

Great Britain Trip
June 29 – July 20, 2016
Neutrino 2016

Wednesday, July 29

Finish packing in the morning. Catch the van at the Marriott at 12:30. Get to airport in plenty of time. Eat lunch there. Fly to Washington, DC. Plane to London is two hours late in taking off making many people miss their connections.

Thursday, July 30

Arrive at Heathrow about 8:00 local time. It takes two hours to go through passport control. Get "oyster" cards for the underground. Catch the train to Earl's court and walk a few blocks to the hotel following the "blue dot." Leave luggage and get lunch at a patisserie. Walk to Kensington Garden and see Kensington Palace from the outside. Walk through the gardens and have an ice cream. Walk to hotel, get room key (small room), and sleep until 10:00. Have a beer/wine and nachos in the lobby, get our electronics set for local time, and go to bed.

Friday, July 1

Sleep in. Get good night's sleep even after sleeping all of yesterday afternoon. After breakfast in the hotel, head for the British Museum and hit the highlights before lunch: the Egyptian statues, the Elgin marbles, and the Syrian gates. Have lunch in the museum café and then back upstairs. Roman mosaics on the stairs and mummies up there. A bathroom break takes us back downstairs again where we see the Mexican collection (Aztec and Mayan sculptures including lintels from structures from Yaxchilan and copies of the stelae from Copan) and the North American collection. They also had a copy of a Mixtec codex, the Codex Zouche-Nuttall. The original is in the museum's collection but not on display. Didn't know the Mixtec's had them. Back upstairs for various "hordes" and a very early carved chess set. Lucky it was Friday and the museum was open late because we stayed until 6:30. Have a drink at the Museum Tavern across the street. Go to a Levant restaurant on the way to the subway station. Get lost by a couple of blocks after dinner. Wanted to walk to Piccadilly Circus. Get to a subway station when it starts to rain. Sub home and watch Wales beat Belgium 3-1 in the European championship.

Can't believe how "bready" things are here even for me. At lunch, the pizza crust was very thick (Jan had soup and a salad) and, at dinner, the baklava had a very thick top layer and no phyllo dough. Have you ever heard of bready baklava?

Saturday, July 2



After a late breakfast we head to Westminster and take the Lonely Planet walk. Start the trip on the subway going the wrong way, but we get straightened out in a station. Walk out of the subway station into an anti-Brexit protest. Go across the bridge for a view of Big Ben and Parliament. Then

head into Westminster Abbey. Spend until 4:30 in the Abbey following the audiotour (with lots of other people). See graves of Darwin, Newton, Maxwell, etc. in naive, Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots, Poet's corner with Chaucer, etc. Go to the Cloister and the gift shop. Beautiful ceiling in the back to the choir.

Outside again and start following the Lonely Planet tour looking for dinner. Pubs full and no restaurants. Go through St. James's Park and end up at Buckingham Palace. Look for perfect picture. (You can't get up to the guards anymore. The area is fenced off.) Go to Queen Victoria's statue. Hear people at the fence scream. Then the rain hits. Stand under the umbrella to the leeward side of Queen Victoria, but still get soaked. Rain finally stops and we resume our walk. Come to a square with Georgian architecture (what is that?) and then on to Piccadilly Circus. Finally find an Italian restaurant. Jan has risotto and I have tortellini. (I would say it was undercooked but what do I know?) Walk to Piccadilly Circus and see the traffic congestion along with the theater ticket offices. Walk back toward underground. Find the Red Lion pub and have beer/wine. See part of the Germany/Italy soccer game. Leave in second half with it tied 1-1. Return home without problems. See Germany win on penalty kicks in room when we get back.

Sunday, July 3

Quick breakfast and take Jan to church (we think service starts at 10:00 and we were late, but actually it starts at 10:30 and we were early!). Randy walks in park and journals during service. Very nice gardens (seems to be the rule everywhere!).

Head for National Gallery. Impressionists (post-Impressionist gallery closed), 18th century Italian, Rembrandts and Da Vinci's. (There was, in addition to a painting, a very nice pencil "cartoon" as a study for a later drawing.) Surprised to see Raphael landscapes and Titian painting like Raphael (actually made while he was a student of Raphael's).

Head back to hotel, change, register for the conference, and go to the reception. Drinks and very little food. Go to dinner with Sharon and Maury. Steve and Robin Kettell sit at the table next to us but we don't get to talk to them.

Monday, July 4

Conference begins. Jan goes to Victoria and Albert Museum (museum of interior design). Meet for a drink at conference center. Eat dinner at a Lebanese place with Sharon, Maury, and their Brazilian friend.

Tuesday, July 5



P&G goes over 85 today and we sell. Randy goes to conference. Jan and Sharon go to the Kensington Palace. Meet at hotel and go to the Canada House for reception/drinks. Go with Steve and Robin Kittel and others of dinner in Covent Garden district. Get home late.

Wednesday, July 6



Randy goes to conference in the morning. Takes lunch from breakfast and eats in Kensington Park. Then subs to St. Paul's Cathedral. Subs are crowded and cathedral is also crowded but enjoyable. Huge dome at center with many mosaics covering everything (almost like a Russian orthodox church). He subs back and does wash.

Jan goes to Harrods with Sharon and then goes to "low tea." She comes home and we go to an Italian restaurant (good food, bad service). Come home, watch Wales lose to Portugal, and Jan does wash.

Thursday, July 7



Jan rests in the morning while Randy reads some papers. About noon we head for the Tate Modern Museum and see a big Georgia O'Keefe exhibit. Eat lunch at the museum before going into the exhibit.



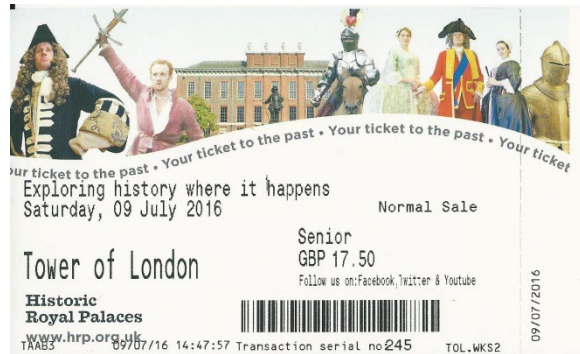
After the exhibit, take a river boat to Greenwich. Meet Hank and Toni Sobel on the dock. Get to Greenwich and find a pub for a beer. Actually crash a T2K party there. At 6:30, go to the Maritime

Museum and have sparkling wine, then hors d'oeuvres, then dinner all standing. Finish dinner and take subway home.

Friday, July 8

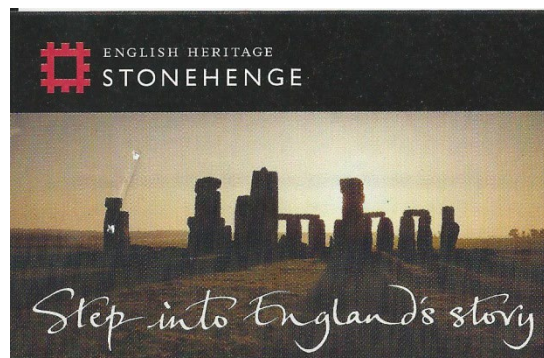
Conference continues for Randy. Jan stays in room for the morning and then she goes to a high tea with Janet MacDonald, Cynthia Albright, and Toni Sobel. Jan has tea and dry gluten-free scones. When we get back together we go to Pret a Manger at the Earl's Court subway station.

Saturday, July 9



Randy finishes conference at lunch break skipping the last session. Jan stays back and packs. Eat again at Pret a Manger and head for the Tower of London. Spend the afternoon there first taking an enjoyable Beefeater's tour and then walking the castle walls. Go through the first palace area at the end. Try to get into the gift shop in the castle but it was closing. We go to the gift shop outside the walls which stays open later and has everything the inside one has (we are assured). Then we have a drink at a café just outside the walls on the Thames. We then walk across the Tower Bridge and have dinner on the other side. "Tube" back to the hotel. Randy is caught without enough money on his oyster card and has to figure out to put a coin amount on the card. Finally figures that out and off we go. Pack as much as we can and go to bed.

Sunday, July 10



Jan decides not to go to church in the morning and we sleep until 8:15. Get dressed, have breakfast, finish packing, map the roads for the day, check out, taxi to Europcar, and get rental by 11:30. Drive back almost by our hotel and then to Stonehenge (with only one wrong turn). Google maps is wonderful in that you can map multiple stops now. Yeah! Get to Stonehenge in about two hours.

Get tickets from the prepaid (short) line and have lunch. Take bus to monument and walk around it. I was amazed at "how small it is." It is still huge but my memory really enlarged it. Get much more of a feel for the other earthworks this time, the trenches around the monument and the barrows (circular mound graves), around it.

Go to gift shop and get guide book, curds, and a bluestone earring and necklace set for Jan. Go to the museum and see some artifacts and bones from the area. Outside see the stone "sled" and some huts that were models of Neolithic items.

Drive to Avebury Stone Circle. Missed parking lot but everything else went well. Jan loves following the "little blue dot." Walk from the parking lot to the stones and then around the circle, first south of the village and then north. It rains all the way. Sheep are in the field by some of the northern stones.

Go to the Red Lion (only pub inside a stone circle) and have a drink and dinner. By the time we are done, the sun is out and before walking back to the car we go to see a few of the stones we left out before (in the rain). As we drive to Oxford, we find more stones in two lines in an adjacent field.

Drive to our B&B in Oxford. Get there about 8:30 and no one is home. Luckily, our phones pick up a British signal and we call the proprietor. He instructs us on how to get in. It is raining again.

Get to room. Jan does laundry and Randy journals. We wash and eat the strawberries that we got at Stonehenge. Boy were they good!

Monday, Jul 11



Get up. Drive to Morton-on-Marsh for the "Secret Garden Tour." Find the train station (after going around the block once) and meet our guides (Becky and Charlotte). They take us first to the manor house and the church associated with it. Villages in Cotswold are the remains of the manor house and the servant quarters. They have all been sold off now as private residences, but the structure remains: one huge house, small houses off the grounds, and a church built by the lord of the manor. There is also usually a pub nearby. Then a lot of farm land which supported the manor.

After the house, we go to Becky's house (the secret cottage) for morning coffee and the first spread. The cottage is really the combination of three manor cottages made into one. The spread is wonderful (with a gluten free section for Jan). Then we loop through various small towns all built with Cotswold limestone blocks and with thatched, slate, or wooden shingle roofs. Back to the cottage for lunch and another huge spread. Elderflower water for a drink was a surprise. Then touring again and pass (but don't go into) another stone ring (the Rollright Stones). Then back to the cottage for a third huge spread and "tea." Then, unfortunately, back to the train station and back to Oxford. Jan sleeps through dinner (we had enough to eat anyway) and then to bed.

Tuesday, July 12

Program phone to lead us through the Lonely Planet Cotswold tour. Now that you can program extra stops, it works quite well. Have breakfast and start tour. Towns are larger than those on

yesterday's tour and a lot more touristy. Find a wonderful old church in Chipping Campden with a lady docent that shows us around. Funny stories about statues, medieval lecture (with eagle), 1300's altar cloth and robe and stain glass. She had a great story to go with each. Eat lunch in the next town in a "deli" with lots of interesting food/toiletry items for sale. Continue tour through a couple of really small towns. Last one has a lot of brick houses in addition to the limestone. (Must be at the edge of the Cotswolds.) Drive to Bath, check in, and walk to city center. Find the "baths." Have a drink across from them (with a young singer giving a recital in front of the restaurant). Order dinner and it starts to drizzle. Go inside and have the meal (fish and chips for Randy, beans and goat cheese feta (yuck) for Jan). Walk back to B&B in the drizzle.

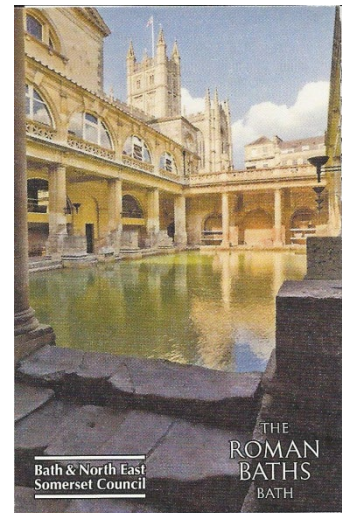
It was amazing how well the phone worked as a travel guide.

Did we mention that the room was small? It is under the eaves and has a slanted ceiling that makes it almost impossible to get around in.

Wednesday, July 13

After breakfast, we walk to the Roman baths and take the audio tour. The Baths are much expanded and better organized than the last time I was here. This tour cleared up a lot of misconceptions I had also. It was hard to differentiate where the Roman ruins ended and the later additions began. Still very interesting. Took lots of pictures in low light. Hope some of them come out. After lunch at Pert a Manger and a shoe shopping stop, we go to the Bath Abbey. Incredible gothic structure. Very high nave vault with lots of windows. Flying buttresses outside. There was an exhibit there fabrics panels decorated with calligraphy and stitching. Jan was enthralled.

Had beer/wine at the Alehouse on the Avon River. Next we take the Lonely Planet walking tour. From the Abbey along the Avon River to Queen's Park, the Circus and the Royal Crescent. Georgian architecture all along the way. Bath must have had a real building boom during the late 1700's. The Circus was impressive with its harmony. The Royal Crescent, not so much so. Windows and doors were different. I remember the view from below before and from there you couldn't see the differences. Got pictures from down there for old times sake. Walked into town and visited the Bath's gift shop. Went to a Nepalese restaurant for dinner, the "Yak Teti Yak" (say it). Had a cold chicken dish and two hot vegetable dishes. It was good. Walked back to the B&B and vegged out.



Thursday, July 14

After packing and breakfast, we drive to Tintern Abbey, an abbey ruins which I had seen in '86. At that time it was raining and we decided not to stop. This time the weather was beautiful and we dawdled much more than we should have. The church was an incredible shell of a building in the Gothic style. The rest of the buildings were mostly foundations. There were lots of signs so we still got a pretty good idea of what monastic life was like (first service at 2:00 AM). Like the Romans, a lot of lead in the plumbing.

Then on to Caerphilly to see that Welch castle. Have lunch in a marvelous local deli that has gluten-free cake for Jan. Then into the castle. It had many lines of defense including two moats. They seem to be reconstructing the castle in places – so it is not all original, but still enjoyable.

Left Caerphilly at 4:00 for our 3 ½ hour drive to the north. Parts were on very narrow roads which were a little harrowing. Here is where Google maps failed. It could have taken us on a much better/faster road, but this one it decided was best. But we made it to Porthmadog by 7:45 (the B&B

said we had to be there by 8:00). Get another small but well decorated room. Go to the pub next door for appetizers (we are both full from lunch) and drinks. Then back to the room.

Friday, July 15



Today was supposed to be the day to climb Mt. Snowdon but the forecast (which was not wrong) was for rain all day and we scrapped that plan. Jan sleeps in skipping breakfast. We decide to ride the narrow gauge railway in the afternoon. Jan shops for a sweater and Randy gets tickets. Notice that the tide in the bay was out and some of the boats were on stilts. Not like the Bay of Fundy where they just lay on their sides. We have lunch in a quite interesting restaurant on Main Street and then board the train on the Festinioc Railway. This is an old slate railroad (train ran from the slate mines to the harbor). So the first half of the ride was uphill. Most is a railway cut into the side of a steep hill with a rock wall on one side and a steep drop on the other. There were two tunnels, a number of cutouts that seemed like tunnels and one point where the track looped back on itself. When we got to the end, we had 20 minutes until the train went back and it was raining pretty hard. We decided to stay on the train. The engineer moved much faster downhill but we had plenty of time for drinks and chips.

Go back to the room before dinner and veg out. Go to the harbor Thai restaurant for dinner.

Saturday, July 16

After breakfast we drive to Bodnant Gardens. The weather is very foggy so we don't see much. Get to the gardens about 10:00. Beautiful gardens with plants from all over very nicely arranged. In the formal areas, they looked formal; in the outer areas, they looked natural. Still drizzling most of the way. We don't take many pictures. Eat lunch at the gardens and drive to Bowness on Windermere. Find our B&B without a problem. Park right in front (amazing since every other parking space in town seems to be taken). Check in and walk down toward the lake. There are no pubs overlooking the lake so we get our drinks a little way back. Eat dinner nearby and walk back (up the hill) to the B&B. Watch the end of the A-Team movie and go to bed.

Sunday, July 17

Jan found a cruise-and-walk package brochure last night and we decide to do that. After breakfast, we walk down to the lake where we catch the 11:40 boat to Ambleside Pier and then the boat to Wray Castle (a pseudo castle built in the 1800's by a rich person on a lark). On the way we see big "manor" houses built about the same time. Seems the wealthy decided Windermere was the place to go about that time. Walked along the back side of the lake taking pictures and eating a lunch that we



had gotten at the co-op. It was a beautiful day for a walk. Boat back to Bowness (one boat before the last). Have drinks at the same pub as yesterday only this time outside. Go to a stogy Indian restaurant. Food was good. Service was snooty. Came back and watched Casino Royale before bed.

Monday, July 18

After breakfast, drive to Long Meg and her Daughters (an ancient stone circle). Decide to take the road up through the Lake District National Park. Pretty scenery. Fog over the pass so we don't see much there. Drive along Lake Ullswater and the end. Then over some very small roads to the stones. Google maps didn't do a very good job with this one taking us down some farm tracks at the end (I think there was a better way). Walked around the stones among the cow pies. We think we saw some ancient carvings on Long Meg.

Google maps does a much better job of getting use to Birdoswald and the Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall. Eat lunch at the picnic area outside of the gift shop. Go through a small museum and then walk around the fort. Come back and have an ice cream. Then walk along the wall to a river overlook. On the way back we find a wall turret ruin that we had missed on the way out. Back at the car we head back stopping at another turret ruin along the way. Along the way we follow Google maps down a very narrow one lane road followed by a turn down a road that had a closed sign on it. We give up and continue down the old road. Somehow we get back to the hotel. Have pizza for dinner and walk down to the lake looking for an ice cream (didn't find one at 10:00). Head back to the hotel for a bit of packing.

Tuesday, July 19

After breakfast and packing the car, we walk down the street looking again at the dress shop and picking up lunch at the co-op. Driving south was uneventful. Google maps was OK except for one point where it told us to get off the freeway only to get right back on (instructions we ignored). Get off freeway for gas and lunch in a park (walk around a bit but there are no tables so we eat in the car). Miss it two times, then park and walk to it. Big room; small B&B. Walk to a local pub for drinks and dinner. Walk back. Stop and watch a bit of lawn bowling. In room, relax in heat and go to bed.

Wednesday, July 20

Up at 7:00 for breakfast at 8:15. Pack up, get gas and head for airport. Returning the car was easy as was getting through passport control. I ended up "gold" so we could sit in the lounge for a while. Boarded without a problem but had to wait 45 minutes because of luggage handling problems. Got off and landed almost on time. At Dulles, many long lines at immigration and security checking. Hurry through airport and get to plane just as it is boarding. Jan goes to first class and I sit in back. Land, get shuttle, and get home just fine.

And thus endeth the trip to merry ol' England.