

9-14-06

First GSE Team Report:

Dear Robert, It's Thursday afternoon, and I'm sitting in the parlor of a Gryffe Valley Rotarian, Mike Ure, at the end of my first day out on a professional visit. Until yesterday, the team has been together day and night, and now we are all guests in homes, and I miss them all. The trip so far is a smashing success, as we have been greeted, wined and dined with great spirit and friendship, and it's hard to believe we have been here only five days.

You have been notified of Jason's blog , so you have some information about our activities from that source.

Blog: <http://www.actcasual.com/scotland/>,

Photos: <http://actcasual.com/scotlandpics/scotlandpics.html>

We had an uneventful flight over, and arrived on time, 7:30 on Sunday morning. We were welcomed by District Governor Neil Fraser, the Foundation chair Geraldine O'Donnell, and our GSE coordinator, Mike Kelly.



They took us to our hotel home for the next few days, gave us an orientation and let us sit in the sunshine and walk about for the remainder of the day as a defense against jet lag. We had a very pleasant first dinner with Neil and Geraldine, and a team celebratory nightcap out on the patio. Warm and pleasant, contrary to our expectations of cool and damp.

Neil took us to Edinburgh on Monday morning, and you have seen Jason's pictures.



Here we are on the rampart of Edinburgh Castle.

At the end of the day we were guests of the Waverly Rotary Club on Princess Street in Edinburgh, a new club with only 14 members. In addition to us, there was a new Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar from Germany, and the speaker was the departing RAS from Japan.



Tuesday we were treated to lunch in Glasgow by 4 of the 5 Assistant Governors,



And then had a tour of the city on a tour bus.

On Tuesday night our presentation had its debut, and I think we made a good impression on the Rotarians at Kirkintilloch. It all goes easier with a pint before the meeting!



This is Jason, introducing our individual movies, something you can see at the District website, I believe. All of our recorded presentation is on a DVD which we leave with each club.

Yesterday our traveling troupe had a matinee for the Paisley Club, and they have some equipment which I think Reynolda should consider. Take a look at the President's Chair:



The bottle in President John's hand is tribute from a member who won the whisky at a golf tournament earlier in the week.

After this meeting we were transported by our current hosts to an area called Gryffe Valley, and had another meeting last night (Wednesday) with another road show.



Here is Adrienne getting her banner from President Alan of the Gryffe Valley club.

Today, Thursday, has been a vocational day for everyone. Bill has been taken fishing, Adrienne is at the Scottish Country Life Museum, Melissa is meeting with planning officials at the local council office, Jason is meeting some filmmakers, and I was taken into Glasgow to meet with a couple of attorneys who are working to make mediation more available in Scotland. A nice lunch and back out into the country where my host Mike and his wife dinner have planned a casual dinner. So now I am ensconced like the family cat, and just another member of the family, sipping tea in the kitchen and now banging away on the computer in the sitting room while Mike watches the news.

I could not be more pleased with the way in which each team member has taken to this trip. They are enormously fun to be with, and every encounter we have with our hosts is ideal from my perspective. All the Rotarians I have met have gone out of their way to be complimentary, and I think we have achieved our goal of exceeding the expectations they may have of a GSE visit. Our little movies inform and entertain, and our personal presentations have been informative and light hearted. Like I said at the beginning, it's hard to believe it's just September 14, as I type this, and that we have had so much happen in just five days, and that we have been to four Rotary Club meetings in 72 hours, and presented the program in three!

Please pass on to everyone my thanks again for all their support and enthusiasm and thanks to you and John and Tom again for taking time out from your lives to see us off in Greensboro. Keep watching Jason's blog, and I'll send you more reports next week. Please remember to encourage the club to have a wee dram in honor of George Buchanan's 500th birthday. We will be in his hometown celebrating, and I will buy a drink in October for the first Reynolda Rotarian who can tell me who George is and why the Scots celebrate his birth.

Best wishes to everyone! Thorns

FOOTNOTE: ABOUT GEORGE BUCHANAN