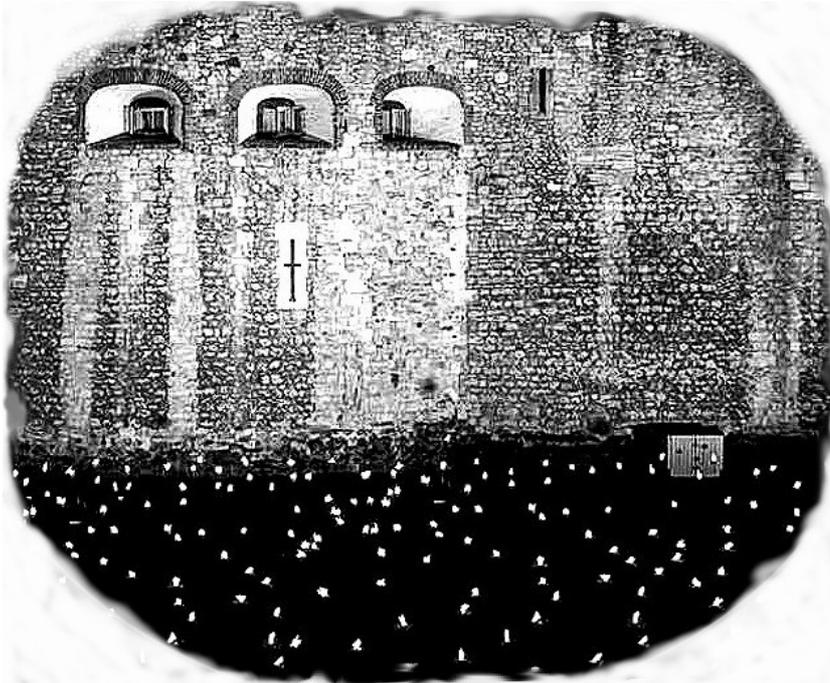




Beyond the Deepening Shadows at the Tower Of London



I am one very lucky lady to have been picked from thousands of applications for this very special event. It came about because of a small piece in the Daily Mail advertising they had 50 pairs of tickets to give away for Saturday 10 November at 5.00pm. Our daughter Julie nominated me and offered to go with me.

We set off around 9.45am. Went on the North Circular Road and saw parts of London I had never seen before although I have been many times. On arrival we started walking, then the heavens opened. Wet through in minutes. I don't recommend walking over Tower Bridge in a downpour with high winds. We arrived at the Tower - had to walk all the way around to the

other side as they had changed the entry gate. It was then 4.10pm, just had time to have a hot drink, while dripping all over Starbucks floor like the rest of the customers.

Just 150 people were allowed to stand on the bridge beside the moat to witness the Beefeater holding a huge flame torch, followed by representatives of the armed forces. The Last Post was played first. We then entered the moat itself which was collecting all the rain still falling fast and causing gigantic puddles. We observed the shadows on the Tower Wall which some of you will know curve in and out. The flames were lit (10,000 in all) by specially trained people wearing fire resistant suits while a lonely Beefeater stood in the middle. Haunting music especially written for the occasion was broadcast from shadowy figures swathed in grey costumes. It was very atmospheric.

We walked through the rain and thought this is all the tears of the fallen coming down on us. We stayed for two hours before having something to eat and drink in the bar inside the Tower Bridge. Brandy was the order of the day for me. This bar overlooked the moat and flames. We ordered a taxi which didn't arrive, then booked another one which went past us to the Tower Hotel Reception. Then the barrier wouldn't go up to let us out. The driver finally went into Reception, while he was gone the barrier went up and we couldn't stop laughing.

On arrival at the NCP car park there was a bin with leaves in it inside the lift. Julie thought it was a bomb. She moved it. Then the fun started. The car park didn't recognise Julie's ticket as prepaid. Rang the emergency number and was told to move the car to the barrier. Waited for a response only to be asked if we really wanted to leave as there were still 3 hours on our ticket and a lot of London to see. This all took about 45minutes. Eventually we left and were on our way into the City by night. We encountered a car that was supposed to be queuing with all lights blazing but no driver, a blocked street where drivers were trying to turn round plus a dead end, Again we saw places we had never seen before. Drove down Abbey Road where the recording studios are, eventually reaching the M1. We arrived home at 2.30am on Sunday morning. This is one to stay in the memory for ever.

Linda Crosby