

Shortly before noon of June 24th 2023, our flight from Budapest landed in Edinburgh airport. After passing security and leaving the airport, a 5 day public transport pass was purchased for each of us. We would be staying the night at Ibis hotel, a short walk from the tram station nearby. Funnily, half of the group failed to get off the tram in time when we had reached our destination, and a bit of walking had to be done to reunite. The hotel was homely, clean, and even included breakfast for the duration of our stay.

Edinburgh's tram line is a marvelous piece of infrastructure; one fast and sleek railway from the airport to the harbor passing through the city center. And so as soon as we were settled in we took the tram again to get to Princes Street. As soon as we exited I was mesmerized by the sight of the colossal hill of Castle Rock crowned by Edinburgh castle. Princes Street is filled with shops and diners which we would explore over the course of the days, starting then. After that we went on a long walk through the city itself.

Edinburgh is a city unlike anything I have ever seen. The castle, musea, and monuments stand out as glaring landmarks in the urban area. Farther away from the city center we saw lovely and serene old built neighborhoods and great hills or mountains to the south, dwarf yet to the titans visible past the bay north.

I made good friends among the group, and we spent a lot of time together, both on trips and at the hotel. At night we were surprised to witness how truly far north we were, the sun not setting completely at midnight.





The next day we woke up in time to make it to our train to Glasgow, about an hour due west. Despite the rain we were welcomed by and that refused to stop for most of our stay, Glasgow was as much beautiful and pleasant as Edinburgh, and just like there, we also walked the downtown in groups to take in the aura of the city. After that we made a trek to the University of Glasgow where we were allowed to enjoy a magnificent exhibition of fossils, artwork, artifacts, and (to our horror) cadavers.

After leaving the museum we almost had time to eat lunch at a restaurant we found along the way, but we had to pack up our unfinished meals and make it in time to the Govanhill Church of Scotland, where friendly staff welcomed us with a copious amount of sandwiches, pastry, and tea. They were of an organization intent on preserving the legacy of Jane Haining and had much to tell about her that one could not simply read on the internet. Stained glass in the church showed Ms. Haining teaching and protecting girls of her school, her life a demonstration of

altruism likened to Jesus Christ's love as He carried His cross. We spent some more free time in Edinburgh after returning and then ate our packed food for dinner back at the hotel.

The next day we undertook the anticipated climb up the hill to the castle. The entire complex up there was like a snowglobe of preserved Scottish history. Our first stop was at St Giles' Cathedral, an absolutely beautiful building where one could simply sit and watch the sun shine through the masterfully crafted stained glass. Next we headed to John Knox house where we could learn about the minister's life and theological doctrine. I bought souvenirs for my family in the shops found on Castle Rock outside the house.

The castle itself lived up to all my expectations. In the courtyard I managed to capture my best view yet of the entire city spanning to the bay and the coastline and



mountains beyond. Inside the fortress were different historical exhibitions regarding medieval Scottish military, royalty, and judicial system. We were even in time to witness the ceremonial firing of the Mons Meg giant cannon.



Our visit concluded we were feeling peckish and found the best restaurant to try genuine British fish 'n' chips. Satiated, we continued on to the palace of

Holyroodhouse, official residence of the British monarch king Charles III in Scotland. The lengthy exhibition was much to take in all at once, but having experienced it we took a peaceful walk in the gardens from where I could once again marvel at the beautiful hills not so far in the distance.

To mark the end of our stay in Scotland, we took the tram all the way to the harbor in the evening so we could gaze upon the North Sea. We went out to the Newhaven Lighthouse to watch the setting sun and say our goodbyes to the country we'd leave the following day.

On the fourth and final day we spent some more free time shopping before we packed up our belongings at the hotel and headed for our flight back home to Budapest.

I am grateful to have been able to take part in such an excursion and will cherish my stay in Edinburgh and Glasgow. I give my heartfelt thanks to the organizers and to the staff of the Govanhill church.



