

Received from Karyn Collie, October 5, 2004

Greetings from Glasgow!

I hope my letter finds everyone well! I have once again been very busy and hardly know where to begin my update. When I last wrote, I was just beginning to "settle in" and since then I have had the opportunity to enjoy more of Glasgow and to venture beyond the city itself. Shortly after the the last email, I went to Culzean Castle (pronounced Cullane) with some other international students. The Castle is not as old as some of the more traditional castles in Scotland, but was still very pretty and has a nice country park. It is also located on the Firth of Clyde and gave me my first glimpse of the Scottish coast (the Firth is actually an inlet of the sea). The next weekend I attended the Rotary Link Weekend in Leeds, England, an orientation for all Ambassadorial and Peace Scholars in the United Kingdom and Ireland. While there, I stayed with Taylor, a scholar from Maryland, at the home of Colin and Barbara Wright. I was truly touched by their hospitality during the weekend, not to mention eagerly fed by some cooking that was A LOT better than mine! Upon discovering that Taylor and I both studied British literature in college, Colin drove us an hour outside of Leeds to Haworth, home of the Bronte Parsonage. I am sure many of you have read the works of the Bronte sisters, including Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre. This was a particular treat for me, having finished my honors thesis on the three Bronte sisters last year. It was very exciting to see where they lived and some of their original manuscripts! I must admit, Taylor and I even let our imaginations run wild as we pictured Heathcliff and Cathy on the moors above the plantation! Now, for those of you who are not as obsessed with literature as I am, you must bear with me, but there is something very exciting about seeing the subject matter that influenced some of your favorite authors!

I also went to York on the following day, as part of the schedule of the Link Weekend. We were greeted by the Lord Mayor of York and walked around the city for the majority of the day. If you have never been to York, it will be hard to describe the city. It is a very pretty place and boasts architecture from several different time periods. I cannot tell you how strange it was for me to see an Elizabethan building, beside a Victorian building, just a few blocks away from the ruins of an old abbey! Not to mention the number of shops that are of considerable interest! :-) I also had the pleasure of attending my first English Barn Dance! It's exactly like a square dance in the US, but with a British accent. There is a big difference in saying, "Now guide your partner" instead of "Swing yer partner round 'n round"! The orientation was very successful and I made several contacts who have already offered me a place to crash if I decide to travel around the United Kingdom! The next weekend, I went to the Highland Cattle Festival located at Pollock Gardens in Glasgow. Highland cows are strange looking creatures. They have ample amounts of shaggy hair that hangs in their eyes. The festival was a little like a mini-State Fair and had Clydesdale horses (but these were taller and less stout than the ones you see at Bush Gardens), rides, crafts, and a farmer's market. On a strange and slightly humorous note, at the farmer's market, there was a meat stand with a sign above the beef that said, "Fifth Place Winner of Last Year's Highland Cattle Contest." I guess you better win first place!!!! I also had the opportunity to have my picture made with two embarrassed looking school boys in kilts (they were probably around 14 or 15 years old)!

In the middle of all my adventures, I have actually been attending class! Yesterday was my first real course and I sat in awe as I listened to the faculty members discuss some of the

difficulties in defining my area of study, Romanticism. The courses are set up like seminars and foster academic discussion instead of lectures. I am very excited to have such a distinguished and enthusiastic faculty administrating my course! There are currently only four graduate students who are full-time. We have two part-time students, and two other full-time students who have not yet arrived due to Visa and Passport problems. I think the course will be challenging and the reading a little strenuous at times, but I am really looking forward to seeing how the year progresses.

As you can see, I have been keeping very busy and am really enjoying Glasgow. As does anyone in another country, I occasionally get homesick (especially when trying to find stuff at the grocery store!), but I have made several friends and often find myself out of my room enjoying all that Glasgow and the United Kingdom has to offer! I also wanted to thank all of you for the emails I received from back home during my first few days here. Your love and support really helped me during the first few days of culture shock. I also wanted to give you the address of my website: community.webshots.com/user/karync91 On this website you will find pictures of my adventures in Scotland (under the album "Scotland") and the Link Weekend (under the album "Travel and Rotary Outside of Scotland"). There are also some pictures of Reidsville on there for me to show the Rotarians here and some pictures of my family and friends. Feel free to look around and I will talk to you all soon!

Sincerely,

Karyn Collie

PS Here are a few more tidbits about Scotland: -Glasgow is considered the "Shopping Mecca of Scotland" and some consider its shops second to London in the United Kingdom. -I am trying to get excited about football here (what we call soccer in the US). I must admit I'm still a bigger fan of American football and basketball, but I'm learning more everyday! -The weather in Glasgow is very strange. They say you can go through all four seasons in one day here! While I am writing, the sun is shining brightly through my window, but it is pouring down rain at the same time!!!!