

UK TRAVEL PLANNING PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE #98

Intro [00:00:03]:

Welcome to the UK travel planning podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website, Tracey Collins. In this podcast, Tracey shares destination guides, travel tips, and itinerary ideas, as well as interviews with a variety of guests who share their knowledge and experience of UK travel to help you plan your perfect UK vacation. Join us as we explore the UK from cosmopolitan cities to quaint villages, from historic castles to beautiful islands, and from the picturesque countryside to seaside towns.

Tracy Collins [00:00:42]:

Welcome to episode 98 of the UK travel planning podcast. So this week, we have a lovely trip report from Venita and Theron. It was based around, as Theron's gonna explain, his lifelong passion for Liverpool football team. The first thing I did ask, though, was for them to introduce themselves and tell us whereabouts and the states they're

Vernetta [00:01:01]:

from. We're from Bloomington, Indiana, which is in the middle of the Midwest.

Therron [00:01:07]:

So my name is Theron Thomas. I spent 30 years in the US Army, grew up here in Bloomington, Indiana, retired. I went to work for the Navy full time. I work now as a recruiter for the federal government. 58 years old. Like I said, grew up in the local area. Actually, dated her 40 years ago and tried to get her to marry me back then, and she wouldn't. Got divorced several years ago, ran back into her.

Therron [00:01:32]:

You know, we we connected, and, finally got my dream. So

Tracy Collins [00:01:36]:

Oh, I am so lucky. That's pretty much me. That was meant to be, Vanita. Yeah.

Therron [00:01:41]:

I gotta blush it.

Tracy Collins [00:01:43]:

I was gonna say, if you listen to the podcast, you won't tell, but, actually, Vanita's gone. She's blushing, which is really lovely. So, Vanita, you're from the same area then. So you were born and brought up in the same area of the state?

Vernetta [00:01:54]:

Yes. I was. Like he said, we met when I was in high school. I was in my last year of high school. Things didn't work out. I went into the military, and after I got out, I married someone else, also got divorced. And when we reconnected, you know, we talked about things we would like to do, and going to the UK was one of them. So we didn't expect a a pandemic and other things to happen along the way.

Tracy Collins [00:02:28]:

Yeah. You know, that that impacted so many people's travel plans. So when did you make it over to the UK, and, how long were you there for?

Vernetta [00:02:36]:

We went in early November. We were there for 2 weeks or 2 weeks and a couple days.

Therron [00:02:42]:

Mhmm. Our travel plans really revolved around Liverpool soccer, honestly. It was I I've been I've been a Liverpool fan since I was, like, 6 years old. And when we talked about going, you know, I said, well, you know, the Tower of London is not going to move. The you know, these other things aren't gonna move. But there is a soccer schedule, and, and I wanted to get a game in Anfield. So we we kept making our plans, and they really didn't solidify until about June when I was able to purchase our tickets. And then we had a date.

Therron [00:03:10]:

And and that's when we really kinda set everything in stone and and decided to to make the trip.

Tracy Collins [00:03:15]:

So that's fantastic. You have to say, I I don't know if you're aware, but Doug's a massive Liverpool fan since he was a child as well. So that will make

Therron [00:03:23]:

Oh, really

Tracy Collins [00:03:24]:

exciting. Yeah. He absolutely adores Liverpool. Actually, if I could swing the camera around, we've got, we've got some, Liverpool, memorabilia in the room and he's a big cricket fan as well. So we've got cricket stuff.

Therron [00:03:34]:

We'll send you some pictures. We have your email address. I'll send you a picture. I have an entire Liverpool bar just on the other side of this wall.

Tracy Collins [00:03:40]:

Oh, yes. You send that. Doug would love it. Absolutely love it. Absolutely love it. So that was fantastic. So you kinda had something to go. You had your date.

Tracy Collins [00:03:48]:

You had you know, look. You could look at the Liverpool fixtures. So give us a brief overview of what your itinerary worked out to

Therron [00:03:54]:

be. Well, I I think I would say first that that when we made our itinerary, unlike a lot of people, we we didn't use a travel agency or anything, you know, because we're both disabled. We we have a lot of of mobility issues and things. You know? And and, what we we had planned

was is that we wanted to do something every other day and and set that in stone. You know, so so we started planning like that. It was like, well, it's you know? And we can fill in. We can do all kinds of things in between if we were able. But we thought every other day is not bad.

Therron [00:04:26]:

Right? And we could set that in stone. If we get feeling bad, then we're not gonna miss something we really wanna see. So we we really we didn't buy any tickets for anything or anything other than our transportation and that game, and everything else was pretty much on the fly. Right?

Vernetta [00:04:39]:

We got our We had the tickets for the game. We had our Liverpool and London hotels reserved. We had a London pass, and we had the BritRail pass. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:04:50]:

Oh, perfect.

Therron [00:04:51]:

So so we we just a quick overview, I I guess. We we landed in Manchester, and that was really because we flew on points. And and when I went to go buy the tickets, with my credit card points, there was a little bit of a variation. And and, actually, a lot of people had told us that flying into Manchester might be a little easier because it's a smaller airport, you know, that type of thing. So we landed in Manchester. We got on the train and we went to Nottingham. And The reason we went there is because my friend well, our our friend, Andy Henley, and his wife live right outside of Nottingham, and they had invited us to come and kinda start our trip. So we went to Nottingham.

Therron [00:05:29]:

They came and met us. We went to York. We got done there for a couple days. We went to Liverpool.

Vernetta [00:05:36]:

We went to York on the one day that the minster was closed.

Therron [00:05:38]:

Oh, that was horrible.

Vernetta [00:05:40]:

The minster was closed that day. It was terrible. Yeah.

Therron [00:05:43]:

But we got to see the shambles and many other things. You know? It was really, really kinda cool. But but, yeah, it was it was just bad. You know, we walked up wanting to see the minster, and it was just it was closed. And then we went to Liverpool, and, we spent 4

Vernetta [00:05:57]:

or 4 days now. 4 days, 5 days, something like that.

Therron [00:06:01]:

Went from Liverpool down to London. I took a day trip to Leicester because, again, my friend Andy and I play a obscure table soccer game called Sabudio, and

Tracy Collins [00:06:11]:

Oh, yes.

Therron [00:06:11]:

His Sabudio, club was meeting, so I went up and played with them. And we spent 6 days

Vernetta [00:06:17]:

in London, I think. Yes. Yeah. The, we went to Westminster Abbey. It was the king's birthday. Yeah. It was not supposed to rain. So we left our rain jackets and umbrellas in the room.

Vernetta [00:06:30]:

So, of course, it rained. We were about to Scotland Yard when it really poured. So we bought an umbrella and realized we needed to.

Tracy Collins [00:06:41]:

Yeah.

Therron [00:06:41]:

So then we we left, from there. We we we had a couple other places we thought about going, but we ended up going back to Manchester. And then Andy and his wife met us again and drove us to Wells. We went to Conley Castle and, visited there for the day. It was lovely. And, and then went back to Manchester. It's been the last, day and a half or so there. And it worked out per honestly, I think our trip worked out perfectly.

Therron [00:07:04]:

It it was just you know, there was no rush to anything. We weren't on someone else's schedule. We could take in things as we saw them. And I and I tell you, you know, if you know, one piece of advice I would give to anybody who's doing this for the first time is you have 2 choices. You can either go stare at something for hours and maybe get bored of it, or you can stare at whatever you want to as long as you want to, and you don't. You know? And and that's kind of the way we took it. We we were you go to the Tower of London, we'd look at a statue. We'd you know, I I can't tell you how many, probably hours I spent taking pictures of there's, there's these chains in Liverpool with locks all over them.

Therron [00:07:42]:

I just was fascinated by them, you know. And I didn't probably never saw those things other than just walking by them. You know? So so, yeah, it was kind of a just do whatever we wanna do trip with things like we're going to go to Westminster. You're you know, we're we're going to go to the the Tower of London. We're going to go see whatever.

Vernetta [00:08:01]:

We were going to go to Hampton Court Palace and also to Windsor. Mhmm. And I looked at him when he got back from Lester. I didn't go with him to Lester. I I needed to rest. I it was just too much. I was done. Yeah.

Vernetta [00:08:17]:

And I told him, if if we do that, I'm good. I want to go and see those, but they're I won't be able to do anything else the rest of this trip. So and, also, I think while we were in the middle of our time in Liverpool, I we've had figured out ways we could do this trip again. That's alright. And and and see more and do more. So, you know, we made the decision that to save with the health Oh. That not to go to places. And I think that's that's a piece of advice that I picked up from someone in the Facebook group, and I thought, oh, it can't be that bad.

Therron [00:08:57]:

Yeah.

Vernetta [00:08:57]:

Oh, it was. Yeah. So, you know, just you know? Also, people need to be prepared to maybe not Yeah. Not do it all.

Therron [00:09:07]:

Yeah. And your group was just phenomenal. I mean, you know, like, that train pass is the best thing ever. I'm just telling you right now. Anybody who's planning on going by we got a 1st class pass. We could hop on that train anytime we wanted to, go anywhere we wanted to. It was fantastic. And, also, I've said I've told this story.

Therron [00:09:25]:

I said, if you're a single person, you want food, get a first class train ticket, hop on because 9 times out of 10, they'll let you take anything you want from the cart. You can get your entire day's meal by by running a 15 minute train ride up the road. You know? So Yeah. Yeah. It's that was phenomenal. The the the train pass was fantastic.

Tracy Collins [00:09:41]:

I think you guys did an amazing job of, planning your itinerary, bearing in mind you'll kinda need to rest and and and take take your time to do it. And I think that's really important, Vanita, as well, you know, is I I don't think people sometimes realize just how tiring it is. It can be phenomenally tiring. You know, whenever you do on on a trip because I think sometimes people as well put the pressure on themselves to try and see everything. I've gotta see everything. I'm in London. I've gotta try and see everything. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:10:11]:

And, actually, you know, if you do that and you do get tired, sometimes it does take some of the joy out of it.

Therron [00:10:17]:

It does. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And being on someone else's schedule too. You know? Again, I go back to some people were cut out for that. Absolutely. And if that's your your, you know, bag of chips, that's what you're gonna do, you know? But but at the end of the day, that wasn't us.

Therron [00:10:30]:

You know? We didn't wanna be, oh, well, we got we got a half hour to look at this. I'm back on the bus. Let's go. We didn't wanna do that at all, and and it was fantastic.

Tracy Collins [00:10:38]:

And I think part of the part of the reason that we started doing what we do with the with the website and the podcast and all our resources is to enable people to to plan it themselves so that if a tour isn't for you, but you're feeling a bit daunted about, okay. How do I put this together? You know? And and I was actually talking to somebody in the Facebook group yesterday. He was asking me about that particular tour company, and I was like, yeah. You can you can use that, but we've got a lot of resources if you actually wanted to put it together. If you've got and we understand some people haven't got the time or inclination. But if you have got the time and inclination, we've got so much out there for you to use to to do it.

Therron [00:11:13]:

So we joked when we first started this. You know, being in the military, she said we need a passport. And I was like, oh, that's right. Yeah. We gotta get a passport. You know? And and I joked. I said the last time I went on a plane trip like this, I had a rifle and hand grenades going to Iraq, so I didn't need a passport. You know? So Yeah.

Therron [00:11:29]:

But but even that was kind of intimidating, never getting a passport. I was like, oh my god. What's this going to entail? You know? So just take it as it is and take the entire thing as an adventure, honestly. And, you know, money was a big concern. I I was freaking out because we tried to buy some things with my credit card, and it kept getting rejected. And that was a problem with our bank. It took them 2 months to rectify it. Every time we would try to do something that we reject, they'd fix it, quote, unquote, fix it.

Therron [00:11:55]:

Next time, we would do it again. Yep. So I went and and got us each, like, \$400, £400 to take with us because I was terrified that we were gonna get there and the card would be messed up. We were, you know, 5, 6 hours difference from the bank. And in retrospect, none of that was a worry. Like, honestly, I think everybody was so friendly and things were so available that anything could have been fixed.

Tracy Collins [00:12:18]:

Yeah.

Therron [00:12:19]:

You know? And and so so, yeah, I think a lot of people probably have those similar worries. Yeah. You know, it it should remain a concern, but it shouldn't worry you is is the way I think I would tell people. You know? Just go enjoy, you know, and and, and things will work out.

Tracy Collins [00:12:35]:

So when you were in the UK, obviously, you used the train the majority of the time to get around. And then when you were in London, how did you get around in London?

Therron [00:12:44]:

A combination. We used we got some cabs. Cabs were pretty expensive, really. You know? And then you don't you don't know where you're going. We we absolutely going back to Liverpool, we undoubtedly got took by a cab driver. Okay. No doubt. We the the cab ride that we took over to we went to, to watch the Trammer Rovers, on the suggestion of a, of a waiter 1 night.

Therron [00:13:07]:

And the trip over took quite a while. I I can't remember what it was. It was like £40 or something for that cab ride, which we paid. On the cab ride back, it was like £14. And we talked to that cabbie, and he said, oh, well, the guy realized you were Americans. Right? And he just he drove you around the block a few times. And Yeah. Oh, okay.

Therron [00:13:24]:

Well, you know what happens. Right?

Vernetta [00:13:25]:

Yep. But also back to Liverpool, Google Maps said that the hotel was 8 tenths of a mile from the train station.

Therron [00:13:35]:

Uh-huh.

Vernetta [00:13:36]:

And by the time we walked this way and walked that way and around this building and that turn, it was a mile and a half. Okay. So from London Houston station to the hotel was supposed to be 3 miles. And by that time, we thought we could do that. And it was getting dark when we arrived in London, so we took a taxi.

Therron [00:13:56]:

And and the country's lovely. I mean, the walk, honestly, and and just talking from a United States perspective. Right?

Tracy Collins [00:14:01]:

Yeah.

Therron [00:14:02]:

90% of the United States, that walk would not have been nearly as daunting because our country is so new that it's based on a grid pattern, number 1. Number 2, we don't have cobblestone sidewalks and things. Right? So for people with disabilities, you know, it that the the whole country was developed over such a long period that the streets are not necessarily like they are in the states. If you go 20 feet this way and turn and go, you know, 400 feet down that way and another turn and and the cobblestones and things. So it was it was just daunting. You know, it was different than it was here in the states. So things you don't think about. You know? When you go to another country, that that you just assume there's gonna be smooth sidewalks everywhere and, you know, and then there's not.

Therron [00:14:41]:

It's beautiful. Place is beautiful, but it it's certainly, for someone with disabilities, dragging some luggage. And, you know, the the tube and everything, it was really easy once we figured it out. You know? We're we're from Indiana. We don't have subways here. If I was maybe from New York or Washington, maybe I've I'm used to it. But the first time I went to go get on, the the underground there, I was just blown away. I was looking at this giant map of, you know, a 100 different names and all these arrows, and it looked like a a bowl of spaghetti with fruit loops.

Therron [00:15:11]:

You know what I mean? I was just I was like, my goodness. This is terrible. Yeah. And finally, someone saw I was in distress and, stopped and said, can I help you, mate? I said, well, yes. I don't I don't know what I'm looking at. I said, I'm trying to get here, and I see that. And he was very helpful. This gentleman said, well, mate, all you have to do is look at the color.

Therron [00:15:28]:

He said, you find this the place you're going to go, and you follow that color all the way to the end, and that's the one you wanna get on.

Tracy Collins [00:15:35]:

Yeah.

Therron [00:15:35]:

And I was like, oh, okay. That's that's way simpler. But I I hadn't looked at that. I hadn't read anything about it. I didn't know. Yeah. You know? So that was way better, once I learned that.

Tracy Collins [00:15:44]:

It's lovely as well that people and and you'll find that people will will stop and help you if you look like you're not not sure where you're going or what you're doing. People will help. It's like, okay. Do you do you need a bit of help, miss?

Therron [00:15:54]:

Yeah. So I'll I'll tell you. I told her I wasn't gonna say this, but I'll tell you. And I'll I'll rephrase it the way I'd normally. I'll tell you, this was our impression. And I she could disagree. I you know? But we got there, and our overall impression was that the people of England were, as a whole, much, more standoffish than I would have expected as a group. But, individually, some of the nicest people I've ever met in my life.

Therron [00:16:20]:

Absolutely. It's a very unusual culture where you just feel almost like an impostor almost all the time. And, you know, people will bump into you and they just don't pay attention. And then you'll stop and say, hey. Can you help me find a sandwich shop? And they'll go buy you a sandwich, you know, and it's like, oh, wait a minute. Like, it's such a such a an odd contrast, you know, where you you just kinda feel like, my god. You know? Like, these people aren't friendly at all, but individually, fantastic.

Tracy Collins [00:16:46]:

I think perhaps you've kinda just described, encapsulated there in a few sentences the kind of, impression of English people has been a bit standoffish. And I think you're in a big city,

you're gonna find that, for example, in London, you might sit on the tube and nobody will make eye contact, that sort of thing. But, honestly, if you stop and ask anybody for help, which obviously you've experienced, they will help you, and they will doesn't matter if it's in London or in Liverpool or, you know, in a big any of the big cities, people will help you out. But as a collective, people do kinda like the personal space and keep to themselves. And I just think and maybe that's a kinda cultural thing that we just are maybe a little bit more reserved. Yeah. Perhaps. Let's change the subject slightly and we'll talk about accommodation.

Tracy Collins [00:17:36]:

So you stayed with friends for part of the time, which is really lovely because that's a fantastic way to experience the culture. But what sort of accommodation choices did you make?

Vernetta [00:17:46]:

We stayed at the Staybridge Suites in Liverpool at the Albert Docks, which interestingly enough, was half a block from an area where my late grandmother had had a picture taken in 2007. Yeah. So we were able to recreate the that picture.

Therron [00:18:06]:

Yeah.

Vernetta [00:18:07]:

We stayed at Tower Hotel in London.

Therron [00:18:09]:

That was fantastic.

Vernetta [00:18:10]:

This was our honeymoon, you know, 3, 4 years delayed because, you know, thanks to the plague. And that was amazing and fascinating. We we stayed in London an extra day because we found out they only did the bridge lift on Saturday Sunday. So we stayed an extra day so we could see the bridge lift. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:18:34]:

Oh, that's lovely. It looks like you had the flexibility to do that. That's amazing. And did you enjoy that?

Vernetta [00:18:40]:

Oh, yeah.

Therron [00:18:40]:

Yeah. It was yeah. There was there are a few highlights about accommodations that that, one of them was and we'll go back to the to the the interesting interactions. The very first day we got there, she was not feeling well at all. And we went into the Staybridge in Nottingham.

Vernetta [00:18:56]:

No. Or or Premier Inn. Premier Inn.

Therron [00:18:58]:

Premier Inn in Nottingham. And, I went up to the clerk, and I said, hey. Is there any way we can get an early check-in? My wife's not feeling well. And he goes, absolutely not. No. We don't do early check ins. I was like, oh, okay. Thanks.

Therron [00:19:08]:

You know? Don't wanna so we sat in the lobby for about 4 and a half hours. What got her a sandwich, which she couldn't really she just what she was just fit sick. You know? Wouldn't really so, well, I look over, and there's another guy working. And I thought, you know what? I just can't believe they don't allow early check ins. So I went over to that gentleman and I said, you know, is it like a a premier in wide policy that you don't allow early check ins? He goes, I don't know what you're talking about, mate. He goes, I can get you an early check-in, and he clickety click click. He's like, here's your card. It's like, go.

Therron [00:19:38]:

Like, are you kidding me? So, anyway, you know, again, it's just personal. Right? Anytime you add people into something, it's gonna be be different.

Vernetta [00:19:46]:

That that was the only issue we had at any hotel the entire time was just that one word gentleman.

Therron [00:19:53]:

Yeah. Otherwise, everybody would have been over backwards to help us. It was incredible. The the place we stayed in Liverpool was fantastic. And just, you know, the by the by the second hour we were there, half the staff seemed like they knew who we were. You know? And they it was just, yeah, just just just loving.

Vernetta [00:20:07]:

The the lady who added our additional day at Tower Hotel, we told her. She's like, are you staying for any reason? And I said, I wanna see the bridge lift. And she said, oh, that's common. Yeah. That's not a problem. That's common. We hear that a lot. Yeah.

Therron [00:20:21]:

Yeah. And the view out of our hotel was spectacular. It was I I honestly we we she wanted to see the bridge, so we paid a little extra to get a view of the bridge. Right? Being an American, being the way I was raised, I fully expected to go in and, you know, press my face against the glass and, you know, sort of see the bridge over there, you know, and let her take a turn pressing her face against the glass. We threw open the the the blinds, and it was like a painting. It was just absolutely spectacular. The the bridge was lit up, and we could see the wheel. And it just it was just absolutely we we stood there for 45 minutes staring out the window, not moving.

Therron [00:20:56]:

Like, this is incredible. You know?

Vernetta [00:20:59]:

Aw. That's one of our granddaughters on video chat and said, look at this. This is our hotel.
And

Therron [00:21:05]:

Yeah. It was lovely. Yeah. The the so so a quick, you know, sort of side story related to accommodations was 1 is is laundry. Like, the place in Liverpool had laundry, and and it was free except you had to buy, you know, laundry pad pods if you wanted those. And we had taken some things with us to do that, but then there was no laundry at, you know, the the the tower hotel. So, you know, we kinda got some dirty laundry accumulated. And and, when I went to when we went to Manchester 1 evening, she was ready to go to bed.

Therron [00:21:36]:

I said, I'm gonna go do laundry. So I looked up to see if there was a coin operated laundry, which are pretty common in the United States. I found 1 2 miles away, 3 miles away. Got on a bus, went there. And when I got off the bus, the guy's like, hey, bait. This is kind of a dangerous neighborhood. What are you doing? I was like, well, I'm gonna go and do laundry. And he goes, okay.

Therron [00:21:56]:

So, well, there's a police station right over here. If you need anything, just be careful. This is a rough neighborhood. Okay. No problem. Thank you. So I get out. I I follow my GPS walking around with my phone.

Therron [00:22:07]:

I walk, you know, across the street. I'm standing in front of a pub. And I was like, oh, this says this is a laundry. You know? So I I make a lap around the pub, and I go into an alleyway behind the pub, and there are 2 washing machines and a dryer under a little overhang in an alley behind the pub. And I was like, I guess I'm doing laundry in an alley. You know? There it was outside. And I and so, yeah, I put money in and went did the laundry. I went inside the pub and had a beer, which is also a strange experience.

Therron [00:22:33]:

And it was, like, Peaky Blinders night at the pub, so everyone was dressed in costume and stuff. It was just almost surreal.

Vernetta [00:22:40]:

In Manchester wearing a Liverpool FC hat and shirt.

Therron [00:22:44]:

Your husband would appreciate that. As I was getting ready to walk in the bar, I realized I'm wearing my hat and a shirt. So I I zipped it up to my neck, took my hat, shoved it under my arm under the jacket, walked in and pretended that I was, you know, no. Don't like Liverpool here. You know? And, had a couple of beers. I did my laundry. It was a whole experience. You know? But but yeah.

Therron [00:23:03]:

So so laundry is a thing. You know? If if, when we were in London, we actually found a cleaners that was right back behind the Tower Hotel, but they wanted \$7 for or £7 for underwear.

Vernetta [00:23:17]:

So yes. So it was crazy, like,

Therron [00:23:19]:

the the the amount

Vernetta [00:23:20]:

One pair of underwear.

Therron [00:23:21]:

It was it was insanely

Vernetta [00:23:22]:

I told them I could I could wash underwear in the same

Therron [00:23:25]:

So so I guess my point in saying all of this is is if you're gonna go over there and you pack light like we did, which we we can talk about a little bit more in a moment, laundry is certainly different than it is in the United States. It is to to us, it was very difficult to find, and when we found it, it was overly expensive. So Yeah. Just a, you know, planning, point. So

Tracy Collins [00:23:46]:

Yeah. I think that that does come up quite a lot, actually, people ask about, trying to find a a laundromat in in the UK. And I think they're that they still exist, and they are still there, but they are they're less common than they they were in the past, I think. So and I know, obviously, sometimes you stay in a hotel and the amount that they want to charge for doing any laundry can be exorbitant. So it's yeah. So that's definitely something if you're packing lightly that you're gonna have to consider. I mean, I do try to like, like, even each other trying to wash certain items in the sink and hang them up. We've got a portable, yeah, we've got a portable, washing line, which we take with us, which is brilliant, which sticks on either side.

Tracy Collins [00:24:24]:

We could fit that in. So we can do the kinda smalls.

Therron [00:24:26]:

Uh-huh.

Tracy Collins [00:24:27]:

That way. But, yes, it it can be an issue finding, laundromat. Yeah. I think I'll have a look and see if there's actually an app because I'm sure there's gonna be an app about where you find them. I'll have a look because that that might be something you can

Therron [00:24:38]:

You're right. Yeah. Yeah. Maybe there is. Yeah. That's brilliant. Yeah. Yeah.

Therron [00:24:40]:

That that may very well be.

Tracy Collins [00:24:41]:

Because that does come up quite often. I mean, we've stayed in quite a lot of, B and Bs, who and they're quite often will let you do. They'll or they'll say, yes. Give us a laundry, and we'll do it and help out. And I know Doug stayed in a hotel in Wales last year, and he was down there on his own doing some work in Wales. And, and, again, the it was lovely at the hotel. They went, oh, just give us a laundry. We'll we'll sort it for you.

Tracy Collins [00:25:03]:

So so sometimes it's worth asking as well if, guest a bit of a posher hotel, probably not not as easy to get it done that way. But if it a B and B or kind of, you know, yeah, guest house, you can do it potentially get it done that way. So so tell us what your I'm I'm sure so this your Liverpool match is gonna come into this, but what were some of your, favorite experiences and places that you visited?

Vernetta [00:25:30]:

Liverpool Cathedral was gorgeous. They were setting up for an event inside, so we couldn't really see a lot. Westminster Abbey, wet feet and all. We were not the only people who had soaking wet feet that that day at Westminster Abbey.

Therron [00:25:49]:

Yeah. That was fascinating to you know, you go in. I I she's way more, well versed on on all of the history of England and then those things. And, you know, when I walk into a place and I see Rudyard Kipling's grave, right, I'm like, I'm already fascinated. So I could have spent 3 days in that place walking around looking and finding all the famous people and things. You know? That's really neat.

Vernetta [00:26:11]:

We were there. We got to London. Well, the Liverpool game was Remembrance Sunday.

Therron [00:26:16]:

Yeah.

Vernetta [00:26:16]:

So all the poppies and everything were still out.

Therron [00:26:19]:

Right.

Vernetta [00:26:20]:

He was able to, get across with the poppy on it. There was a section Yeah. Right outside of Westminster Abbey that was for, American service members who were lost in Iraq and Afghanistan. So he was able to place a cross with the name of his soldier he lost in, Iraq Yeah. Outside of Westminster Abbey.

Therron [00:26:43]:

Yeah. That was that was wonderful. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:26:45]:

Yeah.

Vernetta [00:26:45]:

The Tower of London, was fascinating. Yeah. We we sponsored a block in the in the tower for in memory of our daughter that we lost in early 2020. So, you know, we could stand and look. Well, look. There's her stone, which obviously we couldn't see, but we know what side of the tower. You know? We know where it's at. Yeah.

Vernetta [00:27:08]:

So

Therron [00:27:09]:

Yeah. There was there was a lot of little things that happened. As you said, you know, I I cried like a baby when I went into to Anfield. I'm not ashamed to admit it at all. The first time I walked in and saw that field after, you know, 57 years on the planet wanting to see it, I was it was emotional. Being able to touch the, you know, the the sign, you know, as you walk out. Those things were all memorable, but, honestly, the things that are really more memorable to me was just our chance meetings, and and I'll give you a few examples. One of them was our cab driver when we went to go take a tour of Anfield, ended up being a player from, the 1984 tier 2 Liverpool team.

Therron [00:27:50]:

And we talked for 30 minutes. He got out of the cab. We talked, took pictures and stuff. It was fantastic. You know? When we left the game, we were walking in the rain because you're not gonna get a a taxi. We didn't realize, you know, you're not gonna get a taxi anywhere near Anfield, you know, after the game.

Tracy Collins [00:28:05]:

No. No.

Therron [00:28:05]:

So we started walking. That old walk, a mile or whatever. Right? We we got a cab and there were 2 ladies who were like, hey. What can we share the cab with you? And I said, absolutely. Jump in. You know? One of the lady's husbands was the founder of the radio station that that tower in Liverpool is from.

Tracy Collins [00:28:23]:

Wow. It

Therron [00:28:24]:

was just, you know, just another chance meeting to meet somebody, you know, and just hear her talk for 15 or 20 minutes on the as we rode. And and there were several things like that that happened while we were there that were just absolutely just fascinating. And I and I gotta tell you, I have an artistic side. Right? So, what she didn't know was I was taking

pictures like crazy. Like, every time when you come across a sign I love signs. You know? I take pictures in alleyways and graffiti and, you know, portions of sidewalks and stuff. And she kept you know, I know I know in her mind, she was like, what in the world is this person doing? You know? Why is my husband taking pictures of stuff? And, but when I got back, I had a website, site and I was able to take a map of England and it and it took the 745 photographs that I had taken and took made a collage Oh, wow. That is shaped like, UK and, gave it to her as a present.

Vernetta [00:29:19]:

As a birthday present. I figured out he had been some of those pictures he had taken of me, we were in Westminster Abbey, and I was standing fascinated looking at the tomb of Mary, Queen of Scots. We have a Stewart relation in part of my family. So I'm I'm just fascinated and and amazed that I'm seeing this in person, and he's standing behind me taking pictures of me, standing there, you know, and, you know, fascinated Yeah. To to see all of it. So it So, yeah,

Therron [00:29:48]:

there there's you you can make whatever you wanna make out of the trip. It depends. You know what I mean? There are some people who are cut out that are only gonna be fascinated if they see Big Ben. There's people like me, and I think her also, that we went, we we were we were coming back from York. And what's the name of the place where they found the

Vernetta [00:30:06]:

Chatsworth. Chatsworth. They stopped at Chatsworth House.

Therron [00:30:08]:

Stop at Chatsworth and and just, you know, it's just fast. There's a statue of a horse. You know, there's there's so many little things, you know, little street corners and and phone booths and things that just absolutely

Vernetta [00:30:19]:

We we have the Life 360 app on our phones. It's a, safety tracking app.

Tracy Collins [00:30:25]:

We have that.

Vernetta [00:30:26]:

My sister sends me a picture. When we were at Chatsworth, she had taken a screenshot that showed where we were at and asked if mister Darcy was home. So Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:30:38]:

It's lovely Chatsworth is because I lived, probably about 20 minutes, 25 minutes drive from there for 20 odd years. That's where Doug's not too far from there. Yeah. So if we were when we were back in in December, January, we like to go Chatsworth is lovely at Christmas. They they do a themed Christmas trees throughout I don't know. Was that They had

Therron [00:30:57]:

just opened the the, what what do they call it? The

Vernetta [00:31:00]:

The holiday Christmas mart. And they were, one of the, guides, I guess, said they were still getting the house decorated.

Tracy Collins [00:31:10]:

Yeah. I get it.

Vernetta [00:31:10]:

We were there, like, 2 days after they had opened the the Christmas mart.

Tracy Collins [00:31:14]:

Yeah.

Vernetta [00:31:15]:

That that was fascinating. You know, here in the state, Christmas starts the day after Thanksgiving. And there we were in November, and all the Christmas markets were open. Yeah. They stopped. So that was that was really fascinating.

Tracy Collins [00:31:29]:

Beginning of November in London, you get the lights on and the the Christmas market start. So you get all over and, like, Bath will have 1 and York will have 1. We actually went to the York one last year just before Christmas. So they kinda start different times, but really sort of from mid November onwards to to just be before Christmas, you'll you'll get all of the Christmas markets. Did so did you enjoy having a having a wander around there, Venita?

Vernetta [00:31:54]:

Yeah. They were closing, so we weren't there very long, but it was it was, you know

Tracy Collins [00:32:00]:

We only

Therron [00:32:01]:

had a couple of we hit the one in Metch. Or

Vernetta [00:32:03]:

Yeah. We went to one in London. We met a a friend of mine, a Facebook friend of mine that I finally got to meet in person. She's in London. So we we met her, and she had us, you know, get on a bus, and we're gonna take a tour of town on on a just on a regular bus, not on a hop on hop off bus. And, we got off at Trafalgar Square and then walked back partway and and walked through one of the markets there and walked through the markets in Manchester, and it was just Yeah. It was really fascinating.

Tracy Collins [00:32:35]:

So did you I know you went to places like, you know, Westminster Abbey and, I don't know if you did any other tours. Did you do a tour of Westminster Abbey, or did you just just, like,

Tower of London, Westminster Abbey? Was that just a ticket and go in and look around yourself, or did you do any tours when you were there?

Vernetta [00:32:52]:

We didn't do any tours. We took the tube into London one day and went to Regent Street because I wanted to go to Liberty of London and get fabric. And we found an Asian fusion restaurant there, and we walked back to the hotel and

Therron [00:33:11]:

Discovered all kinds of things in

Vernetta [00:33:13]:

the world. Everything, walked past Saint Paul's completely and totally by accident.

Therron [00:33:17]:

For the only tour we took, the entire time was in Anfield. That was the only, like

Vernetta [00:33:22]:

We took a stadium tour

Therron [00:33:23]:

in Tampa. Stadium tour in Anfield. That was the only thing. It was like a range like that that we did.

Tracy Collins [00:33:27]:

That's really popular to do that. I think that's, that's something, I don't know if Doug's done that yet. I know that would be on his on his wish list. He usually tries to get to a match with because one of his best mates in the UK is also a massive Liverpool fan. So the 2 of them try to get up to see a match when they're back. Did they win? I have to ask you. Did Liverpool win?

Therron [00:33:45]:

They did. Yes. As a matter of fact, they won, and the Tremor Rovers both won 3 now. Oh. So, yeah, great games.

Tracy Collins [00:33:51]:

Brilliant. So just talking about you mentioned a bit about food there, finding that Asian fusion restaurant. Did you try any British foods? Did you have any kind of favorites, any favorite places that you ate?

Therron [00:34:01]:

Yeah. Well, okay. So I'll tell you what I didn't like was the brown sauce. I I wanted to try it so bad. You know? And the very first day, I tried it, and I was like, okay. Well,

Vernetta [00:34:10]:

I'm over that. Horrible.

Therron [00:34:11]:

Just yeah. Just smell. I became quite the fan of eating beans for breakfast. I that was something. I was like, oh, I've gotta try this. I tell you, honestly, I was a big fan. It was very, very good. We we were told by so many people.

Therron [00:34:22]:

It's like, oh, the food foods are gross. It's bland. It's this or that or the other. I'll tell you, honestly, there wasn't a bad thing we ate other than the brown sauce the entire time we were there.

Vernetta [00:34:32]:

We found it Yeah. A chip shop

Therron [00:34:34]:

Chip shop

Vernetta [00:34:34]:

in Liverpool. That was really good.

Therron [00:34:36]:

Had a piece of fish the size of a of a of a, you know, a Volkswagen. It was gigantic. You know? And,

Vernetta [00:34:42]:

we we stopped peas.

Therron [00:34:44]:

Our friend our friend

Vernetta [00:34:45]:

Andy was telling us about mushy peas. Yeah.

Therron [00:34:47]:

Those were not We stopped in the place. We We had some mushy peas. And they warned us. Andy and Julia had warned us. They're like, you know, the the prawns and and and cocktail sauce. They said cocktail sauce over here is like ketchup. Like, just be you know, they told us about a few things. I discovered coronation chicken, and I'll tell you, if I could eat that, like, 3 times a week, I would.

Therron [00:35:06]:

It was fantastic. The, the sauce that I ended up buying, the the

Vernetta [00:35:11]:

Oh, the pickle stuff?

Therron [00:35:13]:

Yeah. Pickle. I'd never had it before. Huge fan. Love it.

Tracy Collins [00:35:17]:

Was that, like, pick a lily or

Therron [00:35:18]:

So, yeah, there's only one

Tracy Collins [00:35:19]:

pickle? Which one was it?

Vernetta [00:35:21]:

Branston Pickle. Pickle. Yeah. Uh-huh.

Therron [00:35:23]:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I I you know, a slice of cheese and some lettuce and tomato and some pickle, but great sandwich.

Tracy Collins [00:35:31]:

Yeah. You know?

Therron [00:35:32]:

And and and I'm kind of a guy. I love I love it, but, yeah, that was wonderful.

Vernetta [00:35:36]:

Andy, introduced him to Iron Brew.

Therron [00:35:39]:

Iron Brew. I still have my friends. I found, Iron Brew at a at a market here in the States. We have a place called, Jungle Jim's, and we went over there. It's like a big international market, and I found some. So I this past weekend, I had my friends trying it because I was like, listen. You need to tell me what it tastes like because I'm telling you there are huge arguments on Reddit and everything else, people going back and forth about what this tastes like.

Tracy Collins [00:36:02]:

Yeah. Yeah.

Therron [00:36:03]:

So yeah. So I I'm a fan. I really like Iron Brew.

Tracy Collins [00:36:05]:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. It's, like, very popular Scottish Scottish drink. So it originates from Scotland. So, yeah, very pretty

Therron [00:36:13]:

fan of instant coffee as well.

Vernetta [00:36:15]:

Oh, my my grandmother, last spring when or last early spring, early summer, we got our when we finally got our passports, I I drove to where my grandmother was in a nursing

home, and I was like, grandma, I finally have a passport. Look at this. And she said, Vernita, you are going to love England, but they drink instant coffee. You won't like that. And I'm thinking to myself, it's been about 20 years since she's been there. Surely that's the thing. Is not a thing anymore. I learned grandma was correct, and we drink instant coffee without a problem because I'm too cheap to pay £10 for a cup of coffee every time I wanted a cup of coffee.

Therron [00:37:01]:

In fact, we we we got to the point where when we came back, we bought a, a boiling pot. Electric kettle. Electric kettle.

Tracy Collins [00:37:09]:

Yep.

Therron [00:37:09]:

And some different teas and things because we you know? Yeah. We both already like tea, but the instant coffee, we've we're it's upstairs right now. We still brew coffee on a daily basis, but kind of a fan of the the

Tracy Collins [00:37:22]:

instant coffee. That's cool. I don't personally, I don't drink coffee, so it's never when I go to the UK, I know that a lot of Australians will say, oh, the coffee in the UK is awful. Awful. Because they they say they have the best coffee in the world. I can't judge because I don't drink it at all, so I don't know.

Vernetta [00:37:37]:

We we did keep Costa Coffee slightly in business. Tesco and Pret also were right right by the London Hotel. So we helped with their business.

Therron [00:37:50]:

And I'll tell you that's going back to the way we traveled. Right? Enjoying enjoying what you can enjoy and finding things and just discovering. You know? I it was fascinating to go into a Tesco. And then, like, every day, we would buy a new bag of of crisps, I keep calling them chips

Tracy Collins [00:38:05]:

Yeah.

Therron [00:38:05]:

Of a different flavor because they don't it's stuff I've never seen ever, you know, and and take it back to the hotel room and be like, these are god awful or, you know, wow. I wish I had these in the States, but but just simple things.

Tracy Collins [00:38:16]:

You know? Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Therron [00:38:17]:

You you have to take that opportunity to discover. You know?

Tracy Collins [00:38:21]:

And I love the fact that you guys have done that. I mean, it's like it's a great thing to do. We love to go wherever we go in the world. We like to go in the supermarkets because it's just a big window into the culture of what people eat and not enjoy. And, yes, in the UK, there's, like, 75,000,000,000 different types of crisps. So whenever we got that, there's always new flavors to try. So it's always amazing. So I know you've already kinda covered this, but I don't know if any if you answered this question.

Tracy Collins [00:38:43]:

So I'm probably gonna land this with you. If there was one tip that you would give to anybody plan travel to the UK for the first time because, obviously, for you guys, this was your first trip. What would you say would be your your top tip?

Vernetta [00:38:55]:

I I'm back to be prepared to not be able to do everything. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:39:01]:

Yeah.

Vernetta [00:39:02]:

Take take lots of pictures and and be there in the moment and take your photos, but be prepared that that you may not be able to do everything.

Therron [00:39:12]:

I think mine probably would be I'm trying to say think out of word this, is do do your preparation in advance, pack light. We we took a, what, literally a small carry on and a backpack a piece, and, and that was plenty. That was plenty. Yeah. But what we also had planned on, and we actually ended up doing more than we expected, was we we knew we wanted souvenirs. We knew we were gonna collect some things while we were there. So, we went and bought a suitcase. Right? And then we ended up buying a second suitcase, but, then we paid for those to come back.

Therron [00:39:45]:

Right? Yeah. But we kinda, planned to make sure we we weren't gonna drag those all over the country the entire time. Right? We we knew that that if we bought those on the last 4 or 5 days we were there, we'd be able to go hit some souvenir shops, go go back to the shops we had seen before, that type of thing. So, you know, it it's just it's really easy to overpack.

Tracy Collins [00:40:04]:

Yeah. And I tell

Therron [00:40:04]:

you that, you know, it's it's amazing how many wears you can get out of. You know, you need you know, I'll just tell you, change your underwear every day and your socks. Right? But at the end of the day, as long as you're not a complete slob, you you can get 3 or 4 days out of a pair of pants, 3 or 4 days out of a shirt. Right? So pack pack light and and spend your time enjoying things instead of trying to figure out how you're gonna get your next hotel or

whatever. It's just there is so much to discover there that that I think we could go back 10, 15 more times. We'd never see all the things we'd like to see. Yeah. But we like the things that we're able to see, right, is is the thing.

Therron [00:40:37]:

We we we spent the time that we wanted to spend seeing the things we wanted to see as long as we wanted to. And, again, that's probably the, I think, the number one thing we would tell anybody is just go enjoy yourself

Tracy Collins [00:40:51]:

Yeah.

Therron [00:40:51]:

And don't, you know, try to pack it in. Don't don't don't do what everybody else does just because that seems to be the thing to do. Because you can't walk a 100 feet in England without finding something fascinating, especially when you're from a country like America. Right? You know, we we we see things that are that are a 175 years old and we think they're old. You go there and and there's literally Roman walls crossing the sidewalk in the middle of a park, and it's just fascinating. If you have any appreciation of history at all, it is just simply stunning. And, yeah, it it's amazing.

Tracy Collins [00:41:25]:

Oh, I just have to ask you one question, because you just because you mentioned about the souvenirs and what you bought, and you brought suitcases back. So do you have a favorite thing that you bought? Yeah.

Therron [00:41:34]:

Go ahead, sweetheart.

Vernetta [00:41:35]:

I collect souvenir spoons. I have collected souvenir spoons since I was 9 or 10 years old. So I came home with 2 dozen Okay. I think. And I I wanted a Paddington Bear. We got to London, and there's Paddington's everywhere. And I saw the price, and I said, absolutely not. And we were in the airport in Manchester, ready to come home, and we still had British pounds.

Vernetta [00:42:08]:

So I have a Paddington.

Therron [00:42:11]:

So

Vernetta [00:42:11]:

There's there's my story behind how I I came home with the Paddington.

Therron [00:42:15]:

So so this is this is gonna be a somewhat lengthy explanation, but I have to tell you the story to to make you understand why I appreciate the things I wanna tell you about is on on the

flight over, I was wearing my Liverpool hat, and a stewardess came by. She said, oh, love. Are you from Liverpool? And I said, no, ma'am. We're we're just I'm a Liverpool fan. Yeah? And, over the course of the 5 and a half hour flight, she came back by several times talking to us. And toward the end of the flight, she knelt down, and she had a sick bag. And she said, I'm gonna put down a number. She said, this is my friend who is a general manager of a restaurant chain, and she'll take care of you.

Therron [00:42:48]:

You tell her that Jen sent you. Blah blah. And here's my dad's number. Here's another number. She wrote down 2 or 3 phone numbers. She said, these people will take care of you, etcetera. She gave me her phone number. Then to our amazement, somehow she materialized a full bottle of champagne because we had told her it was our honeymoon, and she gave us a full bottle of champagne on an airline.

Therron [00:43:10]:

So we were already like, wow. Like, this is an incredible trip.

Tracy Collins [00:43:14]:

You know?

Vernetta [00:43:14]:

We we landed in Manchester with me holding a full and open bottle of champagne in my lab. Do you

Tracy Collins [00:43:19]:

wanna shout out which airline that was?

Vernetta [00:43:23]:

Was it Virgin Atlantic? Yeah.

Therron [00:43:24]:

Virgin Atlantic. So, but but it gets better. So so the next day, she sends me a message, and she says, oh, love. I found out that my friend's dad is the general manager of, of hospitality at Anfield, and he wants to make sure that your trip's really special. So he's going to take care of you. So we went on the tour, and it was fantastic, but nothing special happened outside of what everybody else did. So we were like, okay. Whatever.

Therron [00:43:50]:

You know? It's it is what it is. You know? That evening, I got a message from her. She said my my friend's father is so upset because he gave some things to his staff, and they forgot to give them to you. So he's going to meet you at the game tomorrow to make sure that you get the things that he wanted you to have. It's like, okay. You know? So, we we show up to the game, and he's there. He recognizes us immediately because, I guess, she described us whatever. He said, come on in.

Therron [00:44:16]:

And he gave us 2 bags filled with merchandise and things from Liverpool. And, inside there, there was an autographed book with, Ian Callahan's signature on it, that was just shocked

me. I mean, it it for anybody who doesn't know, that's like getting an autograph of Babe Ruth or, you know, Michael Jordan. I mean, it's just it was just absolutely incredible and and probably a couple \$100 worth of merchandise. It was just absolutely stunning. And simply because I was wearing a Liverpool hat on the way over. You know? And I'll tell you, that's not gonna happen to everybody. But to get to the answer of what you said, there were several things that happened like that on the way over.

Therron [00:44:55]:

So I have to tell you there are 2 things. One of them is that book with the Indian County and segmentron. Just absolutely a treasure for me. The second one is when we went to Tranmere, the steward the main steward, we got talking, learned that she sews. He said, oh, I'm so proud of this. He said, my wife embroiders the Tranmere logo on my Stewart jacket here. We were complimenting it and everything. Right? And at the end of the game, he come over and he said, stick around for a minute if you can.

Therron [00:45:21]:

He said, the game is almost over. Would you stick around? Yeah. Absolutely. The crowd cleared out, and the man took his steward jacket off and gave it to me as a souvenir. Dumbfounding that that happened. I could for multiple reasons. Number 1, that the guy wouldn't even give it to me. Number 2, he give me a Stewart jacket, which seems like it's probably illegal.

Therron [00:45:40]:

I don't know. You know what I mean? Like, there's there's a hundred reasons why that's just shocking. But that's probably the most treasured thing I got while I was there because the gentleman even put a little tag on the inside with a safety pin with his email address on it. And, and I've corresponded with him since I got back. And just it's I never in a 1000000 years expected to get something like that just taken off of someone's back and given to me.

Tracy Collins [00:46:05]:

That's amazing. Both those stories, honestly, just the generosity of both those people is lovely. I have to say, that was a lovely way to end the podcast, guys, and I just wanna say say thank you so much for coming on and sharing your experience of your trip to the UK. It was brilliant.

Therron [00:46:23]:

Thank you for having us.

Vernetta [00:46:25]:

Very

Therron [00:46:25]:

much. And really, honestly, thank you so much for having the sites that you do and all the information because I tell you, we probably would have been lost without it.

Vernetta [00:46:33]:

Well, we found you through the podcast. We found the podcast. Right. Then we found that you had the Facebook group. Mhmm. And then I found that Doug had the train travel group. Uh-huh. And that that was how we Yeah.

Vernetta [00:46:47]:

Traveled. We used your advice even while we were there.

Therron [00:46:51]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:46:51]:

We were

Vernetta [00:46:52]:

using your advice.

Therron [00:46:53]:

Yeah. Absolutely. So thank

Vernetta [00:46:54]:

you so much. You so much for everything.

Tracy Collins [00:46:57]:

Oh, thank you so much, guys, for coming on to the podcast this week. It was really lovely to have your trip report. And I will put photos and, links in the show notes for this episode, which you can find atuktravelplanning.comforward/episode98. That just leaves me to say until next week, happy UK travel planning.