

LONDON KURSAHRT 2011 ENGLISCH LK UNTER DER
LEITUNG VON FRAU WITTING UND FRAU SVENSSON
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REISEBERICHT von FRIEDERIKE BAUER

I have been to London before and I loved it, but I knew it would be different this time, not in a negative sense though. I expected new impressions and I wasn't disappointed at all. London is so crowded, it's incredible! No matter where you go, you'll always see people, everywhere, and what I love so much about Londoners is that most of them are very nice. The weather didn't surprise me, but it could have been worse to be fair. London is a beautiful city full of attractions and people of any origin. You'll always discover something new that will impress you; it never gets boring.

“Who is responsible for what? What are we going to see? When do we have to be where? What else has to be done?” After weeks of preparation everyone was looking forward to our trip to Great Britain's capital, where we arrived in the morning hours of Saturday, 18th June. We were welcomed by rain. Not that anyone expected nice weather.



Since our hostel was in King's Cross, the first really interesting thing we saw and had to capture on camera was "Platform 9 3/4". The Harry Potter feeling was immediately evoked in everyone of us.

After a short walk to the Hostel, the big tiredness came without warning. We all felt how early it has been that morning. Unfortunately, our next destination wasn't the bed, but Camden Market. After I lost the group - Of course it was me! - we spent some hours there, went back to the hostel and prayed we could just sleep.

Only two of us weren't tired, so we left the hostel another time and went to visit an exhibition at the Tate Modern near the Millennium Bridge. At about 11 p.m. we were back in the hostel and dropped into bed.



Our Sunday started with a late breakfast before we went for a walk through Hampstead where Mrs Svensson guided our tour which focussed on German citizens living in exile in this part of London at the time of WWII. Among other places we went to see Sigmund Freud's house.

Later that day we went to the Everyman Cinema in Hampstead to watch a movie. It was the first movie I have seen in an English-speaking country. It was nice to hear the actors' original and not just their German voices. I have seen original

movies before, but it was different to see one in a cinema. The cinema hall was great! There were no seat rows but little tables with armchairs, and staff came to our seats and asked if we would like to have anything - totally different from what we know in Germany! There was only one thing that was not that good, the movie.

After we left the cinema, we were all quite sleepy, but went to Piccadilly Circus and visited China Town. I expected more from Piccadilly Circus, since I was very impressed when I went to see this popular place last year, but now there were scaffolds all around which were distracting the view. We could hardly see the famous video displays and neon signs. However, I don't want to complain, China Town was very nice! I loved all these interesting Chinese products - from clothes, to carvings, to the most exotic food. Finally, we set off for the hostel and all I do remember from that night is that I did sleep soundly.

The next morning I really felt how soundly I have actually slept. I woke up very early, but I didn't really wake up during the day. Half asleep I still noticed that it was the first day with nice weather; I remember sun, bright sun! While we were waiting in front of the Globe Theatre, we could really enjoy it. Less enjoyable was the guided tour through the theatre. We all expected to learn something about Shakespeare, his life, his enthusiasm for acting, how he had become one of the greatest poets and playwrights, the meaning of his plays and why they were so popular, but we weren't told any of these things due to the very special guide who took us through the tour. All I know about now is how different it must have been for the audience back in those days to see a play. Oh, and I know how awkward it must be for a student to stand in front of a big group of people and, ridiculously enough, try to imitate Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. I'm quite sure I won't take that guided tour again.

However, it was time for some shopping then and we were happy again. Oxford street! Everyone knows it, everyone wants to go there, and we've been there!

Tuesday was our sightseeing day. The Charles Dickens Museum, Tower Bridge, Tower of London, Big Ben/House of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace - that was our itinerary.

The Charles Dickens Museum is actually a place Dickens lived in, and it was interesting to see all these oldish rooms and books.

At the Tower of London, which was one of the places I didn't visit on my last trip to London, I was deeply impressed by the Crown Jewels. They were gorgeous! I also really liked the tour guides, the "Beefeaters", with their uniforms. While they used to be responsible for looking after the prisoners and safeguarding the crown jewels in the past, today they are foremost a tourist attraction.



The Palace of Westminster, also known as the House of Parliament, was our next stop, but what we actually wanted to see there was Big Ben, the great clock tower, and of course we all wanted to see the church where Kate and William got married a few weeks ago, Westminster Abbey.

Last but not least, there was Buckingham Palace before another shopping spree on Oxford street, which ended in a real adventure. The tube station was so full of people that we had no chance to get in. They were pushing and shoving,

it was incredible. I don't know how, but we finally made our way back to the hostel. This was a new experience!



On Wednesday we were woken up by rain, which didn't even stop after our visit to the Museum of London. Consequently, our boat tour on the Thames was not really what we expected it to be like. We had to sit indoors and couldn't enjoy the view and the beautiful riverbank that much. Nevertheless, we saw the Tower Bridge and the Thames Barrier, the "London saver". It's a flood barrier which has already prevented London from being flooded several times. That's why I came up with this name.

Towards the end of the river cruise the sun showed up, so we could at least enjoy our visit at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich and a magnificent view of London.



Then we headed to the tube station, this time it was different though. After I've been on the Thames twice, it was the first time I was under London's most popular river. The thought that billion litres of water are directly above you was really scary! We survived and were ready for the highlight of the day, Jinsheng's risotto at the hostel. It was delicious!

Luckily, our last day in London wasn't as stressful as I expected it to be. We spent one last day in the heart of London and were given the choice to visit the British Museum or the National Gallery. I chose the National Gallery since I'm interested in art, especially photography. Even though I quickly realised there were only paintings,

I wasn't too disappointed because they were awesome! It was definitely worth the visit.

Before a final lunch at the hostel there was even still time for a quick side-trip to Covent Garden, where I finally managed to buy souvenirs for my parents. Better late than never, I have been searching for something to get them since the first day! Now I could travel back home with peace of conscience, and that's what we did at about 4 p.m. Some of us were afraid we wouldn't arrive at the airport in time. The contrary was the case. We couldn't even check in yet.

Late in the evening we were back in Berlin, where our parents were already awaiting us.