

# Project week in Durham / England – October 2018

- staying with host families for a week
- spending three school days at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School with our host brothers and sisters
- exploring Durham, including Cathedral and Castle (University)
- going on three day trips
  - ✓ York: Minster, Shambles, Dungeon, ...
  - ✓ The Northeast: Alnwick Castle and Gardens, Bamburgh Castle, Craster, ...
  - ✓ Newcastle: Beamish Open Air Museum, town centre, Quayside, The Baltic, Metro Centre
- having a lot of fun

Partner school: Durham Johnston Comprehensive School

Teachers in charge: Mag. Herbert Blasch, Mag. Ina Lahnsteiner, Miss Janine Schwaiger (Durham)

## Durham language by Antonija Delac

What would you think if someone asked you if you want to go out for tea? Probably the same thing I thought when I came to Durham and my host family asked me the very same question. Going out for tea means going out to actually drink tea, right? Not necessarily, because as a matter of fact, when people in Northern England say tea they mean dinner. That was a revelation to me, as were a few other things concerning vocabulary.

Not only expressions they use, but also the pronunciation gave me a hard time understanding the locals. What I found especially striking was the use of the short “a” in words such as bath or castle. And probably the most unusual thing that I had to get accustomed to, is the use of “me” instead of a reflexive pronoun. For instance: “Yesterday, I bought me those shoes.”

Apart from my experiences, I asked a few people what they think about the way they talk and surprisingly almost everyone gave me the same answer: a lot of locals said that they would describe their style of talking as quite posh. (The posh accent is also referred to as „The Queen’s English”, because it’s spoken by the Royal Family.)

All in all, I can say that the English that people speak in Northern England was a nice change to the way we usually talk in school. Of course, it’s a completely different thing to experience the language being spoken by native speakers after all.



## Life at home (England edition) by Jana Königsmaier

After having spent an entire week with an English family, I am able to spot some differences between their and our Austrian lifestyle and how time is spent in the privacy of their homes.

First and foremost, their dwelling seems to differ from what we are used to. Since people living in England prefer buying houses over renting, their interior design as well as the general state in which the buildings are in might not be comparable to our standards. On top of that, these rather small spaces look mostly alike from the outside, as nearly all facades consist of red brick – at least in Durham.

Having a closer look at so-called “family time”, I’ve come to the conclusion that there are quite some similarities. Still, as opposed to Austria, tea-drinking is actually a thing; the first thing guests are being offered is a cup of tea. Moreover, Brits tend to enjoy their breakfast in front of the TV, whilst some stereotypical talk-shows are on. However, contrary to most assumptions, typical “full English breakfast” is not eaten on a day to day basis.



## Life in town by Franziska Reichl

Let me start by saying that Durham is a lovely town. The people are friendly, the shops are very nice, and my host sister made me feel like a local when we strolled through the aisles of Tesco and Sainsbury's on the hunt for our daily dinner.

Apart from driving on the "wrong" side (which sometimes gave me a slight heart attack because I thought she was taking the wrong lane), life in town in an English town is pretty similar to town life



in Austria. If you have a close look around though, you might notice that most teenagers wander around town coming straight from school and still in their school uniform. Another thing you don't see in Austrian towns ...

It goes without saying that Durham and York are way livelier than the little ghost town I'm from. In each of the towns universities are located, which is the reason why so many young people make the city centers very vibrant and colourful.

## School life in Durham Johnston Comprehensive School by Balthasar Steinmaurer



School life in Durham Johnston Comprehensive School is quite different from the one we all know. In Durham Johnston you can choose all your subjects in 6th form college. Therefore there are no fixed classes like 7A and 7B, but you share every lesson with different students.

Because of that there are no rooms for every single class, but rather one bigger common room

for each year. So, for example the year 6 students have their own room.

Other than in Bad Ischl you have to walk from classroom to classroom every single lesson. The teachers don't come to the students, the students go to their teachers. In my eyes this is more hectic and a bit annoying, as there are a lot of students on the move and the hallways are pretty narrow.



I also find it important to mention that in Durham Johnston there are around four times as many students as in Gymnasium Bad Ischl.

Consequently, nobody knows everybody and thus the whole ambience feels less personal.

Another interesting aspect I've found out is the fact that you can create and visit so called societies. This means that people with a common interest can meet while having their lunch break

and give presentations about a topic that suits the society's theme or do projects together. Examples for such societies are Chemistry society, Biology society and Music society.



I also have the impression that there are more school projects outside of regular school time than there are in Bad Ischl, for example the orchestra and the gardening club.

## **Final exams** by Katharina Bruckschlögl

People say that students in England have to face more serious exams than pupils of other countries have to. But is this reality? I have spent one week in England and I have asked my host-sister which exams she has to do and what they are like.

There are two main exams. The first ones are the so-called GCSEs, which you have to write at the age of 16 at the end of year 11. You must choose 10 subjects to do exams in. They normally take place between May and June. On the exam days they have got time from 45 minutes to 150 minutes. After all this stress of doing those big parts of your life, there is the big prom all students talk about even one year before it takes place.

In Austria we write the “Matura” at the age of 18, in England they have something similar, the A-levels at the end of year 13. You have the option to do some subjects before you turn 18, at the end of year 12. Those are the so called AS-levels. When doing the A-levels you have to pick four subjects but in the end you have to do exams in only three. The A-levels also take place between May and June.

After both exams you will get your results on Result-Day in August.

Concerning grades, there are nine different ones you can get. 9 is the best you can reach, while 1 is the worst grade. If you get grades between 1 and 3 you haven't passed the exam.

Additionally, my friend told me some rules I was shocked about, because I couldn't imagine that anybody would think of things like that. The first one is that you mustn't have a label on your bottle. And the second one is that there are no phones allowed in the exams not even in your pocket. Okay, I have to admit that those rules are more useful than strange.

Considering all the points mentioned, I have come to the conclusion that the exams are quite the same as in Austria, except GCSEs. I think that every single student has to face this exam-stress wherever they live.



## **Waste disposal** by Fabian Klambauer

There is a plastic island in the ocean that is fifteen times the size of England. This is just one of the many examples that show that the human race produces way too much waste and that we need to try and dispose of it in a better way. For this purpose, I am going to elaborate on some observations I made while I was in England.

The first thing I'd like to talk about is school. While there are many differences between Austrian and English schools, waste disposal is handled quite similarly. After we were done with lunch we threw away our paper and plastic wrappers into the designated bins. The only problem was that a lot of them contained both materials, so you had to choose where it would do less damage.

The household where I lived wasn't very strict about separating waste and simply threw everything into the same container, regardless if it was plastic or biodegradable waste. There was also a lot of random waste along the street and inside the fences of forest patches, which might be due to the lack of public waste bins. This was also a problem in bigger cities. While we were in York my friends and I bought fish and chips. We got them in small cardboard boxes, so we could eat them sitting on a bench somewhere. However, after we had finished we didn't know what to do with the boxes. We looked around for a while and found three bins very close together. But when we approached them we found out that they had been closed shut. I still have no idea why that was the case, perhaps it was done after the numerous terrorist attacks, but that is just a guess. It was quite different to Austria where we have trash cans around every corner.

While I do think we are on the way of handling this problem, there are still a lot of things we need to fix, in order not to end up drowning in our own garbage.

## Day trip 1: York – Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup> by Magdalena Peham



On Saturday, we had our first excursion, which led us to the city of York. We left at 9:30 AM at the Durham Johnston school and enjoyed our 1 ½ hour drive with singing typical Austrian folk music. (Sorry again for that little inconvenience!) Arrived in York, we first visited probably the most famous monument of the city, York Minster. It took a total of over 200 years to build this huge gothic Cathedral. Something the Minster is particularly famous for are its windows, such as the great west window (also called the heart of Yorkshire) and the tall five sisters window. A rather odd fact about one of the windows is probably that the creator of the great east window was only paid

£66 for his work, which was an awful lot at that time!

But like everything, the Minster certainly also has its downsides. The history of the cathedral was shaped by several floods and the 3 big fires, the latest of which destroyed not only the whole wooden ceiling, but also the famous rose window. It cracked into thousands of pieces but could eventually be restored.

In the “basement” of the building you can find a tiny museum, which again deals with the Minsters history, but also a bit with its architecture.

After a long, guided tour in the Minster and after a fortifying packed lunch we then did what’s called a *Dungeon*. It turned out to be something like a haunted house where people play different characters and so build a story. Sometimes the audience is involved as well, which has made the experience unforgettable.

Finally, we did a little tour of the city centre, where we saw amongst other things “The Shambles”, a medieval street which York is also known for. We then went to a little “fudge” shop, where we afterwards had the opportunity to do some fudge tasting. The remaining two hours we had free time, in which we got to explore the city by ourselves. Whilst the hungry ones of us went to eat fish and chips, others went shopping in clothing stores, candy shops or souvenir shops.



When the day then came to an end, we were all on the coach again with full grocery bags and some increased knowledge, and then finally got picked up again by our host families at Durham Johnston.



## Day trip 2: The Northeast – Sunday, October 7<sup>th</sup> by Nadine Promberger

On Sunday, our second excursion took us to the very north of England and our first destination was Alnwick Castle, which is located in the county of Northumberland. Built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it is one of the largest inhabited castles in Britain today, right after Windsor Castle, the home of the Queen. But what makes Alnwick so special is the fact that it has been used as a setting in many films and TV series, for instance Transformers, Robin Hood, Downtown Abbey and the probably most famous movie series Harry Potter.

After the exploration of the adjacent Alnwick Gardens, we set off to Bamburgh Castle, a beautiful castle right on the northeast coast of England. This castle has stood guard over the coastline for over 1,400 years and displays a wide range of different items, such as ancient arms and armours, artwork and porcelain. What is more is that Bamburgh Castle offers an outstanding and breath-taking view out to the Farne Islands.





After a brief walk on the beach and a short photo shoot, where hundreds of pictures were taken by us students, we followed the coastline to our last stop at Craster, a small fishing village from where we had a great view of Dunstanburgh Castle, a fortification which is now in ruins. Our journey to the North then found an end and our coach brought us back to Durham Johnston School.

### Day trip 3: Newcastle – Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> by Layla Barakat

Grainger Market, Millennium Bridge, “CatPawCino“... you probably won't find these places in any other city than Newcastle.

We had the opportunity of visiting so-called Newcastle upon Tyne, filled with historic places, such as “Grey's Monument”. But this city isn't only culturally advanced, it's also very modern. Beside seeing the “Blinking eye bridge” (which is also known as the Millennium Bridge), we walked along the famous Quayside. Additionally, we went through



“Grainger Market”, which houses a huge traditional indoor market, offering a wide variety of products. Along with butchers there are also florists, jewellers, vegetable shops, and not to forget: the coffee and tea shops. However, this wasn't the only shopping experience we had in Newcastle. Moreover, we visited Europe's biggest shopping centre, the Metro Centre.

And we wouldn't have been official tourists without visiting Beamish Open Air Museum and seeing the famous Angel of the North. This 20-metre-tall sculpture was built in 1998 and signifies that beneath this construction coal miners worked for over two centuries.

In conclusion, Newcastle is a very interesting city worth seeing and I would definitely recommend visiting it!

