

A trip to remember

# 2011 - ENGLAND

4 April 2011

Freedom to go anywhere we fancy - two weeks in lovely southern England

**LEG 2**  
15 DAYS TRAVELING  
AROUND SOUTHERN  
ENGLAND IN A MOTOR  
HOME

## SO WHAT WAS LONDON REALLY LIKE?

London has charm and pomp and grandeur and history and old buildings. London has bustle and incessant traffic noise (sirens every few minutes). The sheer volume of double decker buses and black London cabs is amazing. London is also very cosmopolitan - putting it mildly - its full of non whites!! Every second person we saw was black!! If we took the time to notice we always heard at least one language being spoken other than English - probably because we were among so many tourists. What was also very noticeable was the number of women wearing head scarves and full blown burkas. It was very noticeable on our flight over because we flew with an arabian company (Etihad) but we were unprepared for this in London. Looking at pretty girls in one thing but one black sheet looks remarkably the same as another. It was interesting to watch the customs officers checking out the passport photo ID of a women dressed in a burka. What do you say - lovely eyes?

London is obviously a magnet for tourists. After 9.30am the city became quite stifling. People everywhere. Many were keen to get killed by running across the road - London's pedestrian road-kill must be in the thousands. We witnessed so many near misses and then almost got run over ourselves by a speeding biker who ran the red light.



*London is the biggest city in Western Europe (8.2 mill) and has the largest number of tourists (25 mill) in any one year.*

*London's underground train system is the oldest in the world.*

*There are more languages spoken in London than any city in the world.*





No photos from today so here are more from yesterday



**BEING TOURISTS IN LONDON TOWN**

When we were here in London with the kids almost 30 years ago we spent 4 hectic days trying to see as many of the major attractions as time allowed. This time we had no “must sees”. The bikes allowed us to see more than the average tourist in a limited time but on this visit we did not venture far - did not see Big Ben, Tower of London or London Bridge. Pat would be disappointed that we did not find time to catch a live show, despite our apartment being right in the middle of the theatre precinct.

**THE TRIP TO PICK UP OUR VAN**

We did get a taste of “the Tube” (the London underground railway) when we went to the soccer match on the Saturday. But this morning, armed with our suitcases and cumbersome bike bags we decided to take the easier option - a taxi - and let the driver take us to St Pancras central station to catch a national (above ground) train to Luton where we had to pick up our van. Modern technology worked amazingly well because we used Skype to call them on their mobile phone and they came to come pick us up. We also used the computer to work out what line we

needed, when the train departed and how many stations to Luton. Its like having a guide with you all the time. Can't find something? Find it on the Net!! Until the battery runs out.

We passed a number of sleek express trains that were going very fast and were told they were the Euro Expresses on their way, via the English Channel tunnel, to France. The buffeting we received when they passed beside us, was scary.

**THE VAN**

Our van is longer than we expected but at least it has the steering wheel on the right side and the traffic goes that way too. It took us over an hour to check out how the van worked before we drove off. We stopped at a huge Tesco store to buy groceries. Then in the car park, we unpacked our gear and organised the van to our requirements. Unfortunately we realised that we only had one lot of bedding (double) yet we had two single beds in the van (so we would not have to make up a double bed every day). Instead of going back to base Heather purchased another doona and we are now warm and snug ready for the next part of our journey.



