
2023-24 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

10-9-2023

Planes, Coaches & Automobiles

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Clara Johansen
Fall 2023
England
October 9th, 2023

Planes, Coaches, and Automobiles

Hello from Nottingham, everyone!

While I have already been here for a few weeks, I thought it would be fun to reflect a little bit about my journey getting over here and share a some of my thoughts on the initial cultural differences I have found, as well as friends who I have made.

My journey started at 6:00AM on Friday, September 22nd, when I packed all of my suitcases into my family's car and headed to the Portland International Airport. I checked all of my bags and was able to get to my gate with the help of a great gate assistant.



Portland>San Francisco

I had successfully made it to the San Francisco airport and to my next gate with plenty of time to get a good lunch in, as well as call and catch up with some friends and family while waiting to board my next plane.



San Francisco>Heathrow

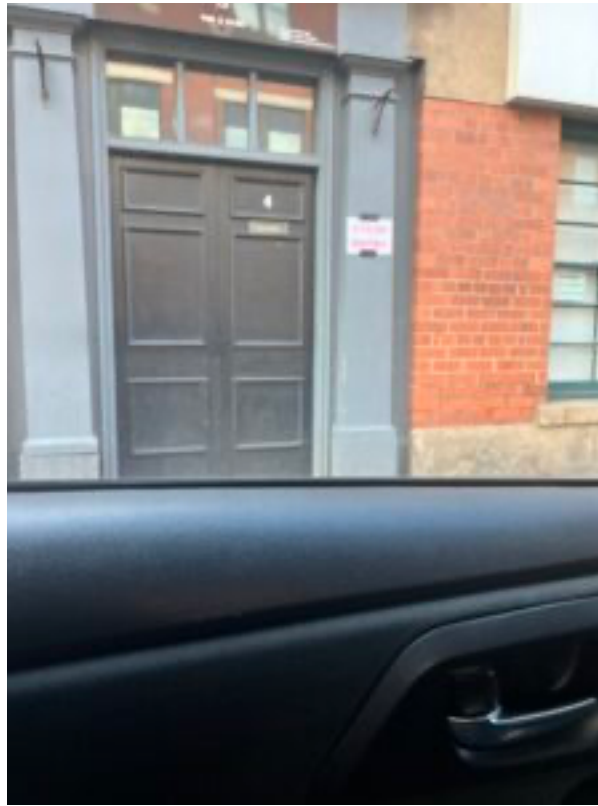
Once on my second plane, I was strapped in for a 10.5 hour flight to London Heathrow. I had my headphones on and was ready to attempt to sleep on the plane, however the cramped environment and a crying baby, coupled with the fact that I don't sleep very well on planes, meant that I collectively got about 1-2 hours of sleep. But I was running on adrenaline and ready for the next stage of my journey. After a very quick stop through customs and baggage claim, I was assisted to the area where people board coaches. It took some trial and error (yes, I may have

almost gotten on the wrong coach to start with, pictured here), but eventually I made it onto the right coach and sat for about a 4-hour long ride.



The incorrect coach I almost boarded, as well as all my luggage

The coach pulled into Broad Marsh Bus Station, and I only had about 3 miles left of my journey! A student ambassador from University of Nottingham was there to greet me and kind enough to help me with ordering an Uber to the University. My Uber ride was quiet and peaceful as we drove past some very cool architecture in a part of town called Old Lenton.



Night Club entrance near the Nottingham City Centre

The driver let me off a block or two away from my hall, and you know how everyone says the last bit of the journey is the hardest? Well, that was proven true as I had to get 3 bags down some stairs and across a lawn. Luckily, some very kind students saw me trying to hold everything and offered to help/direct me to the right hall.

At 6:45PM on September 23rd, after 24 hours of nonstop travel and only 1-2 hours of bad airplane sleep... I made it! Granted, I was about 10 minutes late to the dining hall and it had closed, so I had to get some instant noodles from an RA and realized too late that I had no silverware to eat them with, but I was at least in the right place and had all of my belongings with me

There were definitely some cultural differences that hit me right away. For instance, every announcement at the Heathrow airport was made by someone with a British accent, and I didn't think that the driving on the wrong side of the road would be as weird to me as it was. But,

since my seat on the coach was directly behind the driver, I had an uninhibited view of the road and noticed that almost instantly. As well, the next morning after I had arrived, while waiting in line for a dining hall brunch, I was asked by a student in front of me “is it weird for you to be the one with the accent now?”

I was able to make some friends right off the bat, which I am extremely grateful for. One of them had reached out to me after seeing my name in an international student group chat for UoN and we ended up going shopping for some room necessities. I also found a friend through my hall, Keesha, who is a full time UoN student, and we have gone to club meetings, out shopping, and are planning on going to the Taylor Swift Eras Tour movie next weekend.



Clara & Keesha on a tram on their way to Beeston to go shopping

I've also finished my first week of classes. The format is very different to the Linfield classes that I am used to, but they all seem very interesting and I am very interested in learning about the material they cover: from how the media shapes our self identity, to the role of people such as cinematographers and costume designers in film and television.

It has been an adjustment, but I have been very open to all of the cultural differences I have experienced and feel very blessed that I am able to have this opportunity to live in a country different from my own for 4 months. I will no doubt be learning new things every day, not just in my modules, but through other everyday experiences and larger travel excursions that I plan on doing. I am very much looking forward to these next few months, and I know that they will teach me a lot.

Cheers,

Clara