

July 8 – London

Today we arrived in London, England! After we got off the enormous plane, we stood in the Customs line before we were allowed into the country. Then we had our first experience on the “tube,” or the subway. We also took a bus to the campus where we stayed called “Brunel University”. The dorm rooms were awesome and we had two girls to a room. We had an hour to get ready, and then we headed out for the day.

For a late lunch, we went to “Gino’s”, a cute café with delicious sandwiches. Then we took the metropolitan to see some other sites in London. Corey told us we had a surprise for later and it turned out to be ride on the London Eye. The London Eye is a giant ferris wheel that offers a scenic view of London.

We then walked along the river and saw two street performers, both very interesting. One performer was dressed like a queen and painted silver. Mollie gave her money and she gestured to her, so I thought Sophie and I could get a picture out of one penny...WHOOOPS! It takes a while to adapt to the culture and the different money!

We kept walking and saw St. Paul’s Cathedral. We came at the perfect time because the bells were ringing. On the walk back to Baker’s Street we stopped off at the Pizza Express where we ate scrumptious pizza and dessert.

We took the metropolitan back to our dorms. Everyone was so tired they fell asleep as soon as they got to their rooms. It was a wonderful start to our European adventure.

By Katie Froehle
Northern Lights 16-1

July 9 - London

Today was our first full day in London, and it got off to an interesting start. Natalie and Ellen accidently got on the wrong subway and the doors shut before they could get off. Luckily, we didn’t lose them for too long, since they were smart enough to get off at the next stop. When they saw us on the next train they were so happy that they started to chase the train down the platform, which was a pretty hilarious sight. Once we got on the right train, we went to Westminster Abbey. We had a very nice tour guide named Donna, who showed us the graves of famous poets, scientists, etc. and other historical things in the abbey. We also got to see the inner part of the abbey, where the Queen’s coronation and Princess Diana’s funeral took place.

From there we walked through St. James' Park to Buckingham Palace. It was raining really hard, so we didn't get to see the changing of the guard, but we got pictures with a guard at Prince Charles' official residence. Plus we saw where Prince William and Prince Harry live. Our last stop on the tour was Trafalger Square. After the tour we split up to find some lunch in one of the street cafes (which have really good sandwiches by the way). Some of us also found an internet café/souvenir shop. While we are all having a ton of fun in Europe, it was nice to check our emails and facebook and have contact with everyone in MN.

We also had our first match against England today. We beat them in 3 games (playing best of 5). We played a fourth just for fun, and they beat us in that game. We had a hard time adjusting to some of the European rules, but it was overall a lot of fun. After the match we went out to dinner at a local pub with the British girls. They were fascinated by American culture (they wanted to know if our lives were like the American movies) and our "accents." It was cool to learn about their lives, too.

After a long walk back to the hotel, we were all pretty tired, and everyone went to sleep pretty much as soon as we got back. We still have two days in England left with more sightseeing and playing, which should be a lot of fun!! ☺

By Catherine Hermann
Northern Lights 17-2

July 10 – London to Stansted

Today we were off to the heart of London again! We started out with an hour and a half trip to Tower Hill. We took funny pictures by a fake executioner then we arrived at the Tower of London. There we met our tour guide-anonymous-he was extremely energetic and loud so that made the tour AWESOME. The tour guide was also quite scary and liked to scare little children! Inside the massive area of the London Tower there were torture chambers, the Crown Jewels, and the chapel where Anne Boleyn's remnants are. It was crazy that we were walking where all the Kings and Queens once walked and where people were beheaded and tortured.

After we went to the bathrooms, which we awarded "Lou of the Year", we had 30 minutes to eat, so we found a fish and chips stand and gobbled our food. It was tasty but we ended up sharing it with the pigeons that were attacking us for food. Our visit also included glimpses of the London Bridges which we took many pictures with and sang the rhyme "London Bridge is Falling Down!"

After another long ride back on the “Tube” or train, we barely got to our match against the English. But we made it and played amazing. We dominated all four games, mixing up positions and having lots of fun! Sophie got to set the last set (game) and she did great!

After saying our goodbyes to our English friends, we grabbed all our stuff (including our big duffle bags, back packs, and purses) we headed back for our last trip into the city. We stopped at our usual stop and headed to a restaurant called The Slug and the Lettuce. We ate various wraps, soups, and salads. Although the name was a turn off, the restaurant turned out to be delicious!

We then took the Tube to Liverpool Street and transferred to a bigger train that took us closer to our new hotel which is by the airport we will be taking off from tomorrow at two.

By Ellen Senf
Northern Lights 16-1

July 11 – London to Berlin

Today we got to sleep in until nine thirty, which was a relief even to me who prefers to sleep until noon. We woke up and ate a continental breakfast at the hotel. It was pretty satisfying; best part being the coffee machine that provided all types of hot drinks instantly. Then we packed and repacked worrying about the weight limits for our luggage (which everyone managed to pass). Then we left the hotel, leaving our luggage in a storage room in the hotel, for a small village called Bishop Stortford.

It took two busses and all of fifteen minutes to get there, but it was worth it. Once there we were let loose to explore (in no less than groups of three of coarse, but still). There was a nice little shopping mall, and if you dared to venture from there cute little shops all around. Although we all split up we managed to all eat at the same little café which served wraps and sandwiches and such. We met on a corner at three to catch a bus to go to the airport. Then we caught another bus to take us to the hotel, only to return to the airport soon after with our luggage. The journey to the plane took a great deal of time and frustration largely due to a group of German students who I can only guess must have been extremely anxious to get home what with all the pushing and budging. So after a couple gate changes and all out sprints we boarded the plane. It was the first time any of us went outside and up the stairs...It was just like the

movies! On the plane Cat and I got the best seats in the house, next to the most wonderful person there.

It was a quick ride, and at the airport we were greeted by a tour guide from previous trips, Dee. We got on a bus which took us to a restaurant where we picked up some water and sandwiches (I ate the bread) then headed to the Kienbaum Sports Center where we stayed the night.

By Sophie McBride

July 12 –Berlin

This morning we got up at 6:45am to go eat breakfast at the Kienbaum. We had bread/rolls, cereal, fruit, and yogurt. Then we went on a bus which only held six players so we had to make two shifts. We waited for a train at the train station called Haulsberg that was supposed to come at 9:30. Every time a train went by it made a huge gust of wind and we all screamed! It was the fastest train I've ever seen. It took us about 30 minutes to get to the Hauptbahnhof train station.

First we were greeted by Kessie who is a former volleyball player. She was our tour guide for the day. We went to the Reichstag which was the Government building. After that we saw the Gate and took pictures with two guards who let us wear their hats. We saw the Jewish memorial where they had really cool sculptures. We visited the Berlin Wall and saw pieces of it and then we saw the actual wall from over 20 years ago. It was amazing! We went to the Sony Center and looked at all the modern architecture.

We finally were free and got to go look around by ourselves. We had ice cream and got to go look in shops. Kessie took us to a historical church that was bombed during World War Two. Then we got to go off on our own again and went inside the department store complex. It had six floors and some very cute shops. The other place we could go was a street mall where shops were just lined up along the side of the street and they were very very expensive!! We had to be back by about 2:45 so we had a lot of time since it was only around 1:00.

Once we all got something to eat and met in front of the church we went on the train back to the Berlin HBF. We took a bus from there to the hotel we're staying at. We had about an hour to get ready because we had to play at six. We lost the match but played hard. We at least won the first game though which was good. Then we came back to the Kienbaum and ate dinner. We all had potatoes, bread and brats. It was

really good. We got to use the internet afterwards to talk to friends etc. we went back to our rooms later and hung out until we had to go to bed.

By Danielle Dombeck
Northern Lights 16-1

July 13 – Berlin

A HAIKU:

We woke up early
And went to breakfast to eat
With our referees.

Breakfast was tasty
However the long walk back
Was long and stressful.

We then prepared for
Our match against the Germans
Who are very skilled.

We had a rough match
Because they hit very hard
But we still fought back.

It's raining today
So we were lucky to bus
To the sights today.

We saw many things
Including Checkpoint Charlie
And Berliner Dom.

The Berliner Dom
Had far too many stair flights;
We were out of breath.

And Checkpoint Charlie
Was unique in its own way

And enjoyable.

Then all of us went
To small shops downtown to buy
Awesome souvenirs.

Stopped at a bake store
And had delicious desserts
That were quite filling.

Went back home tired
Yet content with what we saw.
It was a good day.

By Kristin Amermann
Northern Lights 16-2

July 14 – Berlin to Athens

This morning we started of the day with the usual long walk to the cafeteria for breakfast. There was the same food to choose from as the other previous days like bread, meat, eggs, cereal, and yogurt. After eating we had another long walk through nature to get back to the dorms where we got our bags and piled on to the coach bus. The bus was huge so everyone got their own seat with plenty of room to spear. Most people spent the bus ride listening to their I pods, sleeping or looking out the window to see the German towns we drove through. After about an hour we were back to West Berlin to spend two hours shopping and walking around the city.

Once we got to West Berlin everyone took off in groups to look at the variety of shops West Berlin has. The first thing my group went to was the ever so favorite American restaurant McDonalds. It was nice to have the comfort of some good old American food! After having some food we were off to the Nike store which had everything from shoes to soccer jerseys from many countries. Many of us also went into a tourist shop called the Berlin store. It has many souvenirs and anyone could find something a family member would like. While we were waiting in line a cute German boy started talking to Katie and I think she is in love. Michelle thought of putting a wanted poster on the coach bus of him so Katie could find him and they would be reunited. After the Berlin store we went to was H & M even though we have it back home the store still has very cute clothes and jewelry. Dee of course got jewelry there which seems to be

here favorite item to buy this trip. Time flew by and it was already one o clock and time to meet back in front of our bus. We were off to see an old palace.

After a five minute bus ride we pulled up to an old palace which is no longer used because Germany hasn't had a Monarchy since World War One. The palace was gorgeous it had a huge garden in the back which we walked around and took many pictures. We only got to see the outside of it but it was still fun too see and I enjoyed taking many pictures there. After about a half hour of being there we once again got on the bus and headed to the airport.

Once we arrived at the airport we had to say goodbye to Corey one of our tour guides. He had to take a train to Munich to start another tour with a different team. At least we still have Andreja, Corey's wife still with us. Next we stood in line to check in our bags and went through security. In no time we were by all the food and bought items to eat either at the airport or on the plane ride. Some people bought some chocolate at a store which looked delicious. Finally it was time to head to our gate and board the plane. We all walked as fast as we could up the steps of the plane so we could get good seats because here your not assigned any row, you just pick anywhere where there is any empty row. It's about a two and half hour flight to Athens and I now everyone is excited. I have a feeling this will be almost everyone's favorite city, especially Paros island where we will be able to go to the beach and get a tan.

By Lauren Grant
Northern Lights 16-1

July 15 – Athens

At 9am the sun was already shining brightly and burning down on our backs as we made the 6,000 mile trek up to the Acropolis. We all had to bring our own bottles of water and I was wishing I had brought my sweat towel once I stepped out of the hotel. At first Andrea was leading us the complete wrong way up the huge hill to the Acropolis, but she eventually called some random person and got the right directions. We climbed some steps and finally met our tour guide and started our way up to the sacred temples of the Acropolis.

While we were walking up to the top, we took many stops along the way because of the heat and our tour guide told us about the history of Athens, Greece and the Acropolis. There were so many people who were there at the same time as us and it was tough to find places to walk and take pictures. Once we got to the top we took

pictures and walked around the ancient ruins of the Parthenon and temple of Athena and Poseidon.

Everyone was exhausted on our way down from the Acropolis. We met Andrea down in the old town of Athens and walked along the main street and marketplace. It was awesome and really cool to see where people shopped way back when. We also visited one of the best preserved temples in Athens.

Solicitors attacked us right away as we sat down to eat. I gave in to the sunglasses guy and bought some awesome Gucci sunglasses for cheap. We ate real chicken gyros and then we all split up and went shopping.

Over the time we had, we all bought a bunch of souvenirs for our family, friends, and ourselves. We then met up with everyone at two o' clock and headed back to the hotel. We then had free time to go back shopping or rest.

Many of us went back out shopping and I got stamps to send about a billion postcards (dang they're expensive). We then met back at the hotel at 5:30 so Curt could bring us to an ice cream place and treat us to gelato. It was awesome. Then we got back to the hotel and rested some more. We then met back in the lobby at 7 to catch some cabs and drive down to our match, which was located in the middle of the city.

Everyone played awesome, even after a long day of walking and getting fried from the sun (Ellen). We ended up beating the Greek local team in three sets but still played two more games. We were all beyond tired after that and still went out to dinner after at 11:00pm. We didn't get back to the hotel until 1am and we all collapsed and went to bed right away.

Overall the day was **AWESOME**.

By Natalie Walseth

July 16 – Athens

This morning we woke up and met downstairs for breakfast and it was really good. There was a lot of food anywhere from scrambled eggs to pastries. Then we all went back up stairs and got ready for the day. We then walked to the Old Olympic Stadium;

it was really big and exciting to see. After we saw the stadium we then started on our long journey up a HUGE mountain that took a while to climb it was excruciating, we were sweating bullets.

It seemed like a dessert, but once we finally reached the top it was well worth our time. The view was amazing and you could see the whole city, from the acropolis to the ocean. Then we began the walk down, which seemed just as long as the one going up. Once we reached the bottom we went to lunch in groups and all went back to the hotel. Some people went up to the roof and layed out to tan, others went shopping.

Then after we all had napped and were rested up for the day we met with the coaches and Curt took us out to get ice cream. It was really good since it was hot outside. Then we all went back to the hotel to begin getting ready for the last match we would play together in Europe. We were playing the Greek Team. After we got ready we walked down to the taxi pick up and we all got into our taxis. Me, Lauren and Dee were in one taxi and Mollie, Kristin and Katie were in another.

It started off sorta rough because we had to argue about the pricing of the taxi the drivers were not very friendly. The driver in Adam's taxi was weird he had blue lips and fell asleep at the wheel several times during the ride. He also taught the girls many Greek swear words and offered them cigarettes. The Taxi driver in Michelle's car was also weird. He told her that she had to pay his speeding ticket and was rolling cigarettes in the car; both of the drivers dropped us off at the wrong location so there was an argument. Over all it was a fun and interesting ride. Once we met up with the others at the gym we all got our stuff on and began to warm up. We won all of our games and it was fun.

Then at the end we gave the girls our jerseys. Then we got back into the Taxi's and drove to the restaurant and ate chicken and French fries, but Sophie had spaghetti because she is a vegetarian. It was over all a really good meal. After dinner we made our way back to the hotel to start packing and get some sleep since we had to wake up early the next morning, since we are leaving for the Greek island!

By Elly Braaten

July 17 – Athens to Paros Island

The morning came as a surprise to Natalie, Sophie, and I. We woke up at 5:58, 13 minutes after the time we were supposed to be down in the lobby ready to leave for the ferry. As you can imagine, it was hectic! I rushed and packed the rest of my things

up, without brushing my teeth; yuck. Once we all finally got down to the lobby several other groups woke up late too, so that made me feel a little better. The moment we were all gathered we were off on a crazy race to get to the metro station, which made us all pretty upset. I was drenched in sweat and felt disgusting! We got on the subway and that ride was about 30 minutes to the waiting place by the ferry. Finally, we walked onto the ferry, put our bags in a storage area on the boat, and headed up to decently comfortable seats on the 6th floor. Little did we know what was about to happen...

The first pair to be kicked out of their seats was Sophie and Dee, soon followed by Elly and Kristin. I was confused why we kept getting our seats taken, because Ellen said that it was business seating, but once everyone was kicked out of their seats we realized that we had been sitting in the “higher” class area, and business class seating was more towards the front of the ferry. Katie stuck with me and we made our way to the top of the ship, which was open to the beautiful ocean of Greece; it was a great view. Most of us were still tired from the grueling sprint to the ferry earlier that morning, so some dozed off, especially Kristin who I did not even recognize because of the shawl covering her body. After she woke up we decided to go inside the boat and find a good business seat and grab some coffee and a snack. Most of the ATM’s in Greece have failed me miserably, and of course the one on the boat did as well. Kristin, the kind soul she is, took 20 Euros out for me and we got our breakfast/snack, and then headed for the search for seats.

The boat was basically packed, so we did not find open seats; Dee and Sophie found two near, so we just decided to make our own little lounge with plastic chairs behind all of the cushioned ones. Our “VIP” section was by the luggage and an old man sleeping on the floor; it was wonderful. There we enjoyed our breakfast and started journaling about the crazy cab driver from the day before. Dee and Sophie left their chairs, so to avoid creepy comments by a man, we skedaddled to their seats. That is when the motion sickness got to me. I guess when we were inside, Kat made some buddies outside. I heard got guitar lessons from a Greek man singing “Hotel California”. (A Greek rendition). Three motion sickness pills later, we arrived at the dock in Paros Island.

Paros is b-e-a-utiful! Our hotel is absolutely a dream come true. There is an enormous pool that looks over the spectacular Adriatic Sea. The only downfall is the salt water pool, and the rock sand. (Yes, the sand is mostly rocks as big as golf balls). That did not bother me though, because I was soon relaxing on a beach chair tanning in the “close to the equator sun”. It is also breezy here so that balances the brutal heat of the sun. After spending about four hours outside, all of us girls had free time, so I took a nice long nap. Dinner that night was interesting; there was chicken soup and bread

that I enjoyed the most. I was shocked when I found out a tiny bottle of pop costs 2.50 here☹. I decided not to try the seaweed wrapped something's, but I tried the strawberry mousse, which I found out was not strawberry mousse; but rather garlic red spread for bread! The spoonful of that made my tummy hurt, but I had to go to town that night because I felt I might miss out.

Town in Paros is a mixture of child street beggars, creepy old men, henna tattoos, delicious baklava, and ATM's that work! It was a good time, but as responsible young adults, Kristin, Dee, Sophie, and I decided to go onto the bus 20 minutes early so we did not miss it. Through a series of unfortunate assumptions, Curt, Adam, and Michelle were victims of our over-responsibility. On the ride back Andrea came back and found us and said that everyone was looking for us. Whoops! I apologize profusely. In an attempt to make up for our being too on time, we went straight to our rooms when we returned. We got a great night of sleep!!!

July 18 - Paros Island

My room got up late again today, so we missed breakfast, but Kristin describes it as: The bagels were hard as rocks; the cereal was a wannabe count chocula, and the juice might as well have been squeezed lemons. After I heard this I was happy with not eating breakfast. Then it was off to a beach with sand, which we thought would be a hop skip and a jump, but hours later found out it was longer than anticipated. The drivers in Greece are not concerned with road markings or the edge of cliffs, so I said a few prayers there and back. Once we arrived at "Golden Beach" Kristin and I started the construction of the sand Parliament with Big Ben.

I knew in advance that Parliament in London is not surrounded by an ocean, so Kristin and I put our heads together and built a moat that soon fell so we built a wall that soon crumbled, so we built a moat around the wall that protects the moat of the Parliament castle. It was grueling, but we decided to finally start the construction of our castle, until we saw a clear looking slug, so we did not build any longer, for fear of an insect problem in the castle. We then laid out for about 30 minutes and got hungry so went to a little eating area by the beach. There I had margarita pizza, which is basically cheese pizza with tomatoes on top. Elly and I got fries also but I ate them with salt because the ketchup here tastes funny. The meal was decently satisfying, though Sophie got shrimp that was still in its bodies; eyes and all. After eating we went into the ocean and enjoyed it for about 10 more minutes then went to the bus stop.

The ride back to our hotel made my stomach more upset than ever; the drivers here have a way of making it look like they will drive you into a wall but at the last second

turn sharply. I do not like it at all. Happy that I am off the bus and safe, I am now writing this journal entry and am going to end it and take a nap! Good bye!

By Mollie Geske
Northern Lights 16-1