

Wadebridge Sixth Form A Level History trip to London

2nd - 4th March 2014

On Sunday lunchtime we set off for London in the school mini bus ably driven by Roger Chick. By six o'clock that evening we found ourselves walking past the magnificent sight of a floodlit St Paul's Cathedral as we made our way to our Youth Hostel accommodation in a building once used as a school for the cathedral's choir boys.

On Monday morning, after a full English breakfast, we headed off to the City Temple conference centre near Holborn Circus for a series of 'university style' lectures on the life and times of Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union until his death in 1956. It was really interesting listening and talking to four of the country's leading experts on twentieth century Soviet history. Did you know that eighty percent of the fighting during the entire Second World War took place on the Russian front? Did you know that Stalin refused to evacuate women and children from Stalingrad when it was under attack by the Germans because he believed that his soldiers would fight harder to defend their city? We came away with lots of useful information and further questions but all agreed that it was an excellent way to add another dimension to their studies.

That evening we took advantage of 'Monday madness' discounts at Maxwell's restaurant in James Street near Covent Garden before heading to the New London Theatre in Drury Lane to experience a moving performance of Michael Morpurgo's 'War Horse'. This is a must see for anyone remotely interested in the history of the First World War. Roger said he would quite happily have sat through the performance twice. Thrilling stuff!

The following morning we took full advantage of the morning sunshine and walked across the Millennium Bridge and then made our way along the South Bank as far as the London Eye before crossing Westminster Bridge to have our photos taken in front of the statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square. Paul also decided to have a photo with another of his heroes, Nelson Mandela.



Our final destination was the Churchill War Rooms, a secret underground bunker beneath the streets of London from where Churchill and his war cabinet directed the war effort in relative safety from the German bombs. This warren of rooms and corridors has been left largely untouched since it was last used in 1945. It also contains a museum dedicated to Churchill himself with many fascinating artefacts including the Colt Revolver he used during the Boer War and of course his many outfits including the 'baby-blue siren suit' (or onesie) and spotted bow tie. We also saw the famous 'broom cupboard' from where Churchill was able to speak directly to President Roosevelt on a specially secure 'hotline'. The museum also houses a vast array of documents which we were able to view. A really useful complement to their Churchill document studies module back in school.

Many thanks to Mrs Lyle and Mr Chick for their hard work and support throughout this highly successful trip.

Mr Griffith, March 2014