

# MIDLOTHIAN

## CET REFLECTIONS

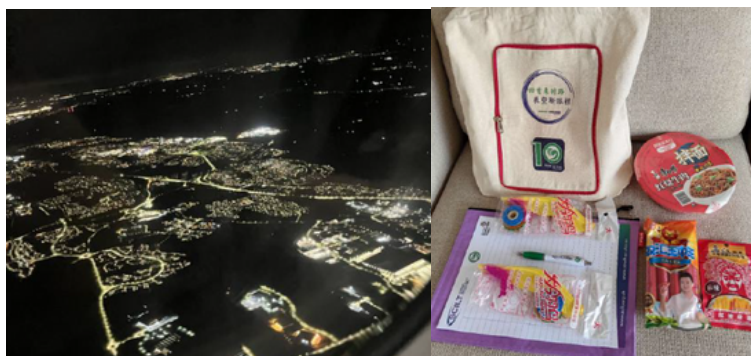
### COLOURFUL MEMORIES IN SCOTLAND

*Yujing He, Chinese Exchange Teacher in Midlothian*

#### THE BEGINNING

The glittering night view of the city gradually came into view as we finally arrived in Glasgow. With excitement and joy, we were about to start our Mandarin dream journey here.

When we landed at Glasgow International Airport, we met the Chinese Dean, Yanyan Zhao, and Lisa Hanna, who came to welcome us. We received a gift prepared by the Confucius Institute for Scotland Schools, which made us feel at home with their warmth and kindness.



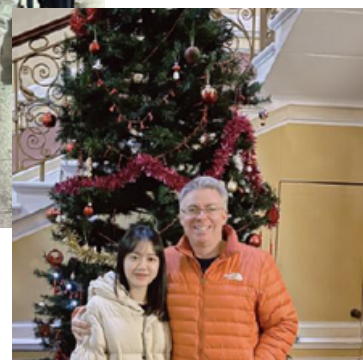
The day after we arrived in Glasgow, we started our three-day intensive teaching training, and it was not until this moment that I really realized that I was about to go from the VET screen to the real classroom, with a little bit of anticipation and a little bit of nervousness.



After completing the training, we all set off to our respective schools, and a Chinese proverb came to mind: "*Gathered as a ball of fire, dispersed as a sky full of stars.*" In the coming year, the volunteers will do their best to brighten up their own part of the sky and make the flower of Mandarin bloom in every corner of Scotland.

As time passed, the train was about to arrive at Edinburgh Waverley railway station, and as soon as I left the ticket gate, I saw my mentor, Colin, who was greeting me with anticipation.

As soon as I saw him, I felt a touch of warmth even in this strange city. He was very nice and a gentleman, helping me to rent an apartment, showing me around the school, inviting me for coffee as well as helping me with my lesson plan, and so on. The most touching thing was that he and Rosemary celebrated my birthday together. Everything he and Rosemary did for me made me feel at home.



## TEACHING TIME IN MANDARIN CLASS

After a week of orientation, I entered the Confucius Classroom in Midlothian. I teach at four primary schools in the Midlothian area, and I am mainly responsible for teaching Chinese to the P6 and P7, and I go to one school every day to teach Mandarin to the pupils. When I walked into Loanhead Primary School for the first time, the students prepared a simple welcoming ceremony for me and presented me with welcome cards made by themselves. The friendly class teacher and lovely students made me feel very good and full of self-confidence and enthusiasm for teaching Chinese in the future.



In the next Mandarin class, we learned about colors, animals and other thematic content together, made panda paper cut-outs; learned how to say numbers in Mandarin, how to play shuttlecock, how to count in Mandarin, and got to know the Chinese RMB.



When learning about the Chinese zodiac as a teaching theme, the children were particularly interested and were eager to raise their hands to tell me their Chinese zodiac and what their favourite zodiac was; the Chinese characters became concrete and vivid on their Mandarin jotters.



In time for the most celebrated festival of the year here (Christmas), we learned vocabulary and then worked in small groups to make Christmas trees, with great engagement from the pupils. Each pupil crafted a hand-made Christmas tree.





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In honour of the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Dragon 2024, we learned about Chinese New Year related customs and legends, read and spoke Chinese New Year vocabulary, watched a video of a dragon dance and made a "dragon" together. Some children even performed a dragon dance in the classroom with a dragon in their hands



The children were engrossed in creating the Eric Liddell posters and it was commendable that Savanna and Isla from P5B class were awarded the prize for the best work out of over 2,000 posters from across Scotland.



In the week before the Easter holidays, the pupils made their much-loved Bunny boxes.



At the end of each term, I always receive gifts from my pupils, perhaps this is their way of showing that they like me and their Chinese lessons, which is both heart-warming and wonderful, and will give me even more motivation to finish the rest of my work in Mandarin teaching.





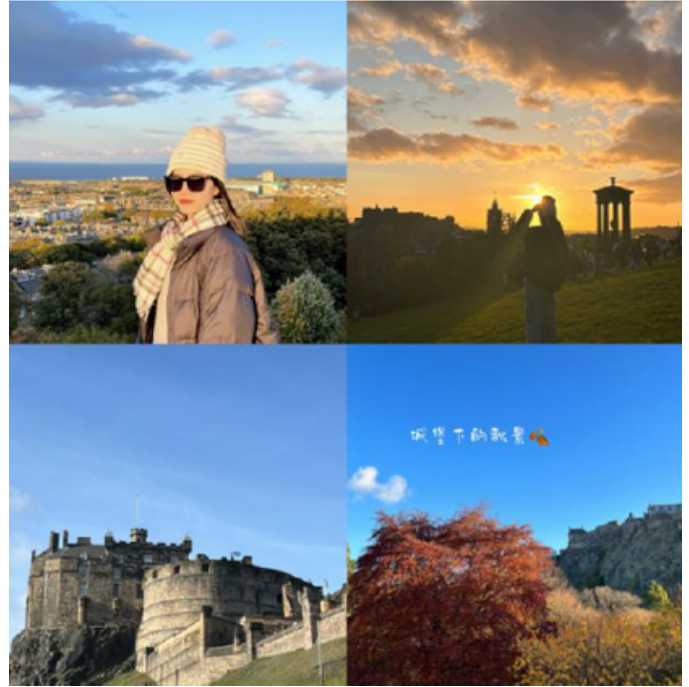
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## LIVING AND TRAVELING IN SCOTLAND

Amazingly, I have been in Midlothian for close to a year now, and it has been full of freshness and challenges. I have experienced many "firsts": the first time I cooked, the first time I lived alone, the first time I faced close to 400 students.



In my spare time from work, my footprints have walked in all corners of the UK. Walking in the rain in Edinburgh, the fog hid Edinburgh Castle and shrouded it in mystery; in the vast and magnificent Highlands and Skye, I embraced the nature, I appreciated nature's ingenious craftsmanship; standing at the top of the Calton Hill, watching the sunset and the clouds in the sky; in Oxford and Cambridge, I appreciate the charm of the world's top academic institutions; the depiction of Cambridge in Chinese language books was given life here; as Big Ben, London Bridge, and the London Eye that I had seen in my English books came into my eyesight, I took in the evening breeze along the River Thames to appreciate the charm of London; the sea breeze of the Seven Sister Cliffs and the waves of Newcastle are in my memories.



It's springtime and the sun is shining, and the flower of our Mandarin teaching in Scotland continues to blossom, and it will bloom in every corner of this place.

