

**u3a Bike Rides
Henry Moore Trail
Tuesday 19th May 2026**

A rather dull and cold morning for our ride as we set out from Brockwell Lido for Kennington.

Several riders had previously dropped out, for a variety of reasons.

The first stop was at the Brandon Council Estate.

1. *Two Piece Reclining Figure no. 3* (1961), Royal Road, Brandon Estate was purchased by LCC, one of several sculptures acquired under the "Arts Patronage Scheme". This was one of several new estates built after the ravages of the war. The environments created were seen as new and innovative. Art sculpture were seen as a key element of creating these new communities. There are two similar works in London; in the forecourt of the Chelsea School of Art and in the grounds of Kenwood.

Passing the Oval Underground Station, we headed for Vauxhall Bridge and the north side of the river to....

2. *Locking Piece* (1963-64) – Riverside Walk Gardens, Millbank.

How did Moore first gain the idea for Locking Piece which shows to interconnecting pieces sitting on top of each other?

Possibly through playing with pebbles in a gravel pit - playing with them he found that they could lock together in many ways.

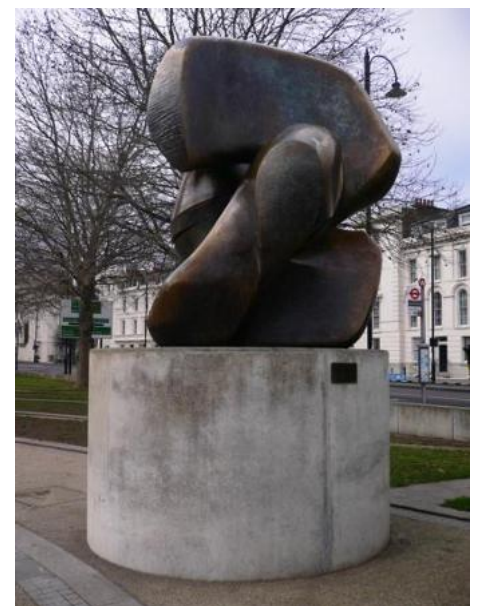
Or based on the idea of interlocking bone fragments lending the piece a more organic quality. Both ideas have their genesis in Moore's own descriptions of the piece.

Locking Piece originally installed at the Montreal Expo in 1967. Returning to London it was installed on the newly designed Riverside Walk in 1968. It had been gifted to the Tate who then loaned it to Westminster City Council.

There were three bronze casts made (Brussels; Hague Museum; the collection of the Henry Moore Foundation.)

The version in Millbank is the artist's copy.

We crossed the road to the Chelsea College of Art & Design where the third work was located. However, because of work on the building it was entirely enclosed in a large wooden box! However, I had taken a photo on a previous visit....



3. Two Piece Reclining Figure No. 1 (1959) – Chelsea College of Art & Design, Atterbury Street
This is the first in a series of two piece female figures.

Acquired by the Chelsea School of Art in 1959; Moore had a long standing connection with it Moore installed the sculpture at the school's former home on Manresa Road in Chelsea. Since then it has moved a number of times.

In 1968 it went to the Tate; in 1988 to the Royal Academy; in 1996 to an art museum in Paris. The school became the Chelsea College of Art & Design and relocated to Millbank in 2010. It was grade II listed in 2019.



Then it was coffee time, and we made our way into the café at the Tate Britain.

Our onward route was along John Islip Street, past St John's Smith Square and out to College Green, by the Houses of Parliament to see.....

4. Knife Edge (1962-64) – Abingdon Street Gardens (College Green),

Striking in terms of its location on College Green and proximity to the Houses of Parliament. It was a gift to the nation from Moore in 1967 and was grade II listed 2016.

Moore liked the idea that his work was in close proximity to Rodin's 'Burghers of Calais' piece which is nearby.

Three pieces were made from the same cast. The first was sold to Rockefeller and now stands in the garden at the Rockefeller family home. This is the second.

The third was erected in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver.

A final artists copy was retained and kept by Moore at his home in Hertfordshire.

The work has recently been renovated - for years it was neglected. There was confusion over ownership and responsibility for its upkeep. The House of Commons took ownership in 2011 and conservation was completed in 2013.



The route to the next exhibit took us through lovely Dean's Yard, a part of the historic precincts of Westminster Abbey, and the remains of what used to be a sprawling monastery complex.



We crossed busy Victoria Street and headed towards St James and Broadway, the home of London Underground plc.

Looking up, we were able to see...

5. West Wind (1928) – 55 Broadway, St James Park

The first public commission Henry Moore was on the front of the London Underground headquarters at 55 Broadway.

A relief it was carved into Portland stone and placed on the facade of the building. Other notable sculptors also contributed reliefs. Jacob Epstein; Eric Gill

The architect Charles Holden designed the building and commissioned the works.

Moore was influenced by carvings he had seen in the British Museum and by Jacob Epstein. This can be seen in the carving of the bold and powerful figure.



It was good to escape the crowds to reach Birdcage Walk for a easy ride up towards Buckingham Palace.

The next site (Time Life Screen) was to be found in Mayfair; but the recce ride showed that the route, crossing Piccadilly, was not a good one, and so on this ride we left it out. The photo from a previous visit is shown.

6. Time Life Screen (1952) – Time Life Building, 153-7 New Bond Street

Incorporated into the architecture of the Time Life Building on New Bond Street. It is a screen, part of the building but not fully integrated within it. It meant that Moore could sculpt both sides.

The building itself was significant; designed by Michael Rosenauer to showcase British design. Built for the American company Time Life, it was an expression of confidence in post-war Britain. It was also the first major building in London not subject to post-war building restrictions. The building was designated Grade II listed in 1988.

The interiors of the building were designed by Hugh Casson, the Director of Architecture for the Festival of Britain in 1951.



So, from Buckingham Palace we omitted the route via St James's and Picadilly and instead crossed to Constitution Hill and made our way to Marble Arch, and Hyde Park and the Serpentine Bar and Kitchen, to eat our sandwiches looking over the lake. Here we were gently reminded by the establishment that the seating was for those who bought food there; note to self for the future!

Fighting an unpleasant head wind along the Serpentine, and just before the bridge, we entered Kensington Gardens to arrive at the next site, the imposing Arch. There's a fine view through it across the lake to Kensington Palace.

7. The Arch (1979-80) – Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park

A six foot Travertine sculpture standing on the north bank of Long Water.

It was presented to the nation by Henry Moore in 1980, intended for Kensington Gardens. It was exhibited in 1978 at the Serpentine Gallery to celebrate Moore's 80th birthday.

The Travertine stone weighed 37 tonnes (ca 5 elephants) and was taken from a quarry in Northern Italy. The arch has had to be restored; this took place in 2010 - 2012.



Leaving the park by the Albert Gate, we headed through Chelsea, to cross the Chelsea Bridge and enter Battersea Park. After a search, we located the somewhat elusive....

8. Three Standing Figures (1947) – Battersea Park

The sculpture of Three Standing Figures in Battersea Park was first exhibited as part of the London County Council's (LCC) first 'Open Air Exhibition of Sculpture in 1948'.

The piece is reminiscent of Moore's drawings of people in bomb shelters during the war.

He described them as an expression in sculpture of the group feeling he was trying to capture in those drawings.

It was originally intended that the work go to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. Instead, it was donated to the LCC and from 1950 the sculpture has been in Battersea Park. Moore chose the location on the small mound facing the lake at the corner of the sub-tropical garden. In 1988 the sculpture was grade II listed.



A big thank you to Niesje helping to finalise the route and research Henry Moore and she reminded the group that this was a prelude to the exhibition of his work in Kew Gardens.
<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/henry-moore>

Riders *Caroline, Daniel, Gisela, Irene, John, Niesje, Tacey*
Report: *John*

Further information

The Art and Life of Henry Moore. (Source: Henry Moore Foundation)
<https://share.google/54Odh5XAPxDaKhbvV>

The War Years: <https://share.google/UftF839PxZUFExUIj>