

Welcome

First of all, we would just like to say hello and how much we are looking forward to having you join us for what we hope will be a wonderful and memorable day. We appreciate that you will be making a real effort in attending, and so we want to help as much as we can to make it as straightforward and worry free as possible. On the next few pages we have put together some information on the locality, getting here, accommodations and the like.

Edinburgh

The capital city of Scotland since 1437 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1995, Edinburgh is referred to as the Athens of the North for its architectural beauty. Princes Street bisects the city centre, dividing the Old Town that dates back to the mediaeval era to the south, from the 18th Century New Town (designed by architect James Craig) to the north.

Atop a dramatic volcanic plug at the heart of the Old Town, and only separated from Princes Street by ornamental gardens, lies Edinburgh Castle. The Royal Mile runs down the rock spine from the castle to the Queen's residence in Edinburgh, the Palace of Holyrood House. Adjacent to the palace is the new Scottish Parliament, built to house our recently created devolved government.



Around this central feature the Old Town sprawls and winds. Over the centuries buildings have been constructed one on top of another, leading to an immensely complex network of streets on many different levels. There are many vaults that have recently been opened up to become shops, clubs and venues; an abandoned and sealed section of street has even been found. Mary King's Close lies under the council chambers on the Royal Mile, and is now open to brave members of the public.

In the New Town, the maze of twisting streets and different levels are replaced by an orderly and open grid of Georgian town houses interspersed with communal and semi-formal gardens. The area is now home to many official residences, learned societies and other professional bodies.

Venue

It is amongst the Georgian grandeur of the New Town, in a sumptuously restored Georgian building on Queen Street, that the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh is located. The main hall is both spacious and cosy, with its grand columns, rich red walls and highly elaborate ceiling. Behind and to the side of the main hall is the library. It oozes gentlemen's club, with its lavish hardwood panelling and leather armchairs. It has lots of that comfortable old world charm. Back towards the front of the building is the much lighter and simpler Cullen Suite with large picture windows overlooking Queen Street Gardens, the New Town and across the Forth to the Kingdom of Fife. At the back of the Cullen Suite is a separate room with a television etc. which will be available as a crèche / children's play area during the whole day.



Getting Here

Edinburgh Airport (EDI) is only about half an hour by taxi from the centre of town and serves a number of international destinations. Most commonly, however, flights to Edinburgh from overseas will come via one of the European hubs, such as Heathrow, Frankfurt or Schipol. It is very convenient, and nowadays no more expensive, to fly in to Edinburgh.

Glasgow Airport (GLA) is situated on the West side of Scotland's second, though largest, city. There are direct flights between Glasgow and some cities in North America [Continental to New York/Newark, NJ] and Canada [several destinations served by Globespan and Zoom].

Getting from Glasgow airport to Edinburgh is about an hour's drive across the M8 motorway; just avoid peak times morning and evening when it could take a lot longer. Another way is to take a taxi to Queen Street Station in central Glasgow. From here there are trains to Edinburgh every 15 minutes, with the journey to Edinburgh centre taking about 50 minutes.

Trains. Edinburgh has two stations in the centre of town: Waverly and Haymarket. Rail services run to pretty much anywhere in the UK, and even through the channel tunnel from Europe these days. Journey times are reasonable, with London to Edinburgh taking around four to five hours.

Weather

As we say in Scotland, "If you don't like the weather, wait twenty minutes." We have a maritime climate warmed by the Gulf Stream, so we do not get the extremes of temperature typical of a continental location. Unfortunately the bringer of warmth is also the bringer of moisture, so we can get a fair bit of rain, though the east is significantly less wet than the west.

Temperatures for October average around a daily low of 6°C and a high of 14°C, but by November these values have dropped to 2°C and 8°C. Rainfall for both months is around 65mm.

What we're saying is, bring a hat and gloves, a waterproof jacket and your sunglasses. You can, however, safely leave the down jacket and snow shoes at home without fear of being ill prepared. Waterproof jackets tend to be a better bet than umbrellas here too. We have prevailing westerlies and get a good proportion of windy days. Apart from blowing your brolly away, the rain will often just come straight in there sideways!

The chances are though, that we'll get a fair bit of cool clear weather in October. Some showers and a breeze would be par for the course, but don't think it's going to be some rain swept picture of misery, please.

Accommodation

Here is a short list of suggested hotels, including the recommendations of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. We will look into hotels shortly with a view to arranging some block bookings and hopefully preferential rates. When this is firmed up we will let you know, but in the meantime here are some options and if you have any questions just give us a call, or drop us an e-mail at debsandmark@begbie.org.

In addition, the Scottish Tourist Board keeps information on a huge variety of accommodation all over the country. They have an excellent website at www.visitscotland.com, or alternatively you can contact them by emailing info@visitscotland.com or telephone +44 845 22 55 121

Plush

The Glasshouse

The Glasshouse, 2 Greenside Place, Edinburgh EH1 3AA

Tel: Melanie Kontschakowsky, Reservations Manager on +44 131 525 8200

Email: melaniekontschakowsky@theetoncollection.com Web: www.theetoncollection.com

10 to 15 minute walk from the College.

The Glasshouse Hotel is a 5-star establishment. Most bedrooms overlook the garden providing a quiet place to stay. £145.00 for a deluxe room, £180.00 in an executive room and £250.00 in a suite, rates are inclusive of value-added tax (VAT) and breakfast.

The George Hotel

19-21 George Street, Edinburgh, Tel: +44 131 225 1251

Web: www.principal-hotels.com

5 minute walk from the College.

Rates: Double for single occupancy £129; Double or twin for double occupancy £139; Upgrade to Deluxe for single occupancy £179; Upgrade to Deluxe for double occupancy £189. These rates are inclusive of full Scottish breakfast and VAT.

This 4 star hotel, part of the Principal Hotels group, has recently been completely refurbished.

The Howard

34 Great King Street, Edinburgh EH3 7RN Tel: +44 131 557 3500

Web: www.thehoward.com

10 minute walk from the College.

Rate: £165 double occupancy; £125 single occupancy.

This luxury hotel provides butler services for all guests.

The Roxburghe

38 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4HG Tel: +44 131 240 5500

Web: www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/roxburghe

10 to 15 minute walk from the College.

Rate: Double room for single occupancy £99; double occupancy £130

This is one of Edinburgh's most elegant hotels and home to some of the world's finest Georgian architecture. It is situated in Charlotte Square, at the west end of Princes Street, which is itself a fine Georgian development.

Affordable

Express by Holiday Inn

16-22 Picardy Place, Edinburgh EH1 3JT Tel +44 131 558 2312

10 to 15 minute walk from the College.

Rate: Sunday to Thursday £65 per room; Friday to Saturday £89 per room for single, double, twin or family occupancy for up to 2 adults and 2 children; inclusive of service, VAT and continental buffet-style breakfast. Limited car parking available at £5 per day with reduced parking fees at nearby NCP Greenside Row car park. Bookings on Friday or Saturday are for a minimum of two nights. There may be some flexibility at quieter times.

This is an RCPE rate; hence your reservation contacts are Kate Wilson, Reservations Agent or Debbie Anderson Reservations / Sales Manager. Please telephone the hotel directly only. Should your call get diverted to the Central Reservations Team, please quote Corporate ID reference 100190859. Group bookings are welcomed. Please discuss your requirements with Kate or Debbie.

Royal Over-Seas League

Over-Seas House, 100 Princes St., Edinburgh EH2 3AB Tel +44 131 225 1501

Email: reception@rosl-edinburgh.org

10 to 15 minutes walk from the College.

Rate: Singles from £55 and twins/doubles from £75 per night including full cooked Scottish Breakfast.

There are comfortable rooms on the 4th floor of the Royal Over-Seas League. The rooms have free WIFI Broadband access and most have views of Edinburgh Castle.

Thistle Edinburgh

107 Leith Street (St James Centre), Edinburgh EH1 3SW Tel +44 870 333 9153

Web: <http://www.thistlehotels.com/edinburgh/>

Approximately 8 minutes walk from the College.

Rate: £84 per room, single or double occupancy.

Thistle Edinburgh is part of a relatively modern commercial development, but is located just off Princes Street. This large hotel has 143 bedrooms, suites and studios.

Bouverie Bed & Breakfast

9b Scotland Street, Edinburgh EH3 6PP Tel +44 131 556 5080

Email: bouvieries@ednet.co.uk Web: www.edinburghbedandbreakfast.co.uk

Rate: £40 per person, £50 for single occupancy of a double room.

Voted as one of the top ten B&Bs in the UK by readers of *Period Living and Traditional Homes* magazine published in February 2005, this cosy B & B offers four rooms, and is a short walking distance from the College.

Sights and the Area

In Town Itself

Well, where to start? Edinburgh itself is dripping with places to see. There's plenty to keep you occupied for a whole day just by starting at the Castle with the Scottish crown jewels, national war memorial, dungeons and more. Then wander down the Royal Mile, past White Horse Close and finish at The Palace of Holyrood House and the Scottish Parliament; which are both also open to the public. Don't forget to drop in to Caddenheads independent whisky bottlers on the way; the finest Scotch whisky on the face of the earth.

Calton Hill sits above the east end of Princes Street with its collection of architectural oddities and expansive views across the city and north, across the Firth of Forth, to the Kingdom of Fife. If you are feeling a little more energetic there is the 823 feet high main plug of the extinct volcano, Arthur's Seat, just a stones throw from the bottom of the Royal Mile.

If you're after culture, then for museums and galleries you'll be spoilt for choice. Princes Street hosts both the National Gallery of Scotland and the Royal Scottish Academy with the Scottish National Portrait Gallery a few doors along from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art only a couple of miles away near the Dean Village; there's even a free bus to transport you between them. There are the National Museum of Scotland and the Museum of Childhood, both in the Old Town.

Further east from the town centre is the Port of Leith, once a separate town but now absorbed entirely within the limits of the city. Following her retirement from official duties in 1997, the Royal Yacht Britannia, built on Clydebank in 1953, was permanently moored in Leith. Her five



decks open to the public have been kept as close as possible to the way they were in service, with access to the former royal and working areas. Areas included in the tour are the Royal Marines' Barrack, State Dining Room, a floating garage with in-situ Rolls Royce and even the Queen's bedroom.

By now, you'll be after some relaxation. Well, don't worry, there's no need to head upstairs and put on the TV as soon as it starts to get dark. Evening and nightlife in Edinburgh are excellent, with many establishments remaining open until long after sensible people *have* gone to bed.

George Street, between Queen Street and Princes Street, has a number of bars and clubs. Starting at the very trendy end of the market are Le Monde and Tiger Lilly with their new and modern interiors. If grand is more your style, then the Globe or The Standing Order are both converted Georgian banks. The Standing Order is part of a chain that prides itself on the quality and reasonable prices for its real ales.



Heading over towards the Old Town, one of the closest areas you come to is Cockburn Street and its surrounding area. There are several traditional Scottish pubs here, like the Malt Shovel, which are smaller and cosier than the places on George Street.

Just over the top of the hill are the Ceilidh House and Whistle Binkies, both renowned folk bars, with live music on many nights of the week. From here it's a short hop, skip and jump to Victoria Street and the delights of the Bow Bar. Small, usually crowded and 'functional' but with a great atmosphere and equally good beer and whisky, it's one of Mark's personal favourites.

Down the hill again, hang a right, and you're at the Grassmarket. Much loved haunt of the student population with several hostels that will be overflowing. If you hang a left instead, you'll find yourself in the Cowgate and about 3 stories below the main road above. The Cowgate comes to life late at night, with predominantly nightclubs along its length. It is however also home to Bannermans, another folksy pub and one that is built into the vaults – just the place for a gothic pint.

For Young Uns

For the kids, Edinburgh Zoo is a great day out and even better, it's only a 15 minute bus ride from the centre of town. If thrills and frights are more in demand the Edinburgh Dungeon is round the corner from Waverly Station. Just over the other side of the Forth, nestled underneath the



famous Forth Bridge is Deep Sea World, where you can walk under the ocean with sand tiger sharks cruising over your head, touch starfish or whistle to the rescued seals. It's an easy trip by train too, simply hop on the Fife circular at either Waverly or Haymarket and hop off within haggis hurling distance of the entrance. Heading in the opposite direction, a 25-mile drive south of Edinburgh brings you to Glentress Forest by Peebles; one of the "Seven Stanes" mountain biking sites, which are rapidly earning a worldwide reputation. There are several routes including family trails, skills / freeride areas and challenging cross-country routes with serious amounts of ascent. No bike,

no problem, bikes are available for hire from "The Hub" at the forest entrance but booking is advisable, especially at weekends. Over in Glasgow, the Glasgow Science Centre has a host of first-class hands-on interactive science exhibits spread over three floors, plus an Imax cinema.

Further Afield

Right, so you're coming to Scotland for our wedding, but it's a trek so chances are you will have a few days to look around this little country a bit. So, fasten your seatbelts, we've only got a page and a little left so this is going to be a bit of a whirlwind. On that theme, let's head off in a circle.

Heading east out of Edinburgh and round the coast takes you through East Lothian with its wide rolling arable farms, down the coast through a series of picturesque towns then on through small fishing villages. Keep heading on down and you'll find yourself over the border in Northumberland with expansive beaches and castles aplenty, including Alnwick Castle from the opening sequence of *BlackAdder* [1485-1917].

Pushing back west along the River Tweed takes you through the Borders, steeped in the history of battle between the separate crowns of Scotland and England. The first miles pass through the famous abbey towns of Kelso and Melrose and close to Jedburgh, the finest example of a Borders abbey. The river then climbs through the rolling hills past woollen mills (surely they'd be better made of stone) and peel towers; which were to be used to signal an English invasion by lighting beacon fires in great braziers on their roofs.

Eventually the river peters out at Tweedsmuir from where the land drops into the western watershed and the Clyde Valley. New Lanark, at the vanguard of the industrial revolution and

now a world heritage site, sits high on the Clyde that then runs on a journey through Scotland's heavy industrial heartland. The landscape and people shaped by steel, mining and the shipyards of Glasgow.

Northwest of Glasgow, Loch Lomond cuts into the highlands, forming a natural gap through to Crianlarich and the Trossachs. Lots of welcoming yet dramatic scenery and endless opportunities for tea and scones! Turn left at Crianlarich and the 'Green Welly Stop' to head west, past the hollowed out Ben Cruachan, to Oban – gateway to the more southerly Western Isles. Keeping on in a northerly direction instead brings the bleak splendour of Rannoch Moor, dramatic cliffs and history of Glencoe and Fort William nestled at the foot of Ben Nevis.

Fort William is a magnet for hill walking and climbing. If you want to see the view with less exertion, the alternative is to use the Nevis Range gondola to reach the top of Aonach Mor, overlooking the brooding northern corrie of The Ben, with its infamous cliffs. Fort William is also the departure point for both the West Highland Line, reputedly one of the most beautiful rail journeys in the world, and the Caledonian Canal. The former makes a tremendous day out, the latter takes a little longer.

Following the line of the Caledonian Canal through the Great Glen Fault leads to Inverness and Speyside famous for salmon fishing and The Macallan malt whisky. Just to the south are the Cairngorm Mountains skirted around by much of what remains of the Caledonian forest of old, made up of an open scots pine canopy with undergrowth characterised by juniper. There are some truly beautiful forest walks in the Rothiemurchus Estate near Aviemore, typically circling tranquil lochs set in undisturbed woodland. Thankfully, a significant reduction in the numbers of red deer has led to a great deal of natural regrowth of this fragile forest in recent years.



Climbing east over the Cairngorms brings Royal Deeside. Host to the Queen's summer residence at Balmoral, Deeside has a calm feel wrapped as it is in ancient forest. At the mouth of the Dee lies Aberdeen, all mediaeval revival silver granite on the shore of the ~~Arctic Ocean~~ North Sea; a city busy with the oil industry and the social whirl that brings. Fertile farming land separates Aberdeen from the next large town to the south, Dundee. Home to Scott's Antarctic ship The Discovery, the Tay Bridge and possibly the world's greatest poet, William Topaz McGonagall.

Head over the Tay into the Kingdom of Fife, the home of golf. If golf is your bag then it would be sacrilege to pass by without at least stepping onto the 18th at the Old Course and having your picture taken on the Swilken Bridge with the clubhouse in the background before retiring to a woollen mill to peruse their SALE items and partake of tea and shortbread. Revitalised, why not take a brisk constitutional around the coast past the castle and cathedral before returning to the shelter of the ancient university buildings in the town centre. Don't worry about building up an appetite, world famous Anstruther fish 'n' chips are only a short drive down the coast, along with a myriad other fishing villages, nooks and crannies to explore; even a nuclear Secret Bunker.



Well that was a whistle stop tour. But if you are really serious, there is one more place you really have to see – the North West Highlands. Covering the area to the North and West of the Great Glen this holds some of Scotland's most beautiful and remote scenery. Ullapool makes an ideal base to see this part of the country being well located, relatively easy to get to and with a life and soul that belies its small size. For a treat, stay at the Ceilidh Place. For an evening to remember, take in a thrash metal band at the Seaforth Arms with the locals! But see as much as you can of Achiltibuie, Stac Pollaidh, Gairloch, Lochinver, Achmelvich, The Old Man of Stoer, Tongue, Sandwood Bay, Torridon, The Summer Isles, Loch Broom FM...

Debs and Mark