

After trying myself out in this very same competition two years ago (and getting 9th place), this year's victory felt even more unreal than I thought it would. Scotland had been on my bucket list for years and this trip felt like a dream come true.

July 15th



Our adventure began in Edinburgh. In the morning we were still a bit cranky because of the early departure of our plane and the lack of sleep but the captivating city quickly improved our spirits .

Our first stop was the Royal Yacht Britannia, a 126 metre long luxury ship, belonging to the British royal family. We learned about the history of the ship, her passengers, her tasteful interior and even the The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust. Her interior was so luxurious that just from the pictures I would have never guessed her to be a ship.

After a quick lunch we headed towards the Castle of Edinburgh. Unfortunately we were running out of time at this point so we only had a mere hour to look around but it was still worth visiting. If anything, the time limit just motivated me to one day return and continue my tour. We still got to visit some interesting buildings, like the St. Margaret's Chapel, the Scottish war memorial, the prisons, David's tower, the Great Hall and some more. All of them had fascinating histories.



We ended our day by visiting Camera Obscura, a museum on the Royal Mile, displaying countless illusions and their explanations. Because of the sunny weather we were fortunate enough to take part in a show where they demonstrated how the museum's real camera obscura works.

July 16th

We started the following day with another early alarm and a delicious 2 hour train ride. If it wasn't for the jaw droppingly beautiful scenery I would have surely fallen asleep. We rode the train to Dumfries where we were greeted by a lovely elderly couple, Pam and Colin Mitchell, who were our guides for the day. They drove us around town, showing us the academy, which

Jane Haining attended. Then we headed to the tiny village of Dunscore where we were welcomed by the thoughtful local elderly community and a filling lunch prepared by them.

I personally prefer a big city over the countryside but even I was enchanted by the immensely green



hills and the peacefully grazing sheep. We were shown the local church and inside we got to flip through the books written about Jane in the exhibition dedicated to her. We also got to see a video honoring her life and dedicated to



informing as many people as possible about her heroic sacrifice. The funny thing is I watched that very same video when preparing for the competition but now I finally got to see its sceneries in real life. After

some more pleasant conversation and driving around to see Jane's home and church it was, to our biggest sorrow, time to say goodbye.

Fortunately we still had plenty of time left of the day so when we got home we headed to the stunning Pollok park where we befriended some adorable highland cows and discovered a precious fairy village.

July 17th

On this day we stayed to explore Glasgow. We visited the Queen's Park Govanhill Parish Church where we were once again welcomed by a delightful elderly community. They showed us around the church, served us some food and drinks and we had a lovely conversation with them. We saw the stained glass window dedicated to Jane and their beautiful place of worship.



Later we wandered around the city, saw a welcoming café and community center located in a church and looked around in an exhibition displayed in the town hall.

Then we hopped on a bus and travelled to the Glasgow Science Centre. I personally could have spent a whole day exploring the three storey building filled with interactive displays and explanations but our time was limited. I still had plenty of fun though learning how reflexes worked, playing pulmonologist, winning a dance battle and running in a hamster wheel. Not to

mention the spectacular science show we had the honor of seeing. This year was the 25th anniversary of the museum's opening so they performed 10 amazing science experiments.



Our next stop was supposed to be the Glasgow Cathedral. I had seen breathtaking pictures of this place and was keen to visit it but we didn't know we had just missed closing time. After walking around it I realised that the exterior is gorgeous as well but left still fairly disappointed.

This disappointment wasn't long lived though, because the nearby Necropolis was just as beautiful as I imagined. The vibrant green grass sparked a sharp contrast with the skillfully engraved gravestones and the view of the city in the background tied it all together.

July 18th

Our last day came sooner than expected and much sooner than desired. On this day we returned to the picturesque city of Edinburgh. We walked around the Royal Mile and visited my favorite building on the whole trip: St. Giles' Cathedral. The mix of gorgeous, colorful stained-glass windows, mosaic floors and carefully sculpted wood made the atmosphere enchanting like the church was a whole other world filled with quiet awe. After a quick lunch we returned to find the only sculpture of an angel playing a bagpipe in the world, which just so happened to be in this very same cathedral. Although the angel was small, I wasn't complaining, as I got to spend some more time in this wonder of a building.

We also had some free time to wander around the Royal Mile and buy souvenirs, but I just couldn't get enough of the beautiful architecture so this only made me want to return more.

Overall, I couldn't be more grateful for having the opportunity to visit such a beautiful place, meet such nice people and learn about the thought-provoking life of the selfless hero that Jaine Haining was.

