

IVSA EXCHANGE WITH RVC IN LONDON



IVSA Estonia, Iina Airasmaa

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The IVSA family at Hawkshead campus.

We arrived at London on Monday with the help of our hosts, students of the Royal Veterinary College, who picked us up from Stansted airport. Some of our group had already flown to London a couple days in advance to take their own time to enjoy the city.

Our placement in London was in Smart Hostel at Russell Square, where all of us from Estonia were placed in the same room – which proved to be the best possible situation later during our visit.

During the first evening we met all the other participants of the exchange at the student bar Haxby in the RVC Camden campus. IVSA UK&Ireland had invited people from several different countries to take part in the visit, and there were visitors from Germany, Greece, South Korea and many others.

During the evening we got to know each other a bit, and enjoyed pizza, drinks and beerpong. Towards to end of the evening the students of RVC showed us their own modified version of Jenga, which was found to be a source of a lot of fun.



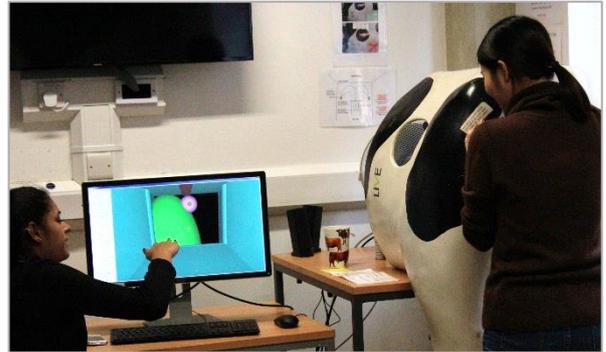
Beer pong is a game of champions!

Tuesday morning we traveled from London to RVC Hawkshead campus in Hatfield. There we had a comprehensive tour of their school, dormitory, sports building and the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals – which is the largest veterinary facility in Europe. To top of the tour we had a class in artificial fertilization.

We got to practice rectal palpation on a bovine haptic simulator, which had a computer generated environment and could

simulate different organs and scenarios.

After ending our tour, we headed for the university farm, where we were taught sheep handling, lambing and about how the cows were kept at the facilities. What seemed to provide the most entertainment was lambing



The bovine haptic simulator proved to be a useful tool.

plush toys from plastic sheep, watching a demonstration on sheep tipping, and trying to grab the sheep and age them.

Our long, tiring day was rewarded by going to a burger place and a pub after. It was a nice end for the second day, we got to know each other a lot better once everyone loosened up.

Wednesday began with a little London tourism; we went to Camden Market for some



Royal Veterinary College students start their studies at the Hawkshead campus after their second year.

shopping and street food "breakfast". The market was a maze of boutiques and food stands, where buying more than you can carry could've been an easy task.



Chinese water deer with its prominent canines.

From the market we headed back to the RVC campus in Camden. We had a tour around the campus and explored their anatomy museum, which contained many interesting creatures and specimens. A horse skeleton that was displayed had been used in Harry Potter as the base for hippogrif, Buckbeak. Other creatures of interest included a wallabi skeleton, a chinese water deer, a polar bear and many others.



Snack break after touring the campus.

In the afternoon we had a local wildlife dissection lab, which was one of the highlights of the trip. Some foxes, hedgehogs, seagulls and deer. Some of the specimens proved to be

very skinny and couple of the birds had some sort of unidentified parasites.

After getting familiar with the anatomy of some of the wildlife in UK, we had a short introductory lecture about them given by Lucy Eckersley. We had a great opportunity to ask questions about how wildlife was controlled and protected in the UK, and a lot of information about her work with european wildcats.



The whole group dining at Poppie's before the evening's partying began.

From the campus we went to sit, chat and eat some local cuisine, fish and chips, before we went back to the hostel to prepare for a night out. London was a good place for a party and most of us found our way back to the hostel very late at night.

Thursday's program started later in the morning with a relaxing city tour to give everyone time to gather themselves. Since some of us had had a bit too much fun the night before, and some others had scheduled some other program for themselves for the morning, most of us did something outside of the scheduled program.

In the afternoon we traveled back to the Hawkshead campus for a lecture on antimicrobial resistance, where we got complimentary bottles of disinfectant.

From Hawkshead we headed to the edge of London to a round church, where we participated in a barn dance lesson. It was definitely one of the funniest experiences,

since most of us couldn't keep up with the moves. It was a nice relaxing evening which was good contrast to our study related program.



Barn dancing was a new and fun experience.

Friday started off with a visit to Grant Museum of Zoology. There we were introduced to the exhibition on Ordinary Animals, which studied the relationship between humans and the animals we've domesticated. It was a very fascinating exhibition and there were very unique items on display, for example a 4,000 year-old veterinary papyrus which describes how to treat bovines for a number of different diseases.



The Micrarium at Grant Museum displays around 2,000 microscope slides containing small animals.

We were granted free time for the day and our group dispersed, each doing what they wanted with the day. Some of us headed to Camden Market for lunch and afterwards spent the rest of the afternoon at Primark buying whatever we happened to desire.

In the evening we ate at a Chinese restaurant where the tables were filled with so much

food that it was impossible to finish it all. From there we started our white t-shirt party; everyone was dressed in a white t-shirt on which we left notes to each other. This continued as we crawled from a bar to another, ending up at the club Tiger Tiger as our final destination.

On Saturday we dressed up in our finest clothes and headed for Ascot Racecourse for the QIPCO British Champions Day. Some of the finest racehorses get to compete in the races there and it was spectacular to watch them. Some of us placed bets and there were even a couple who won money.

After the last race finished, there was an after party on site. The main event at the after party was a concert by George Ezra, who performed brilliantly.



The thrill of the race was contagious.

We were back in London late in the evening, and since it was our final evening with the other groups, we decided to go out to eat with some of the German, Danish and Dutch students at Las Iguanas.

Sunday we had our last morning together with everyone, so we went to eat brunch together and say our goodbyes. Not only did I meet a lot of new interesting people during the week, I also learned a lot of new things about veterinary medicine. I'm excited for when we get to meet our friends from London again in March next year, when we host their visit to Tartu!