

The History & Heritage of Glasgow & Edinburgh

Having travelled by coach from Stevenage we arrived at the Winnock Hotel, Loch Lomond near Glasgow where we were met by our Blue Badge Guide. She was our companion for all 6 days of excursions with a flow of information on the places that we visited and their history whilst directing our driver on tours through city streets and country roads.

In Glasgow we visited the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the Burrell Collection and the Transport Museum. We saw the Rennie Mackintosh School of Art followed by tea at the Willow Tea Rooms but not all on one day. At Hill House which he and his wife designed with all its furniture it was interesting to see a complete product of their work.

A coach tour of Edinburgh showed us the old City area which included Holyrood House, the Castle and the Scottish Parliament Building whilst negotiating diversions around the new tramway construction. It will be nice when it's finished! After a lunch break we visited the Royal Yacht Britannia moored at Leith.

One day we saw how people lived in the 18th century from the poverty of Robert Burns's birthplace at his memorial museum to the wealthy mansion of a successful Industrialist. Dumfries House was rescued from the sale of the property and all its furnishings at the last minute by a Charitable Trust led by Prince Charles. Following an introductory film and talk we toured the house which is being faithfully restored to its former splendour.

An early start was needed to visit the Falkirk Wheel near Stirling where we enjoyed a short boat trip to travel from the lower level canal from Glasgow up 35 metres to the high level canal to Edinburgh and then back down again. Whilst the Engineers examined the details of construction and operation our other members and guests marvelled at the experience. Following lunch in Stirling a boat cruise on Loch Katrine introduced us to the vagaries of Scottish weather with bright sunshine on the beautiful hills and woods rapidly turning to heavy mist wiping out the view then for it to be revealed again.

Each evening we returned to the hotel for a taste of Scottish hospitality with good food served by friendly staff with entertainment to follow. The holiday was organised by Tailored Travel with a coach and driver from Hattons Travel of St Helens.

AD, Hitchin September 2012