

ENGLAND 2005 DIARY

Preface

Ever since I was a small child I've wanted to go to England. Other than traveling around the U.S., it's about the only other place I've ever wanted to go. My wonderful husband, Tony, has long shared the same dream. England's history has always fascinated me. The Romans were relative newcomers to the island. England's history encompasses the Neolithic and Bronze ages c.8300 BC - c.750 BC; the period of the henge monuments c.4000 BC - c.1500 BC; the Celtic era 800 BC; the Iron Age 750 BC - AD 42; Roman Britain AD43 - 409; the invaders 410 - 1065 including the Saxons, Scots and Scandinavians and the Anglo-Normans 1066 - 1215; the Middle Ages 1216 - 1347; the Late Medieval period 1348 - 1484; the Royal families of the Tudors 1485 - 1602 (King Henry I through Queen Elizabeth I), the Stuarts 1603 - 1713 (King James VI of Scotland/James I of England through Queen Anne), the Georgians 1714 - 1836 (King George I through William IV), the Victorians 1837 - 1901 (Queen Victoria), and on into modern times.

We started planning this trip about five years ago - saving, researching places we wanted to see, accommodation, etc. While looking at Rick Steve's web site one day I ran across his advice to take only one suitcase, carry-on size at that, to travel with. I was dumbfounded; we had planned on taking scads of clothes, etc. in our duffel bags. Tony and I talked about it and decided taking only a carry on each had some distinct advantages; no checking bags and having to retrieve them at Gatwick, only one suitcase with wheels for each of us to haul in and out of cars, B&Bs, etc. We purchased clothing that would dry quickly and carried 3 changes of clothes each (plus the clothes that we would be wearing, of course.) We kept our toiletries to practically nothing, planning on buying those at the first Tesco we came to. (Tesco is like a super Wal-Mart.) Another reason we had to keep our carry-ons light is that Virgin Atlantic has a 13 pound carry-on limit. I can now say, from experience, that this is definitely the way to travel!

We should've stopped smoking, like we'd planned, before our trip. Cigarettes cost the equivalent of \$8 to \$9, US, per pack. Restaurant and pub food prices were only slightly higher, if any, than restaurant prices here. In convenience-type stores, prepared sandwiches were costly. Grocery store prices, though, seemed pretty comparable to ours. Petrol (gasoline) costs a good deal more than in the US; they sell it in litres, so an equivalent US gallon costs around \$6.50. Good thing most cars there get around 35mpg, and we didn't have as much ground to cover as touring the US!

We did have to have two or three different types of road atlases, though, as each one had a little something the others didn't. We got very good at knowing which atlas would have the information we needed.

I've included some photographs in our Diary. Most I took, a few I didn't. The aerials, of course, I didn't take. I've included them because it's really impossible to see the scale, not to mention a complete view, of some of the places we went without seeing an aerial shot. There is a picture of a European Robin that is not mine; the rest of the photos are ones I took. As I typed up our trip diary, I've added some notes about things in italics, for clarification.

Our itinerary took us from London (we flew from Orlando into Gatwick) to the Cotswolds, the Lake District (Cumbria), Edinburgh and Stirling in Scotland, Yorkshire and then back down to London. We drove (well, Tony drove, and magnificently I might add) just over 2,600 miles. He did extremely well; only a couple of times when turning onto a road did he almost forget to turn into the proper lane, and it only took about half the trip for me to have to stop shrieking as he tried to enter a roundabout without yielding to the on-coming traffic.

I hope that you will look up on the internet some of the places we've mentioned in our trip diary. My brief writings don't come close to doing these magnificent places justice. If anyone has any questions about our trip, please do not hesitate to email me, tjhowell1@comcast.net, and I'll be happy to answer them. We hope you enjoy reading about our wonderful trip. (We are already planning our second trip in 2007.)

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