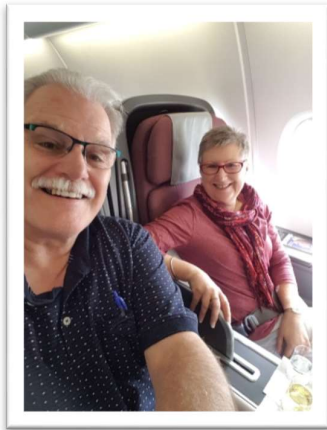


2017 UK trip story

FIRST SECTOR - LONDON

The adventure starts with the arrival at the First Class Lounge in Tullamarine. Therefore we make sure to be there early and given a QF9 leaves for London via Dubai at 11pm on Saturday night it is ideal to start with a fabulous meal and wines while we watch the movement of the planes in the real world outside. We are very lucky to have Dave's Platinum card that seems to open many doors as a frequent flyer.



Once on board for the 13.5 hours to Dubai a few more drinks, some movies and a very comfortable bed for the night. This really is a good flight time as it gives a full night sleep (as long as you can sleep on a plane).

Dubai at 7am in the morning was 36° heading for 42°. We did not feel a thing in the lounge with coffee as Marg now likes it (decaf and soy milk) together with the necessary GF muffin. The next leg was a paltry 7.5 hours but more than enough time for another movie, effectively breakfast and some more sleep.

We arrived at London at 2pm, refreshed and ready for an afternoon exploring on Sunday afternoon.

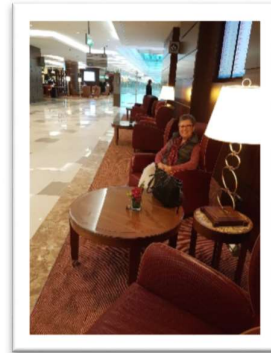


Photo 1: Emirates Lounge Dubai

We have a fabulous hotel arranged by Marg through Luxury Escapes. There might be other better locations but it hard to imagine how that is possible with major attractions of Westminster Abbey a 3 minute walk down the road, Westminster and Big Ben just around the corner and Buckingham Palace within 10 minutes walk the other way. We visited them all with a leisurely strolls, including icecream, in the afternoon.

The first day was topped off with a traditional pub meal that included the mushy peas with the fish& chips together with the London Pride warm beer.



Photo 2: Westminster Abbey

Day 2 Shopping day

We got off to a sketchy start with the planned tour via the Tube. We took the District Line and the change to the Northern Line that was to take us to Leicester Square where we could get tickets for the show for the evening. Trouble was we managed to get to the station just as the train was due to go. Marg jumped on but Dave was too slow...doors closed and the stunned look on Marg's face as she was left inside and Dave on the platform. We waved and gestured "I'll see you there" not knowing how well that would work!

The local station master saw all this happen and shortly the train stopped, the doors reopened, 100+ Londoners looked on bemused as Marg jumped off to rejoin Dave on the platform. As the train pulled out the station master suggested that us tourists should coordinate our movements a bit better in the future. We had lots of laughs with him as we waited 2 minutes for the next train. Then we did several hop-on hop-off jumps across the network without incident.



Sector 1 - LONDON

We got our cheap tickets to Mowtown at Leicester Square then back on the tube to Knightsbridge and the obligatory wander through Harrods (hoping not to spend, eg the £20,000 suitcase). Still love the Food Hall the most.

The Tube offered up the next shopping experience at both Marks & Spencer and Selfridges. Dave joined all the other gentlemen who were assigned to the seats in the women's show department where book reading was allowed.

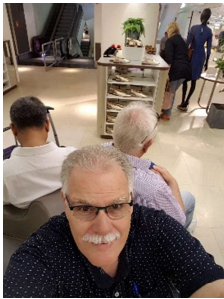


Photo 3: Harrods Food Hall

The Mowtown musical was fantastic. Full house as always we were treated to 2 ½ hours of music from the 50's to the 70's and learnt about the struggle as music and big business collided.



Photo 4: Shaftesbury Theatre

Day 3 Greenwich Mean Time

Sector 1 - LONDON

The next adventure was to take us further east in London.

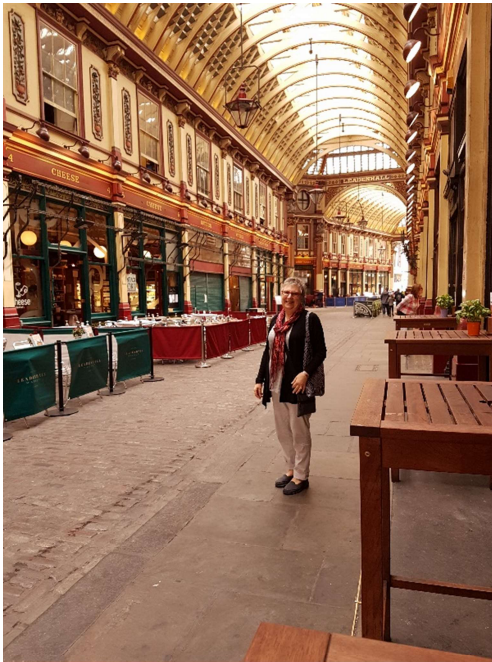


Photo 5: Leadenhall Market

Out along the District line we got to the Bank district where LeadenHall market offered some insight to the Harry Potter set. I could not find the Wand Shop but did find a mysterious set of stairs that seem to go nowhere.



This district seemed to be populated by men in suits which is probably explained by the number of banks and related offices. I have not for a long time seen so many men in white shirts and ties, a tradition long gone in Australian businessmen.



Photo 6: Bank of England Museum and statue of Wellington

Our primary goal for today though was to explore the Greenwich and Millennium Docklands area which is an enormous development post the London Olympics. According to the dialogue on the cable car across the Thames to the O₂ stadium this is the area that will have >200,000 inhabitants in the next few years. Construction is everywhere.

The trip there was done on the driverless DLR train service set up for the Olympics and we were attracted to the portrayal of the cities of the future presented in an impressive building, The Crystal.

Sector 1 - LONDON

As you can see below Marg had a shot had developing a sustainable city with development of infrastructure and services to a budget. The resultant city survived for 10 years before everyone died of thirst and anarchy prevailed. Dave’s attempt lasted 9 years ☹️.



The cable car then took us from The Crystal across the Thames to O₂ in Greenwich North. A double Decker bus from there and we were soon in Greenwich. Apart from the Maritime museum, the Cutty Sark and Greenwich Markets Dave’s main focus was on the Observatory where the standard GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) is set and the related Prime Meridian (0° longitude). Didn’t realise that this would require a substantial almost vertical climb to the top of the little hill but we were really pleased to get there.

