

England -June 12-21, 2018

The first day started off early, I got up at 6:00 and had to be at the airport by 7:00. Once the Literary EF tour Jackson High school students and staff had their tickets at the airport our group went to wait for our airplane and had to wait 3 hours because our plane did not take off until 10:00. Once it was time for us to board the first plane everyone gathered their belongings to start an amazing journey. The first plane flew out from Akron Canton airport and the destination was Detroit. This was the shortest flight out of all the flights it took only about an hour and a half. When we boarded the plane I got a window seat and my mom got a seat next to me. It was beautiful flying over the land and then transitioning to over the lake. It was not too cloudy so you could see a lot when we were over the lake you could see the different islands and truly see how large is Lake Erie.

We landed at Detroit around 10:30. When exploring the Detroit airport our group came across a rainbow lighted tunnel that changes color according to the music. This seemed to intrigue many of my colleagues and they thought it was so cool. Eventually, we made our way to the place we needed to wait to board the plane. After waiting a while I became bored and began to draw a picture of a horse. Later we found out our flight has been delayed for about an extra hour we were worried we would not have enough time to board our flight on our layover in Paris. After waiting for a long time the plane did show up and we boarded for the longest flight that lasted about 8 hours. I got a window seat again and it was also by my mom again which was nice because I didn't need to worry about who I may get stuck sitting by. Most of the time on the plane I spent looking out of the window and the beautiful scenery below but when we began to

travel higher the clouds became larger. I remember looking out of the window and thinking I was in a whole new world just made of clouds. The different clouds in my mind resembled different landmarks depending on their texture and shape. I was imagining vast landscapes with a raging river cutting its way through a valley of clouds that was filled with soft white wispy trees and brush. I also spent a large amount of time working on my drawing which was of a horse as well as watching one movie which was the Incredibles. Many members of our group were able to get some sleep on the plane, but as I tried and I simply couldn't.

When we arrived in Paris we were running and going through security as fast as possible to make sure we had enough time to catch our next flight. But luckily we did have enough time and we had just a few extra minutes to explore the airport. So in this time I used to discover different shops where I started a small tradition of collecting keychains as a small memorabilia for each place on the trip. In Paris, I got a Eiffel Tower keychain with a super cute red with white polka dotted shopping bag charm, as well as, a red and silver high heel and a small tag that said Paris. When we boarded our flight to Manchester in England many of my peers were exhausted, but I was so excited I just couldn't be tired! That flight lasted about 1 and half hours and I did not have a window seat sadly, but I still sat by my mom. This one was interesting because the people on the plane were speaking bilingual they would say something in French and then say the same thing they just said in French and translated it into English.

When we finally arrived in Manchester there was no time to rest although most kids wanted to. We hit the ground running we went through immigration and gathered our luggage. Once everyone was gathered and organized we met our spectacular tour guide Tracy who welcomed us to England with open arms and instantly made us feel right at home. We were the

second group to arrive in England so because we were early we were bussed to Manchester and got to just have a little extra bonus time. First we went to Manchester Art Museum and were able to experience some of the great art of England. The Jackson group split into two groups one who wanted to go to Arndale Mall and the other group wanted to go to the Corn Exchange. The group I chose was the group going to the Arndale Mall. This group include My mom, Mrs. Williams, Kayla Smith, and a handful of other students. We were supposed to find a place to eat so our group came across an Italian restaurant and everyone in our group was asked if they wanted to eat there and most of the student wanted to just brake off in smaller groups and go off independently. So Mom, Mrs. Williams, Kayla and I were the only ones who went to the restaurant. This was my first experience of the differences between American English and UK English. I asked for a Sprite and she said they didn't have it but had lemonade. When it came it was sparkling water with lemon juice and tasted very much like Sprite but not like American Lemonade. After that we went shopping first to a bookshop, then to a bath bomb store called Lush and lastly to a Disney store!

After that our groups meet up and headed back to our first hotel. When we arrived at the hotel, I was a little scared because I am used to higher end hotels and this was not a high end hotel there was only one small elevator and we had to carry our luggage up 2 floors. Me and my mom roomed together the whole trip and it was nice not have to share a room with anyone else because I could actually get sleep many of the other students on the trip were loud and rowdy all night. One of the worst things about this hotel is we had the disability room so the shower had no enclosure so water got all over the bathroom each time we showered. This was also the first time

we had to use our key to turn on the lights in the room. If you took out the key the lights would go off. We settled in this hotel for two days.

The third day was quite an interesting day this was the first day we were truly introduced to our bus driver Chris and his amazing abilities! The first stop on the tour was Wordsworth's home which was located on a hill and the path that led up to that hill was narrow, steep and riddled with cones. Though it may seem extremely difficult just to drive up this hill in a normal car our driver Chris managed to drive up this hill not only in a massive bus, but in a massive bus backwards! 🤪 It was nothing short of unbelievable and from that moment on Chris was known as the bus driver god to our tour group as we chanted his name.

Once we exited the bus we were led to the Wordsworth home. It was an amazing seeing the history in the old house and how people used to live. The craziest thing to me was seeing how small the bedrooms were the one bedroom looked like it could be a closet. Another interesting fact I learned is in order to keep flies and midges out people would make small wreaths out of lavender and hang them on there windows. Outside the house there was a small garden and a small summer home as well. After we explored the Wordsworth house we moved on to a spectacular garden with a shimmering stream and flourishing plant life with gorgeous stone manceury. Once we were done exploring the garden our group set of on an adventure through the coffin trail which led to the only church in the area in the olden days so when someone died this was the trail that was traveled to get the deceased to the church there we stone slabs all around this trial to rest the coffee on when brakes were needed. It took our group a little over an hour to venture this breathtaking trail with exquisite views that were so dazzling they didn't look real it felt like we were traveling through a whole new world. It reminded me of a

painting by an artist with talents otherwise unheard of with the most meticulous details in every small matter to create the large beautiful masterpiece.

After walking the coffin trail we arrived in Grasmere where we explored St. Oswald's church as well as found an off the beaten path place to eat lunch. We ate lunch at the Wordsworth hotel because we asked a local where we could find a nice and quiet place to dine. No one else from our group came in the hotel and it was nice getting some peace and quiet from the rest of group. But the hotel in the restaurant was very nice there were large windows all around and you could see so many beautiful sights. After our time was up in Grasmere we hopped on the coach and headed off to the Lake District where we would learn about Beatrix Potter the children's author. I went into the store and looked and bought some merchandise and then also found a super cute keychain for the Lake District at another small store and from that moment forward decided I would collect a keychain for the different sights along my journey. Soon Kayla needed to use the restroom so we were frantically looking for one and couldn't find one. Until we finally found one but you needed to pay to go inside and it needed to be exact change which was a little hard to figure out because we were still learning the currency. Kayla found the change and went in and a few seconds later a lady walked out and I learned there was a sensor on the other side, so I took my wallet and waved it on the other side and the doors opened so we found a way around using the restroom. After that it was time to head back to the coach to go to the next hotel.

On the fourth day we set off to explore Lancashire where the Bronte sisters' home was located. Their gardens were ravishing with vivid and colorful flowers outside their house. It was amazing when exploring their house inside it was like going through a time machine and you could feel the creativity in the house. My favorite room was the art room and I thought it was so

cool that they dedicated a whole room to art. The girls drawings were amazing. `The brother was also an artist and at the end of the tour they showed a picture he painted of the three sisters, but it looked like there was ghostly image behind them which one of the guides explained he painted them first and planned on adding himself in later standing behind them but gave up for some reason and decided to not finishing himself.

We then went to a gorgeous York Minster Abbey with the most enchanting stained glass windows and the masonry left me speechless. There was one room that had diversified faces stretching all around the room. Some were beautiful and angelic, others were hideous and distorted. The guide said the stone masons were given the opportunity to put their own stamp on the masterpiece using the faces. Our last stop was in the cellar of the church which contained the grave sight of a saint and there have been healing miracles that have taken place there. Many people are buried in the churches in England.

Once our tour of York Minster Abbey was finished we took no time to wait and were told not to look or wait in the gift shop and were rushed though to our tour of Yorkshire tour guide Dave. It was clear we didn't have much time so we had to book it but I had noticed that Kayla was not with our group, so I let my mom know and she let Mrs.Germano know. So my mom was sent back to find Kayla and I was forced to move on with the rest of the group. They eventually caught up and lucky didn't miss too much. We were set free to go to lunch and then after lunch we met up with our group and continued on our tour. We walked around seeing some small yet interesting sights we learned what they call an alleyway which was a snickleway. As we walked down the snickleway Dave told us about how he discovered a secret hermits house that has been hidden and saw "The Shop That Must Not Be Named". We also saw a small what once was a

secret Catholic Chapel Margaret of Clithrow who was Catholic in a time in which it was forbidden and would hide priest in a secret panel in her home. Unfortunately though one day one of her neighbors sold her out and she was caught but refused to talk in court it was the only way to save her family from being torched. So she was sentenced to death but not in the typical way for her “crime” which would be being burned alive. But because she didn't talk she was sentenced to a more gruesome death of being boarded. Which means she was taken to a bridge and had a board put over her body and have stones slowly put on the board over time until she was flattened and killed.

Our last stop was Clifford's tower which had a sad and dark history where many people died yet it was still interesting to see everything especially when you could walk up the ancient narrow winding uneven stairway to the top of the tower where you could see the tiny world below.

On Day 5 at the hotel and we watch tv and noticed there was BSL(British Sign Language) interpreter which I thought was cool because I am learning ASL(American Sign Language). Stratford upon Avon was our next adventure. Fun fact” avon” means river, so the River avon means “river river”. This was the birthplace of Shakespeare and where Anne Hathaway's house was located. It was so fun getting to walk through this little historical town we found this darling little place to eat lunch called Orangemabel. The Orangemabel was a quiet little tea restaurant with class and charm. I ordered a unicorn hot chocolate and pancakes and topped it off with a mermaid sundae for dessert. We also took a trip to St Michael's church which was where Shakespeare was buried and it was so old and beautiful.

When we set off to go to Anne Hathaway's house and Chris our amazing bus driver even made an impossible bus parking possible. The gardens were simply divine with a flower of every color. We waited in line for a small while before we were allowed to enter Anne Hathaway's house. It was again I was transported back to a simpler but more dramatic time of Shakespeare. The first room we arrived in was the kitchen and a guide explained how much bigger the kitchen is now than when it was originally built. She explained when Anne was about 18 that her brother made an upgrade or add on to the kitchen and added a cauldron looking thing and an oven. You could kind of tell because on the extension there was a different color brick. There were also windows in the kitchen which we also learned were added later because apparently to have glass or windows in your home was only for the super rich back then. I also learned on November 27, 1582 Anne and William became married when she was 26 and he was 18. We then ventured to the upstairs of Anne's home. The roof was very low and it looked like it was made for short people yet it probably was because people were shorter back then. The floors were made of wooden planks and you could actually see through the cracks to the floor below. There were many interesting artifacts such as beds, dolls, books, tableware and many other things.

In Oxford for day 6, we started at the Ashmolean Museum which contained many intriguing artifacts from a rainbow of different cultures and times. There were many pieces of art in different forms such as different musical instruments to amazing vintage paintings on antiques furniture. Our tour group showed up a bit early so we had a bit of time to go off exploring but we really didn't stray too far from our meeting place as others did we just stayed at the meeting place and admired the exquisite architecture around us. Once it was time for our

Oxford tour we meet up with our tour guide and saw many amazing sights. Our first stop was getting a glance at a prestigious library for the students of Oxford and across from the library were amazing statues of past people of importance for Oxford. Each was individual and there were even ghost stories that on halloween they come to life. As we continued our voyage we had the honor to see a round building in the heart of the Oxford campus. This round building was for graduations and was a study for only the highest of the Oxford students.

We were headed to New College which is a college in Oxford when we saw some people walking in weird robe like costumes. We were explained that those were the professors and it is a sign of honour to wear those robes. As we approached New College you could truly feel the spirit of the place it was so old and mesmerising. When we first stepped in to New College some people stood on the grass from our group but were quickly corrected and a small sign was pointed out that stated stay off the grass. From then on we saw an amazing church with astonishing art and what I WAS QUITE ECSTATIC ABOUT the Harry Potter courtyard. We got to see the place where many scenes of films were filmed. Plus we got to see the famous Harry Potter tree. Then we were dismissed from the guided tour and explored on our own. We decided to go up and look over Oxford on top of steeple from St Mary's Church in the center of Oxford.

The Roman baths on day seven were beautiful and mystifying with an added bonus of a rich history. They were built when the great Roman Empire invaded England, so they were extremely old. The water was said to have mysterious powers that could heal you so many nobles paid a pretty penny to travel there to bath in the waters. The water in the bathes was beautiful shimmering aqua turquoise color, but I would NOT trust drinking it though that was an option at the end of the tour. The smell of the water was awful.

The the rest of that day was primarily travel to London but even though we were only on the bus we still saw some pretty cool sights. One of my favs was Stonehenge. After we arrived in London we were granted the opportunity to look around and saw many breathtaking views like sunsets over the river the London Eye. We saw cute little shops and some amazing buildings. I even saw the TV station they primary used in England and learned Big Ben is no longer that name because it was changed to Queen Elizabeth's Tower and was under construction so we could not see it all too well.

On day 2 of London, we got to see the world renowned Globe Theater! I loved it so much and again it was like traveling through a time machine and seeing how theater was displayed during Shakespeare time. The concept of a sheltered outdoor theater was unique to what we are used to in our modern society. After touring the actual Globe Theater we saw the museum for the Globe Theater. In the museum there was a mini model side verison of the globe and I thought that was so cool. I was inspired that maybe one day, I could make a mini globe theatre myself. The next thing our tour group did was go on a cool bus tour of London and we got to have a quick glance at Buckingham palace and the Westminster Abbey. Sadly this bus was not AC and we roasted. For dinner we went to a fish and chip shop and were crammed into a tiny room with no air conditioning. I was trapped with nowhere to go and had a mini panic attack. I was granted a table downstairs were it was much more roomy here I got to talk to Tacey our tour guide to find out she was an Actress and Playwright. I wish I would have known this sooner to ask her many more questions.

At last it was time for what I was waiting for, we got to see Wicked at West End Theater which is like our Broadway. I have seen Wicked before but I do think in London they had better stage set and design. I loved them trying to cover up their English Accents.

We saw Windsor Castle on our last day and it was absolutely gorgeous and had so much charm. We also were in Windsor at the same time the queen was there. We knew this because her flag was flying high. In Windsor we were able to see one of the really cool guards that looked like they were wearing a band costume for the 80's and the church that the most recent royal wedding was in, but my favorite part of Windsor was seeing the inside with the stunning chandeliers to the gold detailing and the vibrant colors chosen to decorate. There are absolutely no words that fit to describe how mesmerizing Windsor was it was like you were in a fairytale. Windsor was one high security place because the walls around it has small fragments of sharp rocks embedded into the wall so if an intruder tries to break in and climb the wall their hands would bleed and they would have no way to defend themselves. In the center of Windsor is the round tower where all the secrets are held.

One of the last things we did in England was go on a super cool Harry Potter tour which consisted of seeing lots of cool sights from the different movies. The locations we saw were Westminster (Spiral Stairs), Millennium Bridge (It blew up in the movie), and lastly platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$.

The last day we flew out of England. I got the most painful migraine halfway home, but in between flights. I was not sure if I could get back on the plane however, I won a photo contest, got my medicine, and rested with my eyes shut. When our last flight came I was a less miserable and was able to board making it home alive. This experience opened my eyes to

different cultures, literature, art forms, fashion, language (Yes they speak different English) and history.

