

British don't deserve most recent invasion

Editor's note: Will Grigg is traveling in Great Britain with a Brigham Young University tour group.

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN: An unaccustomed two-day respite offers an opportunity to digest tour experiences.

Our group's four-week schedule is clotted with performances, meetings and other commitments; accordingly, it is difficult to come to know anyone or anything very well during our travels. But there is time for first — and occasionally second — impressions.

The English countryside has been a verdant sea, cresting in rolling hills and occasionally interrupted with hedgerows and stone walls. Many of the cities we have visited are still blemished from the bombings of World War II. There have also been Roman walls and Norman castles several times older than anything in America.

Such scenery summons reflections about the precocity (Some of the English may say immaturity) of the United States. British history portrays an arduous struggle for personal security and self-government; we Americans are the beneficiaries of a fine pedigree.

The tiny contingent of Americans of which I am part has been the beneficiary of exquisite English hospitality, although it appears that our linguistic habits have taxed the patience of our hosts from time to time.

As is often the case, the first thing a visitor should notice about England is the children. School children of all ages still wear uniforms; this is a custom American schools should emulate. (It has been confusing that many English students look like Mormon missionaries). American youth regard dress codes as the very yoke of tyranny; however, protests about dress codes generally emanate from students hopelessly yoked by the latest pop fashion.

Of course, English youth are not immune to the seductions of fashion, alas. Some of the regnant English musical fashions are woeful — and ere long will be imported by the United States.

Watch out for "Acid House" music, a style popular in the Manchester community. The style appears to winnow out all of the most tasteless elements of '70s pop — the disco beat, the appalling bell-bottom jeans, the polyester chic. People here actually enjoy this. The "Acid House" style creates an atmosphere similar to what one would expect at a Desert Industries disco party; it's a nightmare.



**Will
Grigg**

**FOR THE
SAKE OF
ARGUMENT**

Our performing group recently had a holdover in Liverpool, which offered a chance to visit several Beatles shrines. Several from our group returned to the airport burdened beneath Beatles baubles.

Christopher Tookey, a critic for the London Daily Telegraph, observes: "Lenin may no longer be infallible, but the scarcely less bizarre deification of (John) Lennon continues apace." On May 6 British TV broadcast a concert tribute to John Lennon.

Lennon was indeed one half of the extraordinary musical team of Lennon/McCartney, and neither time nor the embarrassment provoked by Lennon's political droolings can diminish from the team's brilliance.

It is unfortunate that the political Lennon continues to mesmerize the young and thoughtless. As a focus for political foolishness, Lennon is measurably less dangerous than Lenin, although hardly less annoying.

Philanthropy is a major concern of the British; the preferred recipients of generosity are children, the disabled, and animals — perhaps especially animals. England has a large, vocal and well-organized animal rights movement. The English fondness for horses and dogs sometimes borders on the uxorious. I have misgivings about the animals rights movement; however, any country filled with people who love dogs and horses — and dislike the French — can't be all bad.

The English people with whom I have spoken are basically quite conservative, as are the major London papers, the Guardian, the Telegraph, and the Times. The "MYOB" (Mind Your Own Business) ethic has become a bit tattered by the tabloids, but the English may have caught themselves in time to reverse the sorry erosion of manners recently lamented by Times columnist Peregrine Worsthorne. Then again, both Phil Donahue and Oprah Winfrey have recently invaded the Isles. Honestly — what have the British done since George III to deserve such an assault?