




The last couple of days have been spent exploring some of the lovely villages around Edinburgh with our wonderful personal guide. We had been hoping that the Scottish weather forecasters were as bad as the Kiwi ones and it's turned out to be true. The endless showers being promised have been pretty non-existent and we have been treated to some lovely sunshine. There was a chilly northerly wind today - still hard to get our heads around northerly winds being cold!

One of the lovely villages we visited on Saturday was Cramond.



The main street of Cramond

 There are loads of dogs here in Scotland, but the Westies are my favourite. This is Hamish, who provided entertainment by peeing on the ice cream shop sign!



Cramond harbour

West of Cramond are the mile long twin bridges across the Firth of Forth. The red rail bridge is the more impressive of the two, but you can only walk across the road suspension bridge. We walked to the middle of the road bridge, which has great view of the coastal villages and the rail bridge.



Two thirds of the rail bridge (there are 3 identical sections)



Queensferry, the village between the two bridges



Forth road bridge



Kids in the middle of the road bridge

On Saturday night we had a couple of Jo's friends come for dinner. Bill (aka The Magic Man) comes to NZ regularly with Jo and stays with us, so it was great to see him again. We need to wait for Monday for one of his magic shows though. Anne from the flat across the landing also came. She is the fittest nearly 91 year old I have ever met. She also has the most wonderful sense of humour so there were loads of laughs again.



The yummy dessert - Creme egg ice creams and sponges made by Anne.

On Sunday morning we went to church with Jo. Everyone was so welcoming yet again and the kids were amazed by the beautiful old stone church. I gave the kids the option to go to kids church and they both decided it would be a good experience to mix with some Scottish kids. I have been really proud of the way they are trying to maximise their travel experiences.

Jo had been hoping for a nice afternoon as she wanted to take us to North Berwick, a popular seaside resort about 45 minutes from Edinburgh. We were all delighted that it was the best weather here so far. There are quite a few islands around North Berwick which are covered in sea birds. We visited the Seabird centre which had amazing interactive displays about the sea birds and their migration, as well as lots of webcams where you could watch the birds in their natural habitat. The puffins were the highlight, they are very cute and entertaining birds.



North Berwick. The small church on the right of the photo is from the 7th century. There is so much history here.



Live webcam of puffins at Seabird Centre



Street in North Berwick

Spring is a very beautiful season here. The buildings and sky are generally quite dreary, which makes the blossoms and flowers an incredible contrast. It sounds like the blossom peak has come early this year after a mild winter - a real bonus for us.



Garden in North Berwick. There was a tulip festival on with beautiful displays along the streets.



There is blossom everywhere.

It's early Monday morning here now. The kids should be back at school now, but instead we will have history lessons today as we are off to visit Edinburgh castle.