

Dear Group

Well, hopefully you made it back ok and are now recovered from the jet lag. I am just dropping you a line to give an outline of the tour, send you the email addresses of everybody, the route maps that I devised for your perusal, and to once again thank you for being such a fun group. I realise you probably get told that every time, but I also believe you can measure the sincerity of my words from the warmth and laughter that came from the bus. I like to laugh, and frequently do, but this group actually was exceptional for your sense of adventure and fun.

Grand Circle will ask you for your feedback regarding certain topics, so I just wanted to include a reminder of some of the things we did and talked about.

### **Discovery Walks**

London's East End where you saw old Victorian Markets, Huguenot houses and workshops, met store owners, and saw where the Elephant Man was chained and displayed to the public. You also saw the first ever tunnel under a river in the world, and the world's oldest police station.

Oxford where you saw the Ashmolean museum and the Bodlean library, walked around Trinity College, saw the spot where the Martyrs were burnt, went through the indoor market, and saw the Bodlean treasures including the very unexpected Magna Carta.

Pontycliffe Aqueduct where Thomas Telford managed to throw a canal across the gorge and only lose 1 life in the building process, compared to the 4<sup>th</sup> bridge that saw 100 lost 100 years later.

Caernarfon where the old docks saw shipbuilding and trade in slate and other goods, as well as a ferry to Anglesea. The magnificent 13<sup>th</sup> Century walls and castle built by Edward 1<sup>st</sup> when subduing Wales, the vandalism of local authority when they knocked down old buildings to put social housing and council offices within the historic region, small shops and galleries, and the historic town square that has held markets for the past 400 years or so.

Chester where you saw beautiful almshouses, typical terraced houses and streets, the town's walls that have been there since Roman times, a Roman amphitheatre, the 2<sup>nd</sup> most photographed clock in England and the historic and unique Chester rows.

York saw the site of Roman Emperors, the magnificent cathedral, the old Terrys shop, the church housing a 'Cross of Peace' as an offering from Coventry, the site of an old Viking village, Clifford's tower with its dark past of anti-semitism, the shambles and the shrine of their own saint, Margaret Clitheroe. As well as the walls of the town and the restored 15<sup>th</sup> Century town house. We also stumbled across the antique emporium where some of you seemed to spend the whole day and your life savings!!

Whitby Abbey to Trenchers Restaurant, where I told you about the events that gave inspiration to Bram Stoker's character 'Dracula', we saw and learnt about fossilised Monkey Puzzle tree jewellery, saw the old Whitby houses, shops and harbour, and the English penchant for tooth rotting sugar products (Rock and Candy Floss).

In Settle we visited the oldest continually running Music Hall in England. There we met John, who gave us some history of the place. I believe some of you also visited the famous railway station there.

We did a quick walk of Hadrians Wall and Lanercost Priory, which revealed Edward 1<sup>st</sup> court whilst recuperating from illness, as well as seeing the famous 'William Morris' Lanercost Dossal.

We did a very quick orientation (one for you Denise!!!) along the Royal Mile when arriving in Scotland, talking to the students handing out flyers for shows (they thought I was an official about to move them along), and you could describe the Fringe Show as a discovery walk, for want of a better description or category.

Also, a quick walk around St Andrews seeing the famous Bishops Castle and remains of the Cathedral of Scotlands most important medieval cathedral and town. You also witnessed first hand the remains of the mob fury stirred by John Knox.

### **Controversial Topics**

Grand Circle likes to expose it's travellers to the countries burning issues of the day, and we covered the Grenfell Tower Disaster, Social Housing and London Homes, Winston Churchill, Brexit (in its many and varied forms), Child Abuse and Pakistani Grooming Gangs, Immigration, Modern Slavery, Globalisation, Clone Towns and the demise of the small shop, Hinkley Point C and the case for Renewable Energy, Quaker Industry and Social Conditions of Work, Predatory Capitalism (particularly in York), English Schooling and tuition fees, Tony Blair and the 'New Labour' demise during the Iraq War, to name but a few. I did touch upon Scottish Salmon Farming and Grouse Shooting but to the depth I would have liked to.

### **Local Foods**

I must admit, I would have liked to have laid my hands on more goodies for you, but we did get to try Wenslydale Cheese, (English, made with oats, butter and honey) flapjacks, Kendall Mint Cake, Samosas and bahji's, Dall and naan bread, Whisky and Whisky Cream, Shortbread (courtesy of John and Esther), Haggis (Courtesy of various providers), Fish n Chips (courtesy of GC and Trenchers), Pork Pies (in farm packed lunch), Mead, Elderflower Wine, Mushy Peas, and I pointed you in the right direction for (Clotted) Cream Teas in the Cotswolds.

Well, it only remains to say that I hope you all had an excellent holiday (and I really do hope that). You are my first and only group to ever have attended an Edinburgh Fringe event and for that alone I will have very fond memories. Please do keep in touch (facebook 'Sherring\_David'), and should I be able to help you with anything in the near or far future please do not hesitate to contact me.

I hope to see you all again one day, who knows where I might pop up when cycling!!!!

Warmest regards

David