

Our Trip to Scotland

My first day started very early. I wrestled myself out of bed at 4 AM, got in the car with my mom and we were off to the airport. There, I met my companions, Réka and Melinda. After a bit of standing in line to get our bags onto the plane, we realized how soon we had to be at our flight and made a mad dash for the gate. Luckily, we arrived on time and got seated aboard the jet.

During our trip, I alternated between almost-but-not-quite-sleeping and staring out the window at the seemingly infinite expanse of land beneath us. About three hours later, and we were finally able to stretch our legs. The first challenge we met was deciphering the thickly accented speech of the Glasgow airport staff. After being told four times, we finally understood to go left to have our IDs checked, which we did, and we were free to enter the city of Glasgow. At the exit of the airport, a cheerful lady, Brenda, greeted us with a sign and gave us all hugs. She took us out to the parking lot where her husband Duncan was waiting with his Ford Transit that seemed oversized for transporting our little group of five. Duncan drove us to one of their friends', Morag's house for breakfast, where last, but definitely not least, Lexa joined our group.

Having stuffed our faces with all kinds of delicious foods, we set off to the Falkirk Wheel, which is basically a bridge but not really that takes boats from one river to another by putting them on platforms and rotating them with a tiny bit of an initial push, but otherwise using their own weight. We had some lunch there and I tried Scotland's other national drink, Irn Bru. To be quite honest, I won't have sleepless nights over its unavailability in Hungary. Next, we visited the Kelpies, which is a pair of giant horse head statues that I really want to climb to the top of and have a picnic or something of the sort. After a day of fun, we were taken to Morag's again for tea and then to Mike and Mary's, a married couple who'd be giving us a place to sleep when we were in the Glasgow area.

Our second day was mostly spent shopping in Glasgow after a short church service where we met the wonderful people of the Queen's Park Govanhill Parish Church. Most notably, we went to Primark where I finally found bandanas and got myself a fancy new wallet. I also got all the gifts I wanted to get my relatives and my teacher. That's about it, really. The shopping took quite some time.

Day three. Duncan, Brenda, Morag and Lexa came to pick us up from Mike and Mary's and we headed to Largs, a small port town on the West coast of Scotland. From there, we went to Great Cumbrae on the ferry. We cycled around the island, an activity that I greatly enjoyed, though my fellow Hungarians seemed to disagree. Back in Largs, we had some delicious fish and chips and saw Scotland's only functional paddle steamer, the Waverley, coming into port. We said goodbye to Largs and Great Cumbrae and rolled back to Glasgow.

Another early start on the fourth day, albeit pretty tame compared to the waking up at 4 AM of the first day. We were travelling to Dumfries by train, where Pam Mitchell awaited us and got us some nice breakfast at a very interesting church-turned-café. She then took us to Dunscore, a small village near Dumfries, where we'd be staying for the next few days. During that time, we went to a barbecue, walked the Jane Haining trail, visited a castle and had a PE lesson with the Royal Marines at Dumfries Academy. We also had dinner with a South African couple, Jani and Sunet, who had some very interesting stories and some very delicious food, including a classic South African dish, orange sweet potatoes.

Wrapping up our Scottish adventure was a final evening at Mike and Mary's, and our second barbecue for the week, with almost the entire Queen's Park congregation present. I had brought some Hungarian candies from home that I'd meant to give to the students in Dumfries Academy, but since I'd forgotten to pack them, I served them at this second barbecue. Pretty much everyone seemed to enjoy them, whether they'd had the honey or liquorice flavoured version. We said our goodbyes and had our last night of sleep in the UK.

Next morning, we woke up similarly early to a week before, except this time, our plane was going the opposite way. We arrived home safe with a whole bunch of souvenirs and memories. It was quite striking to go from the pleasant 15-20 °C of Scotland to the painful 40 °C of home.

Overall, I enjoyed my trip very much and want to go back next summer to do the North Coast 500 road trip with my mom and some friends.