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Just 200 years ago, the British Museum opened its doors to the public. Then, a few hundred people visited the museum each year. Now, about 600,000 see it

Today, people come to the museum from all over the world, from every walk of life. Many of course are students.... And almost everybody visits the Egyptian rooms and the mummies.....

And few miss the Elgin Marbles.... It all started in 1753, when Sir Hans Sloane bequeathed his collection of antiquities, worth £50,000, to the Nation for £20,000. To raise it, the last public lottery was held in England and the British Museum was born.....

The Rosetta Stone is another favorite..... *- the stone that made it possible to decipher the writing of the ancient Egyptians* In 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, 2 1/2 million people visited the museum.....

Most people include Magna Charta in their rounds. It holds a fascination for everyone - especially Americans.....

That student is certainly making a day of it. Probably because the National Portrait Gallery is also celebrating an anniversary. It's a 100 years since it opened to the public..... One of the most popular pictures is Queen Elizabeth I..... (2).....

Hardly a visitor misses another Queen Elizabeth - Her Majesty the Queen in James Gunn's "Conversation piece at Royal Lodge, Windsor", completed in 1950.....

Many are attracted by the rather sinister features of another monarch - King Richard III.....

Nelson on his column overlooks the gallery. *Nelson's there too* ~~Nelson is there too~~ - with Lady Hamilton..... In 1850 there were 5300 visitors ~~to the gallery~~. In 1958 172,000 ~~visited the gallery~~..... And the numbers are still rising.....

~~last year 172,000~~

Last year 172,000 people visited the gallery.
In 100 years the number of visitors has shot up from 5,000 to 172,000 a year.