

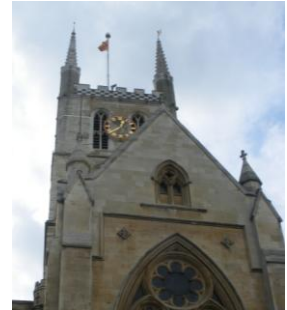
# Under-Floor Eating

Or a series of reports on eating places  
in the crypts of central London churches and other venues

Neil and Marion Richardson, went to the Refectory at Southwark Cathedral on London's Southbank. They were in search of what it had to offer to the busy person seeking a lunch in an unusual place. This is the 11th report on 12 such venues during 2011.

## 1. Ambience

As we arrived, the fire alarm went off and we all had to leave the building, including staff. We chatted to Victoria, a chef. It was a strange but nice ice-breaker. This venue is not under-floor, but we are running out of such places! We arrived at 12 noon and about 12 people were in the refectory. By 1pm, it was very busy. It is a pleasant space with a courtyard outside with French windows. Around the room are 21 etchings of **Creation and Fall** by Diana Green, complete with text from Genesis 1-3:13.

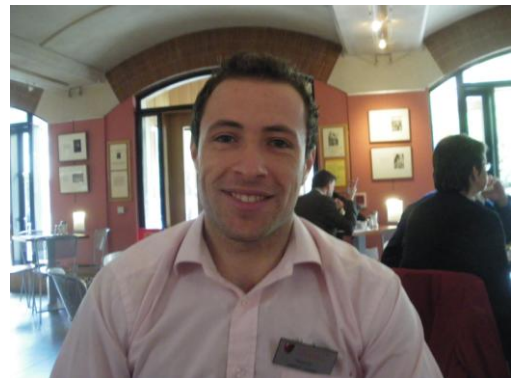


## 2. Welcome

We found a warm and genuine welcome, and I guess the fire alarm incident helped.

## 3. Service

We took soup first and the staff brought sandwiches to our table for us as we finished the soup, and the bowls were taken away quickly. Very good and attentive service was visible throughout. Marcio, the Manager, (pictured) was warm and friendly and came to sit with us to chat about the place.



## 4. Price

Tomato and Celery soup and Leek and Potato soup were £3.50. sandwiches of egg or prawn were £3.50 with sparkling water at £1.55. A Brownie was £2.25, Cafe Latte £2.25, Americano £2.05 and Earl Grey £1.95. A full English Breakfast came in at £9.

## 5. Comfort

Hard chairs, but plenty of space although there was a bit of an echo. It was really nice having the French windows open with the sun shining and a sense of the last hint of summer surrounding us.



## 6. Menu

No crisps! There were main dishes of Beef Casserole at £8 and stuffed Aubergines at £7.50 plus a wide variety of very good looking foods as well as sandwiches. There were daily fish or chicken specials at between £7-8 and a selection of baps all under £4.

## 7. Opening hours

Monday – Friday 8.30am to 6pm. Saturday and Sunday 9am – 6pm

## 8. Food quality

Our soups were very good indeed and easily as good as home made in the refectory. Our sandwiches were also excellent in taste and freshness. The Brownie was luxurious! Everything about the appearance and display of food was above-average.

## 9. Can we bring our own?

In the courtyard, yes! You can see the French windows of the refectory on the left.



## 10. Accessible?

From the main entrance it was easy. There were two wheel-chair customers eating during our visit. The refectory toilets are down steep steps but there are specially designated toilets for people with disabilities on the ground level nearby.

## 11. Value added?

Lots to think about.. We wandered through the Borough Market, adjacent, with a very busy set of stalls of all description, including lots of food on sale, some at top prices. Bring your shopping bag! Then there is the Cathedral itself which is a very old and

fascinating building, a former parish Church of St. Saviour, where John Harvard was baptised in 1607. You are very close to Cafe Fish, if you can get a mortgage from your bank. Just walking around is a history trip, with the Clink Prison, the Golden Hind, and everything along the Southbank of the river Thames.

## 12. Toilet quality

Men – small, just 2 urinals and one cubicle, although there are others in the Cathedral. The units were clean and acceptable.

Women – Oh dear! One cubicle was blocked with paper which seemed to have fallen from its mounting and gone into the bowl and all over the floor. And only one hand dryer was working.

## 13. How to get there?



**London Bridge station:** Jubilee and Northern (City Branch) lines

**Monument station:** District and Circle lines

**Bank Station:** Docklands Light Railway

17 - Archway to London Bridge

21 - Newington Green to Lewisham

35 - Shoreditch to Clapham Junction

40 - Aldgate Bus Station to Dulwich

43 - Friern Barnet Library to London Bridge

45 - Kings Cross to Streatham Hill

47 - Shoreditch to Catford

48 - Walthamstow Central to London Bridge

133 - Liverpool Street to Streatham

141 - Palmers Green to London Bridge

149 - Edmonton Green to London Bridge (24hrs)

381 - Peckham to Waterloo Station

521 - Waterloo Station to London Bridge (Mon-Fri, not evenings)

RV1 - Covent Garden to Tower Gateway