

Travel Report

Excursion: Manchester 2013

Thinking back to when we were in Manchester the aspect that left the most indelible mark on me was the atmosphere of the city of Manchester and even more the people we got to know there.

There is no question that the excursion itself was absolutely life-enhancing and so varied that every activity was valuable and of further benefit for us. But to really experience the mood of a city and of the people who live there is something you cannot get from undertakings like hikes in the Peak District, a boat trip on the canals of Manchester or the visit to an excellent and interesting museum such as the MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry) in Manchester or the Bronte Museum in Haworth. For really catching the spirit of Manchester you need to get in contact with the people who live there. And that is what we coincidentally but luckily did.

It was our big fortune that we met Tom just the day we arrived in Salford. He was a student at the University of Salford and lived in the same student village we lived in. His interest aroused because of the fact that we were talking German, he jumped into our conversation. When he found out that we were on an excursion and wanted to explore Manchester, he told us about interesting places we really had to go to, places we had to watch after our pockets and valuables such as China Town or places we should better avoid. He also could recommend us good but cheap places to eat, so that we had more money to spend in some of the vintage stores in the "Bohemian" Northern Quarter, for example.

One night we also had the great opportunity to go out just like the locals do. Tom took us to a place called Antwerp Mansion, a location we - as tourists - would never have found and will probably never find again without the help of others. It was an old mansion which is basically a creative hub made for creative people by creative people, where constant parties and events are staged, such as music and art festivals. A place where many artists from Manchester come to, where they can perform or exhibit their art. There we spent a great night enjoying good live music and getting to know many interesting people. So without the help of Tom we would have never experienced a night like that, which in my opinion is the best way to feel the spirit of a city and its residents.

It is also Tom's achievement that I'm actually thinking about coming back to Manchester maybe for my master's degree, not because I'm in love with him or anything like that but because of his love for Manchester that got me infected. And I think that interpersonal encounters and intercultural experiences like these are what is so precious about trips to foreign countries and not how many museums you have visited and buildings you have seen.