

Reflections on the HKSSIP trip from 28th Oct to 5th Nov 2017

Creative Secondary School

David Wong F5 Bauhinia

The Scotland exchange program was a one week experience that took my senses all the way across the world. SCEN stands for Scotland China Education Network, which aims to promote Chinese learning in Scotland and Scottish culture learning to Chinese people. Being an exchange program, I was assigned to stay with a host family for the week, and followed my hosts Richard and Rachael around their classes by day and learned so much about Edinburgh by night.

The highlight for me has to be the Summit event on Friday. Being chosen as a representative for CSS, I had to collaborate with 3 other HK students part of the same program. As they were years younger than me (one was still in primary school) I was in charge of managing the overall presentation as well as guiding them while on stage. The summit event lasted a day in Glasgow, and was an SCEN event for promoting Chinese learning in Scotland as well as anything related. In the Royal Concert hall, our group of exchange students presented our experiences in Edinburgh, and as nervous as I was, we managed to impress the audience being some of the youngest people to stand on the stage.

Scotland was such an amazing opportunity for learning, and yes, I encourage anyone who wants an invaluable learning experience to participate in this program.

Kwun Ming Shum F4 Delonix

Scotland is very different from Hong Kong. Teenagers there have a much more relaxing life. They have less work to do and less pressure. They usually have a lot of free time. That's why everyone can spend time on their hobbies. I think it is better for a teenager's development if they have time to find out what they really love.

The city is quiet and peaceful without hustle and bustle. There are no skyscrapers in town and the pollution level is very low. The air is very fresh comparing to Hong Kong. Everyone lives in a big house (especially my host family) and enjoys their day. I like this kind of lifestyle more than living in a busy city.

During the trip, I spent a few days with my host family. They took me to Arthur's Seat and Britannia on the first day. Britannia was the ship the royal family used to travel around the world. The ship was so big and luxurious that it seemed like a five-star hotel. When we were buying tickets, my host dad ordered a family package. The cashier looked at me in a strange way but didn't say anything. Without that, I really felt like being the same family with them. Since I only had a full day to spend with the host family, we could only go for a short hike and didn't have enough time to enjoy the scenery. However, the beautiful scene of the city and the castle was so amazing that I couldn't forget about it for the rest of my life. They also celebrated halloween with me. It was the first Halloween I celebrated in my life. We dressed up as ghost and wizards and went around for trick or treat. It was an amazing cultural experience that I couldn't enjoy in a big city. Staying with them, I felt like being at home on those days.

The school campus-George Watson's College was so big, it seems like a place for vacation more than a school. The school had a lot of facilities that normal Hong Kong schools won't be able to afford. For example, a swimming pool. Also, everything in their school seemed to be bigger and better. The students there were full of motivation and none of them seemed to be exhausted because of studying. A lot of them seemed to be interested in Hong Kong and I made a lot of friends there.

I loved Scotland more than Hong Kong. Or perhaps, it's just because I've been living in Hong Kong for too long. Life in Scotland is a lot more easy going. They have plenty of time and they still learn as much as we do, probably means that students in Hong Kong often receive unnecessary pressure.

Another thing I like about Scotland is that everyone seems so nice and friendly, especially the host family. When I first arrived, they gave me a lot of presents. They did everything to make my trip great. In Hong Kong, I took everything for granted. I didn't even say thank you when my mom ironed clothes for me. Of course, I didn't expect to be served in Scotland. However, my host mom was so nice that she did almost everything for me.

My host family was very eager to know about how Hong Kong has changed in the past 20 years and chatted with me throughout the trip. I told them about my life in Hong Kong. Living in skyscrapers, rushing to school everyday in order to catch more sleep time. All these seemed to be unfamiliar to them. All of the kids were amazed by how Hong Kong is able to fit 7 million people in such a small place, until I told them that people sometimes have to live in "Cage House" or small room. They all felt very sorry for them.

On the first few days of the trip, I taught them a little bit of Mandarin and Cantonese. But most importantly, I tried to teach them how to use a pair of chopsticks. Daniel almost managed to hold it the right way but couldn't really use it. I understand that it is a hard task, as it took me years to learn it when I was young. On the last day of the trip, my family treated me really like Scottish people. They took me to their relatives' house to eat the most traditional Scottish food ever - haggis. It was made of all sorts of animals' inner parts and wrapped up with a goat's stomach. The food looked black but it tasted like salty preserved meat. The best way to taste it was to forget about how it was made.

Daniel and his classmates told me a lot of stories that happened in his school. Teenagers in Scotland were much more creative than those in Hong Kong. They have a lot more freedom and have more time and space to think of games to entertain themselves.

Overall, the trip was too short for us to understand the Scottish culture. A week is definitely not enough for both cultural visit and attending lessons. Every visit in the entire exchange program seemed to be in a rush. Totally, we only had 5 lessons at George Watson's College. I didn't have time to appreciate their teaching style. The only lessons I attended were English, Chinese (presentation from us on Hong Kong), assembly and Spanish. I didn't even have time to attend any elective subjects or special subjects in Scotland (modern studies). Therefore, I can't really appreciate their teaching. They have so many holidays, that might mean they need to teach very effectively. I think that at least I should try all different lessons in order to get a full picture. Another thing is, I almost got a wrong impression of Scotland. Before the trip, I did research about the weather in Edinburg and I realized that the weather in Scotland is usually rainy and very humid. I was so lucky on those days as everyday was sunny and perfect for outdoor activities. A month of exchange would be reasonable to really experience their lifestyle. I love Scotland!

Lorraine Lo F4 Jacaranda

From 28th October to 5th November. I participated in the SCEN exchange programme trip. In this trip I was able to visit a few Scottish cultural sites, shadow at a partner school, attend the SCEN conference and live with a Scottish family. It was an eye opening experience that I will never forget.

During this short week, we visited 3 cultural sites in Edinburgh including the Scotland National museum, Edinburgh zoo and Edinburgh castle. While visiting these cultural sites, I learnt factual knowledge from visiting the museum, environmental and biological knowledge from the zoo and most importantly, the cultural and historical knowledge from the castle. My personal favourite site is the castle because it is an Edinburgh icon and it is filled with lots of interesting history and spooky myths. Plus, we visited it during Halloween, which makes it even spookier.

Shadowing in George Watson's College provided me a different learning experience. Although I only attended/shadowed a few classes with my buddies Richard and Rachael (on one occasion), I was able to experience the way classes in Scotland works which is quite different compared to CSS and I was also able to learn a few things from their classes and I even taught Richard a few Chinese idioms (which is something I am proud of). I was also able to shadow their CCAS (orchestra and pipe band) and even take part in one of them. This CCA experience however, gave me nostalgia because the one I took part in is choir and I used to sing in choir for 8 years and unfortunately had to quit last year. Overall, this shadowing experience had been great and it was nice to learn some new knowledge.

For the conference, it was an eye opening experience to me. I had never been to a conference like this before and it has been a great experience. Going to this conference, I realised there are so many foreigners learning Chinese because China is getting more recognition from other countries and its getting stronger in terms of power. Even my buddies are studying Mandarin and are very eager to learn our culture. With this experience, I realised how fortunate am I to be able to be trilingual and be able to switch to any languages fluently and the importance of Chinese in the world.

The most valuable experience in this trip to me is the home stay experience. Home staying is also something that I was extremely looking forward to for the trip. With this experience, I was able to meet new people and befriend them. To experience the other side of Edinburgh with home staying, I spent a very Scottish style week and learnt that they usually finish the day early and people there are generally very laid back people. Which greatly contrasts with the lifestyle of HK. We also walked around Edinburgh in our free time with our hosts. Once at the first day and once at the last night. I walked a lot and was able to see a lot of scenery that we can't see at the cultural observation such as the Walter Scott memorial, Botanic gardens and Arthur's Seat.

Overall I spent a great week in Scotland and would love to revisit Edinburgh someday. It has been a great learning experience and it also increased my pride as a Chinese citizen overall.

Emily Wong F4 Cassia

We've gone to Edinburgh, Scotland for one week as an exchange student. The trip has been a very enjoyable, and I'm sure that we all have learned a lot. During the trip, I've met a lot of people. They were very nice to me and I felt welcome. the lifestyle in Scotland is very similar to Hong Kong but its very different at the same time. Students that in our partner exchange school ha s similar lesson and timetable as us, but George Watso's College(Exchange School) cares about our interest more. Different from Hong

Kong, Schools care about academic more than interest. I think students should have a balanced learning, so I enjoyed staying in Scotland. The environment was great and people there are all very nice, I've tried a lot of good food and had experience how is the of local Scottish. I've learned and experienced a lot from this trip, it was a memorable experience in my life!!

Law Ting Pong Secondary School

Cheung Tak Hei, Felix S3

I am glad to be able to participate in this Scotland exchange study trip. I am very lucky to have Robert's family as my host. They are very kind and took good care of me during the stay. I got along well with all their family members including Leo, their dog. I also started teaching Robert's little brother how to speak mandarin.

This is a rare opportunity for me to attend lessons at James Gillespie's High Schools (JGHS). The students there are very nice and friendly, the teachers are very helpful and passionate. Moreover, there's a special arrangement in JGHS is that they have a break time that students could leave the campus and go to nearby supermarkets to buy food and drinks, or go home to get stuff they forget to bring, such as textbooks they needed in the lessons after break time. Besides, they don't need to wear uniform when they go to school. JGHS is the only school in Edinburgh that students need not wear uniform when they go to school. I hope that LTPSS could have same arrangements one day.

On the last school day at JGHS, the deputy headmaster Jeff asked us what could be improved if they are having this exchange programme next year. Most of us think that the trip is a bit short this time. The time we spent in the campus wasn't enough. Since we only had chance to join the first two lessons in these four school days, we did not have a chance to experience the full day school life. We really want to know what JGHS students will do during the lunch time and after school.

Regarding the Youth Summit, there was a very impressive performance by some Scottish students who sang a song called "Scotland is my hometown". Then Scottish and Hong Kong student representatives started sharing their experience in learning Mandarin. I feel that as foreigners started to put a lot of effort in learning Chinese and Mandarin, we should pay even more attention to Chinese language learning, otherwise foreign students can speak and write in Chinese better than Hong Kong students one day.

This is a very fruitful and valuable study trip experience and I would never forget it in my life.

Tam Tsz Yin, Vivian S4

I am so glad I had a chance to visit Scotland! My host family is really nice and kind. My buddy name is Gi Gi. My favourite part of the trip is day one. My host family brought me to the Calton Hill and Portobello beach. Calton Hill is one of Edinburgh's main hills, set right in the city centre. It is amazing to see Athenian acropolis poking above the skyline. You can see the whole Scotland up there! It's amazing. Scotland is quite a historical place. All the buildings are old. It's quite different from Hong Kong. We took a lot of pictures and had fun at Calton Hill . After that, we went to Portobello beach. It took us 20 mins to go there! The view is amazing. I saw a lot of people swimming and some people brought their dog to walk. The weather was very cold too. Every night my host family and I played games, like cards and hide and seek. We had a lot of fun! This is also the way to improve my English. But sometimes their

accent is hard to listen. I really enjoy the trip because it was very meaningful. I hope I can go there again next year.

Lam Hin Ching, Grace S3

From 28th October to 3rd November, some of my schoolmates and I went to Scotland. It was fantastic and interesting. They were the best days of my life.

Even though it was really cold and I was not used to this totally new place, but the host family welcomed me with great hospitality. They were very nice to me and I really hope I could meet them one more time.

The first day in Edinburgh was really cold and it was 1 degree and we all felt very cold. After the first day, we started to get used to the weather. We started to feel quite warm because the first day was cold but we overcame it so the rest of the days were not really that hard to overcome.

The last day was the hardest day ever because we had to say goodbye to all of the friends and people in Edinburgh. I didn't cry when we left the host family but we were all sad about leaving Scotland.

This exchange plan was a very great experience to me and I could never do this again in Hong Kong, I enjoyed a lot in this trip. I hope I could go to Scotland again to meet my friends again.

Kwok Pui Hin, Michael S5

During this Scotland exchange trip, I learnt a lot of things.

First, it was my first time to have English surrounding me. I spoke in English for whole day with my buddy, his family and friends. They are very nice and kind.

Second, I learnt how the education system works in Scotland. It is different from London. The government provides free education for its citizens and it is not as competitive as Hong Kong for studying in universities.

Third, I learnt the culture in Scotland. There is a castle which is well-known in Edinburgh. I went inside as well. Most of the houses were built before the second world war. My buddy told me that the prices of those houses suddenly decreased after the second war.

In the morning, we went to school with our buddy and visited around Scotland in the afternoon. Their study is not as hard as HK. Teachers do not punish those students who are late. I love this education style as it provides more freedom for students and let them think out of the box.

I am looking forward to seeing my buddy in the future, and I will share it with my friends about this wonderful trip.

Chow Chi Yi, Cora S3

During my trip in Scotland, I stayed with a local family. My experience of living with host family is quite different compared to other schoolmate because my host family is vegans. At first, I thought it would be Scottish food is all about meat. However, the host family used lots of ways to make vegetables tasty such as pies and pastas.

I attended James Gillespie's High School for four days. JGHS is very different with LTPSS. Student in JGHS do not need to wear uniform and they are allowed to wear uniform. Also, they have more choices of elective subjects. I attended three Psychology lessons, which I had never learnt in Hong Kong, I learnt about dreams and made a poster about dream symbols. I attended a Mathematics lesson too. The Mathematics curriculum is much more easier than Hong Kong so it was not a big challenge for me.

On the third day of the trip, we went to the Edinburgh Castle. It is not a fairytale castle. It is a military castle built in the medieval times. However, the Castle impressed me because I could see the whole view of Edinburgh from it and it does not look as old as I thought.

On the last day of the trip, we attend the SCEN youth summit. Students who study Chinese from all over Scotland gather and share their thoughts about Chinese culture. I learned how much China means to foreigner and the world.

Wong Angel S3

I am very grateful that I can have Freya and her family as my hosts when I visited Edinburgh. During those few days, I learnt a lot of things, such as how to be more independent, get use to new environment and communicate in fully English. We have been to the Edinburgh Zoo, the National Museum and the Edinburgh Castle. We saw a lot of different historic buildings, and at the same time we learn a lot of history about Edinburgh.

The most memorable thing in this trip is the people there. I am thankful to have them as my friends. They are very kind. I think it is important that we learnt what a poppy is (the red one, purple one and also the white one) It is used to commemorate soldiers fought in the world wars. Lastly, I want to thank all the teachers that organize this trip which makes us learn a lot.

HKTA THE YUEN YUEN INSTITUTE NO.1 SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sharon Chui F.5D

In this trip I have learnt more about Edinburgh. I'm a really big fan of Harry Potter and my host family took me to J.K. Rowling's house and some movie scenes in Scotland. I think there is a big difference between the buildings in Hong Kong and those in Scotland. In Scotland, the buildings are very old. Edinburgh is not a modern city where buildings were built by stones. But in Hong Kong, we don't use stones to build buildings and Hong Kong is quite small so the buildings are very close to each other. I think Edinburgh is a city which is a culture-rich.

Also, what the thing I like most about Edinburgh is air quality, the air is fresh; I can smell the rain and grass, however the problem of pollution is serious in Hong Kong. I like to move to Edinburgh and live there forever.

Katie Shum F.5D

I was glad that I could visit the Edinburgh Castle. That's a really big building. OMG~ I really liked it. The view was remarkably beautiful. I took a lot of photos with my friends there and it gave me lots of unforgettable memories. Also, this was the first time I visited such a spectacular city. The place was so big and wide, it wasn't like Hong Kong – it's small and crowded. Even the people in Scotland were much more relaxed, they weren't as like Hong Kong people. We are always very busy working and studying.

I have been to Queen's Street, I loved it very much. Moreover, I was grateful that my school Principal (Miss Man) had given me a good chance to go out of Hong Kong and travel in this country as I could make some friends, learn a new culture and education system. Now I know that Hong Kong's education system is not good.

To sum up, this trip was a really wonderful experience to me and I can benefit from it. Also it gave me plenty of wonderful moments.

Abbie Chan F.5D

I had a great time in Scotland. In this trip, I have learnt more about Scotland. My host family often introduced the history of Scotland to me, for example, the architecture, culture and what they usually eat in Scotland, etc. It was an excellent experience for me.

Before the trip, I was quite nervous as I thought I might have problem getting used to the Scottish accent, but once I stayed with them, I found that it was quite easy to understand their speech. Also, I was delighted that I could visit the historic castle of Edinburgh. The best thing of the visit was the view that I could see from the castle, I could admire the attractive scenery.

After visiting different places in Edinburgh, I have learnt to respect other cultures. Because I had met a lot of people in Edinburgh, there must be cultural differences among different countries. However, the thing that impressed me most is I time I spent with my host family. They treated me very well and I have made some friends in Scotland.

Candice Siu F.4D

It was my first time in Edinburgh, so everything was new to me and I felt honored to have the chance to go and learn here. I learned a lot of things in three famous landmarks. They were National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh Zoo and University of Edinburgh.

On the third day we went to the National Museums of Scotland. It was a seven-storey museum. There is a difference between the museums in Hong Kong and those in Scotland. However, we didn't have enough time, so we only visited two floors of the museum; one was about animals and the other one was about technology. There were a lot of collections of Scottish antiquities, culture and history. Then we went to the adjacent Royal Museum, which has collections covering science and technology, natural history and world cultures. So, I learned more about animal evolution and technology development. The exhibits looked amazingly real. I hope I can go there again.

On the fourth day, we went to Edinburgh Zoo and did the Endangered Asia Programme. This zoo was the first zoo in the world to house and to breed penguins. It's also the only zoo in Britain to house koalas and giant pandas. I saw a lot of rare animals like wildcats, penguins and pandas. I have never had this experience before. Then we had a programme about endangered animals in Asia. Mr. Blair Cockburn showed us a PowerPoint about the reasons for the endangerment such as pollution, disease and overhunting. I realized that we should do more to protect the animals.

Next, we went to University of Edinburgh. It was an old and beautiful university. Their school culture has inspired me to study hard.

I hope I will be able to study in the university in the future.

TWGHs Kwok Yat Wai College

5A CHOW Lee Ling

The first day I came to Scotland is Sunday and I met my hosts family members Jemima and her older sister. They are all very nice. After lunch we played board games and went hiking near our home. We can see the whole Edinburgh scenery by standing on the mountain. Next day, we visited the Scotland national museum, Edinburgh castle, Scotland Zoo and so on. I like the national museum the best as there are massive exhibitions to watch and I can clearly understand the history of Scotland. It not only shows the wisdom of British, but also shows the changes of England.

Everyday morning we went to Boroughmuir high school. The school looks very old but legendary. We have all kinds of lessons like Mathematics, English, photography, Art and so on. The lessons we had, are roughly the same as those in Hong Kong. I learned some special painting techniques in art class. The Mathematics was very difficult to me. The teachers are very nice to the students.

There are 4 members in my host family and Jemima is my buddy. They are all very generous and interesting people. We had a lot of fun when we stayed together. I felt very warm even the weather was very cold. They are very patient to explain to me about the topics they talked about. I am very delighted and happy that I had such wonderful chance to experience English lifestyle and culture. I really thanks my teachers for their encouragement. They boost my confidence to speak English all the time. After this trip, I feel my English had been improved and I can speak English with more confidence. I will keep contact with my friends.

5A He Shuyi

I had a deep feeling through this Scottish exchange. I experienced the local Scottish life which is very different from that of Hong Kong. When I was in Scotland, the weather was very cold. I am not used to the cold weather of Scotland, but I enjoyed it.

In Scotland, I learned about the local school system. The school rules in Scotland are not so strict. Students don't seem to have too many restrictions. For example, students can snack between classes, and they do not check the appearance of school uniforms on a daily basis. Although it's not very strict in school rules, they maintain good discipline in class. For instance, class is very quiet and serious when they are studying.

The human touch of Scotland was also the most rewarding part of my journey. I was lucky to have two homestay families and I experienced two different cultures at their homes. One of the cultures is from Nepal. My Nepali friend is very friendly to me. She not only takes care of me very carefully, but also encourages me to speak more in English. These memories are wonderful for me.

I think Scotland is a meaningful journey. It gifts me the experience of the local Scottish culture. It also improves my English. At the same time, I think the most important thing is that I gain friendship. All the friends I met in Scotland are invaluable in my life.

4A HO Wing Yee

In this exchange programme, I felt happy that I can learn more about the differences between Scotland and Hong Kong's education system. For most cases, Hong Kong teachers will always use the books and talk, while the Scottish teachers will use more interactive approach by making use of the touch monitor and the projector. It's funny! And in this few days' study, I met a lot of new friends. They are really nice. No matter when I have a problem or not, they are eager to help me.

At home stay, I can feel their warm. In Hong Kong, all people live in a rapid life, but in Scotland, parents would like their children to have a relaxing life. They don't want to make their kids stressful. My host family is a warm family. After dinner, they will dance together and listen to K-pop songs and their mum know how to sing it too. I think this is a good activity to relax after a whole day's hard work. And the most memorable thing is experiencing the Scottish Halloween. My host mum made a lot of food for our Halloween party... it's yummy!!

Through this exchange programme, I become more talkative. Although I had studied there for only a few days, I didn't feel any stress there and I'm so happy.

I still keep close contact with my buddy and chat every day. I miss them so much and I hope we can see each other again and go shopping together!!

5A LIN Ka Ying

Before going to the exchange program in Scotland, I am afraid that I may face a lot of difficulties. I worry about communicating with foreigners. I am stressful whether I can adapt to the Scottish weather, life style and culture. You know there would be great difference between Hong Kong and Scotland

Fortunately, Scotland people are really nice. The classmates in Boroughmuir are helpful and they always try their best to take care of me. I really want to thank for their help.

During my stay in Edinburgh, I live with 2 host families. They treat me just like my real family in Hong Kong, which makes me feel warm. Hong Kong people absolutely will not give this warm feeling to new friends or strangers. I get used to the Scottish style very quickly and this built up my confidence. And I am not afraid of speaking English or even talk to strangers on the street.

In addition, this exchange program gifts me the opportunity to experience the western world. I'm grateful that I have this opportunity to go to Scotland.

Yaumati Catholic Primary School

Chiu Chin Shun

It was an unforgettable trip! I've experienced different things in this trip. We visited the National Museum, the Edinburgh Castle and the zoo. We took a lot of photos. The place I like most is the Castle because we saw the crown in the old days. It was gorgeous! The local people also shared the history of Scotland. This was a great chance for me to communicate with the local people there.

We also went to Preston Street Primary School. We noticed that there are big differences between Hong Kong students and Scotland students. The life in Scotland is more regular. For instance, The Scotland students usually sleep early whereas the Hong Kong students often late to be because of homework and study.

30th October was my 12th birthday. I was really excited and looking forward to spending the whole day with Daisy's family and my classmates. I woke up very early and went to the breakfast club with Daisy, Kitty and Ollie. We had a delicious meal. Then, my classmates and I went to school together. We went on a short hike at the Arthur's Seat. The view is fantastic and stunning! I enjoyed this learning style very much! After that, we visited the National Museum of Scotland. We saw a lot of special collections in the world. Some exhibits are really eye-catching and exquisite. After a while, we went to a park to play on the swing. We had a wonderful time.

After that, we went back to Daisy's house and got changed. Daisy's mum wanted to buy some souvenirs and have dinner. We chose a variety of gifts for my family, teachers and friends. After the crazy shopping, we went to a beautiful restaurant. There were a lot of toothsome dishes. I ordered a pizza and a cup of ice cream. Then we kept waiting and suddenly I heard someone singing the birthday song. The waitress gave me the specially made ice cream with a candle on it. I was really surprised and I thanked Daisy's mum and my friends for making my birthday so special.

It was the most memorable birthday I've ever had. I felt rejoiced as we did a lot of fun and unforgettable things.