

Glasgow and Edinburgh

The drive from Wrexham was straightforward, with weather changing from sunshine to rain. What we did notice was that the outside temperature dropped steadily from 14C to 8C, and was noticeable when we stepped out of the car at our Travelodge in Glasgow Airport! The Travelodge is a new one, similar to the one we stayed at in Cardiff Bay, with inhouse bar and restaurant facilities, and even a free shuttle bus for the short journey to the airport terminal, which is also linked to the CityLink bus services.

From the airport we travelled by bus into the heart of Glasgow, to spend the afternoon exploring. This meant walking the length of Sauchiehall Street, taking in the fine buildings - some new, and many of the originals maybe now



put to other uses like shops and offices. One building of note was a fine art deco structure, resplendent in red and white, set amongst some sombre and darkly aged buildings. The street is mainly pedestrian free, although at one stage we had to step aside for emergency vehicles, responding to an incident which meant the evacuation of some buildings -

bomb scare, fire, malicious call - we will never know! Thirsty work this walking, so we sampled some of the local brew - Drauchers - in a typically town pub. A drink leads to a meal, and with an ample assortment of assorted eating houses, maybe no surprise if you guessed that we enjoyed yet another Chinese buffet meal!

The following day - Saturday - we again left the Glasgow airport bus terminal, and the destination on our tickets read Edinburgh. We had been forewarned that a new metro type service is being installed in central Edinburgh, so the bus ensured we got to the city centre. What a lovely city, complete with commanding castle, many monuments (eg Walter Scott), countless shops, inner city parks and gardens, and some interesting eateries! OK, the castle looks down upon all below, which also means that to get to the castle you have to walk uphill from all directions! Yes, there are plenty of touristy shop outlets, but there again there are plenty of tourists there to support them.



Being Saturday afternoon on a bank holiday weekend, the city centre pubs were packed full and overflowing onto the streets. We eventually found an ideal eating place, slightly out of the centre which suited our requirements very well. Called *GRAPE*, it was an original art deco building, seemingly unaltered, with distinctive windows, lighting, and even a ceiling painted with a period world atlas - not quite the Sistine Chapel, but we both like it! The starters to our meal were appetising prawn cocktails, and Alvina's Hunter Chicken was good. Owain's main course beef and ale pie was served up as a chicken pie, and after being replaced with the beef variety, he had difficulty in finding traces of cow meat. We did not complain, but the bill was reduced by 10% as a goodwill gesture! After the meal we strolled through one of the parks, and the afternoon sunshine saw many folks on the grass sunbathing and relaxing - almost summertime in early May. Yes, Edinburgh is definitely on our "visit again" list.



On Sunday morning we signed out of the Travelodge, loaded our cases into the car for the short drive to Greenock, where the Black Prince was being berthed. We arrived early, so drove down the coast sightseeing. Lo and behold, out of the misty and rainy horizon appeared a cruise vessel - yes the BP was approaching the cruise terminal. We were allowed to board early, and have a good look around this new ship to us!