

London in 2016

Sightseeing, shopping and an alarm because of Germans

Finally our nearly five-year-waiting has been paid! On Monday evening I saw lots of pupils buying drinks and snacks in grocery stores for the long (10h!) trip by bus. So at 11pm we all were freaking excited and waited for the bus to start its engine. Sleep wasn't a thing for everyone. Could be really loud up in the double-decker coach. But who could blame them?

I was really happy to finally see something different than our little village. And of course learn the language more! Just in case you were wondering why Mr. Kuhli, Mrs. Wegener, Mrs. Sassenberg and Mrs. Kaske weren't there before the holidays, they went with us or we went with them. How you want to see it. So we drove and drove and drove... somewhere between 'Are we there yet?' and 'What time is it anyway?' we came to the passport control. It went surprisingly fast.

When we finally arrived in London, the mood started to really brighten up. We went through a park, oh dear, will we hate this park in the next days, and got to make our first impressions of England.

There were public bathrooms. There were people who needed to go there. There were teachers who were kind enough to pay for them and there was a bathroom 'bodyguard'. We had to wait long. A girl went to the disabled bathroom because it took so long. She wanted to flush the toilet but she accidentally pushed the alarm button. So we had to close our ears with our hands to mute the really loud sound. After everyone understood what had happened, we bursted into laughter. The 'bodyguard' could turn off the alarm after a few minutes. What a great start! Some walking and we had to mute the loud sound with our hands on our ears. When we finally understood what had happened, we all bursted into laughter again. The 'bodyguard' stopped the sound after he got back from the men's bathroom.

Some walking and then we got our travel cards and had our first ride with the Docklands Light Railway. Next stop was the Tower of London. We split up in 4 groups and could explore everything. Our 'personal travel guides', also known as our teachers, of course could tell us a lot about the history and the use of the Tower. It sure was very exciting but definitely more excited were the students to have their 'free time'. Some went sightseeing and others, of course, went straight to Oxford Street. Well, as far as they even got there. We first had to figure out how the tube works.

Even though we had learned at school how to use it, it was different to do it practically. But after you understood it and used it one to two times, you got the hang of it and you don't have to think a lot anymore.

We couldn't wait to meet our 'parents'. The families were so kind and did welcome us very well in their houses. After dinner and a shower, I think we nearly fell into our beds. It was a rough day!

The next day started with a breakfast of mostly cornflakes and toast in the families, they drove us to our bus and we went sightseeing with it. It wasn't one of the red buses, just our well known German bus. With our travel guide who spoke German and English (because some wanted it in German - what are you here for, though?). We saw Big Ben, Tower Bridge, the London Eye, Westminster Abbey and a lot more. Oh, and of course we went to Buckingham Palace to see the Changing of the Guards in 'real life'. And even the Queen was there! Well, somewhere in that building anyway.. The flag was up.

Then we were allowed to explore London on our own again. I don't have to say that most pupils went shopping, do I? But even if you go shopping, you learn more about the people and the language. I am not kidding! We met really interesting people.

We had to go back. Our group was perfect on time. But an escalator to a station wasn't available. So we panicked. We searched for an other station that was near but we couldn't find one. We went back and finally the escalator was usable again. We were in a hurry. Couldn't even contact our teachers because there was no signal down there. We were late for the boat tour on the Thames. They couldn't go without any missing students so everyone had to wait for us.. But on the bright sight, we could go on the next boat (Mrs Wegener had planned everything) which was even bigger. We went through this park for like the 4th time, went to the bus and got collected by our 'families'. After just 2 nights at our families, we already had to pack our things and say goodbye.

On the 3rd day, we could decide which museum we wanted to go to. Some (including me) wanted to go to the British Museum. Most wanted to go to the Natural History Museum. So we split up. The ones that wanted to go on the London Eye first went there and then got to the Natural History Museum. The British Museum group went there by bus. Yeah, you got it right. One of the red London Buses. But it wasn't that great at all. The traffic was terrible and we had to wait so long.

The museum was even bigger than expected. It's really huge and impressive! On our last day we were allowed to be on our own too after the museum. And even though I forgot my ticket and a friend's ticket got stolen by an innocent-looking woman, it was a nice last day. The tickets weren't expensive and the security man even helped us to purchase and print those.

The last time through the park!

We were all really tired but we didn't want it to end.

Even the weather in England was better than at home. Can you imagine that?

So there are a lot of things I learned on this trip.

- British people are really nice. Even thieves.
- Protect your belongings everywhere and don't forget them!
- You would rather walk for 20 miles in London than go back to Augustdorf.
- You don't have to be ashamed of your English. Just try it. And if you don't know a word, just explain it.
- British people are really polite. You hear „thank you“ and „you are welcome“ in every second sentence.
- The tube is excellent. It's so fast and easy and doesn't have the traffic that's above it.
- 3 days is too bloody short for a city like London.
- I will definitely want to go there again one day.

(written by Jasmin Ewert, 9a)