



KURSFABHRT LONDON 2022

PREAMBLE

The Scottish writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, used to say that he travelled 'not to go anywhere but to go.' In other words; he loved travelling for its own sake. Although we enjoy being at a new destination, we agree that the journey there can be one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of any holiday.

We loved the sense of gradually making our way into a different part of the world. Travelling slowly gives you time to savour the gradual changes, to think about where you're going or where you've just been, to adapt to a new way of being. This opportunity to reflect is immensely enriching.

These days it's cheaper to hop on a plane than a train and you can now get to London in an hour instead of ten. Lunch in Berlin and dinner in London has become possible thanks to the jet engine. In many ways the journey could be seen as easier now. But in our opinion travelling by rail is still much more satisfying, providing a real sense of the distance - both geographical and social between different countries.

Sunday | June 26th

Day 1

How we sustainably travelled to London.

Saturday | July 2nd

Day 7

Coming back home on time.

Monday | June 27th

Day 2

The National Gallery, Covent Garden, Buckingham Palace, and everything we discovered in between.

SUNDAY

Said journey began on Sunday, 26 June. We boarded a Cologne-bound train at Berlin Central Station. Despite some initial discomfort, due to our seats being taken by strangers, our train departed on time and we gradually gained speed, soon leaving Berlin.

Just as we approached Cologne our train abruptly came to a stop, leaving us deeply worried whether we would reach our connecting train. In the end, we did and were soon crossing the border into Belgium. In all honesty; we had seen countries prettier than Belgium.



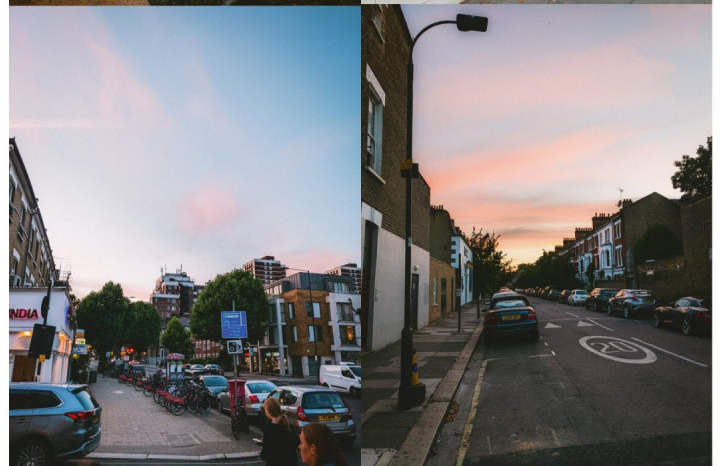
Upon arriving in Brussels, we still had some time to spare and decided to part ways for half an hour. Before boarding the EuroStar to London, we went through a security check and strolled through the little stores in the train station. Once we took our seats, we were informed that the train was going to remain waiting for two passengers who took their time and calmly boarded the train 40 minutes late. The beautiful scenery of northern France neatly wrapped around the sheltered wagons, letting us immerse fully in what the landscape had to offer.

SUNDAY



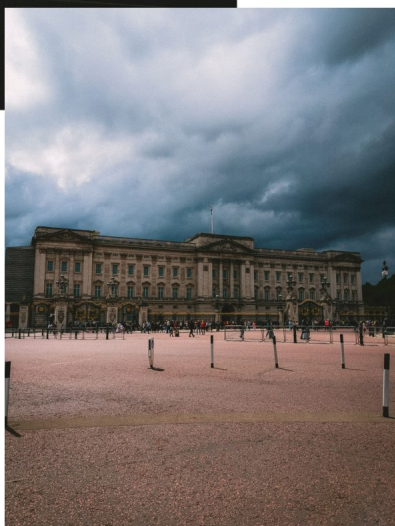
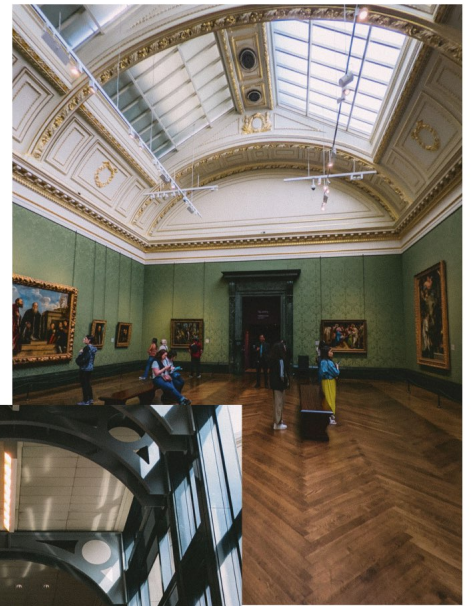
Subsequently, we entered the Eurotunnel and re-emerged from below the sea on the other side of the English Channel, where we were unexpectedly greeted by very inviting sunshine. Shortly after, we reached our destination of St Pancras Station in London and despite it being crowded as ever, we made our way into the Underground and left for our hotel in West London. After having started walking in the wrong direction, we found our hotel and realised that we had been blessed with not so well-maintained rooms in the very back of the basement.

Worried to not be given back our security deposit of £300, we swiftly began documenting the numerous broken amenities in our room. In a group of 7, we then went to buy some take-away pizza at a nearby Italian restaurant. Tired from the exhausting journey, we brushed our teeth and got some well-deserved sleep. In retrospect, this was probably the day, out of all we spent in London, with the nicest and most pleasing weather - had it only lasted a little longer.



MONDAY

The next morning, we got up thoroughly rested and ready to explore London. But first, we ate some breakfast provided by our hotel, which was totally sufficient but in no way remarkable. After having eaten, we boarded an Underground and headed to central London. Our first destination for the day was the National Gallery, filled with astonishing portraits and carefully painted, mind-bendingly expressive artwork. We spent two hours roaming the impressive exhibitions, purchasing gifts in the museum shop and satisfying our hunger in one of the cafes. By the time we left, it had started raining, but nonetheless we made our way to Covent Garden.



Upon our arrival, we decided to part ways for one and a half hour. Some strolled around the historic stores or the souvenir stands while others decided to grab a bite to eat. Having re-gathered, we decided to watch a street performer for a bit and then headed to Buckingham Palace. On our way, we unexpectedly witnessed the Change of the Guards; something others usually strictly plan to see ahead of time. When we reached Buckingham Palace, the sky had already turned dark again, prompting us to not spend too much time there. As we were slowly walking through St. James Park, it began raining and we quickly made our way to the nearest Underground Station and returned to our hotel. We settled on an Indian restaurant where we would eat that evening and made a reservation. Having satisfied our appetite, we went back to the hotel and stopped on the way to purchase some snacks and drinks to eat over the next day.

MONDAY

Having brought back everything to our rooms, we decided to go outside just once more to explore our neighbourhood further. We stumbled upon a park and some restaurants and when it turned dark, we headed back to the hotel for good. We spent some time in our rooms, chatting about what we had done that day and what we were going to do the next, while eating some of the things we had previously bought. As it got more and more quiet outside, we decided to go to bed.



London Trip 2022 – Third diary entry

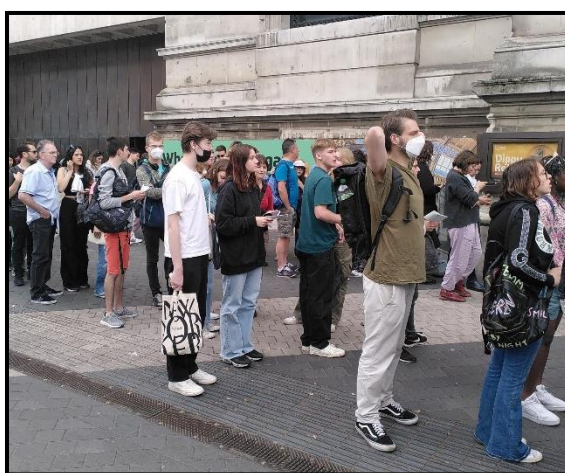
After having survived the second night in the admittedly gruesome hotel, we awoke with the hope that everything that happened so far was nothing but a fever dream (or at least we did). However, as soon as we went to the dining hall to eat breakfast, it became quickly apparent that, in fact, we were not hallucinating. After all, who doesn't know the typical British breakfast consisting of a few slices of toast, some half-way molten butter and one or two slices of cheese?

Oh well, it was not as if we planned to spend the entire day in the hotel anyway. We had aspirations! We wanted to experience something! And so we departed, mind set to visit the Natural History Museum and its renowned exhibitions.

Or at least that is what we would normally write now, but sadly, our departure was delayed by some rather unreliable people (definitely not Andrew and Yuriy). Despite these difficulties, however, we prevailed – at long last, we finally did reach our destination.

As soon as we left the station (Leicester Square), the first impression made by the majestic queue took us aback – the mere length of it required considerable time and effort to process. Luckily, amidst the processing, it appears that we fell victim to an excellently executed visual illusion as there were several separate queues for different kinds of visitors that only conjoined on first glance.

And even then, the time it took for the staff to deal with the queue was notably short, drastically reducing our waiting time. Overall, entry checks were pleasant, with the staff being kind and helpful.



Once inside, it soon became clear that the museum more than deserved the renown it has accumulated over the years. The museum's exhibits range from Hominini skulls and fossils (seen below), animal tusks/canines, various gemstones (especially noteworthy is the museum's so-called "Pain collection") and minerals (including radioactive ones) to various digital depictions of the planets orbiting our sun – some exhibits can even be freely touched!



Those overly excited at the prospect of rocks and minerals will also be left overjoyed by the fact that this museum comes with its own merchandise store stocking all kinds of products. An opportunity that cannot and should not be ignored - At least one of us is now a stone egg's proud owner! All in all, the museum offered more than enough interesting sights and exhibits for us to enjoy ourselves to the fullest, though our enjoyment was cut short by our limited time. Nevertheless, the visit surely proved more enjoyable than some might have thought at first.



With quite some time to spare, we decided to proceed with our planned trip to Hyde Park. It has to be noted that our teachers were finally able to boost their confidence in their navigation skills as they succeeded in guiding us to the entrance without fail. The park's size allowed for nice, lengthy walks, with the wild goose and beautiful swans (it was only by sheer luck that we were able to escape their wrath) living there making great companions. At the end of the central pond going by the name of "The serpentine" (very creatively named) is a café that maintains its monopoly of (expensive) sandwiches, tea, etc., where some of us also grabbed a snack. Afterwards, we split up and enjoyed ourselves individually for an hour by taking a stroll around the park or just generally enjoying the scenery. Concluding our stay at Hyde Park, the group once again took to splitting up, with some heading to Oxford Street for some additional shopping and visiting Westminster Palace, for example.

As for us? We're just writing this diary entry. It's taking awfully long, but we're coming along.

But that is neither here or there. Let's continue! So, after rather quick discussion, we chose an Italian restaurant called "Al – Forno". The prices were acceptable, if not good for London standards, and the dishes were all in all quite enjoyable, but there were some exceptions, such as the risotto. Not really living up to its name, the dish's taste rivalled that of salty water, leaving some of us surprised at the notion of such a simple dish having been "messed up" so heavily.



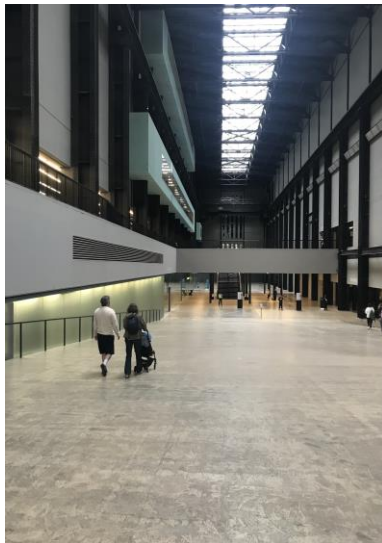
Subsequently, some chose to make themselves comfortable in their room, whereas others stayed outside to further explore the city. As usual, everybody returned to their rooms by 10 PM and completed their daily rituals. In due time, everybody went to sleep in hopes of witnessing yet another exciting day.

Sienna Lucke, Lara Neubert, Helene Martin

London Trip 2022

29.06.2022

After a “delicious and scrumptious” breakfast we went to Tate Modern. We crossed the Millennium Bridge in pouring rain and discovered that some pieces of gum stuck to the bridge were painted because a couple of artists decided they wanted to make the gum pieces on the bridge nice to look at. As usual when we got to the museum, we split into smaller groups to be able to enjoy the museum on our own.



We enjoyed looking at the many pieces of art that were sometimes quite difficult to understand because they were so extraordinary. In the gallery we discovered a shop with small souvenirs that was rather entertaining. As soon as we met back up after two hours at the museum, we walked back over the Millennium Bridge to St. Pauls Cathedral. We had the opportunity to have some free time until we had to meet back up to go to the Globe Theatre so we were told it would be a good idea to walk around the cathedral. It was worth it. The architecture is unbelievably beautiful.

But we soon realized we were starving. So, our small group decided to make a quick stop at the one and only McDonalds. After fuelling up with delicious food we headed back over the Millennium Bridge to go to the Globe Theatre.



Our tickets however only allowed us to stand during the play. The play we had the pleasure of watching was "King Lear". The group consisting of Sienna, Anton, Amy, Peter, Luisa, Helene, and Lara decided to leave after 45 minutes because it was quite exhausting standing there and we'd already experienced much of the given atmosphere. The other students Andrew and Yuriy as well as our respected leaders Mrs. Wolf and Mrs. Schorr stayed to watch the play a little longer. Thus, we took some more time to discover the city in our small groups which was absolutely wonderful. At exactly 5:15 pm we met back up together with everyone and watched Tower Bridge open and let a big ship through. We even managed to get benches right in front, giving us the perfect view.



After watching the Bridge Lift we had a difficult decision to make... dinner. We all managed to agree that we wanted to get different things, so everyone had time to get their own food and we met at the park not too far away from the hotel we were staying at. Once everyone had gotten their food, we sat down on the ground in the park in order to enjoy our meals. And so, we let the day fade out. With that great ending we decided it was time to get some well-needed rest for the night.

30.06.2022

After the usual “delicacies” served at breakfast we took the Tube to Westminster where we waited overexcitedly to take the city cruise to Greenwich.



At first, we sat on the top of the ship but as the wind picked up and the temperature was dropping, we knew we had to take a seat inside. However, the voice of the captain who was so graciously giving us a tour was unnecessarily loud, which was a little disturbing. After an hour we finally arrived at the beautiful Greenwich. As we took a stroll around the small but cute town, we needed something to please our palate. Once we all found something we enjoyed our slightly overpriced food. Nevertheless, we knew we still had one thing... the most important thing... on our agenda... buying souvenirs. To make our family happy at home we spent several hours deciding on what we should bring them back. After everyone successfully found great souvenirs, we slowly made our way back to the place where we agreed to meet. Then we had the great opportunity to have some time to ourselves again. So, with all the time we had, we decided to go back to the hotel because we all desperately needed to rest. We had the great pleasure of being able to pick our own food again. Everyone got something different. We enjoyed our meals in our hotel room and with that the day was already over.

London Trip 2022 – Sixth Entry

This day would mark our last full one in London. The mornings had long since become part of the routine by now, though that made waking up in the morning not easier for most, especially not with the disease some contracted (which later turned out to be Corona). After having eaten breakfast and gotten ready, the destination was clear: the British Museum.

The museum is one of the oldest public national museums worldwide and is of prestigious renown, easily standing out from London's other numerous museums. Like most other museums here, it can be visited for free as well, though a single specific exhibition does admittedly come with an entrance fee. With artefacts from every corner of the world and informative texts distributed throughout the entirety of the enormous building, it was a joy to behold.

Notable mentions are both the coinage of Celtic Europe or the Museum's Jade collection showcasing the cultural and political significance of the mineral throughout China's many dynasties. Although we were once again given two hours to explore the halls, just like in the National History Museum, some extended their stay by up to two hours this time around, though that was a voluntary choice.



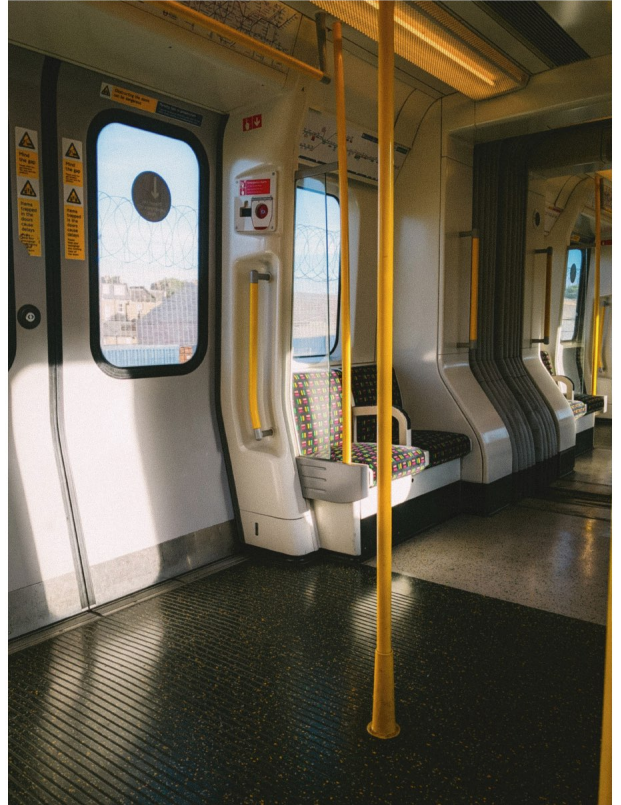
Some decided to explore the Westfield shopping centre nearby our hotel, capable of intimidation through its sheer size. No matter what you are looking for, there's a very high chance that you can find it here. Even the biggest shopping centres in Berlin pale in comparison to this one. Surprisingly though, we did not buy anything. At least in our case, the rather high prices certainly made us hesitant, though others were more generous with the contents of their wallet.



For the last time, we also decided to dine together at the behest of Mrs. Schorr and Mrs. Wolf, settling on Nando's. While that was a somewhat unusual choice compared to the restaurants we previously visited, we definitely didn't regret it. However and perhaps unsurprisingly, the dishes ended up being quite spicy, those classified as mild included. While most didn't mind and even added spicier sauce to their order (with many of the orders being marked as medium – a bold decision to say the least), others found the classification "mild" somewhat euphemistic, though everyone managed just fine in the end. The remaining time of the evening was spent preparing for the return to Berlin with everyone going to bed early, as we would need all the rest we could get for tomorrow's journey.

SATURDAY

On Saturday we got up at 5am to be able to take a shower before heading to the Underground Station. When we finished packing our bags and tidying our rooms, we took some photos of the room in case the next tenants would break something and blame it on us. Our teachers were already waiting for us in front of the hotel, and we handed in our key cards. Having taken a bus to the Underground Station, we boarded the Circle Line Train to St. Pancras, where we were greeted by a seemingly endless line of people, all waiting to board the EuroStar. Rather shortly after having gone through the mandatory security check and having shown our passports, we were allowed to board the train and this time, we left on time.



In Brussels, we had 20 minutes to board our connecting train, which we luckily managed to do and thus shortly after began heading for Germany. We arrived in Cologne with a very minor delay and boarded the last train we would have to take on this trip. The feeling of slowly coming home was very comforting, but also slightly bitter, as we would not see London again for some time. When the landscape became more and more familiar and all the clouds suddenly disappeared, we knew that we were just about to enter Berlin. When we arrived and stepped onto the platform, we formed a circle one last time to say goodbye and then parted ways. But less than an hour later, there was an unwelcome surprise; almost all of us had contracted Covid. By the time this is being written, some have already recovered, while others continue fighting the disease. However, sooner or later we will have all recovered and our lives will go back to being normal.

POSTFACE

For many of us, this was the first time being in London. However, others, who had already been well acquainted with the city, also saw and experienced it from another perspective. This trip was filled with surprises - good and not so good - and memories that will last for a very long time were made. Despite some complications, we are very grateful to have had the opportunity to even go on such a trip in the first place and would, without hesitation, do so again.

