

A Study Abroad Adventure in London

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For a month this summer, we had the great opportunity to study abroad in London, England. Through the University of Southern Mississippi's British Studies Program, twenty-four graduate LIS students from around the US and two USM professors visited about twenty British libraries, archives, and museums. We had the chance to participate in behind-the-scenes tours, see rare items and special collections, and speak to a variety of LIS professionals.

In particular, we want to highlight two of our favorite visits:

Legal deposit of the British Library automatically creates a copy of every published book in the UK and Ireland from the date of publication. Since they have such a large and constant influx of

books, the library has an underground depository, which is the largest subterranean facility in Europe, and an off-site storage building. The library uses an intricate retrieval system to deliver books for use only in the reading rooms, as the books cannot be taken out of the library and the stacks are closed.

In order to use the reading rooms, visitors must have a reader's card. To obtain a reader's card, one must have two proofs of identification and a list of books they require. Basically, the British Library wants to make sure that readers are using their books and not the space for studying and/or personal reasons because space is limited.

The British Library has many functions, but from our tour and research visits there, we quickly realized that the library is geared towards those with research needs.

Since one can only use their materials in the reading room for a limited amount of time (it is not a 24 hours, 7 days a week kind of library) it is not the best place for catching up on the newest issue of National Geographic or reading Tom Clancy's latest book. That being said, if they have something you need to reference or use for research, do not hesitate to get a reader's card. It is



