



Tour Diary



Australian Tour 2017

Forward by Alun Bliss (Director)

I'm not really sure what type of theatre we are creating at the moment. I suppose, given that this charts a true story, it is a documentary drama. In so far as we have used some of the actual words of those involved (taken from journals, letters, articles and parliamentary records etc.) it is also a type of verbatim theatre.

This particular play tries to make the dry language of the early 1600's slightly more digestible by mixing it with some very punchy straight-forward music. The action of the play is often told through dance. So the overall style becomes a mixture of different elements and these elements deliberately collide so that the audience is left with an impression—not just of the people of those violent times, but of the story and how it developed.

Even documentary theatre is inevitably "fiction". It is an interpretation and cannot include every point of view or even every faction.

The English Civil War was clearly a time of factions and there were far more than we have portrayed. As in politics today, it was not as simple as black against white, either. A family with two sons often sent one to fight for the King and another to fight for Parliament, so that they might not lose precious assets and lands in defeat! Seeing the world in black and white is a simple way of simplifying the two sides for the sake of understanding the story, but there would have been plenty of grey areas and even more who were reluctant to join either side.

Religious groups and splinter groups from all sides of the Church were also vitally important during this conflict. Ours is an examination of people, however, and we have tried to make sure that the religious motivations do not come to over-power the story.

This is our sixth tour to Australia and the sixth piece of original theatre that the school has been involved in since 2002. We are trying to create interesting and challenging work. We need to stretch our young performers and we are proud to put together interesting works that fuse the arts and forward education in its broadest sense.



9th July – Last Rehearsal

Jay Pooley

Our final rehearsal was very enjoyable in the sense that it was our last chance to confidently nail the play before the dress rehearsal. Many others and I believed we did just that; as we breezed through the two acts with only a few issues. It was a tough rehearsal; the

studio was sweltering so many of us were battling the urge to scratch and itch while we were the chorus (I was the prime culprit). It really gave us all a great confidence boost as we were all beginning to see scenes come alive in unison for practically one of the first times. Even Mr Bliss said that there were moments he could see through our improved characterisation that he'd forgotten he'd written in. It's all starting to feel very real now in these final days we have in England; words cannot describe how excited I am to go! It's going to be a joy to perform to all our family and friends; then actually take a play we've all worked so hard on to Australia to perform.



10th July – Dress Rehearsal

Maya Engledow

It seems hard to believe that after nearly two years of preparation the cast has finally come to the dress rehearsal. There were so many doubts on if we would be ready in time, the play as a whole is a completely new style to many and with so many dates and historical figures, there was a kind of pressure to get it right.

Having run most of the play on Sunday, we performed confidently and with only a few mistakes. People's characters are really showing now and at long last the dances seem to be flowing nicely. As part of the chorus it's a great experience, we all look out for each other and are starting to think collectively. I felt that we all had a kind of subtle communication between us which really added to the atmosphere of the play.

In light of this, we all seem to be getting on much better as a cast. As is the case with any group of people there will always be tension and arguments, but coming together to perform has made people who would otherwise not be friends, to appreciate each other's talents and virtues both in and outside of performing.



The dress rehearsal was, dare I say, fun. Mr Bliss said that 'it wasn't too bad', which from him is a standing ovation. My favourite parts have to be the songs, when they are performed with confidence, they are very enjoyable. The next stage now is to rest; I, for one, am full of a cold and performing from 5-8 really tires you out. This was the case with many people, as Mr Bliss gave his notes I noticed many people's bleary eyes. His notes were encouraging and relatively small things, directing more towards the subtleties of character than large improvements.

We've worked hard for this, and until the last few days, I had doubts on our success. Having now run the play, I can safely say that performing *The White King* at last will be a very enjoyable and memorable experience.



12th July – First Performance

Sophie Ward

Tonight was our first performance of 'The White King' and emotions were high. Everyone was filled to the brim with nerves and anticipation but mostly excitement. We all arrived at 6pm in full costume looking forward to seeing how the audience would react to the performance as nobody had seen it in full yet.

After warming up, putting on microphones and having a walk through of vital sections and dances, we prepared to go on stage. I know that I wasn't the only one who started to feel the nerves. The whole cast wanted it to be perfect and display our hard work. The pressure was on to make Mr Bliss proud.

We were lucky enough to have a full house which was amazing for our first night and gave us lots of confidence. The first act went down well and we all had our fingers crossed that the second act would be exactly the same. Thankfully it was, even with a few bumps along the way.

In reflection of the whole performance, it was a great start to our trip. The whole team is beginning to feel the Australian buzz and can't wait to get started.



13th July – Second Performances

Rachel Amponah

After the excitement of the first performance subsided, many of us went home and had a long sleep before enjoying a relaxing day, preparing ourselves for the next show; whilst others sleep was possibly interrupted, as they had a day of school to endure. I think those of us who didn't have lessons to attend, spent a lot of the day relaxing, and buying a few last minute things and packing, or just sitting on their bed and thinking about how they should be packing (in my case).

As it came round to the evening, we all arrived at school ready for our second performance. After a successful first performance with only a few small mistakes, we were all ready to put our all into this next show. With the confidence that we could make it through a show, and manage to engage, and educate an audience to a certain degree, we all knew we could make the second performance better than the last.

Before the performance began, we all did our pre show checks, before doing a small warm up of a few of the songs, to make sure that we were all focused and in a good state to perform the show well.

As audiences of friends, family and teachers began to fill the drama studio seats, we waited in anticipation to perform. We went on and performed the show, with confidence and pride, and delivered a better performance than the day before. There were fewer mistakes, we were sharper, and therefore I think more engaging

After the show was over, we all said our goodbyes, and went home. On the journey home I asked my family who had watched the play that night what they thought of it. To my surprise, they all followed and understood the play - even my dad, who struggles to keep up with an episode of Doctor Who. My younger siblings, also enjoyed the show, especially the songs. After hearing this feedback, I concluded that this was a successful show, but I think we all knew that we still had more in us. So we all went home and had a good nights sleep, ready for our final UK show.





14th July—Final Performances in U.K.

Molly Barlow

Tonight was the last show at school in the U.K. Before we leave for Australia on Sunday. Everyone went really full out and everything went great because there was a buzzing atmosphere all around. I felt a little sad as this was the last time we would perform this on our stage back home but I knew we would have many more amazing experiences and challenges to come when performing on different stages in Australia. I was really excited and a little nervous because it had not sunk in that we were actually getting on a plane and going to the other side of the world until now.

Once the show had finished we all stayed behind and thanked everyone for all their hard work they had put in over the years. We all helped to pack up the equipment into the boxes that needed to be super organised to make Mr Moate happy. We all then said our goodbyes especially to Mrs Miller who sadly wasn't joining us on the trip anymore, due to another amazing work opportunity that I'm sure will bring her lots of enjoyment and happiness. We were all tired and ready to go to bed ready for the weigh in of bags tomorrow. The challenge of who had the lightest bag had begun.



16th July— The Flight

Caitlin Kitney—Foster

3am start for us all this morning and I can safely say we are all tired as none of us have slept yet due to all the excitement. Now about to board the bus and with a bit of luck I will be able to catch up on a couple of hours sleep whilst on the way to Heathrow Airport especially if Mrs Dixon is being strict on her sleeping scheme.

Just arrived at Heathrow Airport and carrying around this massive screen is proving to be rather difficult luckily Mr Cuss has taken it off my hands and swapped me with his suitcase which has a cute little flowery head band tied to it. I think all the teachers are a bit stressed carting round 28 students through a very busy airport its highly amusing to watch because we are all perfectly fine. I am however, dreading this flight, 24 hours on a plane is not for me!

Luckily there were plenty of new movies to keep me entertained although the plane food was quite disgusting although Mr Moate wouldn't have agreed with me because he absolutely loved the plane food and did a little dance every time food was brought round he's so funny!



I was so happy to land in Melbourne though so I could actually get some fresh air and I know this probably sounds weird reading this but the air in Melbourne just seemed so clean and fresh compared to England. The funniest bit of these two days though had to be when we were walking back to the hotel as Mr Bliss and Mr Moate had told all of us students that to watch out for the lamp posts because rattle snakes were hibernating under them which was the biggest lie ever but the fact that so many people believed it was hilarious they were all basically avoiding all the lamp posts it was brilliant. But I think the main thing all of us were looking forward to was a shower because 2 days without a shower isn't the best feeling in the world and I think everyone else on the tour would agree with me and some sleep. I shared a room with Maya and Emily and they were great to share my first night in Australia with as they are both such lovely people and didn't snore which was a god send because I wouldn't have coped the next day without a full night's sleep.

Obviously all 3 of us were up a little late chatting well I say all three of us we thought Emily was in on the conversation but after about 5 minutes she was asleep poor thing. Anyway, the first two days of travelling are completed, now it's time to discover Australia and absolutely smash all our performances and make the very best experience out of this trip.

17th July— The Flight

Karen Silva



Today was the first real day of the tour, excitement was high and everyone was excited to go to Australia, this was it! There were a mix of emotions once we went on the plane some people were first time flyers, others were experienced flyers, regardless the team spirit was impeccable as everyone supported those who were not experienced flyers.

Activities wise there were no activities that we could do as we were on the plane. The worst thing about the journey was the plane food described by one of our members as "appalling". There was some entertainment available on the plane including a wide selection of films to watch, most people naturally slept throughout the journey, however quite a few people couldn't go to sleep as they were too excited and also the plane is not really a comfortable place to sleep in.

I personally found it extremely difficult to sleep on the plane as I was incredibly excited and I couldn't wait to get to Australia. Also I found that the plane toilets were not the most pleasant to go in.

After the 14 hour flight, we arrived at Kuala Lumpur Airport this part was the most boring part of the whole journey as we had to wait for 2 hours at the airport before embarking on the next flight to Melbourne. The airport itself was small with very little shops and the people had the tendency to stare a lot, but for them seeing a group of drama students would be a rare occasion, regardless it was interesting to experience a little of the Kuala Lumpur culture even if we only experienced it for a little while.

When we got on the second flight, there was an hour and half delay to departure due to a plane lane malfunction but everyone still had to remain on the plane, most people took the opportunity to sleep during this time, and I personally fell asleep to the sound of the music that the plane was playing. During this 8 hour flight I mostly slept through all of it and many of the others did so as well.

It was very late at night when we finally arrived in Australia, everyone was jet lagged but at the same time everyone had a smile on their face when they landed. We even went to Mac Donald's near the hotel for some food after being checked in to the hotel.

Overall this day had its ups and downs but most of the time was spent on the

plane and even so I loved every single moment of it as I knew we were going to Australia so I didn't mind the long hour flight.

18st July – Sandringham College

Katrina Moffatt



What a day! We've spent so long travelling and I can't believe we're finally on the other side of the world.

Today, after the fairly short coach journey, we arrived at Sandringham College. The teachers were very welcoming and Chris the technician helped us to unpack the coach. We had the usual introductions and we're shown around the school. The staff had kindly organised a buffet dinner for us, certainly much better than the plane food we'd been eating for the last day or so.

Then the moment some of us had been nervous for arrived, meeting our hosts. Alison walked into the room, my name along with my other pair were called out. She was extremely friendly and all the hosts were also just that; welcoming and happy to see us. We all mingled and got to know each other a bit more.

Lunch ended and we were handed over to our hosts, we all filed into the hallways until we came to a large group of students. These were the friends of our hosts.

Everybody seemed really keen to have a conversation with us, fairly often comments on our accents were made and the Aussies would try to imitate us which they almost found impossible.

Georgia and I attended Alison's psychology class, the lesson was focused all around sleep; just what we needed whilst feeling exhausted. However, it was very interesting to see how the Aussies learn and operate in a class environment, it's all very relaxed compared to classes back home. Then we went to maths, to my surprise it was fairly easy!

After class ended, we made our way back to the theatre where all our belongings were kept, we were informed of the next day's itinerary and allowed to leave school with



our hosts. Alison's mum kindly picked us up, we pulled into the garage and were amazed by the size of Alison's home. It was huge! Our homes in England were not even half the size of the magnificent one we're were to call home for the next week or so.

Alison's family were very friendly and asked about our home town of King's Lynn. We chatted for a few hours and curled up on the sofa, wrapping ourselves in fluffy blankets to keep warm in the cold of the Australian winter. We watched a film on Netflix whilst tea was prepared for us. A roast chicken dinner, yum! To my shock the family do not have gravy with their roast dinner. However, it was delicious all the same.

Fighting the tiredness, we pushed ourselves to stay awake. Showering and getting settled, 9pm finally arrived. Certainly safe to say a well earned rest was due for myself and Georgia. What a brilliant first day in Melbourne.



19st July – Sandringham College

Maisie Coldman

So today we were meant to be seeing the Australian animals and visiting the penguins, but because of Melbourne's unpredictable weather we couldn't go :(I went into my hosts lessons during the first half of the morning. She had sociology and they were watching a documentary in the theatre room. It was about a group of surfers not conforming, it was narrated by a comedian that they all seemed

to love!

We then had rehearsals in our new performance space, it was really different! I'd also had a really strong coffee that my host kindly made me but it was so strong that I got the shakes(definitely not having coffee again)!! We practiced the songs, the first time since we arrived and I don't think we were to bad :) We had lunch and a few of us went exploring the school, it's so different to ours, lots more art work.

Once school had finished i walked home with my host (more like a jog because my legs were so small compared to hers!) and we gossiped all the way back. We then went to a dog park, there were so many dogs! I don't normally like them much but there was some really cute small ones that i got to play with. Her dog destroyed all the toys whilst playing tug of war with a husky. When we got back we made our own pizza, I hadn't done this



in forever and it was so much fun. I now like spinach and feta cheese! they were super tasty and I'm going to have them for my lunch tomorrow :)

My bed is so comfy and I'm trying not to fall asleep before 9 because I don't want to be jet lagged for long. Even though i didn't get to see the penguins I really enjoyed my day...



20st July – First Performance Peninsula Grammar

Bailey Marchant

If I was to sum up our first performance in Australia in a little phrase it would be 'a bit of a challenge'. We left Sandringham College for Peninsula Grammar School in the morning on a big coach with all of our costumes hooked above and swinging along the aisle. I thought to myself that this is what we, as a performing company, came here to do. To travel to different locations and perform. There was a sense of feeling quite professional as we were just a few hours away from our first performance on the other side of the world.

When we arrived at the space we would be performing in we were a bit overwhelmed at how large the area was. We definitely felt quite lucky. Slowly the auditorium filled with students and we began our show. This is where it began to become challenging as the students talked through out act 1 and weren't the most respectful audience we had experienced yet. During the interval we felt quite disheartened. However, we had noticed one girl in the front row who was in awe of what we were performing to her. Her jaw was dropped and she was dancing in her seat to the songs. Our teachers told us that no matter what the audience was like that we should give our absolute best performance. In fact it did turn out to be the best performance we had done so far and the teachers at Peninsula Grammar were extremely impressed.



So instead of coming away feeling deflated we actually felt like we had overcome a huge barrier. We had nailed our first performance in an unfamiliar setting and overcome a difficult audience which made us feel like we could then deal with anything and perform our best no matter what stage or audience we may experience.



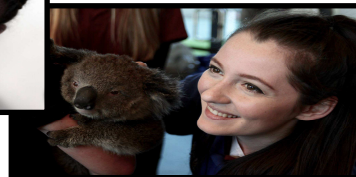
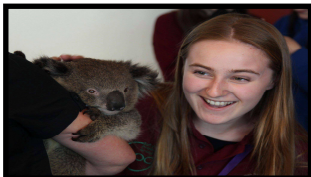
21st July – Performances at Sandringham College

Olivia Grummett

Today was not only full on but also amazing, special and a day I don't think anyone will forget soon. It started with our host mother making Molly and I vegemite on toast (which Molly practically spat out!!) and then rushing around trying to get to school on time. Once at school we then rehearsed and practised a couple of the songs and dances in the performing space.

Lunch time soon came around and we got ready to perform to our hosts and their friends, which we were all very excited about. As Australians are NEVER on time and always late we didn't manage to do a full run through of the play and only sections at a time. During the show I managed to whack Molly in the head with my arm whilst being at the front of the stage, which managed to make people laugh!

After the show we were given a surprise... Australian animals came to visit and we all finally got to see and touch various animals including a baby kangaroo and a koala which everyone was very, very excited about. Soon after falling in love with the koala, we ate pizza and were ready to perform to the public. Again, the show went extremely well and the Australians were very impressed. All in all, it was a great day!



22nd July – Free day in Melbourne

Jack Craven

Today was a host day which was a nice break from our intense rehearsal and performance schedule previous. My host decided that we would go into the centre of Melbourne and look at all the sights and maybe look at a few of the shops.

We made our way into Melbourne nice and early so we could get lots done and so we could stop at various places on the way to show me some sites, such as the extensive rows of multi-coloured beach huts lining the shore (The Brighton Beach Boxes). They were a long row of colourful beach huts that stretched along the coast. That was just a quick stop and 10 minutes later we arrived in Melbourne.

The first thing we did was head straight for the Eureka tower to go on the sky deck and meet up with some other friends and hosts. We were able to get an amazing view of the city from above and go on the "edge" (a glass platform that moved out from the building)

Not long after that, we all went to the shops and down lots of interesting alleyways with cool street art and graffiti. We then had lunch in a small street food alleyway where the food was amazing. After this, our group of people went different ways and my host and I host started to head towards the MCG where we were going to see an AFL game. On the way, we bumped into James and his host who was also going to the game which was very lucky as we didn't even plan to meet up. We all got our tickets and sat together in the very cold and windy stand. We all really enjoyed the game once James and I had an understanding of the rules. We went our separate ways and finished the brilliant day with a meal out in a Malaysian restaurant with my host family.



Staying with host families allowed me to see Melbourne from the perspective of the people who actually live there, which is a massive advantage of the trip and a nice change as opposed to being a tourist



23rd July – Travel to Mallacoota

Megan Tomsett

Today, we travelled from Melbourne to Mallacoota. It was approximately an 8 hour bus journey through the bush. We started the day by travelling to Sandringham school. Once there we all grouped together and said our goodbyes to our hosting families.

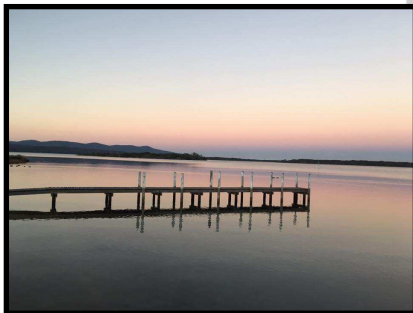
Saying goodbye to my host, Tillie, was quite sad as we had grown to become really good friends. A few tears were shed before we departed, but not before we were given each a small gift from Sandringham school. The gift bag contained a caramello koala, a toy koala and a Sandringham water bottle. We also gave the staff some fluorescent jackets and a framed photo of a scene of the play. After this, we took a huge group photo.

We eventually were sent on our way with heavy hearts but excited smiles. The trip itself was long and slightly tiring but the scenery we travelled through was amazing to see. It was nice to see the way the city dissolved into the wilderness. At one point, we even passed through a rainforest which was fascinating to experience.

Upon entering Mallacoota, many of us were surprised to find that it is indeed a tiny town! We easily found the school and were warmly welcomed by the headmaster. Then we were introduced to our host families. My family, the Greethems, were lovely and welcoming. After the introductions, we all gathered around for pizza.

When the time came to go home, our host Father, Dev, drove us all to the beach where we gazed up at the stars. Due to little to no light pollution, the stars there were amazingly bright and clear, making the milky way easy to observe (this was one of my favourite parts about Mallacoota)

After this, we headed home where we all collapsed into our beds with exhaustion. It was obvious Mallacoota was going to be one of our best and most distinct places to stay on the tour.



24th July – Mallacoota

Molly Seaton

Today, we awoke in Mallacoota for our first full day there! My lovely host family prepared breakfast for us and we all ate together in the kitchen before getting ready for school. Our host mum had packed us all a little lunchbox full of snacks for the day, which was very kind of her! When we arrived at the school, we were split into

groups and my group joined the prep class for the morning. It was an incredible experience working with younger children who had had a completely different

childhood to me and learning how their lives were different to mine growing up was very interesting! The children were very excited to have us with them and were very eager to show us the kangaroos that live just outside their

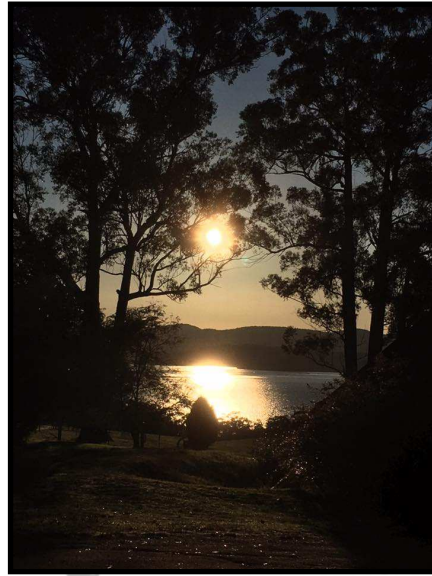
school so we were taken for a walk to spot them! It was the first time I'd seen a kangaroo up close since being in Australia and they were so much bigger than I thought they would be! It felt weird to me that the sight of kangaroos was an everyday occurrence for the people of Mallacoota as it was so exciting for us! The most interesting part of my day was seeing everyone, of all ages, play a game of dodgeball together at lunchtime! It warmed my heart to see the tall, eighteen year old boys making sure everyone was included, even the little five year old girls as it's very rare that you'd see that in England!

I love how in Mallacoota everyone knows each other and no one is left out, we were encouraged by everyone to join the game and it was a lot of fun (despite the fact that I cannot play sports at all). After lunch I had the opportunity to sit in a theatre studies class and learnt a little more about 'The White King'. It was really interesting for me to actually learn the history behind King James and Charles, as it helped me to understand our production so much better and appreciate it more when it was being performed!





At the end of the day, our host parents picked us up from school and offered to take us for a drive to see a little more of Mallacoota and the amazing scenery it has to offer. We were lucky enough to spot some koalas high up in the trees and as we were driving, we had to stop and wait for a koala to cross the road! We then stopped at a lookout place overlooking the most beautiful lake and the sunset was absolutely amazing, reflecting off the water. I got a lot of pictures but none of them did the view justice. It was one of those moments where you just needed to look and take it all in. I felt really lucky to have witnessed something so beautiful. It was also a wonderful opportunity to get to know our host parents a bit more whilst doing a bit of sightseeing at the same time. After the drive, we went back to our host house and had our dinner. It was really nice to sit round a table with everyone and be able to chat and get to know each other and learn about how different it is in Mallacoota compared to Norfolk.



As I didn't really know Emily, Georgia or Karen that well either, it was a really lovely way to learn about them as well! After dinner, we were introduced to 'Milo', which was basically hot chocolate, and we sat together before heading to bed after a busy, but really enjoyable, day.

25th July – Performances at Mallacoota



Molly Paffett

Today we completed two performances, in the morning we rehearsed and had our first performance at 1:30 for the children of the school, we thought that this was our best performance so far - however we further bested ourselves in the evening performance. The audience were so welcoming and enjoyed the play the most so far, even the youngest children loved it and were talking about their favourite parts of it with us.

The band continued our tradition of eating a mint before the shows but they looked like and tasted like dishwasher tablets so Meg B and I ate chocolate to rid ourselves of the taste.

It was our best performance of Iconoclast yet, we had so much energy and enthusiasm and received an applause where we would not usually get one.

During Edgehill the snare loosened and had to be fixed during the song which I found highly amusing as it was poorly covered.

After the afternoon show there was a murder of kangaroos but James and Georgia chased them away and everyone hated them!

After the evening show, a koala was in a tree and everyone went out to see it however I stayed inside because it was cold.

26th July – Mallacoota Beach Walk & Cabaret

Megan Byatt



We started today with a walk along one of Mallacoota's beautiful beaches taking many photos along the way. We arrived at a very steep sand dune and were given the opportunity to body board down the dune. This was a new experience for most of us and we enjoyed it greatly! Then we walked through some of Mallacoota's most beautiful surroundings seeing many kangaroos which was such a surreal experience. Finally ending up at another beach for a picnic and another opportunity for photos.

We made our way back to the school where we prepared for an evening of entertainment alongside our hosts. My host family were joined by 6 of us from Springwood that evening (before the cabaret) to create and rehearse a piece of drum music! After about an hour we had completed it and were ready to perform later that evening. We all made our way down to the 'mud brick' (where the performance took place) and had an evening of fun and entertainment. It was such a great night with both Springwood and Mallacoota's students performing alongside one another, enjoying themselves and encouraging each and every person who was performing!





27th July – Travel to Canberra

Kaveeta Malhi

The time came to say goodbye.
 The coach was loaded with kit and luggage,
 Ready to leave Mallacoota P-12 College.
 The community gathered to send us on our way,
 Many wishing us longer to stay.
 Sophie and Jay made parting speeches,
 Gratefully thanking the students and teachers.
 Just as we were about to go,
 We were presented with books by Bruce Pascoe.
 Took part in a custom as we were to depart,
 All marching onwards through an arch,
 As the school around did stand,
 The preps and the leavers hand in hand.
 Beginning in Victoria on our way,
 But New South Wales later in the day.
 Past the scrubby brush and outback lands,
 Forests, lakes and hot, red sands.
 And as we approached our destination goal,
 We suddenly realised we forgot the flag poles...
 After a very long time of driving and sitting,
 Saw the War Memorial and Parliament Building.
 Canberra is indeed the capital city,
 But sadly cannot be described as pretty.
 We arrived at last in the Pavilion Hotel,
 All took showers so we didn't smell.
 Getting in the pool made you freeze,
 And the lobby was filled with plastic trees!
 Later on in the evening we joined together for a meal,
 Roast pork and potatoes - the real deal.
 And for afters a lovely range of foods,
 Fruit, profiteroles and chocolate mousse.
 It was a very much needed and welcome stop,
 And we were all practically ready to drop.
 When we were finished and very well fed,
 We went up the stairs and got into bed.



28th July – Travel to Blue Mountains

Emily Calvert

Today we travelled to the blue mountains!! We had just stayed one night in Canberra and I felt it was really nice to have a regroup getting everyone together.

Me and Maisie stayed in a hotel room together which was so much fun, and we were all able to have a meal together.

We had a very long bus journey and stopped in a little town on the way to grab some lunch. I started to feel sick so I brought some Australian essentials (Tim Tams). Once we arrived at the Blue Mountains the scenery was insane!! Me and Olivia met our host family who were artists and Lucien made us feel very welcome! A really good travel day:-)

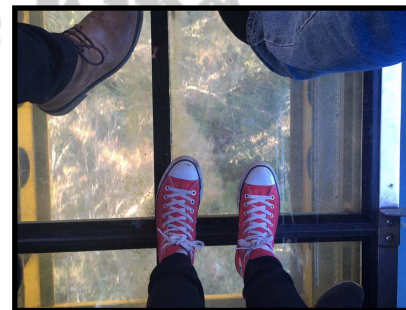


29th July – Oz Trek

Rob Bailey

Today the team ventured out into the wilderness (and the not-so-wilderness) of the Blue Mountains. The day started with a coach tour to all the best view points of the blue mountains, including one which allowed us to actually sit inside the three sisters. The views were spectacular.

After hustling it on and off the coach for most of the morning we eventually landed at scenic world. As a group we conquered the world's steepest railway - which by the way was not as steep as the posters would have you believe - and the glass bottomed cable cars which take you back to the top after tumbling down the mountain side in a train, a pretty solid day, and a nice way to experience the blue mountains!





30th July – Host day in Blue Mountains

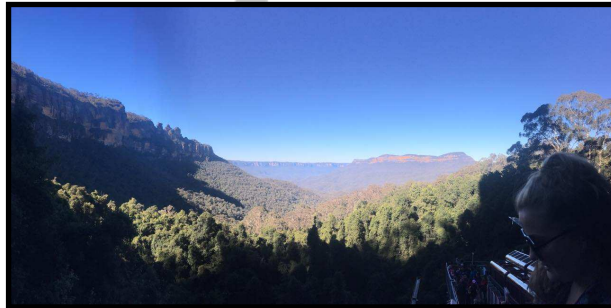
Reece Trott

Today, after struggling to wake up at 7am, James and Jay had a shower while Charlie and I sluggishly became more awake. After arising and getting ready (dressed and washed) we all proceeded to breakfast at around 8, where we consulted with Cam (our host) on the day's plan. We decided to get the early train (8:30am) where we met Izzy Franklin, Bailey, Tegan and Caitlin - all of which

were well awake, causing each of us to follow suit when wondering why the one way ticket to Bondi Beach was so expensive at \$10.20!

On the two hour commute train Izzy and I were baffled that there were no bins on board, and most of us had rubbish to dispose of... we were also incredibly amazed that we could pull a handle on the two seaters, making them face the other way, to which Charlie and I wondered why in earth we don't have this in the UK?! It's such an elegant solution! After our astounding discovery, Rob and his cousin joined the carriage, and Charlie taught me the basics of how to write a song (time signatures and chord patterns) and where to begin if i wanted to create my own, which made me very happy indeed... at this point we got off the train, only to find out we had to get ANOTHER half hour train and a bus with our Opal card (bought at the train station).

After the journey on the second train and bus to Bondi Beach featuring general chit chat with Caitlin and some of the other hosts, we decided to split into two groups, as the Oz hosts, Jay, Charlie and myself were hungry and went to a Sushi bar which took about 20minutes to find... Charlie and I shared our bill of the \$25 budget, as we thought this was a reasonable price for dinner...I am also pleased to say it was Charlie's first sushi experience, and am glad to report he enjoyed it wholeheartedly.



Once finished, the hosts (Cam, Marly, and Grace) left us to find their friend Josh who is hosting Georgia and Maya, so we ventured out onto the beach to find the other group (James, Tegan etc.) where they were arranged to meet us. Upon discovering they had welshed on the agreed meet, Charlie, Jay and I set forth to explore the surrounding area, to which we then spotted Maya and Georgia with Josh across the road among the crowd; causing me to question where the hosts had hone in the first place - as they were not with them... we then let both Maya and Georgia tag along with us, as josh left to find the other Oz hosts looking for him. Consequently, we ended up "looking" for

food as the girls were hungry; walking up and down the same road a few times. Georgia then decided to be petulant, causing me to go and explore for a short time on my own for around 35 minutes, agreeing with the group to meet outside Ben & Jerry's at 2pm before leaving... on my adventure, i saw a hot-rod red Ferrari, and managed to find an underground market with every fruit, veg, and pastry imaginable, totalling roughly 200 square meters of isles filled to the brim with food; i bought a "giant snail" and a bag of marshmallows totalling \$6. At 1:45, 20minutes after leaving the group, i saw two young buskers, a boy and girl (looked like siblings) both around 12 years old, videoed them, and proceeded back to Ben & Jerry's for 2pm.

I proceeded home with Rod (Cam's dad) and the guys, having Rogan Josh with everyone around the table. After dinner, everyone but Charlie and myself went to the cinema to watch "Dunkirk", while we played chess, socialised with our host family, causing Debs (Cam's mum) to compliment us on the extent of our manners and etiquette, saying " Your parents should be proud" making us happy indeed. Had multiple in depth discussions. When Jay and James returned, James taught Jay how to play chess while Charlie taught me practically on the guitar, where I learned the C, A, F, and G chords. By this time it was midnight, and we decided that 'bedtime' was imminent.



31st July – Performance—Blue Mountains

Issy Franklin

After a fun weekend off, we all arrived at the Blue Mountains Grammar School to prepare for our performance later that evening. As always, we began to unpack all of the equipment all together and work out how to set up around and in the completely new space we had been given. However, today we also held a workshop alongside setting up for the pupils of the school we were being hosted at, which we all found very beneficial and funny! It consisted of some warm up activities and us then partnering up with the students, creating movement material inspired by a snippet from our show. It was really lovely to not only meet the students but to also work together in a performing arts environment. We all then got invited to the school's uniform shop where we were kindly given a school polo shirt which was much appreciated.

Our performance that evening was successful, using our space well and receiving positive comments from our hosts and other locals who had come to support us. We were given a lovely message of thanks by the generous staff of the school, making us realise how lucky and thankful we were to be hosted by such a welcoming place.





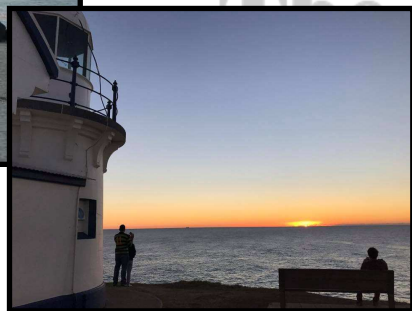
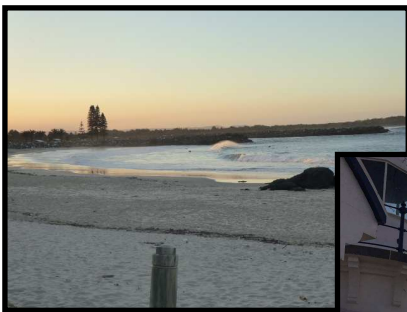
1st August – Travelling to Port Macquarie

Issie Russen

The day started as most days did on the Oz tour, with an early start. Leaving the blue mountains to go on to Port Macquarie was for me one of the hardest goodbyes of the trip, as the family there welcomed us with open arms and the area itself boasted stunning scenery and a wonderful school to perform in. After waking up early to pack, which probably wasn't the best plan, Sophie and I made it to the school on time at 8:15. There was then packing up and moving to do of the kit, by this point in the tour we could pack up pretty quickly as a team so I wasn't long before we were all sat down, boxes packed and we were ready to say our goodbyes. Cindy, the teacher who had welcomed us to the Blue Mountains grammar school also said goodbye to us and we were all given schoolbags with a packet of Tim Tams and a bottle of water for the journey- a lovely gesture.

All of us then loaded onto the coach after the usual numbering ready for the 6-hour journey. On the way there we stopped for a customary McDonalds, however a few of us who'd had enough McDonalds at this point in the trip split off to go to Oliver's.

We arrived at the school in Port Macquarie at the end of their school day, and had the honour of getting to see their new drama department, the toilets were so new they had to go and find us toilet roll! We were then paired with our host families and Karen and I grabbed our bags and set off with the Wilson family to the beach. One of the amazing things about Port Macquarie was its beaches and on the scenic way home we got to see most of them. We stopped off at Lighthouse beach for a walk along the beach and up to the lighthouse, a beautiful, if windy, walk. For Karen and myself that evening we unpacked and settled in, ready to begin rehearsing the next day.



2nd August – Port Macquarie

Tegan McLatchie-Brown

First day waking up in Port Macquarie, early start, went straight to school. Beautiful school, incredible atmosphere and extremely welcoming students and teachers. The day consisted of us as students mucking in and getting involved with their school routine.

Period 1 we had the choice of performing arts subjects; dance, drama, music.

I chose dance for the first hour, in which we were introduced to the beginning of the year 10 assessment program and was able to rehearse and provide input and ideas to their work. After this lesson we all met and went into a drama lesson, here Mr Bliss provided fun and focused physical and vocal warm ups for us



and the Australian students. This was then followed by a performance from the year 9's. They have been getting ready for a stylistic interpretation on gothic theatre, in which we able to provide criticism and positive comments. This lead us into lunchtime! we all sat outside in the canteen with the sun shining, and mingled with the younger students, ages from about 8-11 years old. The children loved the interaction between themselves and students from the other side of the world, and were fascinated how close we live to the queen when she visits Sandringham.

After lunch, we were shown around our performance space for our show the following day. We were then invited to watch drama mock performance exams and again provide feedback, this was really interesting to see how different cultures interpret the concept of 'drama'!

We then all left the school and went back to our Host families where we spent the evening chatting to the families and getting to know each other which was lovely, my host took us straight to admire the views that Port Macquarie had to offer with a lighthouse and a view over the ocean.



3rd August – Port Macquarie Final Show

Georgia Dawson

We arrived at the school early in the morning, all feeling nervous to perform our final show. The chapel, unlike any of the other venues we had been used to on the trip, had a very strange lay-out so we set to work trying to find possible bits of rostra/blocks to create necessary levels within the play. For a change, I helped Mr Moate with the lighting by moving the scaffolding when needed and passing up certain colours for the lighting. After the usual mic checks/ lighting checks, we sat outside for our lunch and the students surrounded us in curiosity, fascinated by our accents and asking us what we had been doing in Australia.

We changed into costume and completed our usual preparation for our first performance of the day, which was to the year 9's and 10's of St.Columba's Anglican School. I felt that this, as a whole, went very well and we were able to keep the majority of the students captivated! Some of the students giggled and spoke during our performance but by this time, we had grown used to all kinds of situations and so we were un-fazed.

In the couple of hours leading up to our final performance, we were given time to relax and visit a cafe, before arriving back at the school for dominos pizza to give us some much needed energy. After changing into costume for the final time, I came out to find the whole cast dancing together on stage, whilst singing 'Laud's dream', completely out of character. I couldn't help but smile and think about how we had all grown so much as a team in the months leading up to the trip.



Despite the excitement of the final performance, one of the highlights of the day was Maisie receiving a message from her mum, letting her know that Maisie was an Auntie and her sister had given birth.

We gave it our all, nobody made a mistake and everyone made the most of the 'last show'. We took the final bow and the lights went down. There were a lot of hugs and a few tears, everyone feeling relieved, yet empty, at the realisation it was all over.



4th August – Primary School & Whale Watching

Georgia Auld

Today we went to Westport Primary School, Port Macquarie. Once we arrived we went down into the school hall and waited for the children to come. Once waiting for a short time about fifty young children arrived looking very excited for what we were going to do. We got into groups with one member of the tour with at least three of the Australian students. The students were given control and we started to create still images of a common animal found in Australia and England. The one thing that they found hilarious to create and perform to everyone was a short role play based on the statement "British tourist gets it wrong in Australia". My group decided that the role play should be me trying to take a picture of some kangaroos and then they started to chase me and ended up jumping on me. As it turns out many of the other groups had also chosen to have Kangaroos chasing a tour member. We then moved on to teaching them "Edgehill" this was fun to do because after watching Caitlin and Olivia do their fight the students got really excited about creating their own slow motion fight. This was an interesting activity as we hadn't done this fight on such a large scale before, meaning we had to be extra aware about the space that we had available. After showing the teachers "Edgehill" we got put on our microphones and performed some of the songs from the play to them.



Once leaving the school it was time to go whale watching, whilst walking down to get the boat we saw some of the beautiful scenery and wildlife Port Macquarie had to offer. On the trip we had three birthdays, as today was both Megan and James birthday's we decided to celebrate all three, as Reece's birthday was on the flight back, the teachers bought cake for them all and we shared it out amongst the tour.



Then we split into two groups and took it in turns to go out and see the whales. My group was the first to go out and we all had to keep an eye out for whales, Jack was the first person to spot the whales and we all looked to where he described and there was a whale jumping out of the water. We stayed out on the

water for about an hour and saw lots of whales during this time. On the way back the captain of the boat decided to have some fun and made the boat do some S shapes on the water which we all really enjoyed.

After the whale watching we went back to our host families, Megan and I got back to our host's and they were having a barbecue to celebrate Megan's birthday. After an exciting day, we were quite tired so went to sleep rather early but we were filled with excitement for traveling to Sydney tomorrow!



5th August – Travel to Sydney

Charlie Bernadin

Today we left Port Macquarie. I woke up to Rob's alarm at 6:45 in the morning, and we got up and dressed and packed our suitcases without saying a word for about 10 minutes. Then I finally said good morning, and we went and had a great last breakfast of pancakes with our host family, the Reynolds. Rob gave them a tea towel and soap from England, and I gave them some fudge from TK Max. When we left for St Columba, the two girls Emily and Laura came with us (Alex the older brother was away on his D of E). Although we were already late, we decided to rush to a lookout point above the beach for some photos. This was definitely a good decision; the photos were lovely. We got to the school quite late but it at least meant we didn't have to help pack the kit into the coach.

The journey to Sydney was comfy and easy. I think by this time we are all hardened to long drives like this. I sat with Maya and joked around with her for some of the trip, and watched Vikings with Jay on his phone at other times. Had a good stop at a service station and I went to Oliver's. We all unpacked and settled into our rooms surprisingly quickly when we got to the hotel (I was in a room with James and Jack).

Shortly after arriving we set out again across the Sydney harbour bridge into the city centre for some downtime; We saw the Sydney Opera House for the first time...I found it slightly underwhelming if anything. Maya and I explored the city with Jack and Bailey, where we went into a souvenir shop and afterwards a Starbucks. We all met up at a restaurant to have a meal together, where I had a creamy pasta meal which I loved, but apparently also made Rob sick...

This was also where I promptly left behind the T-shirt I had bought for Jay, who was my secret Sydney designate. Nice.

The last thing we did in Sydney was the ghost tour. It was hugely anticipated, but in my



opinion the only remotely 'disturbing' thing about this tour turned out to be the guide's outfit. When this was over, we took a short walk to a river taxi which got us back to the hotel extra quick. I was knackered and frustrated by a lot of things by then, so I just collapsed in my bed and slept.

All in all though, it was a really fun and productive day and I won't forget it any time soon.



6th August – Sydney

James Young

After breakfast at the Hotel we were divided into our groups depending on whether we were doing the bridge climb or not. We then walked over the bridge into the city, where we separated off into our groups. I was in the Bridge climb group so headed down to the base of the bridge. We had about 15 minutes before we could get started so some people went and had a look in the shop.

Our training began by signing forms, Olivia had to become the responsible adult of the group as Izzy Russen wasn't 16 yet. We then collected our suits on the yellow circles and got changed. After crossing over the walkway we were then attached to training posts and collected the rest of our gear and free caps. Then it was onto the training ladders.

After we'd been fully trained we got into our climbing order; I went first followed by Kaveeta and Olivia so we could help her through the day due to her fear of see through floors. Steve was quite funny and very interesting telling us dad jokes and everything the was to know about the construction of the bridge. "The Eiffel Tower has 3 million rivets and the Harbour bridge has 6 million proving that the bridge is twice as riveting as the Eiffel Tower." The climb involved working our way up through the pylons past the "lucky" blue granite, across the boardwalks in the lower supports of the bridge before climbing up the ladders between the railway and then up the main arch itself. We had several photos taken on the bridge and some of us recorded little videos at the very top. The whole experience was just incredible and I was so proud of Kaveeta who successfully completed the entire climb. The views of Sydney were spectacular especially of the Opera House.

Once we'd finished the climb we had to wait around for Mr Moate to dismiss us and then we dispersed into the depths of Sydney. The majority of us headed to the markets in The Rocks and then I headed to Westfield shopping centre to meet up with a group of the others who didn't do the bridge climb. I still had to go out and buy a present for



"Secret Sydney" and then we all met up outside City Extra, the restaurant we had eaten at the previous evening.

We caught a taxi boat back to the hotel where I finished writing my Secret Sydney Limerick and got ready for our final fair well meal. We all had fajitas in Had To Happen Mexican Restaurant in North Sydney. Several of us had the pleasure of wearing sombreros and while waiting for our meal and after the meal we delved into the Mystery Black bag for a secret Sydney present and read out the corresponding limerick. They were very funny and quirky gifts such as a cork hat for Mr Moate and shot glasses for many of the Year 13's.

Back at the Hotel my cousin Chris joined us as well because I would be staying in Australia with him for a gap year rather than wake up early for the dreaded flight back to the UK. It was an amazing day and the perfect way to end such a brilliant tour.



7th & 8th August – Flying Home

Natasha Parker



If I had to choose three words to describe our journey home, it would be long, tiring, yet reflective.

We went down for breakfast at around 8.30am, and said our goodbyes to James as he decided that he was going to have a year out and stay in Australia. Then we had one last check round the rooms to make sure nothing was being left behind and allowed ourselves time to look out of our window, at the amazing view of Sydney Harbour one final time.

It was strange to think that just a day before, we had walked across the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge that I was now looking at. This was a once in a lifetime experience, and I am now able to say "I WAS HERE!"

All packed and ready to go, we took our luggage down through reception and waited for the coaches to arrive. Before we knew it we were on our way to the airport.

Once at the airport we handed over our luggage and instruments, then went through to security where we discovered that one of our cast members was missing, by doing a number check.

There was only one person it could possibly be.....Reece!

Coming out of a dark, sealed pod with his hands held high, Reece mouthed to us "I've been bomb checked."

Once we were all safely together again, we continued onto the departure lounge, and soon found ourselves boarding the first plane to Kuala Lumpur. This first stretch of our journey home was around 8-9 hours long. We landed in Malaysia at around 9pm and had a three hour long wait until our next flight.

We spent this time in departures, where the whole cast seemed to stock up on food as nobody seemed to find the in-flight meals very appealing. Apart from Mr Bliss of course, who ended up eating others left overs on the plane.

After buying enough food to last us the rest of the way home, we found that our flight had been delayed an hour. At the sound of this news some of us decided to get some well needed sleep, others taking the time to ponder and reflect on the wonderful experiences we had had in Australia. Special memories cropped up in my mind such as stroking a koala in Melbourne, surfing in Mallacoota, seeing the sights in Sydney, and performing our play, The White King, in all our different destinations. I enjoyed every second of it.

The second flight took approximately 15 hours. It consisted of the entire cast either sleeping, watching films, or eating the food we had stocked up on in Kuala Lumpur airport. When we landed, it was around 6 am at Heathrow airport. We followed the normal procedure of showing our passports, collecting our luggage and walking straight through "nothing to declare".

Once on the other side, Charlie said his goodbyes to us all when his family met him, ready to go on yet another plane to enjoy a family holiday. The rest of us boarded the waiting coach and travelled for another 2 and a half hours back to Kings Lynn, until we found ourselves back at Springwood High School, where our amazing journey had begun three weeks ago.



I am over the moon to be able to say that I took part in The White King, and truly believe it has been a once in a life time experience to be able to take the play to the other side of the world, and be involved in the Australia tour 2017. I have made so many friendships which I hope will last and have lots of wonderful memories, which I will hold with me forever.

The Cast of The White King 2017



The White King

Maisie Coldman, Reece Trott,

Kaveeta Malhi, Megan Byatt, Molly Paffett, Molly Seaton, , Megan Tomsett, Georgia Auld, Natasha, Parker Karen Silva, Jay Pooley, Bailey Marchant, Jack Craven, Tegan Maclutchie-Brownny , James Young

Sophie Watd, Issy Franklin, Rachel Ampomah, Issie Russen, Emily Calvert, Maya Engledow, Rob Bailey,

Charlie Bernadin, Molly Barlow, Georgie Dawson, Olivia Grummett, Katrina Moffatt, Caitlin Kitney-Foster