

Jane Haining competition: Scotland 2022

June of 2022, I had the opportunity to travel to Scotland thanks to all the lovely people who planned the Jane Haining competition. I originally won back in 2021 but due to covid difficulties, it was changed to this summer. As I have never travelled this far, it was an amazing experience for me and the kind people I had the chance to go with made it even greater.



We ran into smaller problems here and there but they were nothing that couldn't be solved, we even had luck with the weather which is a rare occasion in the UK.

As my first flight, it was great. It had a certain excitement to it aside from having good conversations with my newly met company and having time to relax for an hour or two.

The hotel had fantastic services, for anyone planning to visit Scotland, I would definitely recommend it. The breakfasts were varied and delicious, there were all kinds of food to choose from to enlighten our mornings. The rooms were separated into four so everyone had a roommate. I was lucky enough to become friends with all of them, we had a lot in common with the other members and we overall had a fun time together in a new country.



The first day of getting there, we decided to go to the downtown area by metro that specifically had a tourist route. I can't even begin to explain how fascinated I was by the style of Edinburgh. It is modern, yet it holds the old historic features it used to hold long ago. It is pleasing to the eyes. Our teacher explained the stories behind almost everything, it was really interesting to listen to.

The second day we went to Glasgow to meet the lovely ladies who keep the memory of Jane Haining. They told us all about her, her stories and about what an amazing woman she was. Some tellings were terrifying to hear as teenagers of the 21st century. She went through hell and back to protect those not deserving of suffering. We even heard about what happened when they took her to a camp, the unhygienic way of living that got so many of these women sick and even pass. We also got to chat over lunch and share our national differences. It was a cultural shock to me to find out that not only Americans but so do British people not take their shoes off before entering the house. One of the ladies was a musician so the other girls sang some hungarian folkmusic with her and some Scottish as well. They gifted us some amazing specialties of scottish culture, sadly the cathedral was closed so we parted ways.

Often times we went to a nearby convenience store to stock up on local snacks which we later tried out in the hotel while playing card games and such. The prices seemed quite similar to those ones here but they were a bit more generous, nothing criminal.

Walking around in common places, I have started to realize how many objects are there sorted around for helping disabled people. Even our bathroom had a shower favorable for those who have a hard time with it normally. It seems like a genuine way to express kindness and I couldn't help but wonder how many people were helped by this so far. Not just this, but the citizens and workers there all seemed eager to communicate when it looked as if you were confused with something, they were very helpful and open to strangers. As an introverted person, this was a bit of a shock to me but I appreciated it since we did need some assistance and they were always happy to oblige.

On the second day we returned to Edinburgh by a second-story bus which happens to exist in Hungary as well but I do not see it so regularly, especially with a window in the front. We had some pizza at home before going to bed.

On the third day, we took a double-decker to follow the path of the royal mile. We even got free earphones to listen to audioguides on the way. There were some really interesting stories told in whatever language we chose to listen to. Some of them were about the royal mile itself and the nearest tourist attractions left or right. Some were about the people of Scotland, their own history. But one of the stories caught our attention the most, it was about grave robbery. If I recall it correctly, the topic came up because we were just driving by an university where back in the time, they needed to rob graves for research purposes. Naturally, they didn't have the luxury to learn about human anatomy without doing so. The morals of it are questionable but it was a necessary key to learn about ourselves and use the knowledge to help others in medical studies. I, myself, am intrigued by the idea of our ancestors being so motivated as to break law in order to find out more.

Then, we took off the bus to have lunch, strangely enough, it was difficult to find any restaurants not completely crowded or something that offers local specialties instead of food from other countries. True, the UK isn't most known for it's cuisine, it still surprised me. Eventually, we managed to find a restaurant called „The Piper's Rest” named after a myth that a boy was asked to fix the pipe under the place and was never found. The restroom happened to be there so there was a saying that if you listen close enough, you can still hear him. We had some local food which I can't really remember the name of, they were some very strange and tongue-twisting names but the food was delicious and if I could, I'd like to eat some again in the future. Speaking of Piper's Rest, there were some other weird shop names that might be only in Scotland. Such as „Thistle do nicely” or „Three.” or „Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe”. Same thing happened with some of the grocery brands when we went to shop.





After we have finished eating, we headed to Holyrood House, a castle which the royal family likes to go to and is otherwise visited by tourists. Here, we also got audioguides that showed us pictures and talked about the history of the building and the royal family's connection to it. As an artistic person, the architecture of the entire palace blew my mind. First, we had to go around the royal court to go into the building up the stairs. There were many objects we weren't allowed to take



pictures of, in order to keep its current state from fading. On the wall, there were some famously known paintings, either Christian or the ancestors of the family, kings, queens, duchesses, dukes, princes and princesses.



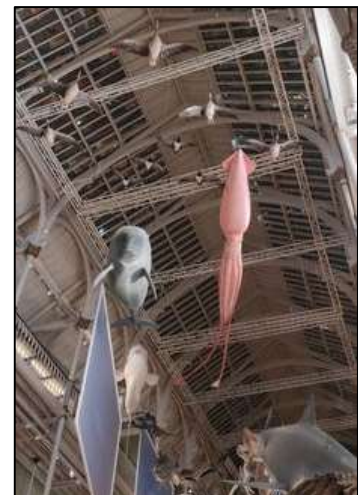
The rooms were mostly dark to protect these paintings. The furniture, the walls, the paintings all had a certain red and golden aesthetic to them, expected of a rich surrounding. We had a lot of time to wander around, get to know about each and every important puzzle piece while listening to the calm narrator. The palace was huge, I wondered if there was even an end to it.

One of the halls were filled with insane amount of paintings of seemingly a lot of different men in different attire, the guide informed us though that all of the paintings were made of a single person who wished to fool people with this. The room also apparently had a secret door we were not allowed to enter.

Later on, a normal looking room turned out to be the scene of a crime, a murder more specifically where a jealous husband killed his wife and the blood stain was still visible on the wooden floor. It was all very dramatic but also interesting to me.

Lastly, we took a walk around one of the closed attractions out in the garden, it was simply beautiful up-close.

Before heading home, we had the chance to meet the Jane Haining Association's new member who represents them in Edinburgh, she was a very lovely lady. Half-hungarian if I remember correctly. We also visited the National Museum of Scotland, unfortunately almost at closing time because I love museums and we barely had time to look around. There were some breath-taking displays of ancient objects which I can only assume did not belong to the country. Jokes aside, I enjoyed learning yet again more about clothing in medieval times, the stars, animals, statues and more.

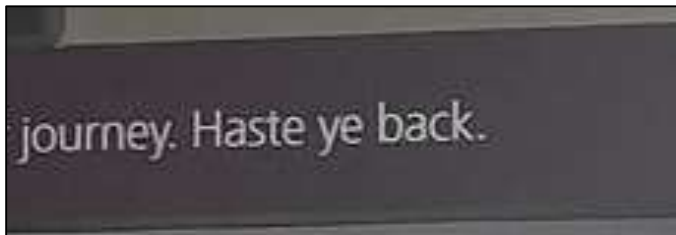




On the last day, we went up to Edinburgh Castle, previously used as a safe space for citizens during war and training for soldiers if I remember correctly. The scenery was gorgeous and the castle had a certain charm to it as well. Most of the buildings were obviously made for shorter people, which I found a little funny, comparing it to our height. There was also a museum-like part of it where there were some very interesting objects of the past. The teacher told us all about historic events of queens, again, very much my idea of conversation, I really like listening to them.

After that, we went to buy souvenirs before saying goodbye to the hotel and Scotland entirely. The flight home was pretty calm, a perfect way to end it.

All in all, I had the time of my life and wish to go back or keep travelling elsewhere. Next time, I hope to be able to talk with locals more because whenever I go abroad, I become a tiny bit more introverted and lose the chance to show off. I want to thank everyone who made this possible, that including my former sweet English teacher who told me about it and helped me prepare. I feel very happy I had this chance.



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