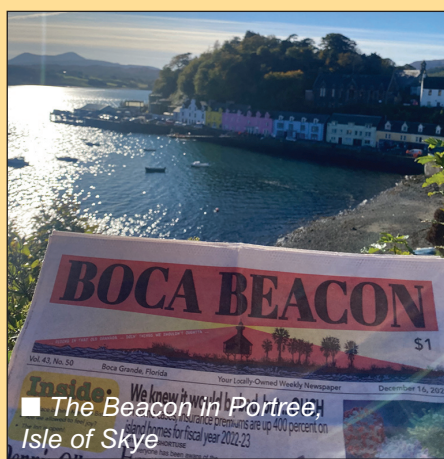


THE SCOTLAND DIARIES - FALL 2023

■ BY ANGEL F. GODWIN
(sixth entry of my diary)

After 15 long months of research, teaching placements, and a 15-thousand-word dissertation, my master's program is complete! I now await my dissertation marks to confirm that I have passed and will be having an official graduation in June 2024. Moving to Edinburgh to study has been a cherished dream come true, and I look forward to using what I have learned to be an even better dance teacher and performer.



■ Harry Potter bridge, Highlands



see the Glenfinnan Viaduct (we went right over it!) which is the bridge shown in the second Harry Potter movie. The next day we took a bus to Portree, the prettiest town with lots of highland cow merchandise and delicious fish and chips. Our original goal was to hike the Old Man of Storr that afternoon, but the bus timetables had other plans. We ended up getting on an empty bus and having a 40-minute personal tour of the Isle of Skye by our driver, who graciously dropped us off right in front of the hiking path for the Quiraing.

Hiking the Quiraing was the main reason for our Highlands trip because the mountain views are otherworldly. Although I visited back in 2019, Emma had never been, so we eagerly looked forward to the three-hour hike. We were very lucky to have blue skies for the entire day and a pink sunset when getting to our accommodation for the night. Once it got dark enough, we were able to see a band from the Milky Way!

The next day was in typical rainy Scottish fashion, but that did not stop



■ Angel visits her 'inn' girls while back in the states

The last month has been especially busy, because while finishing up my dissertation, I had a few birthdays to celebrate. I flew home to celebrate my dad's birthday and surprise my grandma who visited Florida for her 90th birthday! It was the best gift that I could have given her, and it was especially wonderful to see family members who I had not seen in so long.

Unfortunately, after a very quick visit, I was back in Scotland; however, I would not be in Edinburgh. My flatmate Emma and I decided to do a quick Scottish Highlands trip – our first big adventure since moving here! We began by taking two trains to the town of Mallaig and hopped onto a ferry to the Isle of Skye. While it was a major traveling day, we still got to



■ With Florida family; brother Summer, mom Tricia, me, 90 year old grandma Virginia and dad Daniel



■ Angel and Emma at the Trotternish ridge holding on to the Old Man of Storr

us from our hike up the Old Man of Storr. We also stopped in Portree one last time before making our way off the Isle of Skye. We had a few hiccups in the afternoon: our bus was not going to the train station that we needed. Luckily, there was one bus going in the right direction, and we made it to our train at the Kyle of Lochalsh with 20 minutes to spare. From there, we had a train ride into the capital of the highlands: Inverness.

Inverness is situated above Loch Ness, where Nessie resides. Emma and I spent the day going to the Museum and Art Gallery and Botanical Garden. We ended the night seeing live music in one of the pubs. In true tourist fashion, we ordered classic Scottish meals. While this was supposed to be our final day in town, the storm going over Scotland canceled all the trains which meant another day in Inverness. This allowed us to visit Culloden Battlefield, which was the final battle location of the religious civil war between the Jacobite rebellion and the Whigs in 1745.

After a long day of more canceled trains and delays, Emma and I finally made it back to Edinburgh from our six-day adventure. We were exhausted but grateful. Most tourist blogs would advise against using public transportation to get around the Isle of Skye, and even though we had a few bumps in our plan, we

made it happen. It also just so happened that four years ago was my Junior Journey to Scotland, and our trip itinerary was almost identical to the one that we just went on. It was bittersweet visiting the same places with a new perception, knowing that I live much closer to the beauty of the Scottish Highlands. We can't wait to go on another trip!



■ Highland ponies



■ Emma's fish & chips



■ Lucky ladybugs



■ Girls planning a trip



■ Girls in Inverness

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