

## All Roads Lead to Rome: Hadrian's Wall the United Kingdom

This past March, ten intrepid globetrotting scholars embarked on a journey to the United Kingdom where they walked in the path of the Roman centurion, discovered the strong influence of Romanization and Celtic heritage on American and modern British culture, strengthened their faith in the community of Catholics in Edinburgh, and marveled at the natural beauty woven by God and man in the stunning vistas, geographical formations, and archaeological remains as they hiked along the famed Hadrian's Wall in Scotland. In their own words, here is their story:

At a glance, the hustle and bustle of London might emulate that of New York City in the U.S., but its deep roots spanned to before even the Romans. In London, buildings from various architectural eras throughout time fit together like unique puzzle pieces that express the beauty of the city. The amount of history that city holds is beyond comprehension. We enjoyed seeing how much its architecture differed from that of the United States as it is filled with grandiose chapels and meeting places. St. Paul's Cathedral stood in stark contrast to the more modern buildings of the city, giving the city an older feel as we traversed its roads on foot. The iconic double decker busses were an enticing alternative to walking the city, but our journey through London at a walking pace allowed us to truly take in the city. By the end of our stay in London, we could navigate our way through the city by using only the buildings to guide us.



We visited many sites around the city. The Imperial War Museum was an interesting and interactive historic site with an actual tank among the featured displays. Borough Market was an amazing adventure into the culinary diversity of London. We went there for lunch every day to sample award-winning fish and chips, Jamaican street food, and a local cheese artisan and butcher. Andrew Matheson raved that their brisket was better than Texas' brisket. Having been born in Houston, Andrew would know his brisket!

The Tower of London offered many sights to see within the vast castle, featuring a dungeon, torturing chamber, and the crown jewels. The prison's torture equipment and doors, covered with carvings from prisoners, were still visible after hundreds of years. Mary Queen of Scots was one of the most famous residents that was imprisoned and executed there. In the White Tower, we saw knights in armor and horses. We were able to see firsthand the setting for the famous story of Richard III, his nephews, and his rise to power.



After lessons steeped in the history of the English Renaissance, we tried our hand at acting in the Globe Theatre. We took part of an acting class to understand power dynamics on stage. One technique we learned was called spatial awareness, which basically means that in order to produce a certain emotion or effect while

acting, a certain “space range” must be utilized. For example, to imitate someone that is angry, the actor would measure the space and take up space according to the level of emotion that they wished to express. So, on a scale from one to ten, that anger might be a seven, therefore, the actor would be more territorial and occupy more space to complement that degree of emotion. We also took a tour of the Globe and learned its history and watched a rehearsal of the plays. It was rewarding to see something in person that Mr. Williams taught us about in English I during our freshman year.

Westminster Abbey immersed us in a world of Kings and Queens. Not only is it the place of coronation and marriage, but it is also a cemetery used for hundreds of years. The corpses of Kings and Queens reside inside the church buried under the flooring, as well as scientific and literary geniuses Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens, and Geoffrey Chaucer. Hank was in awe as he visited Newton’s grave!



Leaving the hustle and bustle of London, we headed to Bath and Stonehenge. The whole group had been excited to learn about Stonehenge. To quote Marco, “it rocked.” Our tour guide for this trip was very informative and told us about the rituals that the creators of Stonehenge may have used the site for. Stonehenge was surreal to see and chills ran down our spines from the first glance. It is such an iconic symbol around the world, marked by its mystery. Each rock weighs a couple tons and would be absurdly heavy to lift. It isn’t impossible, but given that creators of Stonehenge used primitive resources to execute the task really made us wonder how they could accomplish such a monumental feat. However, even with all of us putting our minds to it, we couldn’t crack the mystery this visit. We next departed for the town of Bath, named for the Roman bathhouse established there. Bath has a small town vibe compared to size and scope of London. However, just as in London, we enjoyed seeing the ancient history intermingle with the intense modernization of the now tourist-filled city of Bath. Inside the Roman baths, the spring that filled the pool over a thousand years ago still runs warm today, which is still rumored to have unearthly healing powers.



Our next stop would take us further down the paths of the Romans as they established themselves in the United Kingdom. We trained to the town of Chollerford, where we would start our multi-day hike of Hadrian’s Wall, which stretches across the country, separating the Roman south from the Caledonian North. This was easily the highlight of the trip for many of us. Even though Hank lost his phone, slipped, and got all his clothes muddy, he still exited with a smile: “great experience!” Having the opportunity to witness the beautiful views and be a part of the endless history that comes with Hadrian’s Wall was a fantastic opportunity and not many visitors to the United Kingdom experience.

Everything from the breathtaking views of lakes, cliffs, and gorgeous countryside to the sheep, which would look at us with their black beady eyes and then gallop away, recalled the beauty and splendor of God’s creation. At the same time, we passed remains of the wall, forts, museums, and an old Roman temple dedicated to Minerva,



learning about the Romans' long process in building the wall and experiencing some of the strides it took to create this massive historical landmark.



Our last stop was Edinburgh, Scotland. There, the bagpipes played, the hills rolled, and the kilts flaunted. While we were still in the United Kingdom, there was a nationalistic pride and community imbued within the people that was not as prevalent in London. Roaming the Royal Mile, the main thoroughfare, our soundtrack was the Scottish native instrument. When we went to mass at the local Catholic Church, we were greeted and welcomed as brothers in faith. The priest there even recognized our school! As for the city itself, Edinburgh Castle was grandiose and towered over the main views. It was a remarkable historic site, where we were able to see the Scottish crown jewels, various military exhibits, and an unbeatable view of the city from its high perch. At night, we adventured underground into the tunnels underneath the city as we learned Edinburgh's history with a touch of spookiness. At the other end of the city, Holyrood Palace boasted pristine gardens, elegant rooms, and a history that came with every staircase, painting, and room. The whole of it was steeped in memory and legend, the like of Westminster Abbey.

Returning home to Washington DC, we departed with the memories and knowledge of our adventures and an appreciation for how not only our studies echoed in each memorial and museum we visited, but also Western culture as we saw echoes of our own society each day. It was an unforgettable trip with unforgettable friends and mentors.



*Those interested in applying for Global Scholars 2019-2020 should submit their applications to Ms. Hatmaker by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.*