

## **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

18 hours, 2 plane journeys and countless movies later we finally arrived at JFK airport in New York. After emerging relatively unscathed from US immigration we headed straight to the Yankees stadium to watch the infamous New York Yankees take on the Baltimore Orioles. Besides the thousands of enthusiastic American baseball fans, Mr Hart seemed to be the only one of us that had any idea what was actually going on. To the rest of us it just looked like a bunch of grown-ups playing an intense game of rounders! Our journey to the stadium took us through the Bronx, which made our fourth year topic of Inequalities in America seem scarily real. Finn was adamant that he had just witnessed a murder, and Aran continued to remind us all that we would be lucky to make it out alive! Armed with his rather fetching man bag Mr Hart instructed us to follow him to the stadium, however it appeared that he was leading us away from the stadium and further into the Bronx, he puts it down to confusion but I don't know how he could have missed the hundred foot tall stadium that was erupting with cheering and chanting!!

After the game we headed to our hotel and crashed out after being up for more than 24 hours.

## **Saturday 21<sup>ST</sup> June 2014**

After breakfast we headed to the Top of the Rock via Times Square. From the top we could see all of New York's famous sights including the Empire State Building and Central Park. We then travelled by subway to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum where we spent the afternoon remembering the horrific events that shocked the world. The museum and memorial shared the recollection of those who witnessed the events and also honoured the many innocent people who lost their lives that day. It was a truly humbling experience that will stay with all of us for many years to come. In the evening, after eating at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square, we watched the Broadway production of Matilda. On the way there while meandering through the streets of Manhattan the group of us accompanied by Mr Hart watched helplessly as he narrowly missed being taken out by a cyclist - moments after explaining to us how important it was to be careful when crossing the road! That was easily more entertaining than the show itself.

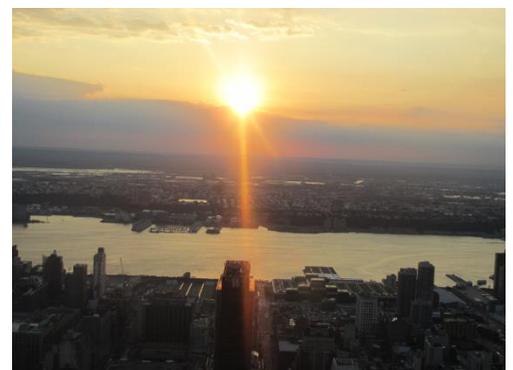


### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014**

In the morning we made our way to Columbia University on the subway to listen to a Civil Rights Veteran who talked to us about his experiences in the Movement and the role he played in showing white support for the campaigners. Afterwards we headed to Central Park where we were given free time to explore the area. People went rowing on the lake while others watched the free shows and entertainers. Before we headed back to the hotel we were given the chance to do some shopping on Fifth Avenue. \$50 is a reasonable price for a t-shirt, right?

### **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014**

In the morning we travelled by subway to the harbour where we would be getting on a boat which was taking us to Liberty and Ellis Islands. Despite Mr Hart constantly reminding us that we were to remain with our groups when we were on the subway, Mr Walls still managed to leave his group standing on the platform as he got on the train. Our first stop on the boat ride was Liberty Island. We spent time walking around the island and taking photographs of Lady Liberty and the impressive views of the Manhattan skyline. After that we headed to Ellis Island where we spent time walking around the museum, which was set in the original building immigrants would have entered on their arrival to America in the 1800s. The boat ride was interesting, if the heat wasn't making you feel nauseous then the vigorous swaying of the boat certainly was. Once back on dry land we made our way to Wall Street for some lunch and then on to Macy's where we were given time to shop. That night after dinner we headed up the Empire State Building to see New York as the sun was setting. The view from the top was amazing and the sunset looked pretty cool behind the tall skyscrapers.



## **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

After breakfast we travelled by coach to Washington, making a three hour stop in Philadelphia. When we got to the hotel in Washington it was certainly interesting – not quite The Ritz! No leaving your room after 10 o'clock and certainly not without shoes on. Before dinner we took a casual stroll to the National Mall, stopping for a while to watch an impromptu game of softball.

## **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

In the Morning we had a tour of the US Capitol and sat in the Senate and House of Representatives. Afterwards we were given free time. Some of us walked back up the National Mall and visited the different memorials, including the WW2 Memorial and the very impressive Lincoln Memorial. In the afternoon we had a question and answer session with Senator John McCain, who ran for president against Barack Obama in 2008. It was a very interesting experience and we all learnt a lot about Americans position in current world issues, Mr Hart also took the opportunity to take a 'selfie' with him, he was very excited. As we headed back from dinner that night we were caught in a torrential rain and thunderstorm which made the weather back home seem mild in comparison! However, the weather soon became insignificant when we were stopped by a police officer who told us that we couldn't cross as the Presidential Motorcade was coming down the road with the President on his way back to the White House. There was a debate between all of us as to whether or not it was Barack Obama or if in fact it was the Israeli President who was on a visit to the White House - Obama sounds more impressive so we're sticking with that!



### **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

After breakfast we made our way to the White House for a tour. It was very impressive inside, with the walls lined with portraits of past Presidents. Inside we passed through several rooms including the state dining room and the Blue Room. It was an experience that I don't think any of us will forget. The Secret Service officers and snipers on the rooftops made it feel like we were extras in a movie scene. Afterwards we headed to Arlington Cemetery via the WW2 Memorial and the Vietnam Memorial. Whilst at Arlington Cemetery we visited the graves of the Kennedy family and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which honours all those soldiers whose remains could not be identified and also acts as a common memorial to all soldiers. It was a humbling experience and the number of graves there brought the reality of war home to us. We spent the remainder of the afternoon shopping at a nearby mall and then headed back to the hotel. After dinner we split into our groups and played softball on the National Mall in front of the White House, which was pretty cool. Despite Mr Hart knowing all the rules and telling us we had it sorted, our team lost terribly, that's the last time we make him captain – sorry Mr Hart, but you're on the bench!

**HUGE, HUGE thanks to Mr Hart, Mr Walls, Mr Chaudhry and Mrs Brain from all of us.**