

# Edinburgh – My City



Late Monday afternoon. It had been a very busy day in the office, one of those days when one wished that Alexander Graham Bell, a Scot of some distinction, hadn't bothered inventing the telephone. The damn contraption hadn't stopped ringing all day...

Being a Monday the general mood of my colleagues and I was down in any case. It didn't help that it was a typical July day in Edinburgh – damp, dreich and grey. It also didn't help that, while I left the office early just after 4.00pm, the reason for this was a visit to the dentist to get a filling replaced. Ochone, ochone as Angus Og used to say.

I usually abort my attempt to board a tram at Bankhead any time after 5.00pm. I read in the news the other day that passenger numbers at Edinburgh Airport topped one million last year. I think they all get on the tram I try to get on after a hard day's graft...

However on Monday, having left the office early for the dreaded trip to the dentist – you know the drill (get on with it – Ed) – I did manage to squeeze on to a tram. Not only that, but I managed to get a seat. I was seated next to a lovely lady and her two toddlers in a buggy made for two. We immediately began chatting – this, after one of said toddlers whacked me on the shin with his boot – and, after apologising for her youngster's act of random violence (oh, don't worry about it, the blood stain on my new suit will soon be removed with a spot of dry cleaning) her Australian accent told me she was in Scotland for the first time.

Now alongside the tourists and weary air travellers, the tram

was full of grim-faced locals glad that the first day of the working week had been put to bed. However, this lovely lady from Perth – Western Australia that is, not Perth in Scotland – was a positive ray of sunshine. As the tram trundled through the streets of Scotland's capital city, she was genuinely in awe of the city's buildings, scenery and sheer beauty which many of we locals can take for granted.

She gasped delight as the tram snaked its way past Murrayfield Stadium and through the Haymarket. Most of us are usually gasping for breath rather than with delight by the time we reach the Haymarket as we empathise with how sardines must feel. But this delightful lady was clearly thrilled at being in Edinburgh and seeing some of its treasures. As the tram eventually headed on to Princes Street she gazed at Edinburgh Castle in astonishment and marvelled at the gardens and shops.

She told me how lucky I was to be living in such a beautiful and vibrant city. And do you know something? She is absolutely right. As she departed at St. Andrew's Square she thanked me, although quite what for I wasn't sure. It should have been me thanking her, not only for her charming company, but for making me feel so proud of Scotland's magnificent capital.

Yes, Edinburgh has its faults just as every other city does. And the trams have become something of a routine for stand up comics (stand up being the words given how difficult it can be to get a seat on the damned things during rush-hour times) But it has always been – and always will be – a magnificent city. Majestic, beautiful, vibrant – just wondrous. It certainly thrilled this Australian visitor.

So if you're heading to work tomorrow and contemplating another day of hard graft think, for a moment, about this incredible place. Scotland's jewel in its crown. Edinburgh. A city to be immensely proud of.

I know I am.