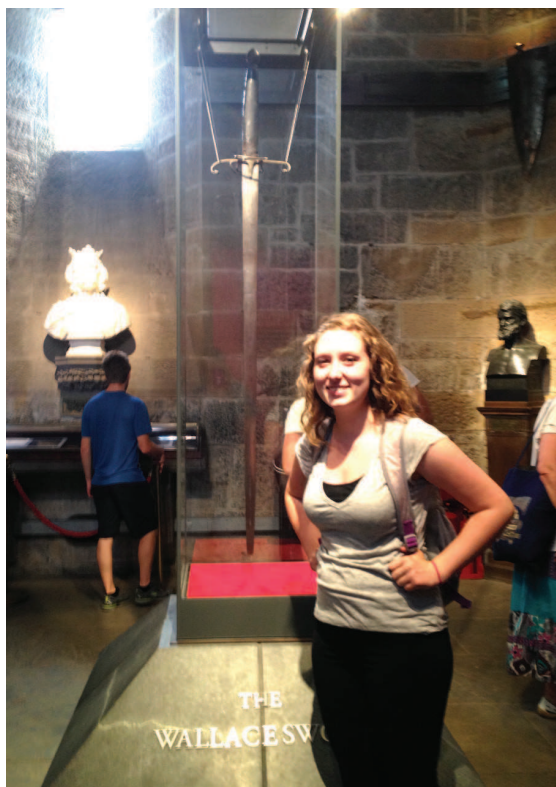


# Life with a Scottish Accent: My Summer Studying Abroad

By Natalie Wallace

*Natalie Wallace is a 2012 graduate of Vernonia High School who is majoring in Biology at Western Oregon University. Wallace is spending the summer studying abroad at the University of Stirling in Stirling, Scotland. Wallace will be sending Vernonia's Voice updates throughout the summer about her adventures in Scotland.*



Natalie Wallace with the Wallace Sword.

Ever since high school, I have known that a huge goal of mine is to study abroad. I think this probably stemmed from the vast amount of exchange students I have had the chance to know in Vernonia and from hosting some of them as well. Seeing what a great experience they had made me want to do the same.

Why Scotland, you may ask? Well, if you ask my family, it's because I am determined to find the real life Hogwarts (which I am not denying), but for me, it's more than just my obsession with Harry Potter or Doctor Who. With the last name Wallace, I have always heard stories about William Wallace and my ancestors from Scotland. I knew I wanted to study abroad in the UK, and Scotland seemed like the perfect place to have that experience, while learning more about my family's history. During my time here, I will be taking classes and completing an internship through the University, so I have a lot to look forward to!

My two classes (British Journalism and the Psychology of Evil) have both been going pretty well, I am enjoying them more than I thought I would since neither really has to do with my biology major, but it's nice to take a break from all of the science.

I knew that coming to a new country, living, going to school, and meeting a bunch of new people would be difficult, but I was surprised how hard it hit me at first. Yet, after meeting some people and catching up on sleep, I am feeling better than ever!

My first week was an interesting one. I have classes Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday with excursions for those classes on Fridays. Since I am taking only two classes, I have a lot of free time, which I used

to go into Stirling and explore a bit both by myself and with some friends. Thursday, all of the International Summer School students had a day trip to St. Andrews, which is pretty much the birth place of golf. At first, I wasn't too excited to go, but once we got there, I wanted to live there. It was on the coast, the sun was out (which doesn't happen in Scotland, like Oregon), and the town was full of beautiful old buildings. The University there is pretty famous as well, because both Prince William and Kate Middleton attended school there. While there, we visited the castle, the cathedral, a kilt shop,

and even tried haggis nachos (yes, they are apparently world famous), which weren't too bad as long as you didn't think too hard about what you were eating. My day ended sitting on the beach listening to a man play the bagpipes. It was pretty amazing!

Friday I had two class excursions. The first one was a trip to the Daily Record in Glasgow, which is a tabloid newspaper. We got to meet the editor, sit in on a meeting, and talk with various other people, which was pretty interesting even though I am not a journalism major or minor. The other excursion for the day was the one I was most excited for, a trip to the Wallace National Monument, which is here in Stirling! We walked from campus to the Monument. The stairs to the top were very tight and small. There were three different rooms that you could stop in on the way to learn more about William Wallace's history, as well as other famous Scots of the time. One of my favorite things was the Wallace Sword, which was taller than I am! It was amazing to learn so much about someone I share a last name with (and am probably related to). Once we made it to the top, it was breathtaking. You could see for miles; it was beautiful. I was talking to a Scottish woman who said she had been to the Monument multiple times, but this was the first time it had ever been sunny. I felt lucky to have such great weather because the views were fantastic!

If all of that traveling and walking wasn't enough, on Saturday a group of other students and I decided to walk up the hill (which is an understatement)



Haggis nachos



A bagpiper on the beach at St. Andrews.



The view from Dumyat.

behind campus called Dumyat. We walked up beautiful green hills through sheep pastures to get to the top. Even though it was steep and exhausting, it was worth it for the views. At the top was a beacon that was full of stones which represent the wishes of everyone who had completed the hike. Apparently the beacon was placed there in 1977 as part of the Queen's jubilee.

All of the walking, climbing and hiking this first week has left me both exhilarated and exhausted. I can't wait to see what the rest of my time in Scotland will bring!

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