

## Castles, Cathedrals and the Most Beautiful Coastline

Our study trip to South England started on Sunday 8/9/2019. At 7 pm sharp our coach left from the *HUK-Parkplatz* and hit the road for Calais where we arrived fourteen hours later. The tall fences around the ferry port and the tense atmosphere when going through the UK border control were somewhat creepy, but but right after we boarded the ship the sun came out and we were leaving Calais in a really beautiful sunset. The first thing we saw when we approached Dover were the famous white cliffs. Unfortunately a light drizzle had started, which did not stop when we arrived at our first stop in Britain: Canterbury.

There we left our luggage at the picturesque youth hostel, before our teachers gave us a tour through the town centre. In the evening we attended the Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral, one of the most important churches in the UK. We were given seats right next to the boys' choir and at the very beginning our "group from the St. Mary School in Regensburg" was given a warm welcome. The atmosphere at the service was awe inspiring. The mixture of choir songs, the spirituality of the prayers and the spectacular gothic architecture was gorgeous.

The next morning was sunny and we left for Windsor Castle, one of the official residences of the Royal Family, where the wedding of Harry and Meghan took place last year. After going through an airport-like security check, we were given audio guides to explore the buildings and the gardens on our own. In the afternoon Mr Gollwitzer lead us through the streets of Windsor towards Eton College, probably the most widely known (and most expensive) public school in England, which e.g. Prince William and Prince Harry had attended when they were boys. In the evening we arrived in Bath where we stayed at the local youth hostel on Bathwick Hill.

The next morning we hiked down the hill towards the town centre in the rain. There we were given a guided tour around town towards the main sights: Pultney Bridge, the Circus and the Royal Crescent. Adrian, our guide, was a really nice person. The tour was never boring, mainly because Adrian always made sure that everyone in the group understood what he wanted to get across. When we finished the tour at the Roman Baths we had learned to love this charming town that he was so enthusiastic about.

In the afternoon we exchanged Adrian for audioguides and visited the Roman Baths, the only hot springs in England and the reason why this town was actually founded. Some of us even tasted some of the water there that is supposed to cure you from literally ANY kind of illness. It was warm and had a foul aftertaste. Yuk! The fish n chips dinner at the West Gate pub was so much better. The staff was super friendly and we agreed; Here you get the best fish n chips in the world (Well, for some of us it were the first ever...). The day ended for many of us on large meadow across the street from our hostel, when we watched the sun set over the roofs of Bath. So romantic.

The next day saw us on the road to Cornwall. On the way we stopped at Exeter for a lunch break in the Cathedral Close. In the late afternoon we finally arrived at Mevagissey, a small harbouring village in Cornwall. We only stayed for an hour and strolled around the harbour, some of us visited the small aquarium, some of us had Cornish ice cream and we all enjoyed the vibes of this very special place. For many of us Mevagissey was one of the highlights of the whole trip.

Still dazzled, we drove on to Boswinger, a tiny village in the middle of nowhere, where we had the local hostel entirely for ourselves for the next two nights. Finding a place to park the coach proved difficult, in the end the drivers were permitted to leave it in a farmyard.

Boswinger was special for various reasons. One was that the whole group cooked dinner together. We had gone grocery shopping in a supermarket on the way and at the hostel some of us cut vegetables, some set the table, some helped Mrs Bosch (Evening 1: Italian dinner with lottttttttttts of noodles) or Mr Gollwitzer (Evening 2: Indian dinner) cook the meals, some cleared the table and ones left over had to do the dishes (which was quite funny, especially for those standing around, watching, giving advice... ☺) The other great thing was Hemmick Beach, which was only a short walk away. We had the entire beach to ourselves, the cliffs, the sand and the quiet rhythm of the waves. Do you have any idea what it is like when the sun sets there? AWWWWESOME.

The next day was the physically most exhausting one as we were hiking along the coastpath from Boscastle towards the remnants of King Arthur's castle at Tintagel. The sun was shining, the scenery was spectacular and the view from the top of the cliffs onto the deep blue sea was amazing. Another highlight. At Tintagel village many of us rewarded ourselves with Cornish pastry from the Cornish Bakery. On the way back to the hostel we visited the *Eden Project* which consists of two huge, stylish greenhouses, the so-called bioms, which simulate a Mediterranean and a rainforest environment.

Boscastle was as far west as our journey would take us. For early next morning we started our return trip to Regensburg. We were on the road until the afternoon when stopped at the world famous prehistoric monument Stonehenge, which actually basically just consists of two rings of huge stones. Despite the crowds of visitors from all over the world looking at the monument from quite a distance, the place had a certain spiritual quality. Maybe because it made us think of *Game of Thrones*.

The sun was about to set when we finally arrived in Brighton at our last place to stay: a former seaside hotel turned into a hostel right next to Palace Pier and the beaches. The next morning had us on the road again until we finally arrived at the *HUK-Parkplatz* in the early morning hours of 16/9/2019.

I think I can speak for our whole group when saying that it was such a cool study trip that none of us will ever forget.

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