

**England**  
**12 November – 29 November 2014**

**12 Nov. – Wednesday**

**Dallas**

And so, this trip, planned seemingly so long ago, begins! Even though it is just another flight, there is something special about an international trip.

We took DART to the airport – a first for us. From Mockingbird station it took us about 2 hours to travel to the airport, get checked in and begin looking for someplace to eat: not bad!

The flight is delightfully un-packed. There are tons of empty seats in coach. We had 2 seats, nice but not a lot of legroom. The 2 seats in front of us are emergency exit seats (and so far – we have not taken off yet – empty). I'm in one now, hoping we will be able to sit here and stretch out a bit.

We're on a 777-300: nice plane! Lots of modern amenities: Power at every seat – a must for today's electronically encumbered travelers!

My luck held – we got to move to the exit row seats so we both have the ultimate flyers luxury: an empty seat next to us (and lots of legroom!).

It has been a hectic time leading up to this trip. We just finished painting the garage – the last part of the house remaining to be painted. So it is only now that the trip seems real. I think it will take me a day or two to relax!

It is "morning" over the Atlantic... I managed to sleep a bit. Woke up as they were serving "breakfast" (nothing that looks like what I think of as breakfast), but the OJ and coffee were good.

Was really happy to have all of the legroom: It made things really comfortable. Traveling in the exit row all this time has spoiled us both.

Really enjoyed my first movie on my iPad. I'm not sure if my seat even had a screen available: if there is one, I never did figure out where it was. Landing soon now.

**13 Nov. 2014 - Thursday**

**London**

Arrived on time to an overcast, cloudy day in London. Baggage and customs were straight-forward and we caught the 10:02 train to Paddington Station (rail-pass accepted!). We had tried to get the ATM to accept our Schwab cards to no avail: so, muttering dark curses at Schwab we exchanged good old cash at the Currency Exchange before we got on the train. That may pay off in the end: they will re-exchange the same amount back into dollars when we depart for free.

We did manage to get cash at Paddington Station (using a different bank's ATM). Had planned on taking a cab to Kings Cross station (to catch our train to York) but decided that the tube looked doable and did that instead! Took the Circle Line 4 or 5 stops down the line. Had to negotiate a few flights of stairs and do some walking, but it was manageable.

We are now on the 11:21 train to York (our first stop), taking full advantage of our day's rail pass allocation.

**York**

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Reached York around 1:30 and walked (about 10 minutes) following the shortcut directions they had provided without much difficulty. We are in a room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Kim (our host) is nice and gave us the lay of the land. We headed out to get something to eat and stopped at one of her recommendations (a hole in the wall pub) and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves! It has good atmosphere and we both enjoyed our fish and chips and beer.

There were lots of people in town wearing graduation gowns: apparently an event at the nearby Munster. It looked like it might be a High School or College Graduation: We never did figure out exactly what though.

We walked around afterwards in the increasingly cooler darkness.... Saw lots of shops (and shoppers) in a beautiful old city. Stopped in at another pub for one more beer (really to kill some more time) but were both really tired by this point (around 7 pm), so headed back to the B&B and slept the sleep of the justly tired globe-trotters.

**14 Nov. 2014 – Friday**

**York**

Slept until 7:30. Breakfast is served from 8:00 – 9:00, and we were both ready to eat! Nice spread: much better than on the plane! Kim fixed me scrambled eggs and bacon.

It was raining steadily, and the forecast called for the rain to continue for a while, so we decided to head into town and camp at Starbucks with a big cup of coffee to wait it out. They had free Wi-Fi (our B&B does too), so we were able to catch up with our virtual world.

It stopped raining around noon, and we walked over to the Railway museum. It was fun: the most interesting thing we saw was the bullet train from Japan. Heard a volunteer talk about how advanced the Japanese rail system is: it was fascinating. We had lunch there: split a pastrami sandwich and soup.

Next, we walked to the Yorkshire museum. It had lots of interesting displays, especially on the role of the Romans in this area. Got there late, but we can go back tomorrow at no charge if we want to.

Had several bitters at a cool old Rick Steves recommendation: The House of the Trembling Madness. It was small, old, crowded and served good beer: We really enjoyed ourselves until we fell into a conversation with a local who regaled us with his tales of a burned million pound boat and travels he has had around the world. Mostly it was him talking. Luckily, he finished his beer and abruptly left so we did not need to find a way to extract ourselves from the conversation.

Had dinner at another Rick Steves recommendation: The Blue Bicycle. It was very upscale for us, but quite enjoyable (I had duck, Kathleen had Bass).

The evening turned very foggy while we were eating dinner. We took some cool pictures after we ate. We picked up some wine at the Sainsbury grocery on our way back to the B&B but arrived too tired to open it.

**15 Nov. 2014 – Saturday**

**York**

We both slept well – seem to be over our jetlag and fully acclimated to the York time zone. Went down to breakfast at 8:30, had another pleasant chat with the (apparently) only other couple staying here (3

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rooms to let?) from somewhere about 180 miles North of York. They apparently like York a lot and have been taking weekend trips to visit the city for the past 30 years.

The meal was punctuated by several illegal visits by Pickles, a new addition to the cat contingent of the residence, and whose presence in the breakfast area is strongly discouraged by Kim. It was hard but we had to join in on the shooshing every time s/he ventured back into the room.

It was a cloudy and cool day (40 – 50 degrees and overcast) but there is no rain in the forecast.

Went back to complete our tour of the Yorkshire museum and were glad we did. The information about the Romans and the Vikings in the basement was interesting to us both.

We then walked the Northern section of the city walls. It must have been quite a construction project with they were built. So glad they have been preserved! Stopped off at a pub for lunch - Fish and chips with beer again – before continuing our exploration of the city wall. Finished up near the Castle museum. We did not go in, but I did climb up to the top of the castle: It was another amazing piece of construction. Katheen's knee was giving her trouble so she waited for me on a bench outside the museum.

We decided that we really could not visit York without paying our respects to the Minster, so we headed that way. We had several glasses of wine at a Best Western hotel across from the Minster first. There was almost nobody in the bar: we had an alcove with couch all to ourselves.

When we did arrive at the Minster, we found a long line of people queueing to get in. Not sure what the sudden attraction was (a local stopped to ask us while we were waiting in line: He was a great admirer of Barack Obama) but we waited for 20 minutes or so to get in. We were very happy that we did too... what an amazing structure!

Apparently, I hadn't done enough climbing for one day because I paid to go up into the tower: Kathleen and he knee declined. Several hundred steps later and I was rewarded with a breathtaking view of the now dark and misty city of York. It was well worth the effort.

Got back down in time to enjoy the start of the evening service. They had a lovely choir accompanied by a massive organ. We really enjoyed sitting there and listening to a service that probably sounded just like thousands of services that have been held in that church for hundreds of years.

They also had a very good exhibit showing all of the work they are doing to preserve and restore the building. They say that they are spending 40,000 pounds a day to maintain the structure.

Wandered around a bit afterwards looking for a good place to eat dinner. Ended up at a French-ish restaurant. Kathleen had Beef Bourguignonne: I had a steak with fries. We both enjoyed a good bottle of Burgundy.

Stopped at the Sainsbury grocery and finished the evening in our room enjoying shortbread and wine.

**16 Nov. 2014 – Sunday**  
**York -> Hull**

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Had our last breakfast in York and got packed up to head to our next town. Talked 5 – 10 minutes with Kim in the front lobby: I think she would have talked all day!

Train service to Scarborough wasn't via train: we took a bus due to some maintenance work being done. Arrived at the station around noon and found that we had a 2 hour wait for our train. There were no storage lockers at the station for our bags, so we and our bags had lunch at a nearby pub. Had an American meal: Hamburger for Kathleen, pulled pork for me.

**Hull**

Arrived in Hull with poor maps and only a general idea of where the hotel was, so it was a confuses and sometimes frustrating walk guided only by our unlocked and O<sup>2</sup> SIM-enabled iPhone 4 which Kathleen has been mastering over the past few days and which is becoming increasingly useful!). Once we figured out where the hotel was it was really a shorter and more straight forward route than we had initially thought.

Our destination was a Holiday Inn – a very modern hotel, and a big change from our York B&B. The room is large, with a desk and a small couch. They gave us each a choice between chocolate or a small bottle of wine because Kathleen is member of their frequent stayer club!

Had the wine in our room while trying to figure out where to go on Monday. Found to my horror that the History Center is closed on Monday's!

Went out to dinner at the nearby Al Porto Ristorante Italliano, located right across the water from our room. Had some difficulty finding the door to get into the restaurant, but it was well worth the effort... What a meal we had!

It is fairly new and there was only one other group eating when we arrived. Our waiter was very knowledgeable and helpful, and everything was obviously made from very fresh ingredients and expertly prepared. We with Mozzarella (buffalo) and Tomatoes, the best either of us have ever had. I had a duck breast in blueberry sauce and Kathleen had bacon wrapped veal, served with roasted potatoes, carrots, broccoli, and cauliflower. We yummied up every bit and enjoyed a delicious red wine, followed by a pineapple sliced and served with chocolate sauce, pine nuts, almonds and chocolate covered dates. Wow! It was a slow, lovely meal, after which we staggered home through the rain that had started while we were eating.

**17 Nov. 2014 – Monday**

**Hull**

Enjoyed an adequate buffet at the hotel (included with our room). All the usual stuff plus sliced meat & cheese in the Scandinavian manor.

Stopped off at the TI for some help and got a really helpful person. He told us that the platform and building where trans-emigrants passed through was still in existence at the train station: Platform 1. He suggested that go there and ask somebody at the train station for more information.

We found it easily enough, and went into the Station Masters office to ask for help and met Paul Ramsden who spent the next 30 minutes cheerfully escorting us around the station and telling us what he knew about the emigrants who had passed through the station, with occasional asides about the

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decline of Brit Rail (he has worked for them for 32 years) and patiently letting us taking pictures of everything. He has been all over the United States, having visited more than 30 times.

He showed us a plaque erected in the station to commemorate a visit a visit by the President of the Borough of Brooklyn in 1999.

What is known today ad track #1 was track #14 back in the day. Emigrants were transported (by truck, van or streetcar) from their ship to a building next to the tracks where they were processed and sent on their way by train to Liverpool. He pointed out the bumper at the end of the track said it was original from that period.

The building itself is still standing and is today a bar (the Lair). We went in and they cheerfully showed us around and pointed out a plaque placed on the building in 2013 and showed us the small room at the end where papers were checked during the process.

We popped back in at the hotel for a cup of coffee and a bit of rest before setting off to see the docks. We are not positive exactly which one was used by the emigrants – it may not even exist anymore: much of the area has been filled in and reclaimed. There is now a statue near the water erected in honor of the 2.2 Million people who passed through Hull on their way to somewhere else.

We had a big lunch at the Minerva just off the docks: Fish and Chips for me – I can't seem to get enough! – Vegetable soup & a sandwich for Kathleen).

Took a quick spin through the Maritime museum, then went over to the William Wilberforce house (he was a well known anti-slave advocate) where we reviewed the horrors associated with slavery until it closed and we had to leave.

Retreated back to our well-located hotel to catch up on email, Facebook and this analog journal over a glass of wine in the bar. In spite of having had a big lunch we walked across the road to Ask Italian restaurant for dinner. It was far more lively than last night's venue, but the food (although quite adequate) was nowhere near as good. I had a salad and pizza. Kathleen had spaghetti.

Came back to our room, had the last of our free wine and called it a day.

**18 Nov. 2014 – Tuesday**

**Hull -> Hastings**

Awoke to bright sunlight (although it soon clouded over a bit). Had breakfast, packed, and made our way leisurely to the train station, no doubt following in the footsteps of so many before us.

Bought coffee and grabbed seats at a table on the 10:30 train to Kings Cross in London.

Pulling out of the station we noted (again) how long the platform on Track #1 was, left over from when very long trains were required to accommodate all of the emigrants passing through Hull.

It had forgotten about the joy of just sitting on a lengthy train trip, daydreaming and occasionally dozing as the countryside rolls by in an endless streaming panorama.

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The sun is out in full force now, causing us both to deploy sunglasses for the first time since we arrived in England.

I also had forgotten how difficult writing on a moving train can be!

As I write this Mary [Kathleen's sister] is on a plane flying home from Pakistan at the end of a 3-week visit. She and Kathleen have been texting as Mary has been in areas with Wi-Fi. It has been a somewhat new experience this trip as we have stayed in touch with Mary and my mother on a near real-time basis. The world is getting, if not smaller, at least better connected.

Zipped into and out of London like a couple of ghosts... Arrived at Kings Cross, walked across the street to St. Pancras, picked up a sandwiches, chips and cokes and boarded our 1:42 high-speed train to Ashford (we should arrive at 2:20) where we will catch our train to Hastings.

London, as brief as our visit was, seemed crowded and hectic after York and Hull.

Hastings has two train stations. Naturally, we got off at the one furthest from our hotel. St. Leonard's Warrior Square turns out to be much closer.

After checking into our hotel, which is across the street from the ocean, we set out on a walking tour of the quiet city. We did find a wine store with a good selection and picked up a few bottle to have in our hotel room.

We had a slow paced but really enjoyable dinner at the hotel.

**19 Nov. 2014 – Wednesday**

**Hastings**

Ate breakfast with a view of the ocean across the street. It is a cloudy day but no rain in the forecast. Kathleen finally got to have kippers (which she seemed to thoroughly enjoy in spite of all of the bones). It is much too fishy and salty for me! I was grateful I had ordered eggs – soft boiled with "soldiers" – strips of toast to dip into the egg yolk.

Our hotel has provided a one-page weather forecast & suggested itinerary for the day that mentioned a trip to Rye. Since the Hastings battlefield is closed (due to the time of the year and wet weather) we decided to take the train up to see what is reported to be a lovely old town.

We hadn't planned on traveling by train this day, so we had to buy tickets (£5.90 each, round trip) for the 20-minute trip to Rye. It indeed is a lovely, small, and old city. Kim (our host from York) had told us it was a much nicer town than Hastings, and she may have been correct. We thoroughly enjoyed walking on the narrow, winding, and hilly streets and looking at the picturesque houses and shops. Kathleen bought a small wooden duck as a gift for her sister Pat as well as some nice wooden kitchen spoons for us (you apparently can never have too many wooden spoons).

We also paid £3 each to go up in the St. Mary's church tower. It is situated at the highest point in town and offers those willing to climb a few stairs a nice view of the town and surrounding countryside. We also toured the stone castle that once served as a prison: what a gruesome place to be locked up!

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Enjoyed a great lunch (tomato soup with a scone for Kathleen, Chicken & Mushroom pie with tons of vegetables on the side for me) at an old pub. By this point in time we felt that we had seen enough of Rye and caught the next train back to Hastings.

The day was getting progressively cooler so we swung by our hotel so I could get another layer on and walked down to the old town, which is located near the other train station. It probably is a hopping place in the summer, but it was not very lively when we were there.

The city actually has two of the largest Funiculars still in operation in England. We walked past one looking for the larger East one, but it was closed for the season, and by the time we got back to the West one it had shut down for the day, so no Funicular ride for us!

We wandered around some more, debating where to eat dinner and looking for a suitable pub, which we finally found, where we watched sports on TV and enjoyed good beer.

Although we had thoroughly enjoyed our meal at the hotel the day before we elected to eat elsewhere. One of the restaurants recommended by our hotel was closed (Tai & Brookstone) and the reviews of the other (Dragon) were not inviting (another advantage of having a functional cell phone: We can check out restaurant reviews!) and settled on another Thai restaurant.

It had great food (the best duck I have had on this trip!) and wine, but for most of the meal we were the only customers, probably because we ate early. We enjoyed a leisurely meal anyway before capping the evening off with a brisk walk back down the boardwalk to our hotel where we enjoyed some of the wine we bought yesterday and caught up with the virtual world.

**20 Nov. 2014 – Thursday**  
**Hastings -> London**

Another travel day. We decided to take the scenic route to London, going through Brighton and Havant to see some of the coast before cutting up to London. We checked out after breakfast, walked to the closer Warrior Square station and caught our first train, which was very crowded.

It is another cool, cloudy but (so far!) rainless day – a good day to enjoy several trains.

**London**

We navigated our way to the Windemere Hotel with no problems. There was a bit of confusion on our part during check-in though. It seems we have reserved an apartment (located some blocks away from the hotel itself) rather than a room at the hotel. Kathleen booked this last May...

It is a great place to stay: it has a bedroom and bathroom separate from a living room and efficiency kitchen on the second floor. I went out and picked up some wine and items for breakfast: we were tired and ready sit for a while. We eventually decided that really were not in the mood to eat at a restaurant, so I went back to Sainsbury's and bought us frozen pizzas. They were good enough, and we watched BBC until nearly midnight.

**21 Nov. 2014 – Friday**  
**London**

We slept in late and both really enjoyed having breakfast in our little apartment.

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Cleaned up and set out for Harrods before it got too crowded. The food court is still as magnificent as ever – so much so it made us both hungry again, so we eventually stopped in at one of their numerous restaurants and had coffee, tea biscuits and crumpets. Very English.

Walked through the occasional light rain to Selfridges. I'm not sure what we expected, but the interior was nothing all like on the TV series we had become obsessed with before the trip. Even the exterior is different. We were by now tired and thirsty and did have some wine in their bar.

Decide that all we needed to do avoid going back to the apartment before the play was buy me a suitable shirt, so we set out looking for one. With apologies to the memory of Mr. Selfridge we left disappointed but did find one next door at Marks & Spencer. We also replaced an umbrella Kathleen had lost.

We walked down to Lester Square and had a fine meal at our favorite London Italian restaurant (Duck Pasta!) before heading to the Prince Albert Theatre to see the Book of Mormon. It was a riot! I can see why the show is still sold out every night.

It was a long walk "home" past Buckingham Palace, through Victoria Station and back to the apartment.

**22 Nov. 2014 – Saturday**  
**London**

Enjoyed our apartment again: slept in late, made breakfast, and relaxed. It really is convenient.

Figured out what we wanted to see and do, then looked at transportation options, before setting out on an overcast but relatively warm (~55 degrees) day.

Walked the 4-5 blocks to Victoria Station, brought day passes (£9 each for zones 1-4) and took the tube over to the Tower of London to see what was left of the poppy display.

What little there was to see was still quite striking. There was quite a crowd there, but they were all... what? Quiet? Polite? Respectful? I can't quite find the right words to express what I felt, but it was unusual... no jostling, very little conversation, and when people did talk it was quiet. We took tons of pictures and wished we had been there before they started dismantling the exhibit.

Left there on the Docklands Railway and went to a part of London we have never visited before – Stratford – to see the QE Olympic Park. It must have been a lot of fun during the Olympics. The is now a large mall/shopping center across the street from the athletic areas. Much change since the games and still undergoing re-re-development.

The swimming center is one of the remaining landmarks. I watched a "Build It Bigger" episode about its construction a month or so ago and was pleased to see the real, final version in person. They have already removed and walled-in the extra seating on the side. There was a swimming competition of some kind under way, so it was fun to see it full of young athletes and spectators.

Gave in to our need for a hamburger and ate at a restaurant in the mall around Convent Gardens – along with just about every tourist in London, or so it seemed.



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We were lucky to find a table at one of the pubs in the lower level (right behind the guys making piaya). It was good to rest. We decided that tonight was the night for Belgo Central. We (obviously) were not ready for dinner yet, so we wandered down to Trafalgar Square to pay our respects. On our way there we happened onto St. Martins in the Field and saw that they were having a Beethoven concert so decided to do that instead eating at Belgo Central. Photographed Trafalgar for had awhile, had dinner in the crypt (and re-discovered the tomb stones used to pave the floor: surely we noticed that before?), then attended the very fun concert in the church.

We sat in the very back in the Church Warden's pew, which is slightly raised and so gave us a very good view of the musicians. The Church was very warm: Many of the men in our row took off their outer/long sleeved shirts. Noticed the elderly men in front of us never even took their coats off!

Kathleen and her iPhone figured out the busses, so we took the #11 back to Victoria Station and got to see a lot of London while we were resting our feet.

Walked the rest of the way back "home" where we had a few snacks (salami, crackers, cookies) and wind before calling it a day and turning in around 11:00.

**23 Nov. 2014 – Sunday**  
**London**

It is hard to believe that this is our last day even though York seems like a long time ago. Still, I at least am ready to head back to the USA and a more normal, less touristy life. I feel very rested: this probably has been one of the best, most relaxing vacations I have ever experienced. It helps that we have week back at Mary's in New York before we finally do return home.

The forecast was correct – rain! Not too hard though. After breakfast and considering our options we headed to Camden Town market, north of London. Took the #24 bus all the way: it was fun to sit up on top and watch the waves of umbrellas of every description as our driver wound skillfully through the constructions-diverted traffic and the rain.

The market itself is simply amazing: It seems endless. We were both amazed at how little the rain seemed to affect the sellers or the tourists. It would have been more enjoyable in the bright sun, but it was great fun even in the rain. Kathleen picked up a scarf for Jane Abling (she would have loved shopping for clothes here: Every other thing we saw reminded us of her).

The variety and quality of the food being prepared and sold was breath-taking. We had resolved to eat an early dinner at Belgo Central and so abstained (apart from a few mouthwatering samples) but could have had an international feast there had we chosen to.

Found our way to the return bus and rode back downtown. Stopped off at a handy pub to take in a few beers and warm up a bit as the day has become progressively cooler. Kathleen offered to share our table with a couple waiting for a seat and we ended up talking to them for a while. They were up to London for the day. She spent 4 months in Long Beach, California on an exchange trip while studying to become a teacher. They have two homes and come to London for the day about 4 times each year.

Finally had our dinner at Belgo Central. We ate in the public half again, which was not very crowded at this early hour (5:00 pm) but it still was as good as we remembered. We both started with lobster bisque: I had chicken and Kathleen had a filet.

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Bussed our way home again: much easier on our feet (and backs) than walking!

Killed off the last of the wine in our room, enjoyed watching everybody walk by while we tried to guess where they were going.

**24 Nov. 2014 – Monday**

**London -> New York**

Had our last breakfast in our lovely apartment, packed, then headed out into the chilly morning. We had to walk 4-5 blocks to the office to drop off the keys, then 5-6 blocks to Victoria Station to catch the tube out to Heathrow.

There was a huge backlog of people lined up to get into the underground station at Victoria, apparently the Monday morning rush hour! We managed to work our way through the crowd, rode two lines and arrived at Terminal 3 about an hour later.

We were able to improve our seats a bit when we checked in. I was chosen for extra security at the gate and had to undergo a more thorough search of my bag (and person!) and had to power up my laptop and iPad.

The flight home was again very uncrowded. Our section seats about 200, but there were only about 90 people sitting there. That explains why we had no trouble changing our seats!

It was a very uneventful 7 ½ hour flight. We took advantage of the empty seats and sat in separate rows again, passing the time in peaceful contemplation (punctuated by an occasional meal).

Mary and Lorraine were delayed, so we had a 45-minute wait once we cleared customs at JFK.