

Life with a Scottish Accent: My Summer Studying Abroad - Part Four

By Natalie Wallace

I know it's pretty cliché, but one thing that my study abroad experience has taught me is that time does indeed fly when you are having fun. My last couple of weeks in Scotland were very nice, even though they were filled with the stress of packing and fitting everything back into my suitcase.

I took a weekend trip to Prague the week before I journeyed home. I went to visit one of my good friends, Bob, who was an exchange student in Vernonia a few years ago. I honestly didn't know what to expect, I didn't know much about Prague to begin with, but it is an absolutely beautiful city with so much to do! Bob and I did almost everything there was to do in Prague (or at least it felt like it). He works as a tour guide, so he was a great person to see everything with. We did a ghost tour, an

underground tour, and a nuclear bunker/communism tour. It was interesting because all of the history I learned while there started centuries ago and went up to about only 50 years ago. It was amazing just how rich in history the city of Prague was; everywhere you looked, there were beautiful old buildings, many of which were older than the United States! The underground tour was really interesting because the city was raised hundreds of years ago because they had (and still have) bad floods that destroy everything (which is something I think we can all relate to in Vernonia). On many of the buildings in Prague, there are marks to show where the water was during various floods over the years.

One of my favorite parts of my trip had to be going on a segway tour of Prague. It was really scary at first, I thought I was going to fall, but once I got the hang of it, it was so much fun! It was much better than walking up and down the hills.

I honestly never expected to love Scotland as much as I do. To have one last farewell to everyone from my study abroad program, a ceilidh (a fun get-together with a band and traditional Scottish dancing) was put on. It allowed all of the students to say goodbye to everyone and look back on all of the fun we have had. This time, the ceilidh was held at a local castle (how many times do you ever get to say that!).

When it was over, it finally hit me that I would never see some of these people ever again, which was a bittersweet thought.

The day before I left for home, two of my roommates and I went into Stirling to do some last minute souvenir shopping and to go to Stirling Castle. It was nice to spend some time with them because I had gotten really close to them and we were all on our separate ways the very next day.



The view from the plane leaving Scotland.

realize how much I missed Oregon until I came home again. While Scotland and Oregon have a lot in common (like the language), I missed the smaller things, like the trees everywhere, or the smell



Natalie with former VHS exchange student Bob Michalec in Prague.



Segway tour in Prague.



Natalie's sister Samantha welcomes her home.

after it rains; which surprisingly smells different in Scotland.

Overall, I couldn't be happier with my decision to study abroad this summer, and choosing Scotland as the place to do it. It gave me the opportunity to learn about my ancestry and heritage in a very hands-on way. Even though I have traveled outside of the US before, I feel that this trip has shown me just how big the world is. No matter how much you think you know, just remember that there is so much more out there than any of us can imagine. I encourage everyone, no matter if you are old or young, or whether you come from a big city or a tiny logging town; get out there and see the world. I guarantee you that it will change your perception and outlook in the most incredible way imaginable. It did for me.

Now I am home and have finally finished unpacking and catching up on my sleep. After traveling about 18 hours to get to Portland, I was pretty exhausted but also exhilarated to see my family in person after two months of just skyping. As soon as I landed in Portland, I got huge butterflies in my stomach, because I was so excited to see my family. They had a welcome home sign and everything; I swear I have never been hugged so much in my life! My Mom, Dad, sister, and aunt were all there to welcome me home. I didn't

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