

My time in Scotland

I should probably start by thanking every single one of the people who helped me have this wonderful experience. Especially my English teacher and the staff.

This experience added so much not only to my summer but to me as well. It has fulfilled my never-ending desire for travel for the summer.

I think my essay may differ from what the others have written, because as of writing this I am on an airplane somewhere over the Atlantic to begin the next school year already in the US in a few days. The others when writing this (the deadline is 20th August) are still living their summer and reflect on the experience knowing that they have at least 10 more days to relax. I on the other hand will be reflecting on our journey knowing that school is about to begin for me and I can position it compared to my other experiences during my summer.

After that long introduction I should probably start telling my story from the very beginning. I heard about this competition from my English teacher and I have hesitated whether I wanted to be going or not. After all no one wanted to go from my class so after a little back and forth I was kind of forced to go. But I do not regret that until this day.

When I got to know finally that I have won and I can go to Scotland I was really happy of course but a little set back was that it was at the same time as a camp I really wanted to go to. But that also cleared up as the two ended up not being at once.

About one month later I found myself on the airport with seven strangers. Only one thing in common that we have won an English competition. On the ground (in both directions) we did not have the best experience as our flight was delayed significantly, but that did not bother us as we were heading to our wonderful experience.

¹When we finally arrived to the hotel that was conveniently next to the tramline everyone



was so tired, but in the evening we still managed to get ourselves together and go for a quick walk in Edinburgh. One of the things that amazed me the most is that sunset is so late in the evening. I think it was around nine pm when we finally decided to get back to our hotel but the sun was still up for two hours after that. I think I took the most photos on that very first day when I saw Edinburgh as a whole for the very first time. It was beautiful and I knew there were ton of cites to see so that we would not be bored for our stay. Here I think is a good time to mention it, the others who I was travelling with were really kind and open and we have formed a little community during our stay.

¹ (picture) Edinburgh on our first evening quick tour, in the sunset, 17 June

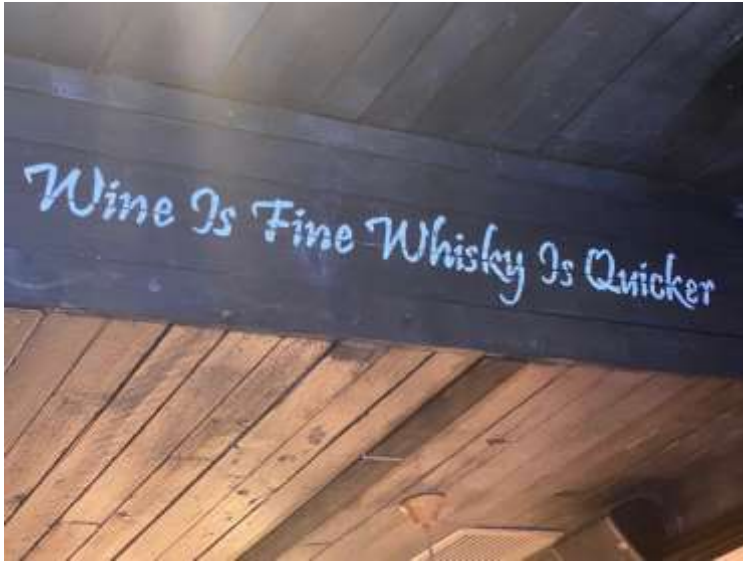
²Next day we went to Glasgow to see the church with the Memorial for Jane Haining. It was beautiful and inspirational. After that we had a chance to tour Glasgow, which was also really pleasant as the sun finally was shining a bit. At around 5 pm we got on the bus and went back to Edinburgh for the rest of the trip. Unfortunately, we did not get the chance to visit Jane Haining's birth place. Also pro tip: If you are ever on a longer bus journey at whatever season in Scotland bring some really warm clothes with you, I do not know why but they make the buses 10 degrees Celsius cold.



Next day, June 19, was the day where I got most tired. We woke up quite early in the morning and after breakfast gathered all our energy and headed straight to the tram to go to Saint Andrew's square, where the city-airport tram ends, also the main square in the middle of the city. First thing we did that day was that we hopped on to a very pleasant, informative and entertaining bus ride. We passed things like the big mountains on the east side of the city, that as of today the city has already surrendered and the Scottish parliament. After that we started wondering around the city. We spent a lot of time doing that up until lunch.

There are two main things and some other less important ones I would like to point out that I have noticed that describe the people and the city there. One is bridges, a lot of bridges. But the interesting thing in them is that they were not built because there are that many rivers or any kind of waters that it would need crossing, but rather they were built because the designers of the city 100-150 years ago looked at this as the best option to overcome the city's mountainous terrain that it is built on. But these bridges are not just interesting because they are there, but they are interesting because if you are on the bridge you would not notice that you are actually on a bridge and you would think that the street is just this flat, because they not only needed to flatten the street they also needed to maximize the available space for building house so not only the street are elevated so are the house. One would only notice that there is a bridge there from underneath it. This interesting but rather clever makes you easily forget how mixed the terrain in the city really is.

² (picture): Glasgow main street, 18 June



³The other main thing to point out is their huge culture for whiskey. On the streets of the city center it is impossible to find a place where you cannot have a drink.

One of the smaller things is that I think has significant meaning is the fact that you can pay by card even at the guy who is doing some traditional Scottish things in popular tourist places just to earn money. This type of advanced culture is really hard to come by and we should appreciate it a lot.

For lunch that day we were fortunate enough to be able to try a real traditional food. Even in the menu the name of the things were written in their old, traditional language. That is why I could learn something in that language I remember until this day. That is MUCKLE TATTIES and it means big potatoes. One learns something every day apparently.

In the afternoon we also had a local lady with us with Hungarian origins who was first guiding us, but more importantly explaining to us about the Holocaust in Hungary as her origins were from there.

After that just an hour before closing we got to see the Scottish National Museum as well. It was fantastic even though the rooftop terrace was closed already.

One thing that really inspired me was that they would close a lot of the street during the weekend for cars to create an even friendlier environment for pedestrians and there would be musician bands, pop up shops and most importantly great atmosphere, people were so free, everyone was clapping and there were even some people dancing happily around.

In the evening after dinner even though we were dead tired we still had energy to play cards. It was a lot of fun.

The next day we only had the morning for us but it turned out to be the perfect amount of time to visit the castle of Edinburgh that is conveniently on a hill inside the city (but not the big mountain I have previously talked about) overlooking the entire thing.

It was filled with history views and Americans. We had a great time there. After that we had lunch at the mall at Waverley, which is the main railway station of Edinburgh, and it perfectly takes advantage of the valley located between the castle and the city as it is lowered into it so it does not take up any space that the people would use.

The weather heated up to 15 degrees that day so I decided to be brave and had an ice cream. It felt really good at the time. Looking back, I have pro tip number two: Do not eat ice cream in 15 degrees.

After that we got back to the hotel packed our stuff and headed to the airport. Our flight as we found out was delayed by 2.5 hours but we did have a good time at the airport.

Scotland has been a really good experience for me and became a beautiful memory.

³picture): Scotts, and their thing for whiskey, 19 June



⁴I will start my year, here in the United States (yes, my plane landed), always remembering what a great time I had there.

⁴ (picture): views from the Edinburgh Castle day four, 20 June