

September 6 to 22, 2013 England

September 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>: We spent the night at O'Hare so we could just walk across to our flight the next morning. This allowed us at least 2 extra hours of sleep, always a good thing. Our flight on the 7<sup>th</sup> was uneventful (always a good thing), and immigration was the easiest we've experienced in years. We arrived just after the bus to our hotel left, and rather than wait almost an hour, we took a taxi to the hotel. We charged and tested our UK cell phones, which worked.

September 8<sup>th</sup>: We caught the bus back to Heathrow, which took half-an-hour or so, then caught the bus to Cambridge, which is 3 and a half hours. We had emailed briefly with Jon Hall about arrival times and all that. So we knew his plane was scheduled to arrive around 11am, then he had immigration and all that, so we figured we would not see him until we got to Cambridge. To our surprise, Jon was waiting for the bus at his stop, so we were able to sit next to him. At the next stop, Peter Sin was waiting, and was surprised to see us. It was a good thing they were on the bus, because they knew that we were supposed to check in to a different part of Gonville & Caius College than we thought we were. When we got to Cambridge, Jon and we took a taxi and checked into the Stephen Hawking Building. The breakfast was in the next building, and actually better than we expected, with lots of choices.

When we stayed one night in the old part of Caius College in 2009, they put us up in the "second best room" since the "best room" was being painted, or some such excuse. But the "second best room" was really charming, with high ceilings and a great view of a little bit of the roof out the window, etc. It was on the 4th floor, without an elevator, which was fine since we were traveling light. So this time we were in the Stephen Hawking center, where we've never been before, which is basically for students and recently built. It's clean, and actually has an elevator and a bathroom inside the room (to our amazement!) It's small, but not so tiny we couldn't move around. There were no end tables near the bed which is kind of odd, and just a shower, but that was ok. There was a reasonable closet and a bookcase that I used to stack all the odds and ends (vitamins, glasses cases, etc.) that would have gone on an end table. So no charm, but there was wireless. The nicest thing about the room was a tiny window that opened slightly, and a tall window next to it. The view was an amazingly gorgeous tree (with another building further on, but I could squint and not see the building), and with the window open, you could hear the sound of the wind in the branches. It was some kind of evergreen, though I don't know what.

After unpacking, we went to dinner with Jon and Michael Aschbacher. Dan Frohardt and Richard Weiss joined us. There were some interesting things at dinner, like beetroot, a salad of beans, watercress, and a green that none of us could figure out. We had an apple and carrot slaw that was julienned strips of apples and carrots, tossed in a very light dressing. I think I would have added some raisins or currants, but it was still good. The chips were humongo, and really well cooked, and I had garlic mashed potatoes. Yum.

September 9<sup>th</sup>: Steve gave his talk at the conference in the morning session, so of course he woke up at 3am thinking about it. I went to the morning session of the talks to hear Ron Solomon, who gave the first talk, then Steve, who gave the second talk. At the beginning and during the break I was able to talk with old friends who were at the meeting, and got some group photos. This turned out to be very useful, because I was able to take different groupings at the conference dinner, as well, and people got used to me taking photos. I stayed for the conference lunch before Steve and I went back to the room briefly. Steve took a short nap and then went back to the conference, while I went in to town to do some errands. It's about a 20 minute walk from the rooms to the math institute, where the conference was held, so we got a bit of exercise.

We met Jon for dinner, and some interesting food. Three vegetables mashed potatoes, broccoli, and a weird green, slightly strong vegetable that turned out to be cabbage. For dessert, Steve and Jon had sticky toffee pudding, which turned out to be a fairly dense, dry-ish cake that looked dark, but had no chocolate...maybe molasses, but they couldn't taste molasses. A slight touch of ginger. No sticky, no toffee that they could find. I had two scoops of ice cream, one black currant and the other apple honey. They were GREAT!!!!. Jon wanted to go to a pub, so we went to the one he and Michael had gone to the night before. We were not at all surprised that there was a group of 6 mathematicians already there, that we knew. After a while, 3 more came in. Then Michael came in, then 3 more, then 2 more. Steve and I were the first to leave, so everyone else is probably still there. The place was packed, and the crowd there looked like they were about 16.

September 10<sup>th</sup> Steve went off to the meeting after breakfast. Rose Solomon told me at breakfast that the plan for the day was to go to the Fitzwilliam Museum and then tour a college, so about 10:30, Rose, Rosa Glauberman, and I met at the Porter's Lodge and walked over to the museum. Along the way, we caught up with Bhama's husband, Larry Smith, who was also going to the museum, so we walked the rest of the way together. Marjorie Collins was waiting for us. We slowly covered the painting collection (Marjorie is an artist and does fairly large, mostly single-subject, oil paintings...one flower, for example). Larry drifted off soon after we started the paintings. The special exhibit was African Combs, which was very interesting. When we finished that, we decided it was time for lunch, so had a sandwich in the café, then went to the gift shop. At this point, Rosa decided she was finished with the museum, so we went to King's College to do the self-tour. In 2009, Steve and I had gone to Evensong (or whatever it's actually called) at King's College, so we had been in the chapel then. Today Rose, Rosa, Marjorie and I paid 7.5 pounds each to get in (I'm not making this up!!! WOW! Or should I say, YEOW!!!) We were allowed to take photos with no flash, and we could walk around in the chapel. When we got to the grounds, it was raining, so we didn't spend much time there. I took a few photos, then we headed back to our rooms.

I called Steve and let him know I was back in the room, so at the break that started at 3pm (the talks actually go until 5pm), he came back to the room, and we went back (for me) to the Fitzwilliam so we could do the Ancient Middle East collections, Egypt, Iran, and Cyprus mostly. They have a lot of china, and we especially liked the Chinese and

Ottoman pottery. We did a very quick walk through the paintings so Steve could see them. It was raining on us in both directions, but just lightly, so no real problem. We of course brought umbrellas and very light wind breakers for rain protection, so we're really fine with a light rain.

In the evening was the conference dinner at Sidney Sussex College. The dinner was nice, and all very jolly.

September 11<sup>th</sup> the last day of the conference, so we packed up and left our luggage and checked out after breakfast. Steve left for the meeting and I went back downtown. I first did some shopping, but didn't actually buy anything except stamps, then went to the Archeology and Anthropology Museum, and then the Geology Museum. I walked to the math institute and had lunch with the conference, then we grabbed a taxi and went to the railroad station to pick up our rental car. We drove the car back to Caius and loaded up our luggage, then headed for the math institute. While Steve was at the talk, I was able to log into email, so managed to spend the time on the computer and then say goodbye to people as we headed for Warwick.

It rained the entire drive, which wasn't so pleasant, and we were glad when we got to the hotel and checked in. We had dinner in a nice tapas restaurant that we had eaten in in 2009. Good olives and garlic bread, etc.

September 12<sup>th</sup>: our first vacation day. We spent most of our vacation time visiting old favorites and seeing plays in Stratford-upon-Avon. We stayed in Warwick because it is so close to Stratford and Kenilworth and has some nice restaurants. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, we had an afternoon performance of Hamlet in Stratford, so went into Stratford early and walked around in the rain so I could take pictures. I couldn't find all of the swans, as we walked around, but after the play, as we were making our way back to the carpark, I saw where they were.

When we were in Oxford in 2009, the Royal Shakespeare Theater in Stratford was under renovation, which was very frustrating. But this trip we were able to see the new theaters, and they were well worth the trouble. The main stage is now a theater-in-the-round, so you get the feel of the stage as it was in Shakespeare's day. But without the standing room in the front, of course. At Hamlet, we were five rows back from the stage, but still felt close, and at All's Well That Ends Well we were on the front row. In the "old days" the stage was in front, with long rows in the audience, so a standard stage. This new configuration is so much better, but they must have far fewer seats. One of the things we really loved is that they have created a costume museum on the upper floors outside the theater, and have a few costumes on the ground floor. We were especially taken with costumes from productions that we had seen, of course.

It was an interesting production of Hamlet. Hamlet was a real loser from the beginning, moping around, etc. You just knew right away that this was a madman, and someone that would not succeed (I mean, even if we didn't know the play so intimately). They had some over-the-top direction. To mirror (or I guess foreshadow) a fencing scene at the

end of the play, they had Hamlet's father's ghost show up in fencing garb and Hamlet carried the helmet around with him for a while. Many of the minor characters came on stage with the fencing helmet on during the production, which was just weird. In an over-the-top moment, during Hamlet and Ophelia's "get thee to a nunnery" scene, he tore her clothes off. Hummmm. The stage was set up with dirt under the planking of the stage, and at one point during the action, the stage crew came out and removed some of the planking. They used the grave for the Yorick scene, and then they buried Ophelia on the stage and left her there, half covered in dirt, while everyone killed each other. In one absolutely brilliant choice, the director had the actor for Claudius play Hamlet's father's ghost as well. Needless to say, the acting was wonderful. We drove back to Warwick for dinner and ate at a good "English" restaurant.

September 13<sup>th</sup>. We drove to Kenilworth after breakfast, dropping off our laundry at a service-laundromat on the way to Kenilworth Castle. We bought the 9-day Overseas Visitors Pass to Heritage sites, which we used enough on the trip to make worthwhile. In 2009, the same guy that sold us this pass sold us an annual pass that we never received. So when he tried to talk us into buying an annual pass this time, I told him we had never received our 2009 annual pass, and he finally gave up. When we arrived at the Castle, it was raining very lightly, but as we made our way around the grounds the sun came out. So I was able to get both cloudy and sunny photos. We picked up our laundry on the way back to the room, so I ironed shirts and folded and packed clothes until it was time to go to Stratford for dinner and All's Well That Ends Well. Before dinner I did manage to get some swan photos.

We ate at the Vintner in Stratford, where we had eaten in 2009, and we were happy that the chef was even better than we remembered. We walked around looking for other possible restaurants and couldn't really find anything, so ate there on the 13<sup>th</sup> as well. An example was the salads that accompanied our appetizers. They were in small bowls, lined up on a rectangular plate. One was shredded carrots and chickpeas mixed in a light sauce, one was small cubes of beets mixed with something that we couldn't identify, but that didn't seem to have a taste but soaked up the color, and the third was a mix of pickled vegetables...they had used a small melon baller to make semi-spheres of zucchini and carrots and used small onions as well. The colors were nice, as were the textures and tastes. We also had really good bread everywhere.

Neither of us could remember ever seeing All's Well That Ends Well, though we both had the feeling that we had. Even though the acting was great, and the direction was good, it didn't pull us in, and we left feeling that it was not one of his better plays. Count Bertram was a wimp, which made us wonder why Helena went to such lengths to snag him in the first place, and then hold him when he went off to war to avoid spending time with her once they were married. And the plot line of Helena going on a long pilgrimage, substituting herself for a woman he was flirting with so he would get her (Helena) pregnant, and then challenging him in front of the king so that he (Bertram) sees the light and realizes that he really is in love with her (Helena) doesn't translate so well into modern life. The stage was really well done, very bare, but with glass shelves along the

back wall, holding lots of succulents and cacti representing the different courts and covered with a white sheet for the bed in the seduction scene.

September 14<sup>th</sup> We left the hotel after breakfast and spend much of the day driving around the Cotswolds. We went to Minster Lovell, a ruin we really like, and walked around for a while. There were some very friendly donkeys in the next field that we had a nice conversation with. Then we drove to Bourton-on the-Water. It has a pretty little stream through the town. We had a plowman' s lunch...cheddar, brie, and stilton which came with lots of salad and "homemade" bread. Oh, yum!!! The salads were a mixed green salad with tomatoes, cucumber, watercress, one radish, one apple, and I think something else...and a slaw that was good, too. We went back to the hotel and changed before heading in to Stratford for dinner, some swan photos, and our last play of the trip, Titus Andronicus. Our first two plays had been on the main stage, and Titus was in the Swan. We were on the front row, and the stage was at waist level, as we were seated, so very intimate.

Titus was intense, bloody (I mean blood every where), violent, and almost entirely wonderful. At one point I thought I was going to throw up from the violence, but was able to keep control. The Goths were costumed as modern Goths, which totally worked. The actress who played Tamora, the Queen of the Goths, was really fabulous in the role, and so totally evil you were almost rooting for her. Aaron, Tamora's lover and henchman, was a fabulous villain, and you felt like cheering when he was buried up to the neck in the middle of the stage. During the final scene, when everyone is getting hacked to bits by each other's swords, stage blood was flying everywhere, including all over the nice, new, pink and white shirt of the man sitting next to me. Somehow I only managed to get one drop on me, which I saw and dabbed off before it set. One thing we didn't much care for was that at the beginning of the play, they would put the corpses in the middle of the stage and lift them by their feet up to the very high ceiling. This seemed like an odd way to get the corpses off the stage. When they were cutting the throats of Tamora's sons, they lifted them up by their feet on the same hooks while they said the lines and cut their throats, then they were whisked up to the ceiling, so then it made sense. One of our best evenings in the theater in ages. But you really had to be in the right frame of mind for it!

September 15<sup>th</sup>: After breakfast we drove south to Bristol and checked into our hotel. It had "Cadbury House" listed in the name, which turned out to be the old part of the hotel, now mostly used for weddings, etc., as far as we could tell. That part was built in 1790 as a private residence, but I couldn't find a connection to the candy company. We were in the modern part of the hotel. It turned out that there was a famous restaurant in the hotel, so that's where we had dinner the 14<sup>th</sup> and breakfast the 15<sup>th</sup>. After getting settled, we drove to Glastonbury to see the abbey, which is one of our favorites.

It was raining, so the driving wasn't so nice, but once we were there, it was a light enough rain that I could still take photos. As with many of these ancient religious places, there is a modern abbey nearby, and there were probably earlier religious buildings on the site. The ruins above ground are from the 12th century, I think, and the monks dug

for King Arthur's grave and of course claimed to have found it. I just think it's a beautiful ruin!! I had not remembered that the town of Glastonbury is new-age-y. I don't really think it was before, but of course it might have been. Every other shop seemed to be witchcraft or séance or taro readings, etc. Because it was Sunday, they were all closed, of course. You wouldn't think that witches would take Sundays off! We also drove close to Wookey and through the town of Cheddar on the way. It's small. I had said that I wanted to have a plowman's lunch in Cheddar to see if it was all cheddar, but we were running late so ate in a lunch place in the hotel before we left. It's good that we did, since we didn't see any place open!!

The dinner in the hotel restaurant was really good, with mounds of fresh vegetables sprinkled with a sauté of leeks and something green, and a lot of rocket. We both had the cheese plate for dessert, and it had really good cheddar and stilton on it.

September 16<sup>th</sup> was a “greatest hits” day, Old Sarum, Stonehenge, and Avebury before driving on to Swindon for the night. Old Sarum is the site of the earliest settlement of Salisbury, starting around 3000 BCE. The Romans, Saxons, Vikings, and Normans wandered through, with the Normans building the castle around 1069, whose remains are still on the site. In 1086 William the Conqueror held a national council here so everyone could come and pay homage to him. The English Heritage has done a good job with protecting the site.

Stonehenge you already know all about, except maybe that they are improving the site. The first improvement they have done is to close the road that tourists use to get to the site, so it took us 45 minutes or so to go 2 miles. They have also increased the diameter of the fence that circles the monument, so you can't get nearly as close as you used to be able to do. I decided that that was actually good because it would make it easier for me to photoshop out the tourists in my photos. I think the reason is that there are archeological remains around the site that they don't want people walking on. Fortunately, there is still a small wagon with sandwiches, so we were able to grab lunch and eat it at a small table just outside the entrance to the monument. It had not been very crowded as we walked around the monument, but as we were eating, huge busloads started pouring in. And as we finished our last bite of bread, rain started pouring down. Talk about great timing!!

Avebury is another of our favorite Heritage sites, and we were last there in 2009 in the snow. It is a World Heritage Site, co-listed with Stonehenge. The prehistoric site of Avebury is from about 2600 BCE, a henge of three stone circles, the largest 1,088ft in diameter. By the time we got there, the weather was ok, so we walked around the circles for a while before heading on to Swindon. When we checked into the hotel, they offered us a special dinner deal, so we decided to relax and eat there.

September 17<sup>th</sup> we drove to Oxford and returned the rental car, then took a taxi to All Souls College, where Steve had been a Visiting Fellow in 2009, where we were staying during the Rhodes reunion. They were ready for us and gave us the same room we had had last year, which was great. The bathroom is right outside the door, with just one

fellow using it during the day, as far as we could tell. We unpacked and went to the Ashmolean museum, having lunch in the café in the museum before spending the afternoon in the galleries. As we were enjoying one of the galleries, a woman came up to us to remind us that there would be a gallery talk in a few minutes. Since we like that kind of thing, we decided we might do it, so Steve went to ask her who was speaking and what the topic would be. It turned out that she was the speaker, and she had almost been on one of the Oriental Institute's digs, but timing didn't work out. But she knew people that we know. We did do the lecture, and she was very good. We were really glad that we had done it. After the Ashmolean, we had dinner at a little restaurant across the road from All Souls. As we were leaving, the waitress noticed that I was still carrying the camera and asked if we would like our photo taken. I said sure, so she set up three different photos, and it turned out that none of them were in focus. But her heart was in the right place.

September 18<sup>th</sup> the Rhodes Reunion began. We went to Rhodes House to sign in and get our bags and badges. They had a tent set up with coffee and a string quartet playing, and we went in to see if we would see anyone we knew. As we walked around the tent, Paul Viita and Rosanna King came in so we talked with them for a while, then other people we knew came in, so we ended up staying there and talking with people until it was time to go to lunch in the Trinity College dining room. After lunch we went to the Botanical Garden and then walked in the Christ Church grounds before going back to Rhodes House for a reception. When we got there (on time), they didn't have the setup ready! So we were looking around trying to decide what to do, and we noticed that the session nearby wasn't finished yet. We had just decided to give up and come back to the room when the new Warden of Rhodes House came up and started talking to us. By the time he was grabbed by other people, the worker-bees had drinks set up, so we went into the reception. We talked to some rather boring people, and some more interesting ones. We somehow started talking to a man who seemed really shy, and in about a minute, we discovered that he had taught at UIC one summer in the 80's, and he had loved it and it was a turning point in his life and he knew people we know, so it was really fun.

We went back to the room and changed into our formal gear and went to the Balliol dinner. There was a reception before hand so we got to talk with our friends, which was a good thing since we were all separated at the dinner. I mostly talked with a young Australian who is just finishing his degree and hadn't decided what to do next (He was across the table from me) and his girlfriend who is from Russia, but grew up in St. Louis, and is currently working on her degree (She was next to me). Steve was seated next to the wife of the Master of Balliol, who, as far as we could tell, looked him up herself on the internet and discovered that he had won the Steele Prize, so made sure he was seated next to her!!! The man between her and me was really boring, and I didn't talk to him very much. After the dinner, we talked to our friends for a little, then we all decided to call it a night. It was a really great day, and no rain while we were in our formal gear!

September 19th We had an odd assortment of food in the room that we had collected during the trip, so I decided that we should have some of it for breakfast instead of

going out. So we had a really good chocolate "cookie" thing that we had been given in one hotel, and some nuts that we had been given in another hotel. Lunch was at 12, so it seemed a little silly to go out for breakfast and then pretty much straight to lunch. The lunch was in Wadham College dining hall, where the green beans and potatoes were especially good. The dessert was an interesting berry timbale kind of thing. We walked through the town before lunch for some exercise. After lunch, Steve went to a talk while I shopped, then we walked down to the Oxford castle (which is really just a mound) and a little in the town before going back to the room to get ready for the formal reception at the Ashmolean and another formal dinner at Balliol

We arrived for the reception at the Ashmolean just before they opened for us. They very carefully checked our badges as we went in. We were allowed to walk around some of the galleries, but not Egypt or the pre-Raphaelites, so we were glad we had done all that before. After an hour, there were very boring speeches, and we were talking with people instead of listening. Then they announced with awe, that Kris Kristofferson would sing for us. A few people were excited, but our group was pretty bored by it, since he was past it. When we could we went over to Balliol for dinner.

This dinner was interesting, with a nice vegetable ravioli appetizer and nice vegetables for the main course. The dessert was a very pretty citrus thing, with grapefruit, oranges, and kiwi seeds molded together. Unfortunately, the taste was kind of bland. I mean, how can you make citrus bland? There was a tiny scoop of lemon sorbet on the side that was great. I could have eaten a lot of that!!

One of the classmates that we haven't seen for a long time is the author, David Quammen. His books are really great, and he is devoted to saving wildlife. We managed to spend about an hour with him, which was great. He does a lot of work for National Geographic.

September 20<sup>th</sup>, the last day of the reunion. We had a light breakfast, again, and went to David Quammen's talk, which was great. After that was a lunch out on the grounds where we sat with the people we are closest to. The organizers were really really lucky that the weather was great. We had Dove Bar ice cream for dessert. After a long time talking with people and saying goodbye, we had a tour of the Pitt Rivers Museum. The speaker was really good and told us about a few of the objects. We stayed and started to go around the museum. Steve went up to the math institute to check in while I stayed at the museum, and then joined me there again. The Natural History museum is closed for renovation, but they have put some of the artifacts along the hallway, so we felt like we had gotten a little of the Natural History museum.

We walked to a French restaurant that we like for dinner, but it was completely booked so we went back to the restaurant across the street from All Souls, and that was fine. We were pretty tired, from the late nights and all the activities, so we were ready to call it a night.



September 21<sup>st</sup>. We had a snack in the room for breakfast and lugged the luggage down to the porter's lodge. I packed the big suitcase with our formal gear, etc., with stuff we wouldn't need again until we got home, so we wouldn't have to open it again. We went back to the Ashmolean and enjoyed some of the galleries that we hadn't had much time in, had lunch in the café, and spent time in other galleries, then headed back to All Souls to collect our luggage. The bus stop for the bus back to Heathrow is just a few yards down the street from All Souls, so we lugged the luggage down in plenty of time for the bus, and arrived at Heathrow a few minutes before the bus to our hotel, so that all worked out very well. This was Dawn's birthday, so when we thought she would be up, with the time change, and all that, we called and sang happy birthday to her.

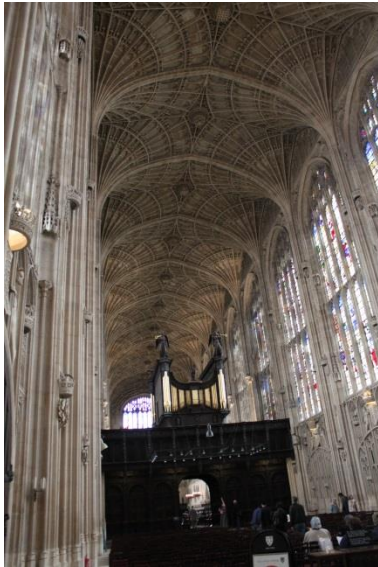
September 22<sup>nd</sup>, we got to Heathrow in plenty of time for our flight and had no problems getting through security. There was a maintenance problem on the plane (which the ground crew claimed was a cleaning issue, but the pilot said was maintenance), so we were delayed getting out. When we got to O'Hare, we circled Rockford for a while before landing, but really no problems. And with our Global Entry, we whisked through immigration, even though there were really long lines at the normal checkpoint.



Steve giving his lecture



Michael Aschbacher, Steve, Jon Hall, and Richard Lyons



Kings College Chapel



Math Institute in Cambridge



Royal Shakespeare Theater, Stratford



Swans on the Avon River



Kenilworth Castle



Minster Lovell



Bourton-on-the-Water



Glastonbury



Old Sarum



Stonehenge



Avebury



All Souls



At Balliol



The men



The women