

July 2011

This is the journal from my trip to England for Oxbridge. It was written in real time so there is lots of misspelling! It's also full of honest reactions. So, I withheld my urge to go back and edit...I hope I don't regret it!

Day 1: Arriving in England-Sunday

We got off the plane at 12:30 London time after an eight hour flight. We were upgraded to business class and, oh, what a difference that made! Big chairs, doting flight attendants, good food, large pillow and a quilt (not a blanket, I mean a quilt) and even a complimentary travel kit full of travel goodies. So, when we got off the plane, between my excitement and the comfortable flight, I felt energized. Steve picked us up from Heathrow and we drove to Oxford. He got a call on the way from someone in the CS Lewis Foundation. They needed him to swing by The Kilns (CS Lewis home) to pick up some paperwork. "Okay, if you insist!" I thought! Yeah right...It was all I could do to stay in the car while he went to the door. I wanted to jump out and kiss the ground, grab a piece of grass and tuck it in my pocket or at the very least roll down the window and breathe in some of the scholarly air! In moments, some of the staff came out to the car to meet us, well, actually Lisa since Steve had told them about her. I was just the lucky bystander. I met the president of the Foundation; Dr. Stan Madson, Kim Gilnett, who would be teaching my seminar on Lewis Remembered; among others. It was a perfect beginning.

After we arrived at Keble College, we unpacked and settled into our dorm rooms. The room is complete with a twin bed, desk, shelf, wardrobe and...a tea table. I love that!

We then decided to keep moving so jet lag wouldn't get the best of us. We walked down High Street in Oxford and stopped at an outdoor café for tea. It was breezy and enchanting. We popped into a tea shop and meandered down the cobblestone sidewalks. I couldn't help thinking these were the same sidewalks Lewis and Tolkien most likely walked. Now, I know he's not Jesus, but it was still very cool.

We then met Steve for dinner at The Eagle and Child. This was the famous meeting place of the Inklings; CS Lewis' literary group. This was the pub where they met weekly to discuss what they were writing...such as the manuscripts which eventually became *The Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Lord of the Rings*. We settled at a little table in the modest pub and after dinner, we paused at the cubby where the Inklings met. On the walls were pictures and even a piece of Lewis writing in his own hand! I was mesmerized. He has had such profound influence on me and it was just thrilling to be in a place I had read so much about where so many incredible ideas were shaped.

We walked back to the dorm and I finally went to bed about 10:30. And, that's when it gets dark! Long, wonderful day. What a great beginning!

Day 2: Monday - London with Lisa

It began at 8:00 in the dining hall of Keeble College. We had the option of eating an English Continental Breakfast or a Traditional English Breakfast. Tough choice since one consisted of cold ham and cheese, pastry and fruit and the other of poached egg, grilled tomato, baked beans and smoked salmon!! I would have been fine with Cheerios! But, who cared what the food was because it was served by proper British young men in the black trousers and crisp white shirts! The dining room was lovely.

Just like the dining room where Harry Potter would have eaten his eggs, this one had long oak tables and benches with lamps in the middle of each. The dishes were china and the napkins were cloth. The service was wonderful and the tea was what one would expect in the UK...exceptional!

After breakfast and gathering maps and bus fare, Lisa and I headed into London. The one hour bus ride took two and we arrived just in time to eat a Chicken Pasty from The Cornish Bake Shop right by where the Tube let us off. It was like a pot pie wrapped in a fluffy crust...like what a "Hot Pocket" wishes it could be!! We then bought a back pack for seven pounds and treaded down toward Harrods. We spent only 30 minutes there because it was huge and was like retail gone wild. So, we instead went across the street to Café Rouge and had tea and Creme Brulee'. Of course, we sat outside surrounded by British accents, the smell of smoke (since the Brits like their cigarettes,) and felt the cool breeze. The temps are in the high 60's and low 70's-a welcome relief from the heat wave in the Midwest of the US.

All the while we are sipping tea; Lisa is attempting to find the phone number for a salon that offers Fish Pedicures. After finally texting Angela back at World Headquarters (aka my basement where Jennifer Rothschild Ministries is housed) she found what she was looking for! Angela simply googled it and found us a salon in Kensington. Off we went and ended up in the Aqua Sheka salon where we sat in swanky chairs and hung our feet into aquariums full of Puka Fish!

The tiny grayish fish come from Turkey where they fin their way through rivers. I think they like being at the Salon better though. They nibbled vigorously for the entire 25 minutes I kept my feet in their habitat. It was as if you could hear 100 little fish voices chattering "More! More! Yum! Move it Nemo...I want some!" The big ones would knock off the little ones and I would feel the brush of fins against my foot. I was told those little fisheys were "suckers" but at first, I thought Lisa and I were the real suckers! I was wrong! It was fun, interesting and my feet were so, so soft. Besides, even if it didn't fulfill its promise to exfoliate and stimulate circulation, how often do you get to sit with one of your best friends in a foreign country while both of you marvel at a fish frenzy at your feet?! It was something I will never forget!

Day 3: Tuesday - Oxford Tour and opening of the Institute

In the morning we went into the City of Oxford. We visited Blackwells Book Store and drank tea while listening to a wonderful street musician who played mostly Eric Clapton! We also went to Boots Pharmacy, which is famous over here. It is a cross-between Sephora and a fancy drug store.

In the afternoon, we toured the city of Oxford on foot. It was a six hour walking tour crammed into three hours! The tour was so packed that our guide felt she had to go extra fast just to get it all in. But I'm so glad she did. We toured four colleges including Magdalen College where Lewis taught. The guide pointed out the rooms he occupied during his tenure. There was purple wisteria creeping up the walls surrounding the windows of his room. There, we saw Addison's Walk—the place where Hugo Dicon and Tolkien and Lewis walked one night and Lewis became convinced Christianity was a "myth become fact" or a "true myth." This was an incredibly influential event solidifying his conversion to Christianity. After the tour, Lisa and I stayed on foot and went back to Addison's Walk. We ate a pasty on a bench there and then walked it. It lines the Cherwell River. It was breezy just like I imagine it was the night of their life changing walk. It was a fulfillment of a dream for me. I was so captivated by the story when I first read it in *Surprised by Joy* and then to walk it was just so special. I thanked God for such a privilege and I also thanked him for Lewis' life which has impacted me so much. I joke that I have a crush on him, and I guess I do. But it is deeper than that. God really used him as my authoritative guide when I was deep in my valley of doubt during my depression. I had such questions and knew how much I didn't know and how little I was capable of knowing. I finally conceded that if Lewis, who is far brighter, learned and wise than I, could believe, then so could I. I guess I trusted him and that helped me to trust God again. That's why I loved walking that path—it was the fruition of the dark path I walked the last 2 years. It was like triumphant rest after a long day of struggle.

We also walked along the old city wall-I think it was from the 1600's and our guide pointed out Tolkien's home on Honeywell Street. Then we went back to Keeble and officially registered for the conference and then to dinner. It was again in the dining room at Keeble. The long oak tables were set with china and goblets. We were served salmon, which was exceptionally fresh, steamed veggies and potatoes. The dessert was a cherry tart that was divine. Of course, tea is served at every meal in a tea cup with a saucer-no mugs used for sipping tea on this side of the pond!!

The opening evening service included a welcome from Dr. Stan Madson, a kind and lovely man who is the president of the CS Lewis Foundation and then a message by Earl Palmer, an Anglican priest. It was very High Church. Lots of liturgy and standing and sitting-which was a very good thing since Lisa and I would have fallen asleep if we'd sat still for more than ten seconds.

Day 4: Wednesday - Os Guinness and the Kilns

The morning plenary is held each day at University Church. Today was Os Guinness. Man, now I know I am way out of my league. The man is an incredible thinker and communicator. I was dazed listening to him. What a great start. The worship is formal and the people are friendly and many are far more geeky than I am! What a relief!

After the session, we went to a covered market and then to a really cool store called, "Lush." Then we lunched at another tea room in Oxford, and we went to our afternoon workshops. Lisa's was "Unveiling Ungit" and it is a discourse on his book, "Till We Have Faces." Mine was called "Lewis Remembered." I boarded a van to the Kilns. I had no idea when I signed up for the Lewis Remembered workshop that it would be held at Lewis' home. I was overwhelmed to enter! No tour but we gathered in the largest room which was added on later to the home. We sat in a circle, introduced ourselves and then listened to Ken Gillnett, a kind man from Seattle Pacific University, talk about Lewis through the eyes of his friends. Today, he read a letter from a little girl who had visited the Kilns lately and tucked it away in a book shelf. It was precious. Her name was Maggie and she was thanking him for his impact on her life and telling him *Narnia* were her favorite books. It was so touching. We talked about how Lewis was so loved and respected. Not just Dons and other notables liked and respected him, but those who one would not expect him to relate to genuinely like and respected him—people like his barber and driver. Ken read the end of the *Weight of Glory* which tells Lewis' view of others. He said that next to the holy sacraments, our neighbor is the holiest thing we know. He treated every person with such deference. Lewis even answered each letter the day it arrived and it often took him three hours a day to do this. He said it was because he didn't have to write a book. But since he did, he had a responsibility to his readers to answer them. It was inspiring and thought provoking for me as an author. I had just told Lisa on the train to London how I struggled with answering emails. I told her it was overwhelming and time consuming and I wasn't sure I really needed to. Now, I hear this. I am asking God if it means anything for me. Either way, it inspired me to love deeper.

(And, we even had tea at the Kilns-enchanting!)

The evening was again at University Church. We heard Steve Bell, who was amazing songwriter and singer from Canada and then a Reader's Theatre presentation of the off Broadway show "Freud's Last Session." It was performed by The Lambs Players out of California. They were fabulous and the dialogue was riveting. I absolutely loved it.

Day 5: Thursday - Walter Hooper

Today in my workshop we met Walter Hooper. He was Lewis' secretary at the end of Lewis' life and became a trustee of his estate and a Literary Executor—at least I think that's what it's called! Anyway, he was so sharp and charming. He's 83 years old.

I asked him what he perceived in Lewis that he thought may have made him different, special etc. He said he observed how Lewis would "DO ALL HE COULD" for someone or a situation. Then, he would leave it behind. Trust God and decide he had done all he could—I don't want to misquote him—I need to check my recording on this. I do remember he told how Lewis didn't despise merriment. He could laugh and enjoy people even when there was stress. This was because he was able to take people seriously enough to enjoy them and be merry. Very interesting. I think I have read this in the *Weight of Glory*.

Day 6: Friday - The City of Oxford orchestra

Today Lisa and I had a private tour with Kim and Debbie at the Kilns. We sat in Lewis' parlor and had tea before we wandered around his home. I touched Warney's typewriter, saw Lewis' bed and bath. We sat at the table where he took his meals. Kim and Debbie both gave us special insight and access. This was truly beyond words for me—my cup runneth over.

Then, in the afternoon, we went punting on the Cherwell River. A young man was our driver, steerer, paddler...I don't know what you call him! But, we just sat and enjoyed the ride while he plunged those giant poles into the river and pushed them against the river bed to keep us moving. We caught the boat at the base of Magdalen College. Our voyage took us right beside Addison's Walk—loved that!

Then...What a night! We had a private concert by the city of Oxford Symphony in the Sheldonian Theatre and it was stunning. The acoustics were phenomenal and the orchestra was top notch. I felt so honored to be able to listen to such a renowned group of musicians. There were some songs I felt like I didn't want to exhale until the last note so as not to spoil the beauty. I will always remember such a rich sensory experience. I wish my mom could have been at this. She would have been enraptured.

Day 7: Saturday - Bus to Cambridge and walking tour

This morning we took an early bus to Cambridge. It was a two-hour drive and Lisa said the countryside of England is like a painting. We arrived and settled in to our dorm rooms at Robison College. Unfortunately, I think this may have been a boy's dorm room...the smell remains. A mother of boys always recognizes that distinct smell...okay, bluntly, it smells like urine in this room! But, I travel with a candle so hopefully, it will help! We immediately left to walk into town to explore.

Upon arriving in the main part of town (it isn't nearly as big or exciting as Oxford,) we found a sidewalk café to have lunch. Then we poked around in the little shops—my favorite was a silver shop where I got Mom a sugar shaker spoon. It is sterling and has tiny holes allowing sugar to be shaken out over cookies or a cake. It is quaint and oh so British!

We then met at the Round Church for our "Christian Heritage" walking tour. Lisa and I were both worn out from the week and were not looking forward to the two-hour tour on our feet. We were both pleasantly surprised. This was the most interesting tour yet. So many nuggets. So many famous people from Cambridge were so pivotal in so many arenas of life, both ancient and modern. One of the most

fascinating was the man who invented the computer. It took up a whole floor. I need to google his name. Anyway, the apple with a bite missing that Mac uses is because of him. He committed suicide from biting into a poison apple. Who knew?

After the tour, we found a place for dinner/high tea. (It really is a full meal.) We had some time to stall before the evening session so we walked around some more and sat at another sidewalk café. Then to the great St. Mary's Church for a presentation of the making of the movie *Amazing Grace*. It was more interesting because we had just learned so much about Wilbur Wilburforce during our Christian Heritage Tour. What a great man of courage and faith.

Day 8: Sunday - Tea at the Round Church and Ely Cathedral and *Till We Have Faces*

Lisa, Steve and I headed into town to have tea at the Round Church. It was supposed to be a part of our tour the day before but our schedule didn't work well to enjoy it so they invited us back. The ladies who served were so kind. One was only there for the summer while her husband studied or researched or something heady at one of the colleges in Cambridge. She was actually from Knoxville, Tennessee! How neat to be with sisters in Christ gathered in this one place from all around the world. And, the tea was one of the best repleat with sausage rolls, scones and tea cakes.

We walked back into town to Robison College to join 290 or so of our closest new friends on a bus to the village of Ely. The ride was only about 40 minutes and very pastoral. Lisa and I dozed. Well, she slept and I couldn't help staying tuned in to the conversation in the seats around me. I really thought I was a geek - no way! These people are brilliant and never lack the energy to plum the depths of their vast knowledge! I was drowning in a sea of intellect. I just wanted to yell..."Don't you people ever talk about anything shallow?! Shoes? Shopping? Chocolate? People Magazine?!" Seriously, I thought I had an insatiable appetite for all things heady and curious until now. I think that what I thought was appetite was really deprivation. I just don't have anyone to discuss this kind of stuff with and I do enjoy it. But, I learned on this bus ride that I enjoy it in moderation-I'm just not that bright and clearly, a little shallow! Ha! I was even more exhausted after trying to relax on the bus simply because just listening to these intellectual giants wore me out! Man!

We arrived in the little village of Ely and Lisa and I took off for the shops. We first ate lunch at the cathedral's café. She and I both had tomato soup and this time a cappuccino instead of tea. We needed the strong stuff. We meandered into and out of little shops and eventually stopped for tea again. This time, Nancy joined us. She is an interesting woman who is clearly very deep and warm. I enjoyed the little time I got with her.

We then went inside the Ely Cathedral as Evensong would begin soon. We poked around the magnificent church and took turns sitting on the throne that was used in the movie, "The Kings Speech." The service finally began. We joined parishners from the community. The CS Lewis Chorale sang; we did lots of responsive reading and sang several hymns. It was a long service and I marveled at the small children that were there. Clearly, they were there each Sunday and this is the only form of worship they know. It was at times hard for me to follow so I can only imagine how those children experience. I understood more clearly what a typical British school child experiences growing up in church. Very formal.

When the service finished, we boarded a bus and headed back to Cambridge. But the day wasn't done yet...we attended the most excellent presentation of *Till We Have Faces* performed by the Lambs Players. It was so well done and haunting. They are such a talented and intuitive drama troop. The

music they incorporated; the lines they drew from Lewis' book; the way the actors communicated characters...I was totally enthralled. The quality of what this institute puts on is beyond what I could have dreamed of.

Day 9: Monday - Randy Alcorn and Walter Hooper at Robison College

One more walk to Great St. Marys Church in Cambridge. This morning the speaker was Randy Alcorn. I just love him. His presentation of Heaven was inspiring and made me ready to go there! I especially appreciated his responses during the question and answer time. He is a wise and empathetic man. He was asked a difficult question about Rob Bell and his apparent position on hell. Randy handled it with incredible grace and truth. I learned from his humble response. Lord, let me be so full of You in those kind of situations that I won't be full of myself.

Then it was off to the workshop...our last visit with Walter Hooper. I think I will have to share my crush now between Lewis and Walter! He charms me. He is 83 and so keen, bright, limber, funny and sweet. He is a wonderful story teller. I could listen to him all day. One of the things he said today that inspired me was that CS Lewis' God was bigger than his. What he meant is that Lewis had such a grand and correct view of God. He thought that was why Lewis had such a way with capturing and communicating Heaven. He also said something interesting—Lewis got up every morning at 7:30, drank his tea, which he loved, and then took a bath. While this doesn't seem odd to us, for the British, especially during that time, daily bathing was unusual. P.S., I think it is still unusual for some! It was often very cold. Lewis had to go outside down the stairs to get to the bathroom. It wasn't heated. So, this was quite a discipline. Walter said Lewis was incredibly disciplined. The real highlight for me was getting the Lewis poetry book he edited, signed by him. He was so endearing. He inscribed it to me as "the beautiful Jennifer Rothschild". It will always be a treasure to me. Then, right after Walter signed the book, Kim handed me what felt like a rock. It was part of a brick from The Kilns!! How very, very thoughtful. I will also treasure that for all my days. And, I will remember Kim's thoughtfulness each time I hold it. Lewis has influenced so many of us for good. Kim and Walter are just 2 examples - I hope I receive all the lessons from this amazing experience. I want to be as other centered as Lewis. I want to be as humble. I wish I could be as logical of a thinker, doubt it! I want to trust and honor imagination and intuition as he did. I want to be disciplined as he was. I want people the quality of Walter and Kim to speak highly of me someday and bear my influence in their lives too. What a way to give Jesus to others. So, again, Lord, let me decrease so You will increase in me.

Day 10: Tuesday - Surprise, we're going to Paris!

We woke up at 4:45 this morning and got in a cab by 5:15 and then on a train to Paris by 6:30. Here was Lisa, a blind woman, 2 huge suitcases, backpacks and a map. We were so giddy with anticipation. Part of our glee was because it was Paris, but part of it was that we were leaving Cambridge early; part was just the whole spontaneous nature of just doing it! Considering all, travel was easy. Lisa's a real trooper whose patient and kind attitude never wains. And I know it isn't easy dealing with me and luggage in subways, trains and foreign cities. I appreciate her so.

The hotel was a boutique hotel and it was tiny and lovely. No air-conditioning; no screens on the floor to ceiling windows - we were on the second floor just above outdoor cafes and shops. The bustle, traffic and clatter of dishes were as loud in our room as if we were sleeping on the sidewalks! But, it held a certain Parisian charm. And, the accommodations were extremely clean...a deceiving beginning to our

time in one of the dirtiest cities I've ever been in! This was first discovered as we went into the metro station to begin the first of about 40 metro rides. I thought when I left my Cambridge dorm I would leave the urine smell...nope....I was just exchanging it for a more potent version. The floors were sticky. The stink was indescribable. It smelled like people just peed on the floor. When I said that to Lisa, she said, it's a good thing you can't see because that's what you're walking through. After one especially smelly turn, I commented that it smelled like people did more than urinate. I guess my senses are way too refined because just as I said that Lisa moaned. The gutters on either side of the stairs we were climbing was where people had...well, you know.... some petrified with age, some fresh and recent. But, there was so, so much. It was unbelievable, the filth. The same conditions were what we found in the public toilets. First, you can't use any bathroom without paying. Then, you get in there and the floors are disgusting and smell is almost unbearable. You combine all that with the fact that there is no air conditioning anywhere, the temps were well into the 80's and...lets just say, we tried to "hold it" as long as we could!!

I can't believe I just used all those words describing something I would never talk about! That's bathroom talk as I tell Connor! But, it just blew me away! UGH!!

Anyway, we went straight to the Eiffel Tower. It was packed with tourists. We decided we would walk down the Seine River rather than beside the tower. The breeze was lovely and it was far less crowded. I don't mean to belabor this, but even by the river it reeked. Seriously, I think the French peoples lack of inhibition is a little too much. Pee in private people, please!! We settled at an outdoor café right by the river where I had a toasted cheese sandwich and a chocolate/banana crepe and of course, a cappuccino!

We boarded a river boat to cruise down the Seine. It was wonderful. We went under 22 of the over 30 bridges that cross the famous river. We passed all the major sites of Paris and the tour Guide pointed each out both in French and English. One of the things I found sweet was that locks were fastened all over the bridges. Random ones, different sizes, all placed there by people who got engaged or married. I love that! I wonder if they threw the keys in the river? Talk about a great picture of commitment.

After disembarking we continued to stroll the Seine until it started sprinkling. We hopped in a cab and went to the Arc de Triomphe. What a massive piece of architecture. We headed out from there down the Champs-Élysées. It is kind of like the Rodeo Drive of Paris so we didn't actually do any shopping. But, we did stop for juice and tea. By that time it was already dusk so we headed back to the hotel via the Metro.

We figured out that we weren't the only ones trying to leave on the metro—rush hour must have been at 8:00?! It was so crowded that we were stuck-- stiff and cemented to our Parisian neighbors by sweat! It was unbelievably hot and smelly. It was so packed that Lisa's backpack got caught in the closing doors of the subway. It was hanging out of the train! She quickly pulled the straps off her shoulders so it wouldn't yank her arms off as the train began to move. It was scary but we could barely move. Thankfully, some Parisian knew how to manually open the doors. But, he wasn't nice about it. Lisa said we got disgusted looks from all the sweaty people around us.

Maybe the French tire of us gringos visiting and messing up their groove. Or maybe they're just grumpy because their fair city smells like a boy's locker room. But, I hate to say it but we didn't encounter many, if any, people in Paris who were nice. Some weren't even civil. I mean, who can cut off a blind woman just to get in a door first?!

I must say. My friend Lisa has shown herself to be incredibly competent navigating this city. She studies that map and hits the road like a pro. And, her patience is inspiring. She is a gift to me. And, I am glad

that she still has her backpack and her arms after that metro ride!

Day 11 - Wednesday - Day 2 in Paris

We left the hotel, stopped at a sidewalk cafe for a baguette and cappuccino and then walked back to the metro station - aka the world's largest urinal and boarded the metro for Notre Dame.

Lisa had plotted out a full day in Paris and we hit every planned site. She navigated us all over the city. We walked and rode the subway everywhere. I'm not exaggerating when I tell you we walked about nine hours today. I'm also not exaggerating when I tell you we took over 40 individual subway rides and climbed over 1,000 stairs up and down to catch the Metro!!!!

Anyway, we started day 2 at Notre Dame and the Palace of Justice. Then we stopped for a cappuccino at another sidewalk café. Then we went to the Flower Market. It was so peaceful. Then the Louvre. (Although, we didn't go through it; only inside of it.) One of the things we learned on our boat tour yesterday was that if you took one minute to view each piece of art in the Louvre, it would take four months to see everything!!!

Outside the Louvre were high end shops. Lisa wanted to go into Fossil and I am so glad we did. I ended up purchasing a burnished charm bracelet and 3 special charms. One is 2 locks and a key. This reminded me of the locks on the bridges and represents me and Phil and our 25th anniversary. I also got a cappuccino cup! Since Lisa and I have had nothing but cappuccinos in Paris, it seemed a fitting reminder. I also got a wooden leaf to represent South Africa. Now, I want something to represent NYC and the bracelet will be perfect for my 2011 highlights.

From there we walked through the Tuileries. This is about 16 kilometers of green lawns, flowers, ancient trees, fountains and marble statues. It was our favorite part of the whole trip. For starters, we sat beside a huge fountain and had quite the Zen moment. It was overcast. There were birds landing in the water. There was a cool breeze and it caught the spray from the fountain and gently sprinkled our faces. Children were giggling beside us. We could have stayed there all day.

The second best moment of the day was when we had lunch in the middle of the Tuileries beside a pond. I had the most delicious salad; arugula, cucumber, feta, tomato and mint. Of course the bread was wonderful and for dessert another cherry tart and a cappuccino!

From there, we toured a Parfum Museum. It was really fascinating and we learned everything we would ever want to know about making perfume, bottling perfume, applying perfume, storing perfume...then they tried to sell us a bunch of perfume.) After that, we went to a place called "St. Paul Village," which is a three-block radius of antique shops. Unfortunately, most of them were already closed and the ones that weren't, were exorbitantly expensive. And, by this time, it was becoming absorbantly hot! Lisa and I were in one particularly tiny and warm shop when I said, "Lisa, take me out of here. My eyelids have sweat on them." She looked at me and laughed..."even your arms are wet!" Yes, I was having a full blown hot flash in a hot little antique store in a hot foreign country. From that point on, I waited outside while she ran in and checked out the shops. A hot flash is bad enough but when it happens in a toaster oven...ha! By now it was 7:00 and we needed to get back to the hotel via a few more Metros with several thousand of our fellow French passengers. When we arrived, we were so hot and tired but so, so, so glad we did this! It was an adventure and something neither of us will ever forget!

Day 13: On the way home

Early departure. Taxi to train; train to tube; tube to airport. That sounds simple but we were both exhausted, the luggage was heavy and awkward; there was a lot of steps; the elevators were not working; it was raining; and we hadn't had coffee! In fact, we didn't get anything to eat or drink until the Admirals Club at Heathrow at 1:00!! Again,, Lisa was so good. I know it is a sacrifice for her to deal with me when it would be so much easier alone or with another friend. I will always remember her patience and grace.

We sat in bulk head for the 9 hour flight and by the time I get home to Springfield, it will be 11:00 - my body, however, will feel like it is 4:00AM!! But, I can't wait to see Phil and Connor! I don't want to leave Phil again for this long. It was a trip of a lifetime and I loved it, but I sure miss him.

Thank You Lord for this trip; for Lisa; for Phil and Connor's generosity; for CS Lewis; for hope; for something I will always treasure. Please bring this to mind and let me experience it always with even more sweetness as I remember it for all my days.