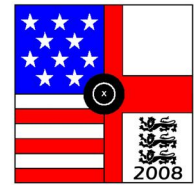


England Rifle Team to USA 2008

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Day 3 – Vegas to the Grand Canyon

The day started at a civilised hour, but for several members of the team it was a little too early after a late night of playing the tables. The early car set off with Dave D leading the way so that they could arrive at the Grand Canyon in good time. The rest of the team followed on about an hour later, and after very slow service at the car rental depot we set off on our way with two of the cars getting a free upgrade!

The journey was a long one but filled with beautifully rugged scenery lining the way. Near to Las Vegas the vegetation was sparse but the nearer we got to our destination, the greener it got. The roads we travelled on lay on land about as flat as you can get, with mountains lining either side where the earth's crust had been folded into awe inspiring, yet dangerous-looking peaks. Nature's artistic canvas was also interceded with giant boulders precariously balanced boulders on pillars of crumbling mudstone and sandstone, which made one wonder how such a sculpture was created.

Part way through the journey there was a welcome pit-stop at the Hoover dam; one of the modern wonders of the world. It is an inspiring engineering feat that took several years, millions of dollars and too many lives to complete. At the site there were guided tours available, but we opted to visit the museum, which in itself was very interesting. It told of how the dam came about, how they actually built it and how the waters gushing through the purpose built tunnels are used to produce a massive power supply. A visit I would recommend to all budding engineers out there.

We reached our hotel at around 5pm and checked in. The team then piled into the vehicles after dropping off kit to visit the world famous Grand Canyon and to see its magnificent sunset. Many pictures were taken of this marvel and of the sunrise the next day. Some time was spent taking in the view of the canyon itself and also the surrounding area with its interesting flora and fauna. After an hour or so bellies started rumbling and dinner sounded like a good plan to all concerned.

After a few drinks in the sports bar the Captain asked the opinion of one of the receptionists as to where would be the best place to eat and the Hotel across the road was recommended. Before this meal the team had eaten in some quite nice restaurants and the venue chosen did not meet those high standards. Much to Nick Hinchcliffe's disgust the highest priced bottle of wine reached the heady heights of \$22! It was a mediocre meal, but with the venue situated where it was and decorated as an old Wild West town it was never going to be great, but it was a pleasant evening having the team together for the first time so far (minus Jeremy Langley)

The evening's festivities were rounded off with some of the team bowling. It got competitive and Tom Rylands proved himself to be a bit of a demon, at one point scoring three strikes in a row.

A good night's sleep was in order, partly because of the lack in Vegas because we tried to fit everything into a day and a half, but also because many of the team planned to get up at 5am to watch the sun rise over the Grand Canyon.