

Received from Lindsay Moore, December 20, 2004

EMAIL INSTALLMENT #3

Hey gang,

I am back. After a month of depriving you of my Scottish life, I return with exciting updates of highland adventures, Rotary laughs, new friendships, and a reunion with my precious family in London. I have now officially been in Scotland for two months and I have to admit that life here is about as good as it gets. I thought that after a few weeks of feeling overwhelmingly in love with my life, the feeling would wear off, but it hasn't by any means. Each day seems to present new faces, new opportunities, and new blessings. While the weather is already of an arctic nature (well at least for my warm-blooded North Carolina veins), the people in my life seem to bring so much warmth and flavor that the cold north winds off the Firth of Tay are barely noticeable. St. Andrews is quite possibly the most magical and special place in the world.

Since I last wrote (and might I congratulate those of you who actually read the full breadth of my 6 page epistle) much has happened. My coursework actually has picked up to a very busy, yet manageable state, and I find myself more and more excited by my studies and my research interests. My supervisor is so encouraging and at every opportunity he seeks to accommodate my dissertation research. I am currently gathering sources and doing preliminary research for what I hope will become my dissertation topic. After reading a September article in the New York Times on Rembrandt's Eyes, I learned that there is strong evidence that Rembrandt might have suffered from an optical disability. As an artist, the quality of his vision was of utmost importance and there is strong evidence that Rembrandt's personal anxieties about blindness are not unfounded because it is known that his own father became blind during the last years of his life. His preoccupation is evident in the fact that over 25% of his religious works involve individuals who were either physically and/or spiritually blind. Rembrandt as one of the most highly personal artists seems to make a direct relationship to blindness and its value as an interpreter of spirituality both in his own life and often in the nameless faces of the lower classes with whom he empathizes. Anyway, this all sounds good, but we'll see how things go on the research front. Sometime in the early spring, I will probably travel back to the Netherlands to get a first hand glance at Rembrandt's drawings and etchings at the Rijksmuseum.

On the Rotary front, things have been super exciting. The opportunity to serve the greater St. Andrews community has truly been a joy. One of the first service events I attended, a bingo event and tea party with the senior citizens of the community, particularly blessed me. At the conclusion of the event as I was picking up teacups one of the precious ladies immediately grabbed my attention. Wearing a hot pink flowered hat and bright pink lipstick (yeah, yeah, go ahead and laugh for those of you gals who poke fun at my own love of hot pink lipstick, might I add it is a intimate remnant of my childhood time with Mrs. Bailey as she always wore hot pink lipstick ('shocking pink') and influenced my own use of it at age 9), I was immediately drawn to this sassy lady whom I now know as Anne Sweeney. Upon approaching her with wide eyes, she grabbed my hand (with quite a forceful grasp might I add) and said 'ye wee sweet lassie you are coming to my house tomorrow.' After 30 minutes of hysterical laughing and cutting up, I was more than eager to go to Anne's house for tea the following day. In the last month, I have been so encouraged by my time with Anne and her lovely husband,

Danny. The two of them live in an elderly community situated in the most ideal spot in all of St. Andrews, a flat on the Scores with one top floor window looking out on St. Andrews castle and bay, and the other looking out on the pier and cathedral ruins. At ages 84 and 85, Anne and Danny are Irish, but have lived in Scotland since 1959. Anne used to be a housekeeper at St. Leonards high school and Danny is a retired taxi cab driver for the Scores Hotel and Golf Resort (he used to be Bing Crosby's personal driver!). Only 200 yards away from the art building, I find myself popping in for tea and biscuits every few days, each time leaving with a filled tummy, new stories, and a warmed heart. I find that I am already very attached to them. So when I learned two weeks ago that Danny's cancer had returned, my heart ached. Danny and Anne, however, are optimistic as ever, enjoying each day at a time, and they avoid making it the main topic of conversation. With Danny's frequent hospital treatments and Anne's vision difficulties (she will soon be undergoing cataract surgery), I have tried to help in the smallest ways like getting their groceries, but I wish there was more. Their company blesses me in more ways than I can count, so I pray that maybe my company will provide some distraction from their difficulties.

In the last month I have also given my first few Rotary talks. These I have found are quite entertaining not because of any particular stories from me, but because of the kinds of questions I am asked (typically of a political nature) and the 'characters' I have the opportunity of meeting. One particular character called 'Sandy' from the Speyside Valley club (a club located in the highlands of Cairngorm Mountains), much to my dismay, actually pulled me on top of a Rotary table and took a picture with me. These Scots I've found are quite rowdy and never cease to amaze you. I've learned I have to be on my guard at all times in the Rotary world! In just a week, the Rotarians are sponsoring a Christmas Ball with celidilah and the following weekend a scholar retreat with many of the Rotarians at St. Fillians in the north central part of Scotland. Another exciting opportunity, still in an incipient state is the formation of a Rotaract club in the St. Andrews area. This club will be only the second in Scotland and will encourage young adults in their 20s and early 30s in the area to support the surrounding community in service and in relationships. We are meeting on Tuesday evenings. Finally, my precious host counselors here, Graham and Dororthy Findlay, continue to bless me with their lives and stories. At every opportunity, they are more than eager to be part of my Rotary experience and my life here in St. Andrews.

Fellowship opportunities have continued to multiply in abundance over the last month. It continues to amaze me how purposefully and intricately God is establishing my life here, in all honesty it is often hard to keep up with all the blessings and I am trying my best just to step back and be still and relish them. On Monday nights a group of about ten of us, all postgraduates, are meeting and studying the Gospel of John. The diversity of our religious and academic backgrounds provides quite a dynamic and interesting setting for growth. We already spend a lot of time with one another outside of Monday night as well. However, the Alpha Group I am leading at St. Leonard's high school has quite possibly been one of the biggest joys of my time at St. Andrews. Our first week of meeting only two students arrived, but we are now in our 6th week, and there is group of around 8 to 9 attending, ranging from many different religions and ethnicities. The opportunity to teach and share with them the joy of my heart has been tremendous. In particular there are 5 German girls attending whom I feel especially drawn to. They are about as boisterous and talkative as it gets, so they are quite a treat to get to know.

My parents flew into London for the week of Thanksgiving and I can't begin to tell you what a sheer gift it was to have them visit. Our time in London was perhaps not the most efficient as far as sightseeing and traveling perhaps allows, but our time together as a family was truly an irretrievable treasure. I arrived on Monday night, November 22nd at 10:30pm at London King's Cross station and my sweet parents met me at their tube stop (the London subway). I found my parents in fine form, perhaps a little tired from jet lag, but otherwise super excited to see me (why shouldn't they be?!). My mom blessed me with her super jovial smile and laughter, and my sweet dad embraced me with the warmest hug. During my first full day, it was just the three of us (little Miss Em was not to arrive until Wed afternoon) and we set out on a royal hunt (well, at least my mom did, whom I might add prides herself on her knowledge of the royal family) headed straight for Buckingham Palace. Within half an hour of our day, we found we were in quite a bit of luck. As we arrived on the main road in front of Buckingham, we learned that the Queen herself would soon be passing by in horse-drawn carriage along with Prince Philip, Charles, and other members of the royal entourage. My mom was ecstatic to put it calmly! Out of the 365 days of the year, we just so happened to go to Buckingham Palace the opening day of Parliament and the one day a year the Queen makes her triumphant journey to Parliament with the crown. We actually waited for another hour just to see the Queen and the carriage that followed filled with her jewels return to the Palace. Quite a royal treat might I add. The rest of our day was spent walking around the city of Westminster. On Wednesday, my parents and I went to the National Gallery of Art and the British Museum and then returned in the late afternoon to the hotel to wait on the arrival of my sister and her boyfriend, Arch. Our evening ended up being quite a reunion. My dad made reservations at this amazing French restaurant in Covent Garden and a family friend, Betty Dalhrymple, a native to London's Highbury and Islington area, joined us. Thanksgiving day, however, was perhaps one of the most memorable ever (despite the fact my sister, Beth, and her husband, Dalton, could sadly enough not be with us). Instead of a traditional Thanksgiving meal, we instead spent the time in worship at an American Thanksgiving service at St. Paul's Cathedral. Joined by over a thousand other Americans, Brits, and government ambassadors we spent time in song and prayer, for me a great reminder of the blessings that have been showered on my life and hope of those that will be. Following the service, Arch joined us for a British style Thanksgiving meal at a local pub in the Kensington area. Following lunch we toured Kensington Palace and walked the Hyde Park area. While it was cold and dreary, we truly had a blast just being together. That evening my dad got the most amazing seats for The Lion King and it truly was one of the most spectacular performances I have seen. The costumes, music, and stage set were fantastic! On Friday, we ventured out to Windsor Castle for the day and then returned for an evening 'Jack the Ripper' Walk and dinner in the White Chapel area. I must admit, though, that my stomach didn't settle so well for dinner after the grotesque details our guide shared about each of Jack's victims - ugh. So, our week together ended on Saturday. Following a morning adventure to the Notting Hill Market at Portabello Square and a walk out on Millenium Bridge, my family escorted me to King's Cross to catch my train back to St. Andrews. It was sad to part ways, but I am reassured knowing that I will see them in just 3 weeks and my little sister in just a week and a half when she travels up to St. Andrews to visit me. The week was truly a gift and I am so thankful that God provided the means for my parents to get here.

However, I will conclude now with a few stories from my highland adventures during 'reading week' (for there are far too many to share them all). So imagine yourself in a seven-passenger vehicle for 6 days with 7 other Americans all used to driving on the

right side of the road. Frightening, huh? Well, overall the week was incredible, and not a complete debacle as you might imagine. The group was an interesting assortment of eclectic personalities that not surprisingly brought great entertainment to our daily travels. We left on a Sunday morning, literally sitting on top of pillows, bags, and junk food for our four-hour journey into the highlands (notice that 'books' were not mentioned - we didn't really heed the notice that our week off was suppose to be a 'reading week.'). We leisurely spent the day traveling up the A-9 (the Scottish motorway) stopping at small villages such as Dumkeld, Pitlochery, and at Blair Castle. Michael, our faithful driver for the week, added to the playfulness of our ride on many occasions, and in the case of Blair Castle he drove us right up to the private, personal entrance of the still inhabited home place of the 10th Duke of Atholl. This wouldn't have been so bad, if he wasn't the only man in all of Great Britain who still owns and trains a personal military regiment on the grounds of his castle. Luckily, the only gunshots that went off were fortunately guided by poor aim (jk). Throughout the week we hiked along the Cairngorm Mountains, visited the Loch Ness and Urquhart Castle (but unfortunately did not get messie with nessie), visited some local fishing villages and castle/cathedral ruins along the northeast coast, and went on a whiskey tour. I think the best part of the week, though, was probably just spent in laughter, games (lots of mafia, monopoly, and cranium), and conversation during our late evenings. On a return trip to St. Andrews, we stopped at Stirling where we visited Stirling Castle and hiked to William Wallace's monument. Our week together was naturally concluded over fish and chips at the most famous fish and chips shop in the UK located just 15 minutes south of St. Andrews in the fishing village of Anstruthers.

So that's it for now. I know you probably are disappointed that things end here, but I can assure you that in many ways this is just the beginning of more good times to come (as stomachs sink in disappointment!). Strangely enough, I return to the Tarheel State in just 3 weeks, and I must admit I am kind of apathetic about coming home. In all honesty I can imagine while at home, I will be torn between spending time with my family (and of course those of you who want to come visit me! I am car-less these days just so you know) and longing for the shores of Scotland. However, Moravian Lovefeasts, ginger cookies, and sugar cake sound awfully inviting and I know that the holidays would not be the same without the traditions that normally make up the season for me (and might I add that my cat, Mr. Darcy, is quite a temptation to return home to as well, if you have ever met Mr. Darcy you will whole-heartedly agree with me!).

So, for those of you who are in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area on Thursday, December 16th, I am arriving on an American Airlines flight 173 at 3:35 pm at RDU airport (hint hint). I can't guarantee I'll be in full Lindsay spirits after 8 hours on a plane, but I will be available for pictures and a famous Lindsay hug (Benj Ferrell once dubbed 'the anaconda hug').

Know you are each missed and in my prayers.

With love,  
Lindsay

PS. For my Davidson buddies out there, I will be at our precious Mary Sommerville's wedding in Richmond, Virginia on New Year's day, I can't wait to see you all!

Also, for those of you, who usually contact me via cell phone, be advised I no longer have one.