

SCOTLAND, UNITED KINGDOM,

Information Guide

Recreation

Scotland gave golf to the world, and as befits the founding nation of the sport, excellent courses can be played throughout the land. The majority of courses accept visitors without introduction, and fees are low compared with those in most countries. Among the notable courses are St. Andrews Old Course and the splendid Dornoch links (50 mi/80 km north of Inverness). The championship courses at Turnberry belong to the luxurious Westin Turnberry Resort. Prestwick, at one time the home of the British Open, is home to three major courses. Golfing holidays can be arranged through the Golf Scotland Society (1 Roseburn Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5NG). VisitScotland publishes a brochure called Golf Scotland, which details some 350 courses. <http://www.visitscotland.com>.



Scotland's rugged landscape is ideal for outdoor activities. It is regarded as the world's premier destination for mountain biking and hosts the world championships every year. Walkers and climbers can try everything from marked woodland walks, hill and rock climbing, long-distance footpaths such as the West Highland Way, gentle coastal walks and historical trails. Fishing for salmon and trout in the lochs and rivers is very popular. The waterways also offer some of the best places in Europe for boating, sailing, kayaking or canoeing. In the winter, the Highlands have several major skiing areas: Glenshee, Cairngorm, Glencoe, the Lecht and the Nevis Range.

Destinations in Scotland

Aberdeen

Scotland's third-largest city is characterized by buildings of beautiful granite. Set beside the North Sea, Aberdeen is both a university town and the capital of the Scottish oil boom. In addition, it is one of Scotland's largest seaside resorts.

The city's attractions include the 15th-century St. Machar's Cathedral, the Mercat Cross of 1686 (a striking structure), the 14th-century Brig o' Balgownie (Scotland's oldest bridge), the Winter Garden (Europe's largest indoor garden), a fine art gallery and the

Aberdeen Maritime Museum. Old Aberdeen, the students' quarter of the city, is worth a visit: Walk the campuses of the two ancient universities, King's College (founded 1495) and Marischal College (founded 1500, the second-largest granite building in the world), now combined as the University of Aberdeen. Or get up at the crack of dawn to visit the warehouse of buzzing activity that is Aberdeen's famous fish market.

Aberdeen is an excellent base for touring the nearby castles (Dunnotar, Slains and Crathes) and numerous Speyside whisky distilleries (Glenfiddich, Glenlivet and many more). Other sites include Balmoral Castle (the royal family's summer residence, with grounds and the Carriage Hall open to the public from late March or early April to the end of July) and Braemar Castle, which hosts the largest Highland games every September. 150 mi/240 km northeast of Glasgow.

Ayr

Set in the heart of Robert Burns country, Ayr will appeal to literary mavens. Attractions include the parish church where Burns was baptized, as well as the two bridges the poet immortalized in *Twa Brigs*. Also in town are 16th-century Loudon Hall and 17th-century Ayr Auld Kirk (church). No place in Scotland is complete without a golf course, and Ayr has three (their setting along the coastline is stunning). South of Ayr is Alloway, where Burns was born. Located in the village are Burns Cottage (site of the poet's birth), the



Robert Burns Centre, and the Burns Monument and Gardens.

On the coast road south from Alloway is Culzean, a castle designed by Robert Adam and the most-visited property belonging to the National Trust for Scotland. Set along the coast

in a wooded estate that's one of Scotland's finest parks, the castle exudes a sense of history and tradition and houses a fine collection of military memorabilia dating from the 1800s. Mementos of former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower (who was given lifetime use of an apartment in the castle) are on display. (The Eisenhower Rooms, part of the National Guest Flat, can be rented.) The cliff below the castle is riddled with old smuggler's caves. From there, it's not far to Kirkoswald and Souter Johnnie's Cottage, home of the man Robert Burns used as the inspiration for a character in *Tam O'Shanter*. The Souter and Thomas Graham of Shanter farm are both buried in the ruined kirkyard opposite the cottage. Burns received part of his education there in a small schoolroom

that is now part of the hotel. Also nearby are the impressive ruins of Crossraguel Abbey. South of Culzean is the Westin Turnberry Resort and its excellent golf course (rated in the top 20 worldwide).

The main attraction at Troon (north of Ayr) is Royal Troon golf course. Northwest of Troon lies Kilmarnock, the home of Johnnie Walker Whisky and where Burns published his first edition of poetry. Also worth seeing in the area is Dean Castle Country Park: The castle, which dates from the mid-14th century, has one of the world's best collections of early European musical instruments, as well as impressive holdings of armor and tapestries. Ayr is 30 mi/50 km southwest of Glasgow.

Dumfries and Galloway

This southwestern region is notable for its quaint towns, picturesque scenery, good fishing, mild weather and a history of cattle rustling. The splendid town of Kirkcudbright (pronounced KIR-coo-bray) is where Mary, Queen of Scots, spent her last night in Scotland. West of there is Wigtown, Scotland's official book town, which boasts more than 20 bookshops, including the largest antiquarian bookshop in Scotland. A short distance south is Whithorn, the cradle of Scottish Christianity where archaeologists have unearthed evidence of St. Ninian, who founded his church there long before St. Columba landed on Iona or St. Augustine settled in Canterbury. Farther west on the Rhins of Galloway is Kirkmadrine, with a churchyard that displays Scotland's earliest Christian monuments (some dating back 1,500 years), and Port Logan has its botanic gardens and a pond where you can feed fish from the sea by hand. North of there on the coast is the fishing village of Portpatrick, which is the perfect place to watch a sunset on a warm summer evening.

South of Dumfries at Caerlaverock are the remains of a unique moated castle, a National Nature Reserve, and a Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust sanctuary that is very popular with bird-watchers.

At the village of New Abbey are the remains of a Cistercian abbey and a working corn mill owned by the National Trust for Scotland. The abbey was built by Devorgilla de Balliol and is known as Sweetheart Abbey, because the hearts of her and her husband were interred there. Not far away at Mabie Forest is one of southern Scotland's famous 7 Stanes Mountain Biking Centres.

East of Dumfries in the tiny village of Ruthwell is an ornately preserved, eighth-century early Christian cross. Heading north from Dumfries through Nithsdale leads to Leadhills and Wanlockhead, Scotland's highest village. In these former lead-mining communities, you'll find the oldest subscription library in the world and the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining. This was also where the gold for the Scottish Crown jewels came from. Panning for gold is a popular tourist activity in the summer.

Galloway Forest Park in the west has some of the finest scenery in Scotland and also some of the best walking. There are numerous waymarked forest trails that include everything from a 0.5-mi/0.8-km stroll to a few miles/kilometers of serious walking. In

the Galloway Hills there are no trails, waymarks or, in most cases, even sheep tracks. It is possible to spend two weeks walking and wild camping there and not meet another human being. Dumfries is 78 mi/125 km southwest of Edinburgh.

Edinburgh

Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, likes to draw on its history to appeal to visitors-with good reason. The Old Town of Edinburgh reverberates with the history of Scottish royalty and romantic literary figures, and on a visit to Edinburgh, crossing Princes Street into the New Town is like passing through a time warp to the late 1700s.

Edinburgh, Scotland, has also launched more than its fair share of notable figures onto the world stage: Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Alexander Graham Bell, to name just a few Edinburgh notables.

But Edinburgh isn't just wrapped up in history. Tourists flock to Edinburgh every summer to partake of the extraordinarily vibrant atmosphere of the Edinburgh Festival-it's the world's biggest performing-arts festival (actually six distinct festivals in one). The festival season may be the busiest tourist season in Edinburgh, but the busiest night of the year is Hogmanay (New Year's Eve), when Edinburgh invites visitors to one of the biggest street parties in the world.

Visitors will discover that Edinburgh has also been reinvigorated by the opening of the Scottish parliament building in 2004, new and improved tourist attractions, an influx of immigrants from the former Eastern Bloc countries and a renaissance of its previously ignored waterfront.

Glasgow

Glasgow is a reflection of Scottish exuberance. Even the frequently seen rain clouds can't dampen Glaswegian enthusiasm, friendliness and civic pride. No other Scottish city has quite the same endearing grittiness, in spite of its sophistication.

Drawing on a long tradition of support for the performing arts, Glasgow, Scotland, fills its theaters with music, comedy and drama and flaunts the fact that it-not Edinburgh-is





home to the Scottish Opera and Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Well-known as Scotland's center for architecture and design, Glasgow is becoming an increasingly popular European tourist and conference venue. Glasgow is also a bustling business and manufacturing center.

After visitors have experienced the depth of sophistication and diversity Glasgow has to offer as a European travel destination, they'll

likely agree with the many conventioners,

business travelers and tourists who have departed singing Glasgow's praises.

Isle Of Arran

The Isle of Arran is a thriving island that has been described-with good reason-as "Scotland in Miniature." The Highland Boundary Fault bisects the island so its southern half is all rolling hills and farmland, and the north is a wild landscape of mountains and glens similar to the Highlands. The warm Gulf Stream enables palm trees to grow, and human activities flourish as well: Visit Arran Aromatics (soap, candles and skin-care products), Arran Brewery, the Island Cheese Company and the Isle of Arran Distillers. While there, be sure to visit Cir Mhor and Glen Rosa for the views. The Standing Stones on Machrie Moor, while not as spectacular as the Callanish Stones on Lewis, are nevertheless worth visiting.

Arran is an excellent option if you don't have enough time to travel farther north. If you plan to go, we recommend a two-night stay. The island is most directly reached by Calmac ferry from Ardrossan.

Orkney

This isolated archipelago of 70 islands (of which 20 are inhabited) lies off the northeast coast of Scotland. These nearly treeless islands were of great strategic importance in both World Wars; the dozens of World War I shipwrecks are a great attraction for divers. Most visitors will stay in either Stromness or Kirkwall on Mainland, the major island.

Mainland is a "museum" of prehistory. The heart of neolithic Orkney was declared a World Heritage Site in 1999 and includes Maes Howe, the Ring of Brodgar (a 3,500-year-old circle of giant stones), the Standing Stones of Stenness and Skara Brae. Skara Brae is a remarkably well-preserved neolithic village that dates to 3200 BC, before the Egyptian pyramids were built.

In Kirkwall, see Earl Patrick's Palace and the nondenominational Cathedral of St. Magnus (Patrick was a whisky distiller and smuggler who used to store his contraband in the church). A more recent marvel is the Italian Chapel, built from a couple of Nissen huts by Italian prisoners of war during World War II. The walls of the huts were lined

with plaster, and on these, artist Domenico Chiochetti painted his masterpieces. The chapel has been preserved and is one of Scotland's must-see sites. Chiochetti returned twice after the war, and he restored his artwork in 1960.

Many of the more remote islands are of interest for those who have plenty of time and like nature and isolation. A thriving artists' and writers' colony has developed on the islands, centered on the town of Stromness. Orkney is also a bird-lover's paradise, offering thousands upon thousands of puffins, eider ducks, whooper swans, arctic terns and many other species that nest there in the summer months. Orkney is off the northern tip of Scotland.



Perth

This city makes an excellent base for exploring beautiful countryside that was once hugely important and influential in Scotland. It is set on the banks of the Tay River in a hilly wooded area near Scone (pronounced skoon) Palace, a beautiful structure covered with red ivy, with several peacocks wandering the grounds. You'll also find a chapel and a replica of the Stone of Scone on which the kings of Scots were crowned. (The original, now in Edinburgh Castle, was stolen by the English and kept in London until its return to Scotland.)

Farther east from Scone Palace, the coastline leads to Dundee, Scotland's fourth-largest city. It was once noted for jam, jute and journalism, but only journalism remains. D.C. Thomson, publisher of most of the nation's comics, is still based there. It created children's favorites such as "Dennis the Menace," "Desperate Dan" and "Bash Street Kids." You can see how jute was manufactured and processed at Verdant Works, one of Europe's top industrial museums. The city's major attraction is the ship Discovery, which was used on the first Antarctic expedition of Capt. Robert Scott. The ship was originally built in the Panmure shipyard. In the 1970s, it was little more than a decaying hulk moored on the Thames's Embankment in London, but then a campaign by its home city resulted in its return and complete restoration.

To the north of Dundee is Glamis Castle, birthplace and childhood home of the late Queen Mother. Also in that area are Brechin Round Tower (built more than 1,000 years ago by Irish monks) and the lovely gardens at Edzell Castle. To the northeast lie the ruins of Arbroath Abbey and the remains of Dunnottar Castle. In Broughty Ferry, a village to the east of Dundee, Claypotts Castle is a fine example of 16th-century Scottish

architecture and was once owned by John Graham of Claverhouse, known as "Bonnie Dundee" or "Bloody Clavers," depending on your point of view.

South of Perth is Gleneagles, a five-star hotel and resort that has four excellent golf courses. It is one of only two hotels that can guarantee guests a round on a championship course. Facilities also include the Gleneagles Mark Phillips Equestrian Centre (with indoor and outdoor arenas) and the Gleneagles Jackie Stewart Shooting School for clay target shooting. Perth is 45 mi/70 km north of Edinburgh.

Shetland

Though the 100 Shetland Islands are only about 60 mi/100 km north of the Orkney Islands, they're startlingly different: Orkney is characterized by rolling farmland, but Shetland is a barren archipelago. The population traditionally worked as shepherds and fishermen, but today many are employed by installations associated with North Sea oil. It's a rugged land, ideal for those seeking remote and stark scenery, and bliss for bird-watchers, anglers and fans of seals, otters and other sea mammals.

Oddly, the islands' only town and capital, Lerwick, is among the most cosmopolitan in Scotland: Its narrow stone-paved streets and its pubs play host to sailors and oilmen from around the globe. The harbor usually is filled with the rusting hulks of Russian, Panamanian and Greek fishing vessels. The town also has a museum with Viking artifacts from throughout the islands. The islands are justly famous for music, which is played year-round in pub sessions and is celebrated every May in the internationally famous Shetland Folk Festival. An even bigger attraction is the winter fire festival of Up Helly Aa, held in January, culminating in the burning of a replica of a Viking longboat.

The Shetlands' largest island is called Mainland, and most of its interesting points are prehistoric: Clickhimin Broch, the Broch of Mousa, Jarlshof and Stanydale Temple. Many of these structures were already several centuries old when the Vikings arrived in the ninth century. Some of the outlying islands are truly isolated. Foula, the most remote inhabited island in Britain, can be reached by ferry twice a week and by air three times a week (from Tingwall Airport, near Lerwick). The truly adventurous can take the overnight ferry from Lerwick to the Faeroes on the way to Iceland. Midway between Shetland and Orkney lies Fair Isle, a bird-watcher's haven that's also known for its knitwear. Shetland is north of Orkney.

St. Andrews and Fife

Revered in the world of golf, St. Andrews is one of the most historic towns in Scotland. In addition to being the cradle of the Scottish Reformation, the town has the oldest university, the oldest golf course (appropriately named Old Course) and the ruins of the oldest cathedral in Scotland. The town was given a huge boost in popularity in 2001, when Prince William chose to study art history at the university. To the south, at Troywood, is one of Scotland's more unusual visitor attractions, the Secret Bunker, a subterranean base built in the 1950s and intended to be a command center in the event of nuclear war.

In nearby Fife and vicinity are outstanding monuments in stone such as Falkland Palace, Dunfermline Abbey and Leuchars Church. Culross is a splendid small Scottish town, and the coast road between Elie and Crail presents a lovely procession of tidy fishing ports. Pittenweem is a traditional Fife fishing village. When in Dunfermline, visit the birthplace



of U.S. millionaire and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and Pittencrieff Glen, a large ornamental estate with superb gardens. As a child, Carnegie couldn't see the estate except through its great gates. When he grew up, he bought the estate and presented it to the town (in 1903) so that it could be enjoyed by the children of the area. Several Scottish monarchs are buried in Dunfermline, including Robert the Bruce, whose remains (except for his heart) lie in the abbey. The cave where St. Margaret secretly prayed is

near Dunfermline's High Street and is accessible to the public. Walkers might want to take the Fife Coastal Path, which leads from Crail all the way to the Victorian Forth Rail Bridge at North Queensferry. 35 mi/55 km north of Edinburgh, across the Firth of Forth.

The Borders

The Borders is Scotland with a difference. This once-turbulent region in southeastern Scotland, made famous through the novels of Sir Walter Scott, is a gentle blend of landscapes-fertile farmlands spreading beneath rolling hills. It's also drier and warmer than the rest of the country. The region is characterized by distinctive market towns with squares and its historic buildings and monuments. Notable attractions range from the rugged headland above the fishing village of St. Abbs in the east to the remote and desolate fortress of Hermitage Castle to the west. There are grand houses and abbeys, including the spectacular ruins of the 14th-century Melrose Abbey, where the heart of Robert the Bruce was buried, Floors Castle and Traquair House (Scotland's oldest inhabited dwelling). Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford is open to the public, and in the old courtroom at Selkirk there is an audiovisual display about his association with the area. Although the industry is in decline, the Borders is still known for its woolens. A number of mills can be visited, including those in Hawick, Walkerburn and Innerleithen.

The Highlands

For travelers with the time to explore, the Highlands, covering most of the northern half of the country, provide some of the most spectacular scenery in all the British Isles. The desolate and untamed splendor of moors, mountains and sea-lochs is interrupted only by crofting communities nestled in the bottoms of the fertile straths and glens and a string of fishing villages dotted along the coast. Natural attractions range from the desolate blanket

bog of the Flow Country (a vast peatland full of rare wildlife), the popular beaches and massive seaside cliffs of Sutherland in the north to the rugged beauty of Argyll in the south. It's a region where every road is scenic.

Fort William sits at the western end of Great Glen, at the foot of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak (if you can see Ben Nevis through the mist, you're experiencing a rare occurrence). Queen Victoria used to admire dramatic views of the mountain from Inverlochy Castle, which is now a hotel. For accommodations in less hectic surroundings, try Glenfinnan, Arasaig or Acharachle (20-30 mi/32-48 km to the west) or Spean Bridge (to the north). You can join the West Highland Way there, a 95-mi-/150-km-long hiking path that leads all the way to Milngavie, near Glasgow, via old military roads and cattle routes. Take any road out of Fort William for a spectacular drive: south to Glencoe



(somber and majestic) or Glen Nevis (rugged and wild), southwest through Strontian to Ardnamurchan or west to Mallaig (along the picturesque Road to the Isles, which passes the Glenfinnan Monument, commemorating Bonnie Prince Charlie and the ill-fated rebellion of 1745). If time permits, stop in Mallaig; it's an interesting fishing village. It can be reached by train through some very spectacular scenery (a lovely day trip)-in the summer, a "Jacobite" steam engine pulls the trains from Fort William to Mallaig, through dramatic scenery (including the 21-arch "Harry Potter" viaduct at Glenfinnan).

On the North Sea, Invergordon merits a stop to see the lighthouse and Invergordon Castle (seat of the MacLeod Clan). In nearby Tain, Scotland's oldest royal burgh, whisky-lovers can take tours of the hallowed Glenmorangie distillery. Between Invergordon and Tain lies the "Pictish Trail" of fishing villages such as Nigg and Balintore.

Inverness was awarded city status in 2000. It is often used as a gateway to nearby Loch Ness and the northern Highlands, though it has a few interesting sights of its own. Some of the buildings in its historical area at the end of Church Street date to the 16th century. It also has a clock tower, Culloden Battlefield and a prehistoric graveyard.

Loch Ness, the reputed home of "Nessie," the famous water monster, is a short way southwest of Inverness. There are two Loch Ness Monster Exhibitions at Drumnadrochit, on the main road to Fort William—the "Official" and the "Original." They are both worth seeing. Jacobite Cruises does boat tours of the loch, providing a close-up view of the dark, mysterious waters and a haunting glimpse of the ruin of Urquhart Castle, destroyed by its owner to prevent its capture by Jacobites in 1692.

There are several scenic routes through the northern Highlands region that shouldn't be missed. The road from Inverness northwest through Strathpeffer, Aultbea and eventually to Loch Carron is among the most beautiful and rugged in Scotland, with few tourists but several spacious vistas sprinkled with small villages. The road on the coast north of Loch Carron takes some time: It's as narrow as the views of mountains and sea are spectacular. Area roads lead back through mountainous moorland to the eastern coast of Ross and Sutherland counties (a strip of fertile farms dotted with tidy towns and villages).



The Spey Valley south of Inverness also provides excellent touring. Around Grantown-on-Spey, you can follow the winding "whisky trail" and take distillery tours until you literally drop (but be sure to take along a non-drinking driver). The mountain resort of Aviemore lies in the shadow of the Cairngorms in the Cairngorms National Park. Once Scotland's main ski center, it now offers year-round activities that include a funicular railway to the highest restaurant in Scotland, mountain biking, hiking and

climbing. Nearby Glen More Forest Park provides a variety of nature-related activities, including, oddly enough, reindeer-watching. Continuing south through the national park, you'll pass Blair Castle (an impressive white baronial mansion), the superb Queen's View (another favorite of Victoria's) and the fine wooded gorge at the pass of Killiecrankie before arriving in Pitlochry, "the center of Scotland." Ben Vrackie towers over the town and is a reasonably undemanding climb for the able-bodied. Depending on the season,

you can watch salmon throwing themselves up the fish ladder by the dam to spawn farther upstream.

Nairn, to the east of Inverness, is a nice seaside resort area complete with beaches, golf courses and a small-town atmosphere. The area is linked with the black arts-it was home to both the reputed witch Isobel Gowdie and Cawdor Castle (of Macbeth fame-it's still inhabited by the Earl of Cawdor). Also near Nairn is Brodie Castle. With its elaborate 17th-century ceilings, it's an elegant setting for a notable collection of paintings, French furniture and porcelain. The National Trust for Scotland now rents out the former laird's apartment at a very reasonable price.

Thurso, the most northerly town in mainland Britain and the northern terminus of the Scottish rail system, is often used as a base to see John O'Groats, at the very tip of Scotland, and explore the wide-open spaces and dramatic sea-cliffs of Caithness. While in the area, be sure to visit the Castle of Mey (the late Queen Mother's Scottish home) and the rugged, spectacular scenery. Incongruously enough, Thurso is popular with surfers.



Heading west along the road from Thurso eventually will take you to the clachan of Bettyhill. There, in the former 18th-century parish church of St. Columba, is Strathnaver Museum. This is the best place to find out about one of the most notorious events in Scottish history, the Highland Clearances. South of Bettyhill, a single-track road runs through Strathnave, scene of the worst of the clearances, and you can visit the remains of a clearance village at Rosal.

The seafront town of Oban on the west coast is one of the most attractive in the Highlands (and it's another good base for touring). From Oban, there are many opportunities to explore the Hebridean Islands, but only if you have lots of time. South of Oban are Castle Sween, Scotland's oldest keep, and Dunadd Fort, the first capital of the Scots. South of Dunadd is Kilmartin Glen, a shallow valley rich in prehistoric remains (standing stones and burial cairns). To the east lies the Pass of Brander, site of stark Kilchurn Castle.

The Inner Hebrides

These rugged, isolated and desolate islands are a wonderful glimpse of the old rural Scotland. If you visit, make sure you spend enough time to settle into the slow island rhythms-otherwise their subtle charms might pass you by.

The spectacular Isle of Skye is a fascinating place and, fortunately, the biggest and most accessible of the Inner Hebrides. The rounded mountain mass of the Red Cuillins contrasts dramatically with the jagged spires of the Black Cuillins, a magnet for Britain's premier mountaineers. Spend as much time as possible on Skye-many of the loveliest parts are down side roads, so it can't be fully appreciated on a day trip. Drive to Talisker (visit the distillery for a tour), Sleat (Clan Donald center) or Glendale (near 800-year-old Dunvegan Castle). Skye offers a chance to explore isolated beaches and trek through jagged mountains. Visit the Bright Water Visitor Centre at Kyleakin Pier and learn a little about the author Gavin Maxwell and his time on Skye. Also worth a visit is the collection of old crofter cottages that form the Skye Museum of Island Life, and Flora MacDonald's grave near Kilmuir. The island is reached by a bridge from Kyle of Lochalsh.

Several days could be spent on Islay, which is more sheltered than the other Hebrides. It provides an astounding variety of scenery and wildlife (hundreds of species of birds have been recorded). The rich, peaty, single-malt whiskys of Islay's eight distilleries are world-renowned (the island also produces tweeds and cheese). Attractions include ancient crosses and Scotland's only round church, designed so that the devil would have no corner in which to hide.

Jura is separated from Islay by a narrow passage. If anything it is more rugged than Islay and the perfect location for a "get away from it all" break. The author George Orwell took up residence in the isolated house of Barnhill in 1946, and it was there that he wrote his novel 1984, which was completed in 1948. North of where Orwell lived is the Sound of Corryvreckan, which separates Jura from Scarba. There's a famous whirlpool that can be viewed from the hills above the gulf.

Though fairly difficult to get to, the Isle of Iona is worth the effort for those interested in the history of Christianity in Britain-the island's abbey was the center of Christianity in the north of Scotland for a very long time. Reached by Calmac ferry from Oban and then a shorter ferry crossing to the island, Iona is worth a day's visit (include a boat trip from there to see the dramatic column-shaped basalt pillars and Fingal's Cave on the isle of Staffa). Mull is also worth visiting, particularly the town of Tobermoray, with its gaily colored cottages facing the harbor where the remains of a Spanish galleon loaded with gold supposedly lie. The Inner Hebrides are off the northwest coast of Scotland.

Trossachs Region

The Trossachs (which means "bristling country") was home to Scottish folk hero Rob Roy MacGregor and the setting of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. The scenery-hills and valleys-and alpine ambience are reminiscent of parts of Austria and Switzerland. We suggest at least a full day there; it's



one of the country's most beautiful-and underrated-regions. Callander, which is a good base for exploring, has a variety of shops and an exhibition about Rob Roy. At Balquhiddar, north of Callander, you can visit his grave with its inscription "MACGREGOR DESPITE THEM," referring to the fact that the MacGregor name had been proscribed. Nearby Loch Katrine is one of the most romantic of Scottish lochs and the water supply for the

city of Glasgow. The steamer Sir Walter Scot sails across the loch daily in the summer.

Popularized in a Scottish ballad, Loch Lomond is one of the most accessible of the Scottish lochs. Straddling the Highland Boundary Fault line, it shares characteristics of both Highlands and Lowlands and boasts a huge variety of wildlife, especially birds and plants. Waterskiing and windsurfing are excellent (equipment may be rented locally), but beware strong underwater currents. The surrounding scenery, including the nearby peak of Ben Lomond, is delightful. The village of Luss, on the coast, is a conservation village that was once important in the cotton and slate industries. The loch is good for a day trip from Glasgow or Stirling, or it can be combined with a visit to the Trossachs.

Though only a small city, Stirling possesses as much visual charm as any other place in Scotland, and it has great historical importance. Stirling was once the capital of Scotland and Stirling Castle the favorite seat of the Stuart kings for 800 years. From the castle ramparts, the whole of

the surrounding countryside can be seen, including the Wallace Monument and the Battlefield at Bannockburn. The fine Gothic Church of the Holy Rude, the Guild Hall, old craftsmen's houses, Argyll's Lodging (a 16th-century town house) and a wealth of architectural gems from throughout the centuries make



Stirling one of the most attractive of Scottish towns. Highlights include the Tolbooth

Theatre, the Queen Anne Garden, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum and the creepy Old Town Jail.

At Bannockburn, just to the south, Robert Bruce won Scottish independence in 1314, and you can see an excellent audiovisual display about the battle there. Hunters in the area may come across the obscure, seemingly forgotten memorial marking the spot where King James III was mysteriously murdered. And the massive Wallace Monument stands across the River Forth from Stirling, near where Sir William Wallace, another fighter for Scottish independence, defeated the English (Wallace's 6-ft/2-m broadsword is on display in the tower). At nearby Bridge of Allan is a more historically dubious tribute, a monument to Wallace that depicts the freedom-fighter's face as that of actor Mel Gibson in the movie *Braveheart*. For those more interested in animals than history, Blair Drummond Safari Park and Glengoulandie Deer Park are both nearby. 25 mi/40 km north of Glasgow.

Western Isles

The Western Isles, also known as the Outer Hebrides, are beautiful, treeless, windswept islands with a mountainous spine, in an area where the land seems to blend with the water in countless lochs, rivers, inlets and pools. This is a place for solitude and the contemplation of nature. The best time to visit is the summer, when the rains are less frequent. There's an almost infinite variety of wildlife for nature lovers, and not just in the nature preserve of Loch Druidibeg (on South Uist). Otters, mink, seals, porpoises and even basking sharks can be found in and around the water.

Though primarily a land in which to marvel at natural rather than man-made things, people have lived on these islands for 6,000 years, and they offer some marvelous historical structures: Kisimul Castle on the island of Barra, Rodel Church on Harris, the Standing Stones of Callanish (Scotland's Stonehenge) and Dun Carloway Broch on Lewis. From more recent years, at Arnol on Lewis, you can find one of the few remaining blackhouses, the thatched dwellings that people traditionally shared with their animals. (This one was still occupied in the 1960s.) The Gaelic language is still spoken widely in the Western Isles, and it's a place where old traditions of story, song and piping are still going strong. You can also see Harris Tweed being woven on Uist, Harris and Lewis or at the Lewis Loom Centre in Stornoway.

The Western Isles are a long way from most other tourist attractions, but a trip there can be the experience of a lifetime for those who appreciate nature at its most untamed. You can get there by ferry from Oban or Ullapool. The most spectacular way to arrive is by the Glasgow-Barra flight, which tumbles down onto a sandy beach. (It's the only flight on the British Airways timetable that includes the caveat, "subject to tides.") For a truly remarkable sojourn, hire a boat on Barra to take you south to the uninhabited mountainous island of Berneray, where 1,000-ft/300-m cliffs plunge into the sea at Barra Head. Few visitors leave this impressive though forgotten corner of the world unmoved. The Western Isles lie off the northwestern coast of Scotland.

DINING

These days, all images of Scottish cuisine as bland and stodgy have been hurled out the window by a flurry of top-notch restaurants, celebrity chefs and innovative cooking techniques that make the best of the local ingredients. Native specialties include



Aberdeen Angus beef, lamb, fish (particularly salmon, trout and whitefish), grouse, pheasant, venison and seafood-especially Loch Fyne oysters, scallops, lobster and delicious fish-and-chips. Try haggis, which is made from the minced offal of a sheep, highly seasoned, mixed with oatmeal and traditionally boiled in a sheep's

stomach. It is usually served at Burns Suppers with "neeps and tatties" (mashed turnips and potatoes) and washed down with whisky. Other local favorites include black pudding (blood sausage) and mince pie, available from bakeries and especially popular at football matches.



Scots also make excellent soups, especially cullen skink (a creamy fish-and-potato soup that originated in the village of Cullen in the Highlands). Desserts and pastries are generally very good, especially shortbread and oatcakes.



Scottish breakfasts are well-known for their generous portions. If you get a full breakfast (consisting of cereal, black pudding, haggis, fried egg, sausage, bacon, potato scone, fried tomato, beans, toast, and tea or coffee), you may not be able to eat lunch. Try a high tea, which usually consists of fish-and-chips and a selection of scones, cakes, and bread and butter. The Tontine Hotel in Greenock west of Glasgow is rightly famous for its high teas.

In most larger towns and cities, there are international restaurants, tearooms and cafes, but great hearty Scottish food also can be found in pubs-

if you know where to look. The best way to find a good place to eat is to ask a local-some of the tourist-oriented restaurants do not do justice to the country's rich culinary larder.

Also, be aware that Scotland is a "Smoke-Free Zone." You cannot light up in restaurants, pubs or cafes-or in any enclosed public space. That also includes public transportation, cinemas, museums and even bus shelters. The ban came into effect March 2006.

SHOPPING

Shopping in Scotland can be great fun, especially if you have time to explore smaller, off-the-beaten-track stores. Book lovers can get lost for hours in the larger bookstores in urban areas that are home to universities, especially Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Shop for antiques, woolens, tartans, leather and sheepskin clothing, crystal, china, silver jewelry and, of course, whisky. Beware the tacky-tartan shops in many popular tourist areas that sell poor-quality souvenirs such as ultra-thin kilts.



Glasgow, which is the U.K.'s second-best

shopping experience (after London), has earned the well-deserved description "Scotland with style." Edinburgh is catching up with the opening of Multrees Walk, a designer shopping area in the New Town (the city center's first new street in centuries) and Scotland's first Harvey Nichols department store. Elsewhere, smaller towns such as Castle Douglas and Peebles have retained a strong sense of local identity and still boast a large selection of unique shops.

Shopping Hours: Monday-Saturday 9 am-5:30 pm. Hours may vary: Some stores may be open on Sunday morning, and most stores will close early one day, usually Wednesday or Thursday.

PRACTICALITIES

Geostats

Official Name: Scotland.

Passport/Visa Requirements: Passports are required of Canadian and U.S. citizens for stays of up to six months. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

Capital: Edinburgh.

Population: 5,057,400.

LANGUAGES: ENGLISH, GAELIC AND SCOTS.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Protestant).

Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the last Saturday in March to the last Saturday in October.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts.

Telephone Codes: 44, code for the U.K.; 131, city code for Edinburgh; 141, city code for Glasgow.

Money

Currency Exchange

The Scottish pound is issued by Scottish banks and is legal tender, with the same value as the British pound. The British pound is accepted everywhere in Scotland, but the reverse is not true: Outside of London and other major cities in England, you may have trouble finding merchants who will accept Scottish pound notes. If you are heading to England, change Scottish notes for British ones before you leave.

Currency Exchange Rates

The recent British election resulted in a falling pound to the U. S. dollar. As of Saturday, 8 May 2010, the rate of exchange was approximately 50-U.S. cents to 1- U.K. pound sterling. The rate is continuing to change.

Taxes

A 17.5% value-added tax (VAT) is levied on most purchases, including hotel and restaurant bills. Nonresidents may receive a VAT refund by using Customs Form 407 (some shops keep these handy and may even take care of the paperwork for you). Stores set their own minimum purchases (usually around £35) for you to qualify for a VAT refund. At the airport, take your forms to the Tax-Free Cash Refund Desk for reimbursement. For more information, call Foreign Exchange Tax-Free Shopping, 0800-829-373.

Tipping

Tip 10%-15% if a service charge is not included on the bill.

Weather

Scotland can be windy, misty and chilly, which can be unpleasant if you are not prepared. Be sure to take a windbreaker and clothing that can be layered. The eastern coast is often drier and cooler than the western, but the weather everywhere is highly variable, changing by the mile and the minute, as well as by the altitude. The best time to go is April-September. Summer temperatures range around 65-80 F/18-25 C. The days are long in midsummer,



especially in the north where it stays light almost to midnight. Many tourist attractions-castles, museums and the like-are closed in the winter and open only for limited viewing hours in the autumn and spring. In November-January, the days are very short, and the darkness, cold and drizzle can be oppressive. Winter temperatures seldom dip far below freezing, except in the mountains. Be sure to take along or buy a hefty sweater, no matter when you go.

For More Information

Tourist Offices

VisitScotland, Ocean Point One, 94 Ocean Drive, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6JH, Scotland, U.K. Phone 0845-225-5121 or 0131-472-2222. <http://www.visitscotland.com>.

Canada: Visit Britain, 5915 Airport Road, Mississauga, ON L4B 1T1. Toll-free 888-847-4885. <http://www.visitbritain.com>.

U.S.: Visit Britain, 551 Fifth Ave., Suite 701, New York, NY 10176. Phone 212-986-2200. Toll-free 800-462-2748. Fax 212-986-1188. There are also offices in Atlanta and Chicago.

British Embassies

Canada: British High Commission, 80 Elgin St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5K7. Phone 613-237-1530. Fax 613-237-7980. There are also consulates in Halifax, Montreal, St. John's, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

U.S.: British Embassy, 3100 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20008. Phone 900-990-8472. (This is a premium-rate service and charges US\$2.49 per minute. Credit-card calls at the same rate can be made to 800-935-9993.) Emergencies only: 202-588-6500. Fax 202-898-4255. There are also consulates in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco. <http://www.britain-info.org>.

Foreign Consulates in Scotland

Canadian Consulate, Festival Square, 50 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9WJ. Phone 131-473-6320.

U.S. Consulate, 3 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BW. Phone 131-556-8315.

Additional Reading

The Scottish Nation 1700-2000, by T.M. Devine (Penguin)

Any of the historical novels by the late Nigel Tranter.

Recommended Guidebooks

Essential Scotland, by Hugh Taylor and Moira McCrossan (AA/AAA). Ideal for the first-time visitor who has limited time and wants to see the highlights.

Spiral Guide to Scotland, by Hugh Taylor and Moira McCrossan (AA/AAA). Read it on the plane and hit the ground running. The magazine section provides valuable background information, and each chapter contains detailed itineraries and walking and driving tours to take all of the work out of vacation planning.

Insight Guide: Scotland (APA Publications). This covers the country in great depth and has an excellent historical section.

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Travel is by its very nature an adventure into the unknown. In all instances, no matter how safe you may perceive a destination, any destination, use your good judgment. Take precautions. The more information you have, the better. The destination intelligence in this report is supplied and monitored by Weissmann Reports. While we make every effort to be as thorough and accurate as possible, mistakes can and do occur. Please use the information provided as a basis for further research and not as a definitive report on your destination. All information is provided "as is" and without any representation or warranty.

POLLOCK HALLS, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Confirm upon arrival the telephone numbers given in this hand-out. The numbers may have changed since this document was prepared.

HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR GROUP ORGANISERS

Important : please pass on information to members of your group.

FIRE SAFETY

Fire alarm testing is carried out every Wednesday.

The alarm emits a continuous high-pitched sound. Fire Action notices (white print on a blue background) are prominently displayed in all public areas.

‘Action to be Taken in the Event of a Fire’ notices are posted in every bedroom. Fire Exits and escape routes are clearly sign-posted in each residence.

In the event of a fire alarm activation, the Helpdesk in the Reception Centre is automatically notified and will contact the Fire Brigade directly. Anyone discovering a fire, as well as raising the alarm, should contact the Help Desk by dialing **6666**. Guests are required to vacate the building **immediately** the fire alarm is activated, and must not re-enter the building until permitted to do so by the Fire Brigade or the Fire Assembly Controller

Evacuation assembly points are located clear of the main exit of each residence. Group Organisers should have an accurate list of all names and room numbers of their group (available from the Reception Centre on check-in), and are responsible for reporting to the Fire Safety Controller (a member of the Pollock Halls Security Staff) who will attend when a fire alarm is activated) to give an indication if the area has been cleared and any relevant information which can be passed on to the Fire Brigade.

DISABLED RESIDENTS

Details of any disabled members in your group should be registered with your Group Co-ordinator prior to arrival. Alternatively, please advise the Reception Centre staff as soon as possible. Notices detailing Fire Action for Disabled People are displayed in all buildings. Please note that mobility disabled guests will be accommodated on the ground or lower ground floors. Group Organisers should inform the Fire Assembly Controller of the situation regarding disabled guests in their group. Written Instruction Notices are posted in rooms used for Disabled Guests and copies are available on request.

ACCIDENTS & EMERGENCIES

In the event of an accident or emergency, residents are requested to contact the Reception Centre Helpdesk by dialing 6666. The Helpdesk staff will contact, as necessary, a taxi or ambulance to take the casualty to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

FIRST AID

All residences display contact details for qualified First Aiders and Appointed Persons, either in the entrance foyer or close to the House Office. These notices also detail where to find the nearest First Aid Box. Each building maintains at least one First Aid Box. During normal working hours, Domestic Supervisors will be able to arrange First Aid assistance; alternatively contact Reception by dialing 22002.

LIFT BREAKDOWNS

All passenger lifts are provided with an in-built telephone which is directly linked to the Reception Centre. Should a guest be trapped in a lift, they should contact Reception by using the telephone. If the telephone doesn't work, the lift alarm should be activated, which will be reported to Reception. If necessary, a lift engineer will attend within 30 minutes of receiving a call from the Helpdesk and a member of staff will remain in proximity of the lift to update on progress.

SECURITY

Please note the Help Desk at Reception is staffed 24 hours a day

GENERAL SECURITY GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS

To ensure the safety and well being of all our guests, we recommend that individuals take some basic precautions ...

We advise guests to keep their room doors locked at all times, even if only leaving your room for a short time. Remember to lock the door when in your room and, where relevant, make use of the security spy-hole facility. And please secure all windows when leaving your room.

It is inadvisable to leave items of value unattended in your room. If you do not wish to carry valuables with you, please make enquiries at the Reception Centre about access to a safe.

Residents are encouraged to report any suspicious behaviour or persons to staff, or call the Helpdesk on 22002. Any members of staff who require access to your room for cleaning or maintenance can provide identification on request.

Rooms should be vacated by 10.30am on the day of departure. Please note that luggage CANNOT be left in individual residences/rooms. However, luggage can be securely left at the Reception Centre, if required.

We strongly advise against leaving belongings visible in a car or coach parked in the grounds. All personal belongings should be taken to your room or deposited at left luggage in the Reception Centre.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Pollock Halls Reception Centre - 24-hours From outside (0131) 667
1971

Internal (from residences) 22002

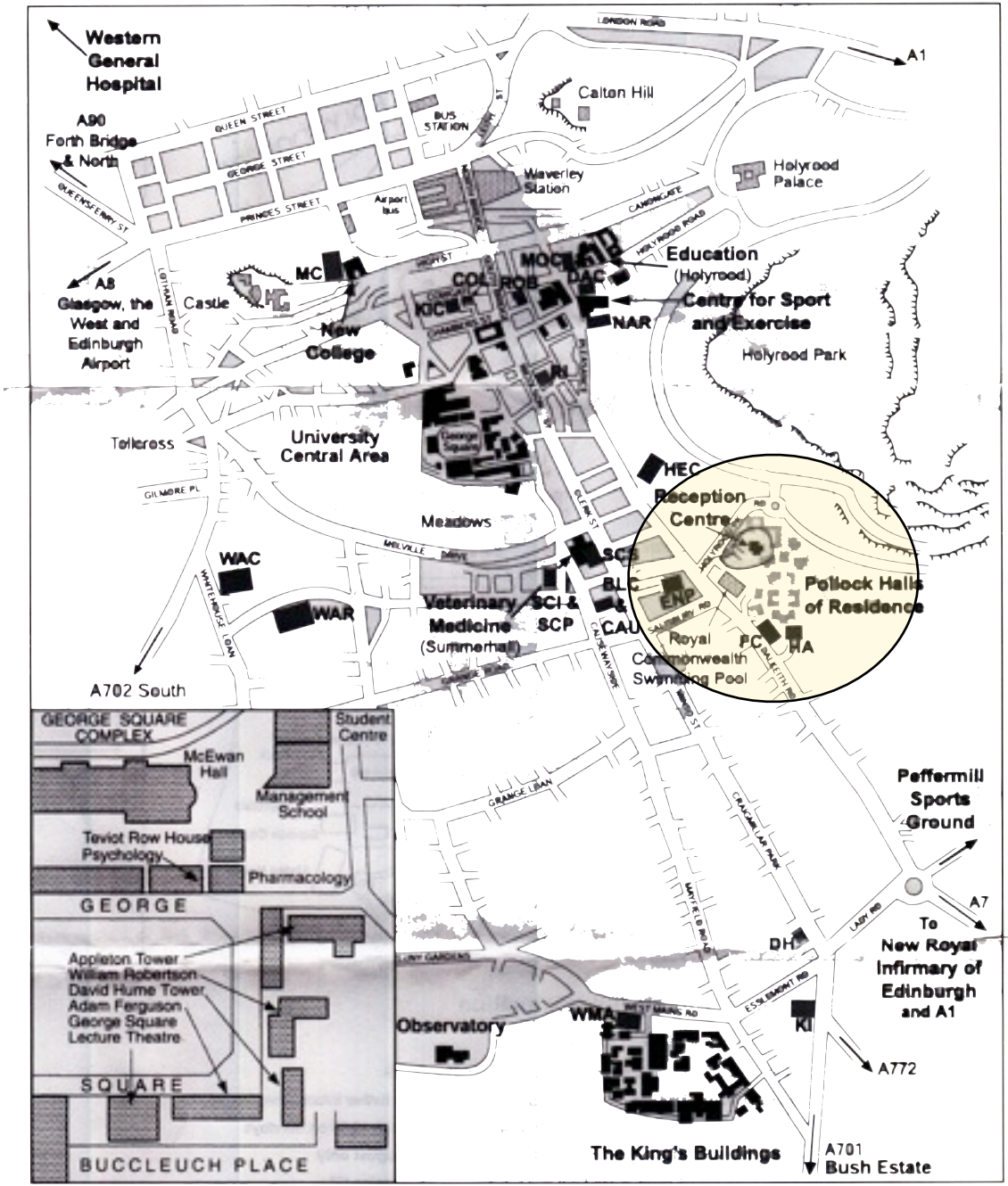
St Leonard's Police Station (0131) 662
5000

Emergency telephone numbers

From any building in Pollock Halls (except Fraser Court) call **6666**

From Fraser Court call **999**

Pollock Halls and other University of Edinburgh accommodation locations

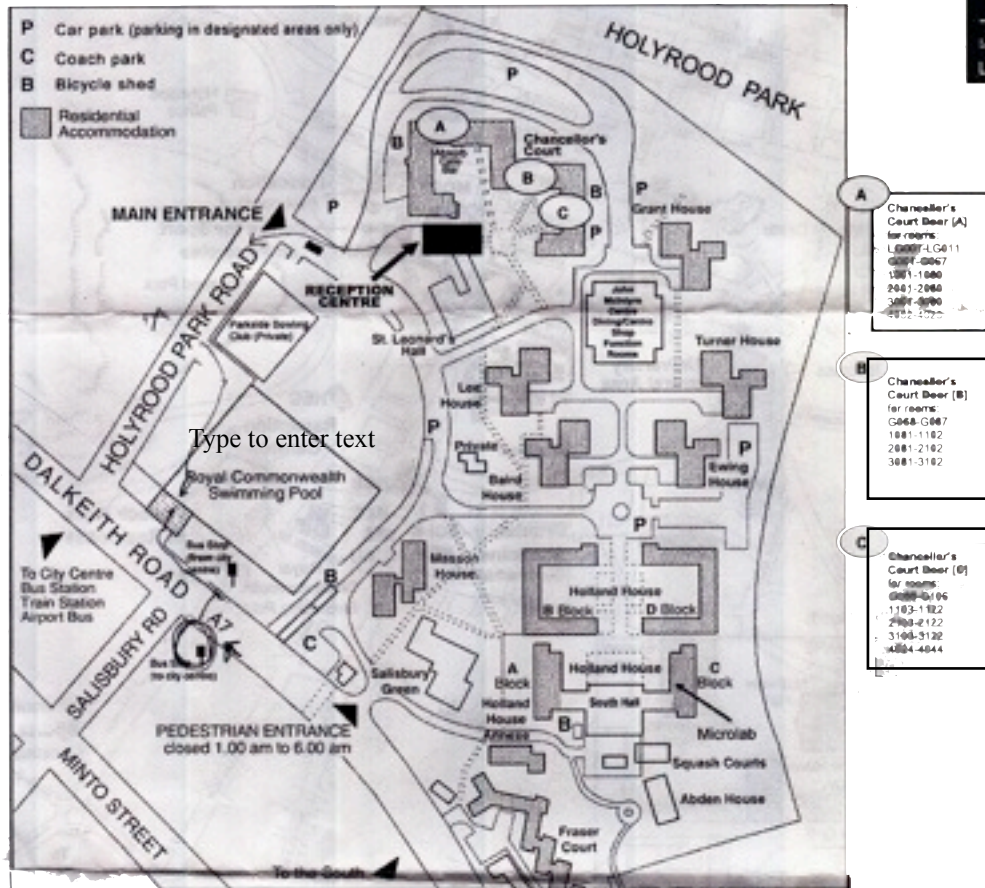


Accommodation site codes					
BLC	Blackwood Crescent	HEC	Hemil's Croft	SCI	Sciennes
CAU	Causewayside	KI	Kitchener House	SCP	Sciennes Place
COL	College Wynd	KIC	Kincaid's Court	SCS	South Clerk Street
DAC	Darroch Court	MC	Myne's Court	WAC	Warrender Park Crescent
DH	David Horn House	MOC	Morgan Court	WAR	Warrender Park Road
ENP	East Newington Place	NAR	New Arthur Place	WMA	West Mains Road
FC	Fraser Court	RI	Richmond Place		
HA	Holland Annexe	ROB	Robertson's Close		

Edinburgh First at The University of Edinburgh

Email edinburgh.first@ed.ac.uk **Web** www.edinburghfirst.com
Tel 0131 651 2189 **Fax** 0131 667 7271

Edinburgh First



Useful Information

- Check out time on your day of departure is 10.30.
- Breakfast is served in the John McIntyre Centre (JMC) from 07.30 to 10.00.
- Lunch and Dinner are also served at the JMC. Please see Reception for further information.
- Centre Bar (in the JMC) is open 11.00 to 23.00 daily; no alcohol is served till 12.30 on Sundays.
- Absorb Bar (in Chancellor's Court) is open from 11.00 to 23.00 daily in August only.
- Reception may be contacted 24 hours a day from any room phone, by pressing "0".
- Internet pay-per-minute terminals are available in the Reception Centre.
- Internet wireless zones are available on site in Absorb, Centre and the Reception Centre. To access the system, you need to register at Reception and pay a daily fee.
- Bus maps and a guide to public transport in Edinburgh are available in the Reception Centre.

Conferences, Meetings & Events | Accommodation | Dining | Weddings | Outside Catering

The information in this Early Scotland pamphlet is compiled from a number of different sources including Visit Scotland, <http://www.visitscotland.com/>, material provided by Pollack Halls, and the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad (CCSA). This handout is not an official publication of Pollack Halls or CCSA.