

HUE 2021

LEARNING TO ROLL WITH IT

The month of July saw growth and adventure. Students finally began to feel settled into their home away from home, and class work began to pick up. New food, travel and studies began to feel routine and normal, yet there was still the lingering reality of living in a country entirely *not* our own. And so we lived our lives to the fullest. Here are our final stories

FOODIE SUPERLATIVES!

Most British

"Afternoon tea at the Woozley!"

Mikey Hutchinson

Prettiest

"The smoothie bowl from Fly!"

Haley Lynn

Tastiest

"The steak at Flat Iron!"

Riley Shephard



ARTICLES AND DESIGN BY ZACH BISHOP

THE KNIGHTS' IN SHINING ARMOR

WRITTEN BY ZACH BISHOP

This summer marked Tyler and Lauren Knight's 11th year of bringing the world to the students of HUE, and its challenges and joys led to some time of reflection. "We started in August of 2010, and we thought we would just help out for one year while I was studying at Oxford," said Tyler. "That first year was great, so we agreed to do it for another year, and when that second year turned out great, we thought, 'well, we'll do this for a while.'"

Lauren recalls her early years as director as well. "I got the job because Tyler was moving to Oxford to do his graduate work, and I didn't know what my visa would allow me to do, so I just offered to volunteer and cook meals and hang out with students for the HUE program," she said. "As time went on, I became more involved with the trip planning aspect, and I went on several day trips with the students. From there, I eventually stepped into the role of full-time director of HUE."

Since then, the two have grown their family and grown Harding University in England into an educationally and experientially dynamic program. Lauren runs the planning, booking and itinerary side of things and teaches the humanities course while Tyler runs the accounting of HUE and teaches the bible, economics and communications courses. "While Lauren is interacting with the group and planning and facilitating their experience, I'm more in the background making sure that the business of HUE is running smoothly," said Tyler.

Lauren uses her interpersonal skills to help drive the experiential vigor of the program. "As a director, there's a weird blend of academic experience and pastoral experience that you really have to balance well," she said. "I'm constantly trying to look for experiences that are fun but that will also actually help students learn and see the world in a bigger way."

Even with more than a decade of experience, this summer was a whole new ball game for the Knights as they worked to give the students the best experience in the midst of a pandemic. "Lauren and Tyler spent so much time working to make our trip the best it could be," said rising Junior Hannah Ferrie. "They would spend time late in the evenings and early in the mornings booking things for us and figuring out our schedule, and they would always welcome our thoughts and opinions for the best way to do something."

Throughout the summer, the stresses of the pandemic and classes were a constant for the students, so Lauren put in the extra effort to accommodate students' mental health. "I'm responsible for making sure students are in a good place so that they can actually be digesting what they're seeing," she said. "You have to make people feel comfortable and taken care of so they can be open to the world around them. If they're stressed, they're not going to function and it's not going to work, so you have to create a tenor of ease and peace that is very important."

At the end of the day, the two directors are doing the best they can to create the most academically credible trip possible without compromising the excitement and thrill of being in a different country. Not even a pandemic could change that. "We're always trying to figure out what's fresh, what are people doing, what is important culturally, and then we try to add that into the experience," Lauren said. "We integrate students into what's happening culturally in London and in the world on a bigger level."

Tyler agrees. "We have access to the most international city in the world. It's the closest place that people from the east can come to if they want to move west and vice versa, and that has all kinds of effects on British culture. You never feel like you're not learning something here."

After 11 years of planning and educating, the two directors still love what they do, and they see HUE as their life calling. "We see this as our lives work up to now, and when we think about our future, we always think of it in terms of working for HUE," Tyler said.

Even through the ups and downs and stresses of this unpredictable pandemic, the Knights made HUE 2021 happen. Here's to 11 more years of creating life changing experiences for the students and young people from across the pond.



PHOTOS FROM LAUREN KNIGHT

DAY TRIPS IN JULY

WRITTEN BY ZACH BISHOP

In between class in the flats and free time on their own, students had the opportunity to visit incredible places like Stonehenge, Stratford Upon Avon and Salisbury for their humanities course. Each student was required to give 2-4 on-site presentations at historic places of their choice from Lauren and Tyler's itinerary. Each student studied their location and taught the group about its significance to British culture.



FREE TIME

WRITTEN BY ZACH BISHOP

Before the pandemic, there had never been a full, semester long summer program to England at Harding, but this year changed that. The HUE summer 2021 program entered uncharted territory and was unique in many ways, but most notably was the absence of independent travel due to international travel restrictions. This would have put a real damper on the trip if it hadn't been for the abundance of down time that was factored into the schedule. Nothing can replace the rejuvenating effect that free afternoons, evenings and even full days had on the students. Day trips and museum tours as a group were incredible experiences, but nothing beat the ability to jump on the tube or a train to go on individual adventures, and this freedom led to some amazing diversity in students' destinations.

For some, free time meant traveling miles outside of the city, and for others it meant staying local. "One of my favorite free times was going down to Portobello Market in London and seeing the fun things that people were trying to sell and experiencing the culture down there," said rising junior Cenzi Crain. "I love finding random cafes in the city to try different coffee, and my favorite one was called the Victoria House, which was close to the British Museum."

Rising junior Gabi Gonzalez found a favorite adventure in Scotland during a free afternoon. "One of my favorite final experiences was in Scotland when a few of us climbed half of Arthur's seat and had a picnic," said Gonzalez. "We just chatted about the trip and all the amazing things we'd done."

For rising juniors Sadie Alexander and Cole Davis, taking an oh-so-British trip to a castle was their idea of a fun day trip. "On one of the free days in England, Cole and I hopped on a train to go to Hever Castle, which is one of King Henry VIII's castles and also Anne Boelyn's childhood home," said Alexander. "The castle was beautiful, but the grounds of Hever Castle were just as beautiful. There's a lake, beautiful Italian gardens, fountains, a small village of shops, a little restaurant, and an area used for jousting. We had a great day."

Some students even channeled some American summer energy into their free time and took trips to the beach. "We decided to go to this little town called Whitstable one Friday night and booked our tickets early the next morning at the train station," said rising senior Haley Lynn. "It was a gorgeous little beach town and was a perfect day away from the busyness of London."

At the encouragement from Directors Lauren and Tyler Knight, students also didn't shy away from taking advantage of the more "touristy" activities during their down time. Rising sophomore Sierra Cassidy not only loved the London Eye, but said it was her favorite free time moment. "My group all walked there, got on, saw the amazing views and got amazing photos, and then went and got some amazing ice cream. It was just such a fairy tale experience," she said.

HUE students this summer got over their lack of official independent travel by learning to take advantage of the individualistic nature of the program. They made the most of what time they had by going on life-changing adventures, making memories that will last a lifetime.



YOU NEED TO BE MORE...FLEXIBLE.

WRITTEN BY ZACH BISHOP



This summer, the students on HUE learned a lesson in flexibility. Plans changed daily due to COVID-19 restrictions from the British government, and the itinerary couldn't be scheduled more than a week in advance. "This semester has been put together as we go," said HUE director Lauren Knight. "There isn't really an itinerary, it's being put together a week or two at a time." Luckily the students at HUE proved to be very helpful and easy going, which helped make what could have been a difficult trip very fulfilling and enjoyable. "Being flexible in London is essential," said rising junior Cenzi Crain. "You just have to be, especially during COVID. There are things that I wish we could have done that were just not possible with COVID, but that's ok and you have to learn to be flexible in that."

With new challenges every day, it wasn't always easy to be flexible, and some students were able to roll with the punches better than others. When looking for someone flexible to imitate, rising senior Haley Lynn would come to several peoples' minds.

"Whenever plans changed, or there was an open spot in our schedule, she was always game for whatever came next and took everything in stride," said rising Junior Keller Montgomery. "That kind of flexibility is definitely nice to have on a trip like this."

Lynn took everything as it came. "You have to be able to roll with it," she said. "If no one wants to do the thing that you want to do, you have to be super flexible and do what other people want to do, and then they can be flexible later and do the thing that you want to do. It's very give and take, and as long as you have a good attitude, everything will work out."

One of the biggest challenges of the semester for some students was learning how to have class in the living rooms of the flats. Everything from tests and group presentations to lectures were held in a tight space, and this was a learning curve for most everyone. "I knew class abroad would be different, but we did most of it in our flats in a living room, or in a park," said Crain. "I learned to be flexible in that, and I even learned how to enjoy something that is different from how we were traditionally taught it's supposed to be."

Another big adjustment that the group had to make was, ironically, not going places in a group. "We couldn't all walk to a destination together because that would draw heads," said Lauren. "It wasn't culturally acceptable to go in a big group yet because COVID regulations are so strict."

Travel and booking challenges helped teach students how to be quick on their feet and solve problems on their own. "You can't just be flexible, but you also have to be curious," said Lauren. "You have to be thinking, 'Ok, how do I solve this problem?'"

After three months of refining their problem solving skills, students looked back at the unpredictability of the trip with a newfound hindsight. "We got hit with a lot of unexpected things that caused our plans to change, but generally, people were pretty flexible with our schedule," Montgomery said. Rising junior Mikey Hutchinson had a similar experience. "Looking back on it, whenever I had a good attitude it worked out and I had more fun."

A lot of curve balls were thrown at the students this summer, but nothing, not even evacuating the the flat in Edinburgh at midnight due to bed bugs, tight train rides from London with no room for luggage, or self administered COVID tests at 7 am, could dampen the mood forever. They would simply monitor and adjust. In the end, everyone knew that they were on the trip of a lifetime in the most international country in the world, growing incredible friendships and relationships.



SNAPSHOTS OF SCOTLAND

