



GLASGOW 2014

XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES



BORDER HOLIDAY GROUP DIARY

Borders it was now time for Pauline to negotiate the main city roads. The temperature got higher the closer we got to Glasgow and we were all grateful when we pulled up outside the hotel at 2pm, after a wee tour of MacDonald's car park!

The staff at the Premier Inn were very helpful and we were into our rooms in no time. A short walk into Milngavie and we found a Ladbrokes for Robbie to have a flutter, though none of us really knew what we were doing. We had a wee wander round the lovely town centre and a quick reekie of the train station and it was time to stop for a wee refreshment at Garvie & Co. Think the sun had got to Lesley as she was having difficulty "finding the entrance to the bag". By now Robbie was warming up and the one-liners were coming thick and fast. We wandered back along to the hotel and popped into the Burnie Brae for dinner. After negotiating the picnic table we enjoyed the evening sunshine in the beer garden. Robbie asking the waitress, (who was dressed in black trousers, white shirt and black tie), "if she had been at a funeral?" Luckily we got served our meals and left without being barred, though Robbie had to be gagged a couple of times. Back in the hotel we got Robbie into bed and were able to watch the 100m final. Robbie's each way bet on Gemili was a good one. Then it was an early night as it would be an early start the next morning.

Day 2 - Tuesday 29th July - 6am start today as we were due at our parking spot at Hampden at 8.30am. As it turned out we could have had an extra half hour in bed as we were so slick at getting ready we were ready for breakfast by 6.30am and they didn't start serving until 7am! After a buffet breakfast of cereal, toast, crumpets, bacon, sausage, egg, tea and coffee we were ready for Hampden.

The lady on the sat nav, after some amendments by Pauline, got us to our destination shortly after 8.30am, there were already hundreds of people making their way along the pavements toward Hampden. Our pre-booked parking space was easy to get to and the stewards were very helpful. The short walk to Hampden in the crowds and we were ushered through airport style security. Peter beeping the metal detector so often, we thought they were going to have to strip search him! But we were in; unfortunately we then had to split up as our tickets were at opposite ends of the stadium. Pauline and Lesley headed for the far end, the start end, while the boys were at the finishing end. The boys had a bit trouble getting to their seating area due to the volume of people, going in the opposite direction to them, and unwilling to let them past. That's when help arrived in the form of Clydesider, Irene. She took Robbie and Pete right to their seats, just below the big screen, and made sure they had plenty of help and company throughout

Day 1 - Monday 28th July - After over a year of planning the day had arrived it was time to head off to the 20th Commonwealth Games, Glasgow 2014. Our small band of travellers, Robbie, Pete, Pauline and Lesley loaded the car and set off shortly before 10am. First stop Gala to buy some Scottish flags, then at Robbie's insistence it was up the A68 and over Soutra. It was warm in the car and Robbie suggested stopping for a cuppa, so that's what we did.

Cases unloaded so we could get Robbie unloaded we stepped into the House of Soutra Coffee shop and before we could get the break on the lady behind the counter was over giving Rob a kiss and a cuddle, she was a lady Robbie had known for years, since he was a young lad. Tea coffee scones and tray bake consumed, photos taken outside, reloaded and we set off again. A tail back on the bypass held us up for a short while, but allowed us to see Pete's impression of a dog with its head out the window! Once onto the M8 we stopped to change drivers, Lesley having negotiated "the back roads" from the

the morning. Pauline and Lesley were below the big screen at the opposite end, (no one spoke to them all morning!).

The stadium was beginning to fill and the men's long jump competitors were led out, no Scottish athletes, but Olympic gold medallist Greg Rutherford was there. While they were warming up the decathlon hurdles heats were taking place. Greg Rutherford qualified on his first jump so didn't need to jump again but rather than leaving the stadium he took time to speak to people in the crowd. Meanwhile it was on to the Heptathlon 100m hurdles heats, again no Scots in this but it seemed like you needed to be called Jessica to take part! The men's 110m hurdles then took place with England's Andy Turner hitting the first hurdle and not finishing the race. Events then moved down to Pete and Robbie's end with the long jump, heptathlon high jump and decathlon discus all taking part in front of them. The hurdles were all cleared away with choreographed precision.

The crowd were warmed up with a "Wegie Wave" and a chorus of "500 Miles" and it was time for wheelchair races. Women's and men's T54 1500m heats and at last some Scottish Athletes, Scottish Borders para-athlete Sam Kinghorn, from Gordon, qualifying in her heat. The wave of sound as the athletes lapped the stadium was unbelievable, with not only the Scottish athletes and leading athletes getting a big cheer, but the underdogs trailing well behind the rest of the field got just as big a cheer. Then it was time for one of the big stars, David Weir, Olympic Champion. It was a slow race to begin with but 300m from home he stepped up a gear, shot past the rest of the field and won easily. In the following heat there was a crash with one of the chairs tipping and sliding across the track just in front of Pauline and Lesley. No harm done though the guy got back in and completed the race, receiving a huge cheer as he passed on the cool down lap.

The atmosphere was building as out came the hurdles again, this time for the women's 400m hurdles. Scotland's Eilidh Child ran in the first heat, with the wave of sound following her round like a physical force. The high jump was heating up too with one of the Jessica's breaking her personal best. Meanwhile at Pauline and Lesley's end the decathlon had moved on to the pole vault. Even seeing it in real life we couldn't see how anyone would choose to do that or even how you would learn to do it. A couple of times they seemed to linger on the end of the pole as it decided which way to go. The track had been cleared of hurdles again and it was time for the men's 800m heat Scotland's Guy Learmonth, from Berwick, missing out on an automatic qualifying spot, it would depend on times for him. The other heats proved to be slower and the English runner was disqualified for interfering with the Welsh runner in the final heat so Learmonth made it though.

By now it was nearly after 1pm, the wind had gotten up and the stadium was emptying as it was only the pole vault that was still going on. Lesley phoned Pete at the opposite end of the stadium to see if they were ready to leave, they were so with some help again the boys made their way down out of the stadium and met up with the girls. We then made our way back to the car and decided to head to Loch Lomond for the afternoon. After a short pit stop at the hotel we set off up to Loch Lomond, enjoying the atmospheric scenery of the hills and changeable weather. We stopped at Balloch and had a walk around and some refreshments. With the time getting on and the weather starting to change we headed back to Milngavie. The plan had been to stop at a wee inn on the way back but the kitchen was closed so we went to the Beefeater instead. Robbie eating one of the biggest gammon stakes we had ever seen! Back in the hotel we had the bed time routine down to a fine art, if wheelchair and hoist shuffling were a Commonwealth sport, we would win gold.

Day 3 - Wednesday 30th July - A more leisurely start this morning 7.15am alarm call, followed by huge breakfast again, Robbie finishing off a huge bowl of porridge with prunes and yogurt as well as 2 rashers of bacon. Though he didn't think much of the cranberry tea! It was then into the car for the 2 minute drive to the station. The loading and unloading now being very slick. Scottish Rails, Duncan was very helpful and got us on board the train, when asked where we were heading Robbie replied "London!" The staff were once again helpful in Queens Street station and before long we were on the streets of Glasgow, and into George Square.

First stop the Commonwealth Games shop. A look round and Robbie had decided what he wanted to buy, Warren the floor manager said we could put everything aside and collect it later to save us carrying it all day. Unfortunately Robbie decided he wanted to buy a Commonwealth Tartan tammy hat, we then

Day 1 - Monday 28th July



And we are off.....



A wee refreshment stop at the foot of Soutra

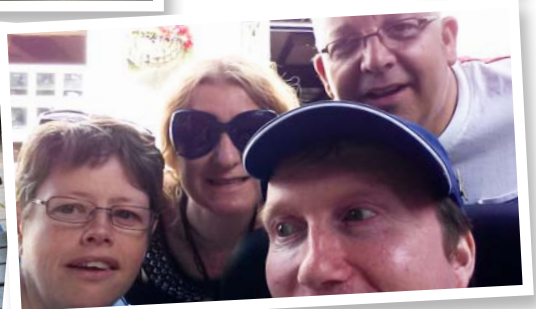
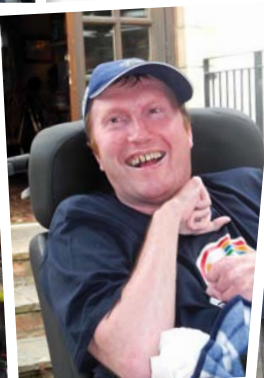


Note the empties are all water!

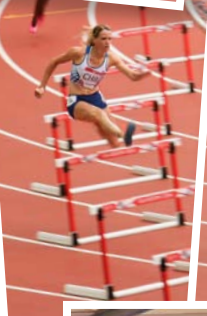
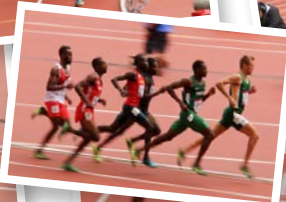
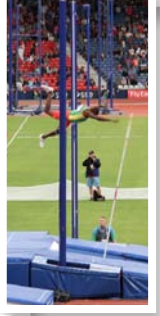
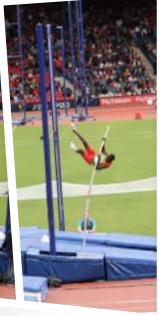
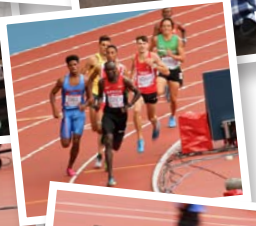
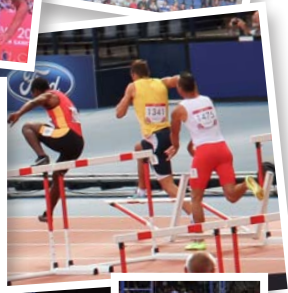
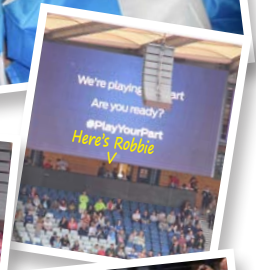
They weren't ours!



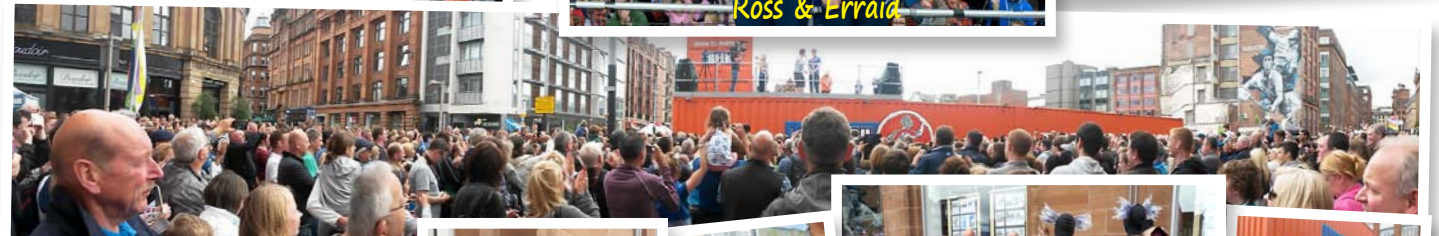
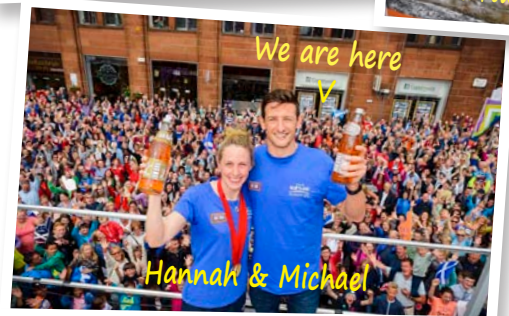
"Heggie" Tatties & neeps, with a whisky sauce!



Day 2 - Tuesday 29th July



Day 3 - Wednesday 30th July



Day 4 - Thursday 31st July



had to look at him wearing it the rest of the trip, it is awful! (Robbie can get away with a lot of things with the cheeky smile he has, but I don't think we would have got away with his suggestion letting him wear it out the shop and not letting on that we hadn't paid for it! So he had to part with his money.)

Outside again we took a few photos while waiting to hear from Gordon who was going to be joining us for the day. We had a wander around, but many of the cafes and bars were still closed, so we headed for Weatherspoons meeting Gordon on the way, Kenny and Alice, Pauline's husband and daughter, then joined us, but we had to leave as we couldn't have only beverages as Alice was under 18. We found another cafe and watched some of the Gymnastics on the TV, while we had our coffees and caught up. Robbie enquiring as to where Kenny had parked his Bentley!

It was then off to Merchant City which was one of the Glasgow Live venues, passing Wellington's Statue with the traffic cone on its head. There was loads going on, but as we waited on the Strong Lady Show to get going, the heavens opened so we headed for the shelter of the Irn Bru store. You couldn't miss it, it was three huge cargo containers painted bright orange with Irn Bru on the side. Inside there was a history display of Irn Bru and more merchandise than you could shake a stick at. We had planned to have a late lunch but Irn Bru were going to be playing host to some Scottish medalists at 3pm so we decided to go for lunch earlier and get back to see the swimmers. After stating he wasn't hungry Robbie then proceeded to polish off a Hawaiian Pizza!

After a wander round the stalls and being accosted by some weird fish and singing floaty monks, we found a spot in front of Irn Bru. Alice offered to go and get Robbie's lottery, which he thanked her for and hoped she had her lucky knickers on! The entrainment was good and a huge crowd gathered, not all of them mindful of Robbie's size 10 feet sticking out the front of his wheelchair. First to arrive was silver medalist Michael Jamieson and Gold medalist Hannah Miley the cheers were thunderous, they were presented with personalised bottles of Irn Bru and onesies before posing for photos. The crowd then dispersed some we moved forward a bit to try and save Robbie's toes. Bronze medalist Erraid Davies and Gold medalist Ross Murdoch then arrived, both seemed a bit in awe of the crowd.

While they were being interviewed Gordon decided to lean on Robbie's chair and all that could be heard was the bellow of Robbie as he was tipped right back, his head went down his feet came up, kicked Pete on the backside who, was knocked forward and hit a wee girl on the head with his elbow, making her cry! We got Robbie up right again and all was calm. Gordon won't be leaning on any level again anytime soon.

Another walk back through Merchant City seeing a bit more of the Strong Lady's show and we headed for George Square. More photos were taken and we met a lady and her "wee" 14 month old dog Anoushka, before heading back into the Games store. It looked like it had been ransacked, the selves were nearly empty. Good job Warren had put our goodies aside. We headed towards Central Station, passing Wellington's Statue, which was now sporting a gold traffic cone on it's head. We stopped for a seat in Gordon Street. The rain came on again but didn't dampen our spirits, we hardy Borderers will drink alfresco in any weather. We said goodbye to Kenny and Alice before heading for our own train at Queens Street. Conning Gordon into pushing Robbie up the long steep ramp, by offering a shot of trying the motorised chair. A quick stop at the disable loo/prison and it was on to our train.

We had to change at Partick but once again the staff were superb and looked after us. And we met a lady, who lived in a wee village Pauline had friends in, and whose husband was a vet. Robbie and her blethered for ages. Getting back to the hotel about 8.30pm Robbie wanted into bed to watch the athletics as it had been a long day, and said we could go for a drink. Which we were happy to do, checking on Robbie regularly thinking he would be asleep each time, he wasn't. Pete said he was still awake after midnight!

Day 4 - Thursday 31st July - We were all a little bleary eyed when we woke but snapped into action, getting Robbie up, packing cases, dismantling the hoist and packing the car, all before breakfast. This was our last day but we were going to make the most of it. Breakfast eaten hotel rooms checked and we checked out about 9.30am and made our way to the station. Our destination today, Glasgow Green, to see the Time Trial Cycling. Once again Duncan was there to assist us and have a good blether, much to the annoyance of other customers wanting to buy tickets. In fact he didn't even sell us our tickets saying the ticket collector would sell us them. Although tired, Robbie was still ready with a one liner, an older lady

walking past asked her son and grandchildren “ can I get you anything?” To which Robbie replied “Some better weather would be nice.”

The train was busier but everyone was mindful of not bumping Robbie’s chair. We got off at Central Station this time and headed for the bookies. First up was to collect Robbie’s winnings on the 100m, then it was place your bets time, unfortunately they couldn’t take a bet on David Weir or Libby Clegg so Robbie bet on the win for Eilidh Child and the Jamaican Relay team. While walking through Merchant City we bumped into Gordon who was heading to meet us.

All roads led to Glasgow Green, though they were barriered off for the cycling. We found a spot with no hoardings on the barriers so Robbie could see and settled in for the wait. But with nothing much happening and, with a look at our phones, we discovered it would be over an hour before things would be getting underway so we moved on towards Glasgow Green. Checking the lottery numbers on the way, Alice hadn’t had her lucky underwear on.

It got busier as we got to the entrance, and we had to squeeze through the crowd who were waiting to see the start of the time trial, and make our way round to the end of the queue. We had lost Gordon by this time and the crowds and stewards were not at all helpful in assisting us get the wheelchair up the large kerb, the latter shouting at us to keep the line moving. Thankfully the gentleman, who had been behind us in the queue, let us squeeze in again, but a police officer had seen what had happened before that and said it was not acceptable, so fast tracked us through to security. This time Pete didn’t need strip searched and we were in. Gordon however had taken a wrong turn so was at the back of the queue.

Glasgow Green was busy and we spotted a viewing point for wheelchair users so we made our way to it. It was the finishing straight, so we had a while to wait before we saw the racers but we did see them heading down to the start. Robbie decided he wanted a burger so Pete went off to find one, just as the cyclists were starting to return. Pete wasn’t allowed to carry the burger out the food area so had to hand it over the fence. Pauline then took on the dangerous job of feeding Robbie his burger. Past burgers, in our presence, have been know to end up with trips to the dentist because of broken teeth. Thankfully Robbie’s teeth were intact and Pauline was left with most of her fingers.

The cyclists were now coming in more frequently but the main guys were still to start, so we decided to take a walk round the park. There was loads of activities for the kids and a few gift stalls where Robbie got some postcards. You could also try and beat Usain Bolt in a short race, Pauline came close to beating him, as we told her to image it was last orders at the bar! We worked our way round the main stage and the big screen; once again we got into the wheelchair area which gave us a great view of what was happening. Before we knew it the race was over and England had another Gold Medal much to Pete’s delight. The Medal Ceremony took place on the main stage, with the guy that designed the medals being interviewed before it. The Ceremony was good but Pete didn’t sing along to his National Anthem, which the rest of us thought was a poor show, we would have been at top voice if Scotland had won!

By now it was after 4pm so we decided we had best head back for the train as we still had the car to collect and get something to eat before driving home. Once again the Rail Staff were brilliant and we were back in Milngavie by 5.45pm We stopped at the Burnie Brae Inn for one last meal then it was off down the road. The rain had now started and it was a little colder. But we had to open the windows as one of the back seat passengers had a spot of wind, good job the deodorant was close at hand. Pauline negotiated the rain, pong and streets of Glasgow, well and we were onto the M8 heading for home. Change of drivers at Dobbie’s and we were off down the A7. Not Robbie’s favourite road. Thank you’s were all exchanged on the way down and we arrived home at 9.30pm. Thankfully the nursing home let us in, we thought they might have changed the locks!

A very tired Robbie, back in his room, was full of thanks and said :

“It was better than the Olympics. Thank you.”

