

Simply Good - Our Temporary Life in Edinburgh

How amazing can a field trip during which you have to study be, after all? Let's say pretty damn awesome isn't even slightly covering the time we got to spend in the beautiful, old city of Edinburgh. To give you an impression of what the Summer School practically is, let us start from the very beginning since there is so much to talk about.

This year, the Summer School consisted of 35 students and 4 lecturers, who spent two weeks in Edinburgh in August. We also had our personal tutors there, two students accompanying us and helping us find our way around the big, bad city.

The groups were split with regard to housing: some of us stayed at Pollock Halls, the others in self-catered flats at WAC. With your own room and a large kitchen at hand, it was the best combination of housing you can think of for you were able to both study for your courses independently and invite other people over to your place to spend some time together.

As to our daily routine, we had class from 9 am to 4 pm every day, and our kind tutors sacrificed their precious bedtime so as to escort us to our course rooms in the morning. Otherwise, considering how huge the University of Edinburgh is, we would have been totally lost.

The courses we took were all very interesting, which made it difficult to choose: British Landeskunde vs. Middle English Lyrics and Shakespeare vs. John Milton's Paradise Lost – tough call! But in the end, whatever choice we had made, it turned out to be absolutely amazing and so much fun. There was no such thing as a tense working atmosphere, as opposed to what you are probably used to. It is more like a welcoming atmosphere that inspires your creativity and encourages you to increase your skills and expand your horizon...As though you spend two weeks in a bubble filled with joy, fun and enthusiasm – which only explodes when you get back home and realise that you actually have to hand in your term paper.

This may all sound somewhat strictly organised – but it is fool's gold! Yes, of course we had to take two courses, one in the morning and one after lunch, but that makes up for only seven hours out of 24. So what to do with the rest of our time? Good question, even better is the answer: you can do anything you like!

This is not as easy as it sounds. Just think of all the activities you can choose from: Due to the two Edinburgh festivals – the Fringe Festival and the Edinburgh International Festival, there was a huge variety of entertaining shows you were free to attend and enjoy, all sorts of stuff ranging from comedy shows to theatre plays such as Macbeth.

If truth be told, the whole city is just like one huge festival on its own because of all the talented people performing spontaneously in the streets during the festival period. As if that wasn't enough already, there were also activities planned by the tutors, for instance the UNESCO Literary Walk, where we followed the traces of some of the most important literary figures from Edinburgh, or the Scavenger Hunt, which really helped us know our way around the city, and finally a trip to the National Library for a private exhibition of old manuscripts and letters by Lord Byron, Jane Austen and many more. We were even allowed to touch those and examine them for ourselves – ever heard of a German library doing that? All in all, there is just no space for boredom in Edinburgh!

And for the night owls among us who wanted to burn the candle at both ends, the Ghost Walk hosted by James where we followed ghosts in Edinburgh's vaults revealed some gory moments of the city's history. Or you could simply join some lecturers and tutors in the pub, for example the famous Frankenstein Pub, and have a pint of lager or cider - which is no big deal because, thankfully, class does not start before 9 o'clock the next morning.

On that note, go for it and take the chance to participate in the Edinburgh Summer School next year. Do some amazing and incredibly interesting courses, attend special activities and take your time to explore the city on your own - whether you prefer the flair of old buildings, the Castle and St Giles's Cathedral in the old town or rather fancy going shopping in the new town (maybe go hunting for some traditional clothing?), there is so much to see in this beautiful city, which has definitely become one of my favourite places to go. Oh, and by all means, TRY SOME FUDGE!!!! You'll know what I mean once you get to the Fudge Kitchen...

So, you want to combine some studies with a little holiday abroad? The Edinburgh Summer School is where you belong!

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