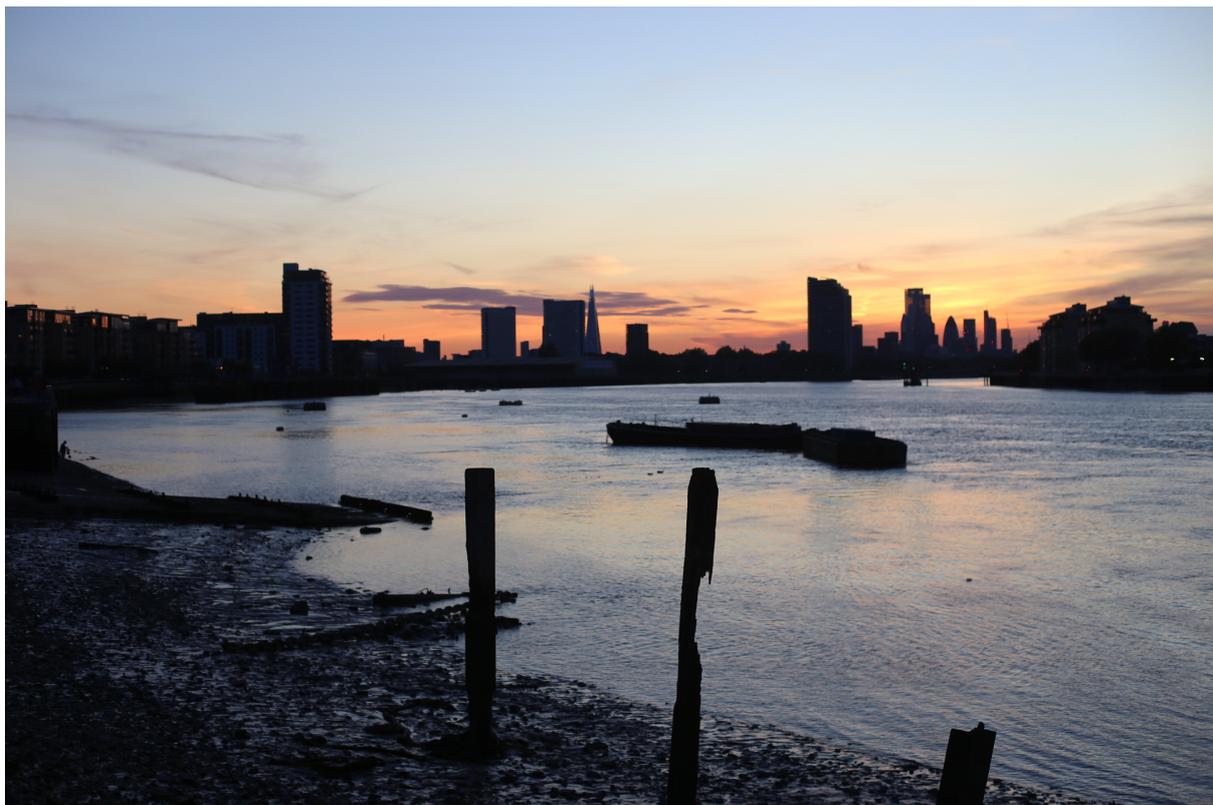


5. Arun Mahajan reflects on Strolls round Pimlico - River Thames (1 April 2020)

Hope you are all well and adjusting to life as we know it. Strange days to say the least and the freedoms lost to an unseen killer that lurks who knows where....my step count has vastly reduced from my norm., however I walk once a day - morning, afternoon, evening or night-time - leaving my flat and weaving through side streets to my first crossing point at Vauxhall Bridge. As I cross observing the Thames ebb and flow and where the two lost rivers the Effra & Tyburn meet. It's such a relief to be out and walking, my mood is uplifted as I look on the sunlit river and its changing temperament, whether it be high or low, incoming or outgoing, all different at the times of day or night.



One of the best things I have noticed is the Air Pollution levels have vastly reduced in surrounding area. As I make my way along Albert Embankment passing MI6 and towards the Thames is the Dock floating pub - memories of drunken fun times had on deck of the 1930's converted Dutch barge come to the fore and jovial days and arsing around with friends. Looking across the road sitting on the corner is one of London's most beautiful Victorian pubs *The Rose*.... How lovely it would be to sit outside with a pint but not today. This busy pub frequented by locals spies and tourists is closed like the rest of London and for how long! I walk on towards Lambeth Bridge passing one or two other individuals who refuse to give eye contact as they pass on by. I think to myself is it the bright blue disposable gloves and mouth covered face that's putting them on edge?



Sitting for a while in Lambeth Palace Garden - part of William Blake walk we put together with Charlie (Other Southwark/CoolTan Arts Walk), I reflect that this current situation is nothing new for the Thames, as it been through Plague, small pox, cholera, the great fire along with world wars and there will be more to come after I'm long gone. The river will give life and *Magnificence* to the city I love. My mind wanders to what to cook what to eat drifting from the present moment and makes me more aware of the small things that used to be but now are highlights in ones' day. My crossing point takes me back over the river and into Westminster passing the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Bridge, homeward bound as I make my way down Horseferry Road passing the Coroners Court - a grand grade 2 listed building – now extended on the side by adding a large tent on to the available space (used by Black Cabs for parking). It is now temporary morgue set up for victims of Covid19 Virus. Last time I saw the same structure here, was for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. This corner of Horseferry road and Regency Street is generally a busy hub for people gathering to use the cafes - a favourite being the Regency Cafe a throwback to the Forties - a meeting point for black cabs drivers and locals alike all silent and void of people now. Not far to go, another few minutes walking and I'm home. I am asthmatic and should not be out or have any face-to-face contact. That's easier said than done. (Emailed 1 April 2020)