

***Cathedrals, Castles, Countryside - and Pubs – WC-ALL trip to Great Britain, 2013  
Thanks to Bobbie Chase***



England and Scotland were dressed in their glorious springtime finery, the beautiful countryside was covered in daffodils and dotted with sheep and newly born lambs, and most of us never opened our umbrellas when thirty of us visited the UK in late April and early May, 2013. The WC-ALL group was shepherded by our expert and amiable leader, John Ames, for our ***Cathedrals, Castles, Countryside - and Pubs*** journey.

A small group got a head start in London for a few days, enjoying a bus tour of the City and exploring, dining and theatre going.



Upon leaving London, the **advance group** joined the others at Heathrow and on we **all** went to Windsor, the site of our first castle. Our hotel was right across the street from the 11th Century Windsor Castle, which we saw being readied for a visit from not only the Queen but the head of the United Arab Emirates as well.



While we may have wanted to stay the next morning to see the parade "dress rehearsal", we were off for nearby Winchester with a visit en route to King Henry the VIII's Hampton Court Palace - part Tudor, part Baroque. Later on, at Winchester Cathedral (1079) which **has** the largest nave and greatest overall length of any Gothic cathedral in Europe, we heard the boys' and men's choirs sing at the Evensong service. There too we saw the tomb of Jane Austen - perpetually adorned with fresh flowers.



**Now it** was time for Salisbury Cathedral (1258) which boasts a surviving copy of the Magna Carta, houses the oldest running clock (1386) and is not built on a firm foundation. On the same windy Salisbury Plain sits Stonehenge which is now roped off but **there is still** a fabulous view of this prehistoric monument.



On we journeyed to beautiful Bath with its many landmarks - the Roman baths, Royal Crescent, Jane Austen's house, and magnificent Abbey (1499) - among them. Most of us attended the Sunday Charter Service at the Abbey and even joined in the singing of "God Save The Queen". Florin Ivan, a Washington College alumnus from Romania whom several of us knew and now living and working in London, joined us for dinner in Windsor, Winchester and Bath.



After a day in the charming and picturesque Cotswolds, we were on to Stratford-upon-Avon for a walking tour and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre where that evening we could see either Shakespeare's *As You Like It* or a contemporary play, *The Empress* (Queen Victoria) - both of which received rave reviews from our group. We visited Holy Trinity Church

(1210), a "weeping" church because the altar area is slanted off to the side like Christ's head on the cross. This is the church where Shakespeare, his wife Anne, and some other members of his family are buried.



In the Lake District, we had our choice of either a boat cruise on Lake Windemere or a visit to Wordsworth's Dove Cottage. The next day we boarded two small buses for a mountain goat (actually sheep) tour of the mountains surrounding the Lakes. We visited the ruins of a Roman fort and saw many of the rugged Herdwick sheep who

spend their whole lives on these slopes and crags. The UK military uses these mountains for training purposes as they resemble the mountains of Afghanistan.



Historic York was next with its rich heritage of Roman walls, awe-inspiring York Minster (1338) - the largest gothic cathedral in northern Europe, the Jorvic (866 AD) Viking Center, The Shambles shopping area, and impressive Castle. A stately home, called Castle Howard, where *Brideshead Revisited* was filmed and where the Howard family resides, welcomed us on our way to Durham.



John Ames' son, John William, joined our group there. He had been a student at the Durham Chorister's School and a choirboy at the Cathedral when he was eleven, and was later a graduate student at Durham University. **Many of us** attended the Sunday morning Choral Eucharist service at this magnificent Norman Cathedral (1093),



and then headed north for Edinburgh on a beautiful drive along the North Sea.



While in Scotland we saw two fabulous 12th Century castles - Edinburgh (where the crown, scepter sword and Stone of Destiny used in the coronation of the infant Mary, Queen of Scots reside) and Stirling (site of wars of independence some featuring William Wallace (Braveheart) and Robert the Bruce; later



home of Mary, Queen of Scots). We walked the Royal Mile, peeked in at Holyrood Palace where the Queen resides when she is in Edinburgh, visited the Famous Grouse Distillery, a woolen mill, and marveled at the breathtaking beauty of the Highlands.

With treasured memories of new friends and good food - fish and chips, sticky toffee puddings, draft ales and ciders - at quaint and friendly restaurants and pubs, such as The Garrick Inn (Stratford), The Queens Head (Troutbeck), Lion and Lamb (York), and Angels and Bagpipes (Edinburgh),

On May 8th we bid farewell to this captivating Isle. Now expressions like "Mind the lift", "That would be lovely", and "Queues likely" are part of our vocabularies - not to mention "Keep Calm and Carry On" - or as one sign read - "Keep Calm You Can Still Marry Harry"! ".....and thereby hangs a tale....."

See the happy travelers on the next page.





A great group!

Who are these WC-ALL Travelers? The rows are hard to figure out but here's a shot:

Left to right –

- Front row Peggy Christie, Francie Miller, John Christie, Lorain Martin, Betty Barbe, Silvia Grier.
- Row 2: Bobbie Chase, Beverly Birkmire, Betty Spence, Courtney Sjostrom, John Ames.
- Row 3 Alice Ritchie, Kristina Hughes, Cathy Moyer, Tony Cucina, Nancy Kissner, Mary Celeste Alexander, Martha Holland, John Sjostrom.
- Back Row: Redge Mahaffey, Beverly Shields-Mahaffey, Joan West, Pat Cucina, Jane Rogers, Joan Wise, Cliff West, George Kissner, Ed Birkmire, Merle Phillips, Betsy Butler.