



Witness of history at The British Museum

The British Museum is one of the most visited museums in the world, owing to its vast collection of arts and pieces of history from around the globe. Located in central London's Bloomsbury area, the 263 year old museum is overwhelming both for the beauty of its architecture and eclectic organisation.

On a visit last month, I discovered the British Museum in a very new form, as the first hand experience of the place is completely different than what I had seen in images or on videos.

Upon reaching the museum's gate from the underground Russell Square tube station, I could see the big triangular façade with inscribed murals of primitive people. A big British flag was fluttering on top of it.

The central courtyard, right after entering through the main gate, is itself a thing of mesmerising beauty. If the British Museum were a city, the courtyard would have been the park!

The round shaped courtyard has an off-white wall with its roof, covered with a spectacular bluish glass attached to a big crisscrossed metal structure. On the left side of the courtyard, there is an information desk. One can take up free flyers put beside the desk for the map, direction and other information about the museum.

From the central courtyard, a pair of spiral stairs go up through the central reading room, meeting at the very top, from where a single walkway takes visitors inside the museum.

As there are lots of objects in the museum (almost 8 million), it is prudent to decide, obviously based on individual tastes, as to what you can do without seeing, and what must not be missed! This is especially important since it is said that you need at least two whole days to just look around the things on display once.

Of the hundreds of things, what attracted me the most were the displays of The Mummy of Katebet, The Parthenon Sculptures, The Oxus Treasure, The Rosetta Stone, The Lewis Chessmen, The Portland Vase, The Cat Mummies, Colossal Granite Head of Amenhotep III, The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial Helmet, HoaHakananai'a - The Easter Island Statue, The Elgin Marbles, Aztec Double-Headed Serpent and The

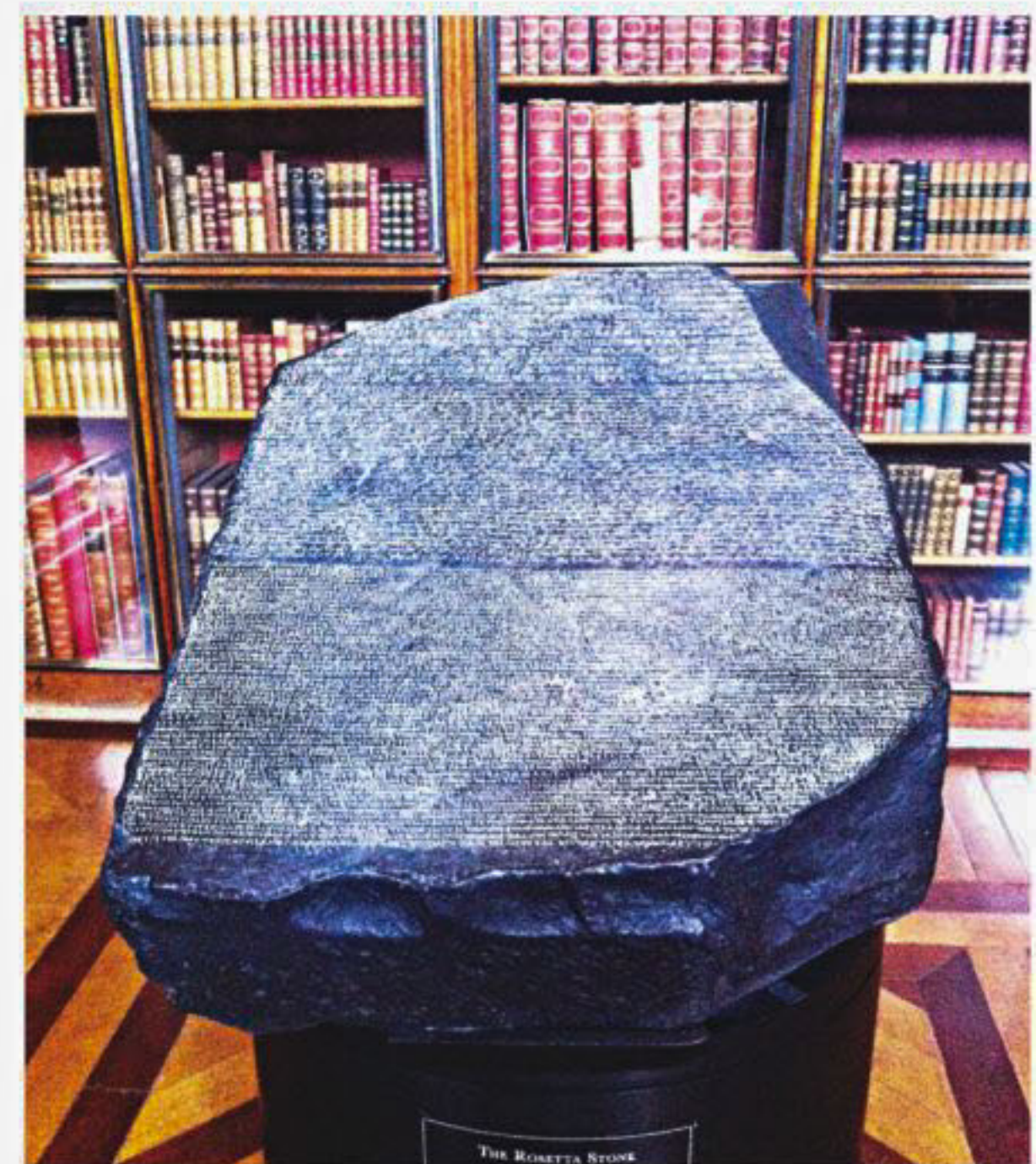


Vindolanda Tablets.

There is a common notice in the museum that things should not be touched or leaned on. But a few objects can be touched and photos can be taken with them. One such object is the Rosetta stone.



I was trying to read what was written on its big surface area but failed. The stone has a decree scripted on it in three different ancient languages which had been proclaimed by a teenage king in Egypt back in the 17th century.



As this stone is very famous among the children, it has been put on display on the ground floor of gallery four. It is also one of the selected objects in "A History of the World in 100 Objects".

On a random day at the museum, you might see groups of school guided by their teachers on a trip inside, people sketching the objects and parents sitting and chatting around. As the British Museum is no less famous than the Louvre in Paris, visitors from all around the world can be seen here. So if you are in London, paying a visit to the British Museum is a must as it is open every day, and allows free admission to all.

By Samiul Raijul
Photo: Samiul Raijul