

In the English Landscape

Sarah Burger

One week after finishing finals in spring 2018, I drove back to West Lafayette for a two day intensive English history session to prepare for *In the English Landscape*. After a late change in flight plan, I made it to England and through customs just minutes before our study abroad group's bus left for the Euston rail station. There was a group of 19 of us from Purdue; 17



students, 1 horticulture professor and 1 history professor. We were to tour several gardens throughout England and learn the history that influenced the different designs.

After being in England a day, I learned that their food is quite bland. They use few seasonings in comparison with Americans. They also love fried potatoes of any kind (though they are under salted). Sometimes they were in thin slices and deep fried, and other times they were French fry style which they call chips. We had several of the meals cooked for us by a professional English cook. I ate some beautiful dishes decorated with flowers like snap dragons. The flowers I tasted were rather plain which was very fitting for English taste.

We visited 2-3 sites daily. Before being allowed to explore the sites on our own, a student would give a brief history overview of the site. I quickly learned what styles I did and didn't like. Brownian and Augustin landscapes are by far my least favorite (trees, grass, sheep, garden follies, and water). On the other hand, I loved seeing all the formal gardens (Elizabethan and Victorian style). Because of being an island, England has much more moderate temperatures, creating the perfect environment to grow almost everything from palms to deciduous plants to evergreens. They grow the largest and most beautiful rhododendrons I have ever seen, some over 12 feet tall.

One day we went to the world famous Chelsea Flower Show put on by the Royal Horticultural Society in London. At the Chelsea Flower Show, I saw many varieties of plants in every color imaginable. They also had a few landscape designs built by local landscaping companies. After seeing





the landscape plots, I began to see that Americans use landscapes differently than the British. While the British design gardens to display wealth and beautiful plants of many colors, Americans design landscapes to be used (patios, outdoor kitchens, pools, pergolas, etc.).

While touring Stourhead, a friend and I decided to go off the main paved road onto a dirt path. After walking through a cow pasture, a forest and a meadow, we found King Alfred's Tower. The 160 foot tall tower was built in 1772 for King Alfred the Great, who fought in the Seven Years War against France.

I loved my time in England and seeing a different culture. I got to experience watching the soccer world cup in a bar while the Chelsea team was playing. It was more fun watching all the English fans in the bar than the soccer players on TV. Traveling throughout England was a fantastic way to start off my summer and has given me a desire to travel more someday.

