

The Scots know how to party, and the Hogmanay celebrations were not over yet. There was a New Year's event called the Loony Dook that we would have liked to see. About 1000 mad people dress up in fancy dress, parade through Queensferry village and then jump into the freezing waters of the Forth River. It would have been fun to watch, but we slept in too long to be able to get there in time. So after a leisurely breakfast, we were looking for a Plan B.

After our failed trip to the beach yesterday, we thought we would give it another go. North Berwick wasn't an option as the trains weren't running and the bus took three times as long. There was a closer beach in the suburbs of Edinburgh with a very un-Scottish name, Portobello Beach. It was a lovely day but the temperatures had plummeted and the icy northerly was blowing straight into the beach. That didn't deter the hardy Scots and the place was packed with people and dogs, some of them mad enough to swim here too.



Portobello Beach



The Scots are tough

It was fun people watching for a while, then we escaped inside for a classic British experience, the seaside arcade. You accumulate a lot of coins in the UK. Unlike NZ, they haven't discarded any of their smaller coins yet, so you end up with masses of low value coins, right down to one penny. We found the perfect way to get rid of these coins, a 2 penny coin-push game. We converted a bunch of our coins into two penny coins and set about trying to win one of the amazing prizes on offer. Anna had her eye on a Krusty Burger key ring, and we all pitched in to help. It took ages (we keep winning a supply of two penny coins and feeding them back in) and an investment of about one pound, but it was great fun and we were finally rewarded with the much-wanted key ring.



The Gamblers

We'd heard Andy talk about Five Guys Burgers in New York, and discovered there were now three branches in Edinburgh. We bussed back to Princes St to find the nearest branch. Their burgers did not disappoint, they were absolutely delicious and the chips were the best of the trip so far. We caught the bus back to Jo's place for the last time. We've spent a fair amount of time on the Lothian buses and they've been a great way to get around. The views from upstairs are fantastic and allow you to see more of this beautiful city.



View from the bus stop



Lothian Bus



Final Bus Ride up Morningside Drive

Back at the Manor, we helped Jo with preparations for the last New Year's celebration. We didn't realise that there would be another party on New Year's night, but shouldn't have been surprised as this is Scotland. It was a lovely way to end our time in Edinburgh, catching up with Bill, Anne and Mike and Mags, as well as seeing Liz and May for the first time on this trip. It's always sad saying goodbye, but we'll be back and hopefully some of them will come and visit NZ again too.



New Year Dinner