

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

Sunday, July 13, and Monday July 14, 2008. I have never seen the airport so busy. Fortunately I found a Skycap who took me to a special Skycap check-in and got me a wheel chair. I got to the Business Elite Lounge with no further trouble. I was hoping to find Charity there but no luck. I hope she is not having a hard time. She broke a bone in her foot a few weeks ago and so is not very mobile.

As I was writing this Charity appeared complete with crutch. We dismissed the chair pusher as I can push Charity to the gate. After visiting for a time we started out. Charity was in the chair and loaded down with two carryons. I dragged my roll on behind. The chairs are very easy to push and we got to the gate as they were boarding. Then disaster struck! I had left my purse back in the lounge. I hurried back and there it was large as life on the table where we had been sitting. I then rushed back to the gate. Meanwhile everyone had boarded and Charity was assuring Delta I was coming. They must compare the checked baggage tags to when the boarding pass is validated for security reasons. In any event I hope that is the only disaster of the trip.

We had a pleasant dinner and I tried to sleep. I was having restless leg¹ problems. I haven't had the problem for months but it kept me from sleeping on this crossing. I probably only slept on and off for five hours but I felt reasonably good the next morning. Charity was still sleeping as we started the landing procedure.

I was happy we had wheelchairs at Gatwick for it was a long route where we got passed from one handler to another and switched terminals to find Flybe². Evans caught up with us as we were getting our boarding passes and we were taken to a holding pen for handicapped people. After getting some coffee, Charity checked out a bookstore and I chatted with a man who was catching a non-stop flight to San Diego on an airline I had not heard of.

They finally came to take us to the flight but we were told we had to walk to it, as the cart could not fit in the elevator. A man led us out to Gate One where we soon boarded our flight.

My seatmate was in the British army just returning from a leave. She only has three years to go until she can retire with a pension. I opened Flybe's magazine and who should I see but Bill French³ who was on the Namibia trip with us. I had thought he was a pilot with the airline but I underestimated him! He is CEO and Chairman of the company. He managed to make the airline profitable by converting them to turbo prop planes instead of jets. They use far less fuel and are quieter. I was impressed!

A representative from Lord of the Glens⁴ was waiting for us in the baggage claim and we boarded a bus for the twenty-minute run into Inverness⁵. We were left there to explore the town and have lunch. We went to the Filling Station⁶ and I had a chicken club sandwich, which was so big I could only eat half!

Then we set out to find an ATM⁷. Charity and Evans had had some problems with someone cloning their cards in Morocco. The new card refused to work even though they tried several times to use it. They then went to a phone booth and spent at least a half hour trying to reach the issuer of the card to straighten the problem out to no avail. We then went to another bank and tried again. My card worked perfectly. Theirs did not. We went to an Internet Café but it had a steep climb up to it and I decided to wait on the sidewalk instead. Time passed and my cane seat got harder and harder. I walked a bit to look in the windows of an art gallery and finally headed back to the bus that was waiting for us. Thus we did not see much of the town.

I did however note several unusual buildings. The Town House⁸ looks like a castle, complete with turrets. The British Cabinet met here in September 1921, the only time it ever met outside of London. There is also a building called the Caledonian, which looks like a Greek Temple but is apparently a pub!

Finally we boarded the Lord of the Glens. This is my third trip with National Geographic⁹. I

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restless_legs_syndrome

² <http://www.flybe.com/>

³ <http://www.buseseye.co.uk/stories/?issueid=48&storyid=224>

⁴ <http://www.europeanbarging.com/Lord%20of%20the%20Glen/Lord%20of%20the%20Glen.htm>

⁵ <http://www.inverness-scotland.com/>

⁶ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gordonhamilton/2251567632/>

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Automated_Teller_Machine

⁸ http://www.ambaile.org.uk/en/item/item_photograph.jsp?item_id=9899

⁹ <http://www.expeditions.com/>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

unpacked and took a shower fighting the urge to take a nap for I will never sleep tonight if I do so. At 6:00, I ventured out to explore the ship. She was built to fit in the locks of the Caledonian Canal¹⁰. The top deck has a two-part lounge (one part is the bar). There is a small deck forward with chairs so you can go out and take pictures. Aft there is another deck with chairs and tables. The middle deck has reception and the Mark Twain dining room. This is also where we disembark. The next lower deck is where my cabin is. There is another deck below that I did not investigate.

After the briefing we had Captain Neil McKee's welcome cocktail party where Expedition Leader David Barnes¹¹ introduced our two historian lecturers, Steve Blamires¹² and Konia Tack. Konia is German but fell in love with Scotland and moved here many years ago. She speaks English with a wee Scotch accent. There are 41 of us. Shortly after dinner I went wearily to bed. It had been a LONG day.

Tuesday, July 15, 2008. We had a bus tour that took us first to Culloden Moor¹³. Here the Jacobites (the Catholic supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie)¹⁴ fought the British in a futile attempt to regain the crown for the Stuarts.

The battle was the last one fought on British soil. It took place on April 16, 1746. Charles had come back from France to try and reclaim the throne his grandfather had lost. England was now ruled by the protestant King William and Mary. Charles went up into the highlands of Scotland and enlisted support from the Clan chieftains. They challenged the British at Culloden Moor. The British were well prepared, well armed and well fed. Charles must have thought he was invincible for his troops had not eaten and some of the musket bails were the wrong size for their rifles. The battle cry went up and the troops faced each other. It was no match and the Duke of Cumberland's army literally mowed down the Jacobite army in one hour! Even the spectators were killed. For days afterwards people wearing kilts were thought to be Jacobites. Many were killed even though they were loyal to the British government. Culloden was not fought to destroy the clans. It was a religious war. But the clan system was destroyed in its wake.

The museum was interesting in that it was laid out as if you were in the battle with the Jacobites on one side and the British on the other. The path also zigzagged to show the course of the battle. In one room you also could experience the battle itself with life-size figures projected all around you on the walls. There was another demonstration on how to load a rifle.

Then I walked out on the moor. The clans have set up rock monuments to their fallen. In the center of the field was a tower said to mark the burial place for the thousands who died. I experienced a genuine sadness for the troops who died in this poorly conceived battle. It was very moving. Flora MacDonald helped Charles to escape but he returned to France and never had contact with her again.

Nearby we visited the Clava Cairns¹⁵ thought to have been burial mounds for an ancient Bronze Age people (2000-1500 BC). Two of these rock piles had a corridor the led to an inner room. Their actual purpose is not known but like the standing stones all over England and parts of Europe, two of the three mounds had a distinct astronomical orientation for the summer solstice lines up with the entrance. On one stone there were small round holes that had obviously been manmade but no one knows much else about them.

We drove back to the ship through Inverness and caught a closer glimpse of the 19th century Inverness Castle¹⁶ that now holds the law courts. This fortress was built in 1835 on the site of earlier ones. Legend tells us it may have been the castle featured in Macbeth where Duncan 1 was murdered. The river Ness flows through the city giving it its name. Once on board the ship started off.

After a smoked salmon sandwich I stayed up in the lounge to see us go through some locks

¹⁰ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/inverness/caledoniancanal/index.html>

¹¹ <http://www.expeditions.com/Bio84.asp?Member=314122&MemberType=15&ByName=>

¹² Steve Blamires

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Culloden

¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacobitism>

¹⁵ http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/majorsites/clava_cairns.html

¹⁶ <http://www.castles.org/Chatelaine/INVERNES.HTM>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

However I could hardly keep my eyes open and went down to my cabin for a “short” nap. As a result I missed most of Loch Ness¹⁷ and even Nessie who had been pointed out to the people on deck. (She was plastic).

We got into Fort Augustus¹⁸ about 4:30 and I joined the walking tour into town to the visitor’s center, which had some exhibits showing how the canal was built. The fort was named Augustus to honor Prince William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland¹⁹.

The Caledonian Canal was built starting in 1803 under the direction of Thomas Telford (1757-1834)²⁰, a Scottish engineer who developed the techniques to construct the locks and canals that connected the various lakes already in existence along the natural Fault Line²¹ that runs from the North Sea to the Irish Sea. The canal eliminated the dangerous trip around John o’ Groats²² on the tip of Scotland.

Charity, Evans and I then explored the town. It is quite small and there are tourist shops in every block. I did buy a pair of Celtic earrings.

Back on board we had our briefing and dinner before going to bed.

Tuesday, July 16. Since yesterday’s breakfast was at 7:00, I assumed it was then every day. I arrived at the dining room at 7:15 and had to wait until 7:30. Others were under the same misconception. Fran Edson who lives in Tucson, and I were both early risers who ate breakfast together almost every morning. She is traveling with her daughter Kristen Dietiker, but both Kristen and Evans and Charity like to sleep later. Fran took a round the world trip with Spencer Wells²³, the geneticist who was with us in the Cook Islands

After breakfast we went into a series of five small locks to get to the other side of town. Many people came out to watch us go through and take our picture. It reminded me of when I came down the upper Mississippi on the Delta Queen. It was a big event for the towns to see. We fill the locks completely for the ship was built as large as could be accommodated.

David took us on a moderately difficult walk of two and a half miles. He set out at a brisk pace and with about 20 of us trailing behind. Others on the ship including Charity and Evans went kayaking.

Walking out of town through a sort of alley we got to see some lovely gardens all in bloom. Then the road passed through rural countryside with pastures of sheep. Wildflowers were in bloom and it was quite pretty. David stopped occasionally to point out a bush or a tree. Wild Gorse and Broom were growing near each other at one point. We then saw across a large field the Kilchuiman graveyard²⁴ of a now non-existent church.

After the Battle of Culloden, the highlands were cleared. People were killed or forced to leave. My own Stewart ancestors probably were part of these clearances²⁵. Many towns were abandoned. At Kilchuiman there is no trace of what must have been the surrounding village. Only the burial ground remains to remind us there was once a town here. The new town of Fort Augustus came into being when the canal was built.

We climbed over a stile in the rock wall where someone had thoughtfully provided steps. At this point Konia Tack, one of our leaders, appeared and asked if anyone wanted to go back to the ship. None of us did. However then our trail started up. The road was not steep but it was up and David never altered his brisk pace. I started to fall behind and finally had to stop and catch my breath, which put me at the end of the line. We must have gotten 150 feet above the river before the road straightened out on a more level angle. Then the only problem was to try and avoid the puddles and the mud. Some stone had been put in the two-track but one side was overgrown with bushes and ferns so only one track could be used. We made one rather smelly

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loch_Ness

¹⁸ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/fortaugustus/fortaugustus/index.html>

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_William_Augustus,_Duke_of_Cumberland

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Telford

²¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fault_\(geology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fault_(geology))

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_O'Groats

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spencer_Wells

²⁴ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/monkeyiron/2361599139/>

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highland_Clearances

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

stop where silage was baled and rotting²⁶. No one grows hay anymore but they cut the grass and put it into plastic bags to rot. I guess the animals eat it okay but it has been devastating to the birds that used to feed on the hay. Some species are no longer seen. At last we got to a point where we could see a corner of Loch Ness. We were invited to approach closer to it but most of us just wanted to get back to where there were rest rooms. At last the road brought us to the swing bridge in Fort Augustus and it was only a short hike uphill to reach the ship. I was exhausted!

After lunch David gave a lecture explaining how Protestantism grew across Europe during the 15th and 16th century. The Tudor King, Henry VIII²⁷, to ameliorate his marital problems declared a national Anglican²⁸ religion and mandated everyone adhere to it. His daughter Queen Mary²⁹ briefly brought back Catholicism but Queen Elizabeth³⁰ made the country Protestant once more. David surmises that many people shifted their adoration from the Virgin Mary to the Virgin Queen. After Elizabeth, James came to the throne and re-embraced the Catholic Church. He was deposed in order for William and Mary³¹ to become the rulers. David proudly pointed out that they were Welsh like him. James' grandson was Bonnie Prince Charlie³² who came to England from exile in France and tried to get back the throne. Culloden ended all hope of England becoming Catholic again.

We came to another small lock and made much noise on the horn. I didn't know if it was an emergency or not and hurried back on deck. Nothing was wrong so I wonder why there was so much noise! The ship is very noisy when it moves through the locks because of the hydraulic bow thrusters.

Mist came and shrouded the mountains and it was all quite beautiful as we continued on our way.

We tied up at Laggan Lock. After dinner we walked to the nearby Eagle Pub³³ on a barge. The owner had fixed it up with all sorts of nautical artifacts. The bar was made from wood that had been one of the Lock's gates before they were replaced with steel. I ordered a half pint of Pilsner but could not drink it because I was stuffed from all the food at dinner. A Piper in full regalia came in and entertained us. A Swiss tourist asked if he could try the pipes. After a practice blow or two he launched into a Scottish tune, obviously well versed in Bagpipe playing. The pub was very crowded not only from the people off the Lord of the Glens but people were there from other cruising yachts going through the locks.

Thursday, July 17. Some people left the ship early for some more kayaking. Steve gave a talk about the Glencoe³⁴ massacre. This was another boondoggle. When James was deposed and William of Orange came to the throne he issued a decree that all the Clan chiefs should swear allegiance to him by January 1 or be killed. The head of the MacDonalds of Glencoe had pledged himself to James and he wrote to James in France to be released from his oath. It took time for the answer to come back that he was free of it, whereupon the clan chief walked through a snowstorm to Fort William to give his oath. He arrived on December 31. Commander Hill told him he was at the wrong place but he wrote a letter telling of the man's intent. The Chieftain then walked on in the storm to Inveraray³⁵ arriving on Jan 4 and signed his pledge. However King William decided to make an example of the clan. Colonel Cameron was ordered to take his battalion into the valley where they had to be billeted. Scottish hospitality made the MacDonalds take the Camerons³⁶ into their homes where they fed and entertained them. Then the order came to kill all the MacDonalds. At 5:00 AM they opened fire on the unarmed and undressed people. 35 were killed on the spot. Some escaped into the hills but died of frostbite. It was

²⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silage>

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_VIII_of_England

²⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican>

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_I_of_England

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_I_of_England

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_and_Mary

³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Edward_Stuart

³³ <http://www.westhighlandsailing.com/eagle.html>

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glen_Coe

³⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inveraray>

³⁶ <http://clancameron.proboards12.com/index.cgi?board=history&action=display&thread=36>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

another bloody chapter of Scottish history. To this day people don't think much of the Camerons in the Highlands³⁷.

Evans and two others decided to bike along the towpath and left the ship. We then passed through a manual swing bridge. The lockmaster had to swing half the bridge open, then row across and open the other half. After we came through he had to repeat the process to close it. We continued on to Fort William, also named for William Augustus the Duke of Cumberland. Here we descended Neptune's staircase³⁸, a series of 8 locks that dropped the ship 64 feet. It was possible to jump off the ship and get some pictures and then get on at the next lock. You could see the capstans where the ships were once manually winched through the locks.

I had lunch with Rosie and Wilbur Davis who live in Winter Park, FL. Wilbur is an oral surgeon. Also at lunch were R A and Terry Edwards from Hutchinson, Kansas. R A is also a doctor. The two men both went to Emory.

We then boarded a bus for the 30-minute drive to Glencoe. It is a beautiful valley carved by glaciers eons ago. The whole valley is now a nature preserve where people can come to hike or camp. At the visitors center there were exhibits telling the history of the valley and a film telling of the MacDonald massacre. Some took a short hike to see the ruin of a MacDonald House but I am still recovering from yesterday's walk, Charity made the walk with her Dutch shoe all trussed up in a garbage bag to keep it dry. I treated myself to a chocolate ice cream in the coffee shop while I waited for them to come back.

We were back on board for wrap-up and dinner.

Friday, July 18, 2008. I woke to the grinding of our hydraulic bow thruster so knew we were under way. My travel clock has stopped working but I knew it was time to get up. We left the canal and went down Loch Linnhe³⁹ to the sea.

David gave a talk on how Christianity came to Britain. The first Christians came after the Romans but they were persecuted. Then a 6th century saint called Columba⁴⁰ came from Ireland to the island of Iona and established a church.

The Konia talked about Oban⁴¹. Its main industries are kelp and a whiskey distillery. Queen Victoria came here in 1840 but never got off the ship. Felix Mendelssohn⁴² composed his Hebrides Overture here. Because it has a railroad Oban is the jumping off place for people coming to the Inner Hebrides⁴³. The waterfront is lined with shops carrying all sorts of Scottish goods. High above you can see McCaig's folly⁴⁴ a circular edifice that looks like it might be a Roman Coliseum. A local banker built it, at a cost of five thousand pounds, to counter the unemployment in Oban. His plan was to fill each arch with a statue of himself! The building was never finished.

After lunch we walked into town and explored some shops before meeting at the distillery for our tour. I don't remember ever having toured a distillery although I have toured many wineries.

We started in a room where the guide, Frances, described the process of grinding the barley. The Oban Distillery⁴⁵ does not grind the grain itself but buys the highest quality to mix with water. Sometimes flavors are added to the whiskey such as oranges but the sea salt flavor is natural and comes from the air.

We next went into the tun room full of huge vats where the grist is mixed with water and yeast and heated three times over a peat fire. Peat is what gives it the smoky flavor. The temperature is very important. Next the mash is put into other huge vats and allowed to ferment for four days. It then goes to the still and is distilled twice. This produces a high alcohol content brew. We were given some to taste and it reminded me of the white lightning⁴⁶ I tried many years ago in

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_of_Glencoe

³⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neptune's_Staircase

³⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loch_Linnhe

⁴⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columba>

⁴¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oban>

⁴² <http://www.answers.com/topic/felix-mendelssohn>

⁴³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrides>

⁴⁴ http://www.rampantscotland.com/know/blknow_mccaig.htm

⁴⁵ <http://www.scotchwhisky.net/distilleries/oban.htm>

⁴⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moonshine>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

Tennessee. Finally water is added to reduce the alcohol content to 56%. It can only be called Scotch if it ages three years in the cask. Oban's whiskey goes into oak casks and ages for 14 years. Some of the oak comes from America where it has been used to make Bourbon but the casks are refashioned here. They are only used once then sold to other distilleries.

The whiskey is moved in an unmarked truck to the bottling plant for its cargo is very valuable. We then went into the tasting room but I still had the taste of the super strong stuff and did not enjoy the finished product. I rarely drink anything but wine.

I walked back to the ship and processed my pictures and tried to finish the book I have been reading: Saxons, Vikings and Celts by Bryan Sykes⁴⁷. It is very interesting showing how DNA has been used to figure out the origins of the British people.

Our itinerary said we would overnight in Oban but we sailed promptly at 5:00 in order to get to Mull⁴⁸ before the bad weather came in. Mull is the second largest island of the Inner Hebrides⁴⁹. We had a nice view of Duart Castle standing bleakly on a promontory on Mull before the rain started coming down so hard we could see nothing ahead. We made it to the sheltered anchorage at Tobermory safely.

Tobermory⁵⁰ is an attractive town with a large sheltered bay. The shops are along the bow shaped waterfront. The resident's homes stand on the bluff above.

Saturday, July 19. We had a leisurely start at 9:30 for Torosay Castle⁵¹. The bus could not come to the ship so we had to walk around the waterfront to the distillery to meet it. The half hour drive followed the coast and we could see sailboats on the Gulf of Mull. Picturesque abandoned boats were on the beach. At one point the bus driver pointed out seals resting on a rock. He also said there are otters but I weren't lucky enough to spot one.

Torosay is a Victorian castle. Architect David Bryce completed it in 1858⁵². It was sold in 1865 to Arbuthnot Charles Guthrie. David James⁵³, a Member of Parliament, was a descendant. He restored it and now it is open to the public to help defray the taxes they must pay. Jaquetta James, his widow, is a delightful lady who told us all sorts of family tales. The family had connections to Winston Churchill. The house is full of pictures and memorabilia. One room is dedicated to the frigate on which Mr. James sailed while in the navy. Another room has scrapbooks of significant events listed by years.

The house has views out on the sound and from the dining room you can see Duart Castle. Castles were built within sight of one another so that if danger occurred a warning beacon could send a message to the next castle.

David led us on a walk through the extensive gardens. One terrace is lined with Italian statues. These were not Gods and Goddesses but ordinary people. One was even of a pregnant lady! Then we walked through a wilder more informal garden with a pond and many varieties of hydrangeas and rhododendrons. We checked out the greenhouses and then stepped into a semi walled garden where fruit trees were espaliered on the wall. The wall breaks the wind and tempers the climate so food can be grown all year long. It was all quite delightful. Only two gardeners care for the whole thing.

Back in Tobermory we walked back to the ship for lunch. Then I set out to try and find a new travel clock. I was unlucky at the first couple of places I stopped but Evans got into the act and we finally found one at the ironmongers⁵⁴.

Various walks were offered but I decided to rest instead.

After dinner, Wings over Mull⁵⁵ came to enlighten us on the raptors they are rescuing. All but one of the birds they brought had been bred in captivity and they use them to explain their work and raise money. The first bird was a magnificent European Eagle owl named Dolby. His constantly

⁴⁷ <http://www.amazon.com/Saxons-Vikings-Celts-Genetic-Britain/dp/0393062686>

⁴⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isle_of_Mull

⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_Hebrides

⁵⁰ <http://www.tobermory.org/>

⁵¹ <http://www.torosay.com/>

⁵² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bryce

⁵³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_James_\(politician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_James_(politician))

⁵⁴ <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ironmonger>

⁵⁵ <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/ironmonger>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

swiveling head never missed a trick from all of us to the gulls flying outside the lounge. Next they had a Harris Hawk from South America called Purdy. He didn't use his claws to grab but sat daintily on the trainer's hand much as he would perch on a cactus in his native environment. The third bird was Shadow a Barbary falcon. He was smaller than the falcons I have seen before and they demonstrated how he could fly. One of my favorites was the snowy owl named Obie who would whistle periodically during the description of him. He knew what the script called for a quickly devoured the rat he was finally offered! Then there was a ghostly Barn Owl named Bracken. However the hit of the evening was at the end when they brought out a three-week old barn owl chick named Spook. He was just a ball of white fluff for his feathers hadn't yet developed. We were invited to come and touch him for they want him to be comfortable around humans. Needless to say the offering box was stuffed to overflowing by the delighted audience.

Sunday, July 20. We got under way at 7:00 to run down to the ferry terminal at Craignure⁵⁶ where our bus was waiting to take us across the island to the Iona Ferry. Even by shortening the trip the bus still took an hour and a quarter to cross the mountainous interior of Mull. We only saw a couple of houses the whole time for few people live in the interior. There were spectacular views, several lakes and waterfalls and of course the ever-present sheep. I believe Scotland is like New Zealand where the sheep outnumber the people. Sadly, they are only grown for their meat for the wool is worthless.

The ferry to Iona takes about 15 minutes. Iona is delightful⁵⁷. There is a small village to support the Abbey and tourism business. The island is mountainous and barren but beautiful.

In the 6th century a monk called Columba came from Ireland to this island and established a church. From this beginning Christianity spread across Britain. The island was considered a sacred place and most of the early Scottish kings were buried here. However Macbeth's grave has not been located although he was buried here. In the 12th century under reformation all the Catholic monasteries were abandoned and the Benedictine Abbey on Iona was abandoned as well as the adjoining Augustinian Nunnery.

It was a cold and windy day but we walked from the ferry to the ruin of the Nunnery⁵⁸ that was planted with flowers. About 1200, Reginald MacDonald of Ilay built an Augustinian Nunnery on the island and installed his sister, Bethoc as its first prioress.

Nearby was the modern parish Church, which had been designed by Thomas Telford and built from a kit in stone. Telford did much more than design the canal. We paused to view the McLean Celtic cross⁵⁹, which dates from the 15th century although the form evolved in the 5th century. David explained how wooden arms could be added to it so that the crucifixion could be displayed.

The Iona Abbey was majestic⁶⁰. About 1200 Reginald MacDonald of Ilay replaced the ruins of the Columban monastery with a grand Benedictine Monastery. Restoration began on the Abbey Church in 1902 and now the community on Iona operates it as an ecumenical church. Outside were two more huge Celtic crosses that had marked the pilgrimage routes to the island. We toured the inside of the Abbey church and found a stand with Bibles printed in many different languages so that all can enjoy the service. There was a small adjoining shop and then we walked into the cloister where the parishioners were enjoying a libation and socialization for the service had just concluded.

Then it was time for lunch at the St Columba Hotel⁶¹. Huge bowls of tomato soup and open-faced sandwiches were a welcome change from the over-large lunches we get on the ship. Then we went back to view the graveyard and see if we could find Macbeth to no avail. Behind the church was the old infirmary and here we found the old stones had been gathered for preservation. Some of the early stones were only marked with Celtic designs and had no names or dates. Some had been carved with figures in ancient armor.

We checked out the nearby bookshop and then it was time to head back to the ferry. All but Bob

⁵⁶ <http://www.mull.zynet.co.uk/accommodation/craignure.htm>

⁵⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iona>

⁵⁸ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/iona/ionanunnery/index.html>

⁵⁹ http://www.celtarts.com/revival_crosses.htm

⁶⁰ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/iona/abbey/index.html>

⁶¹ <http://www.stcolumba-hotel.co.uk/>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

Smythe got there in time so we had to wait a half hour on Mull for him to come on a later ferry. As a result we were late getting to Duart Castle⁶² and had a shortened visit.

This magnificent 12th century castle we had seen from the water. It stands bleakly on a promontory overlooking the sea. Sir Lachlan MacLean, the present and 28th Clan Chief, told us how his ancestors had built the castle⁶³. At one time one of the Spanish armada ships came to the castle and was blown up. The castle was remodeled in 1911. Lachlan was raised in the castle and told how he and his sister would roller skate in the old kitchen. We toured the castle, seeing the old dungeon and then climbed a stone spiral staircase up to the State Rooms. Everywhere was exhibits showing the history of the family. One case displayed some amazing silver bowls and carafes. The state apartment had a modern bathroom with the largest washbasin I have ever seen. We went to the battlements and enjoyed the view. Then it was time for tea in the coffee shop before catching the bus back to the ship, waiting for us at Craignure. We set sail at once for Tobermory where we spent the night.

Monday, July 21. We left Tobermory at 9:30 to go to Eigg. It was a sparkling day. We saw a Basking shark with her fin prominently displayed as she lazed along⁶⁴. She was literally basking not at all afraid of a nearby boat. These are the 2nd largest fish after the whale shark. Then we saw flocks of puffins skimming just over the water⁶⁵. At one point we passed Ardnamurchan lighthouse⁶⁶ and were told this was the westernmost point of mainland Great Britain, even further west than Land's End.

Soon we were looking at the lesser Hebrides islands of Muck, Eigg and Rum. As David pointed out it sounded like some sort of drink!⁶⁷ Eigg⁶⁸ is so named because it has a rocky crest that looks like an egg tooth. It is volcanic in origin. We are so lucky with the weather. This is only the second time David has gotten to Eigg in 10 years.

We put into the ferry dock on Eigg to the tunes of a female piper dressed in a minikilt. Kilts were originally just homespun for the clan members and clans did not have individual patterns. It is only since the mid-eighteen hundreds that the tartans were assigned to specific clans⁶⁹. The word "plaid" in Scotland refers to the tartan cloth slung over the shoulder.

We more mobility impaired had been promised a van but as there was no sign of it I walked the long dock into the general store. Evans, Charity, Fred Weil and I started out on foot but the road got very steep. At last the van past us on the way to the dock and promised to come back. However it took an age and so Fred turned back but we continued climbing. On top of the hill were pastures kept clear from the ever-encroaching bracken. Bracken⁷⁰ is a fern that is as invasive as Kudzu and just as hard to get rid of.

Finally the van appeared and I gratefully climbed aboard. The driver Stuart did not volunteer much but did answer questions. He came to the island when he was 9, left for the University but has returned to be one of the 85 residents.

Our route led over the crest to the far side of the island where the crofters live. No sheep are allowed here for this is cropland, but cows do graze there⁷¹. We had a good view of Rum enshrouded in cloud and also of the small crofter village with the rugged cliffs behind.

After the clans were destroyed the clan chieftains became landlords and were called lairds. Before the Trust bought the island, the crofters were at the mercy of the Laird. There were successions of them, the worst being a Mr. Sutherland who would not allow the islanders to as much as repair a broken window. The whole infrastructure of the island broke down and when the Trust bought the island there was much to be repaired. Now the islander's lot is much better. One man had added an addition to his house and was running a small restaurant that could not

⁶² http://www.duartcastle.com/pages/castle/castle_intro.html

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan_MacLean

⁶⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basking_shark

⁶⁵ <http://www.projectpuffin.org/puffins.html>

⁶⁶ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/kilchoan/ardnamurchanpoint/index.html>

⁶⁷ <http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/small-is.htm>

⁶⁸ <http://www.isleofeigg.org/>

⁶⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tartan>

⁷⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracken>

⁷¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croft_\(land\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croft_(land))

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

have happened before. The new freedom has caused some people to come here to live although the rules are very strict. You must plan to live here permanently. Most people make their living by farming or fishing.

We then drove out to Kildonan (all the houses have names) that stands on a point of land. A monk named Donan⁷² came here in the 6th Century and had 150 followers but a Pict⁷³ Queen was offended by something and ordered them all killed. Another bloody part of Scottish history! We heard there are remnants of Saint Donan's church but they cannot be reached by road.

Another road led us to the old manor house that is being restored. It was built during the 1920s but you can see from the window frames that much work is still needed. It has a lovely garden and in the entrance are some stones with crosses on them from the old Donan chapel.

We stopped to photograph the Community Hall and finally were back at the dock with its general store and restaurant.

Donna, the piper piped us off the island. Her short kilt and tights looked incongruous in the misting rain.

A short distance away was the island of Rum. While the island is a nature conservancy, our goal was Kinloch Castle⁷⁴.

James Bullough, born about 1800, started work at the age of eight in Lancashire's weaving industry. He and a partner made several inventions that revolutionized the industry. His younger son, John inherited his father's flair for invention and the family business prospered even more. He was the one who bought the castle and sporting estate of Meggerrine in Perthshire. However it was not secluded enough for him and he decided to build a holiday home on Rum to host hunting parties on the island. However he died at the age of 53 leaving his son George, then 21, to inherit the family business. George had no interest in running the business and left it in the hands of caretakers but he certainly knew how to spend the money!

First of all he built an elaborate vault for his father's remains. This Doric temple still stands on the island but we did not see it. He then bought a 221-foot steam yacht called the Rhouma that still exists under the name of Madiz⁷⁵. In 2007 Lloyds Register of Yachts gave the yacht the rating of 100 to denote that it was built of the highest quality.

George then turned his attention to build a castle on Rum. No expense was spared and the castle is a monument to extravagance. Embellished with turrets and even a conservatory, the materials were all brought from the mainland.

We started our tour in the great hall, two stories high, decorated with everything from mounted stag heads and lion skins on the floor, to huge Japanese vases and a magnificent Japanese bronze Eagle. There was a Steinway piano.

They took us next to the walnut paneled dining room. The table sat 16 and came off the yacht Rhouma. On the yacht the chairs were bolted to the floor so the seats swiveled so you could easily get in and out of them. Nearby a huge snooker table⁷⁶ dominated the gaming and smoking room.

George was interested in dogs and horses and he had a telephone in his study so he could get the results of the races. A cable had to be laid to the island to make it work and the contraption looked a bit like an old fashioned gramophone.

Under the stairs was a most unusual orchestrion⁷⁷ that played rolls of orchestra music much as a player piano plays tunes. The castle has one of the largest collections of these rolls in existence. Some of the 900 organ pipes had been bent to fit under the stairs. We were treated to an air.

George married divorced society beauty Monique de la Pasture later called Lady Monica. We next went to the wing his wife, Lady Monica, had appropriated for her own. She was French and the room was filled with French furniture upholstered in beautiful hand embroidered silk.

Everywhere we turned there were interesting bits and pieces from George's travels around the world. I noted a lovely lacquer cabinet housing a Buddha in the hall.

⁷² http://www.cushnieent.force9.co.uk/CelticEra/Saints/saints_donan.htm

⁷³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picts>

⁷⁴ <http://www.kinlochcastlefriendsassociation.com/castle.html>

⁷⁵ <http://www.madiz.com/lloyds.htm>

⁷⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snooker>

⁷⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchestrion>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

Monica had a room devoted to Napoleon. His emblem was in the wallpaper. Everything was upholstered in red. One of the strangest features were the stuffed hummingbirds. At one time the solarium filled with hummingbirds. The power failed one winter and the hummingbirds died. George had them stuffed and mounted in shadowboxes to be displayed on the wall.

The ballroom was large enough for two squares to dance the Scottish dances. Curtains hid a minstrel gallery. George always traveled with a fourteen-piece band but they were not to see the parties he gave in the ballroom. Neither could anyone look in for the windows were too high. If you wanted a drink you placed it in a cubical where it was filled without the servants being able to see into the room. It is rumored that there were sexual orgies there but no one knows. Uninvited visitors to the island were turned away with guns.

The whole castle was such a flamboyant ostentation it is unique among places I have seen. The castle is in need of major repair and we were told we could probably buy it for one pound or so. However it would take millions of pounds to restore and preserve it. Prince Charles has an interest in the restoration but as yet has not received government support.⁷⁸

Tuesday July 22, 2008. We left Rum at 7:30 for a rolling ride across the sea to the Isle of Skye⁷⁹ where we landed at Armadale⁸⁰. The Isle of Skye is the largest island in the Hebrides. 40,000 people were removed from Skye during the clearances to make room for sheep. Slowly people are moving back since Parliament has passed laws giving the crofters some rights.

There was a shuttle to take us to the Clan Donald Centre⁸¹. The castle was built in 1815 but burned down in 1850. The brick ruins are still extant surrounded by a lovely garden with many unusual trees. We walked to the museum with its exhibits extolling the McDonalds through the years.

I came back to the ship for lunch and then took the coach across the island to Dunvegan Castle. It took an hour and a half to make the trip and it was raining as we crossed the Cuillin Mountains⁸². I blush to say I nodded off and really didn't see too much.

Dunvegan castle⁸³ was interesting in that it is the oldest castle in Scotland. The keep dates from the 13th century. Stronghold of the MacLeod Clan⁸⁴ it was built on a rock once surrounded by salt water. Unfortunately there were far too many people there to see it well although each room had a printed page you could read to tell the highlights. The treasure of the castles is a remnant of the silk Fairy flag that the MacLeods carried into battle many centuries ago. There was also a horn that takes a liter of claret to fill. Traditionally the Clan chief must dispatch the contents in one gulp. The present chieftain did it in a minute and a half. The castle had pictures and memorabilia for the clan through the ages. I think I have seen too many castles for this was the least favorite of the ones we have seen.

We drove back in the rain and met the seven people who had taken the alternative hike and went into Scumas Pub in the Sligachan Hotel. They were really wet from the rain but professed to having a good time. I think the pub must have had 100 varieties of scotch for you to sample. I had a small beer. Then it was back to the ship arriving after 6.

Wednesday, July 23. We came to the narrows where the current is very strong between Skye and the mainland. On the shore we saw the ruins of Moil Castle⁸⁵. A Viking princess married a local and they lived in this castle. They put a chain across the narrows and exacted tolls from passing ships.

The Skye Bridge⁸⁶ was very controversial since the original tolls were even worse than the ferry. A private car was charged 5.6 pounds. A coach was charged 85 pounds. After many objections

⁷⁸ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/apr/27/scotland.heritage?commentpage=1>

⁷⁹ <http://www.skye.co.uk/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/skye/armadale/index.html>

⁸¹ <http://www.clandonald.com/>

⁸² <http://flickr.com/photos/tiktok-africa/2680190830/in/pool-a510>

⁸³ <http://flickr.com/photos/tiktok-africa/2680190830/in/pool-a510>

⁸⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clan_MacLeod

⁸⁵ <http://www.ealaghol.co.uk/pictures/castlemoil/>

⁸⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skye_Bridge

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

the bridge was finally made free. The Bank of Scotland repaid the Bank of America who had issued the bonds to build the bridge. Why on earth was Bank of America over here in the first place? The bridge has made the island more accessible and even the population is starting to grow.

We went under the bridge that is 106 feet high. The dimension was picked so the Queen's yacht, Britannia could pass beneath it⁸⁷. A sturdy lighthouse stands by the bridge.

We then docked next to the Railroad station in Kyle of Lochalsh⁸⁸. The last section of the line was built at enormous cost and is probably the most expensive railway line ever built. It had to cut through the stony mountains that surround Kyle of Lochalsh. Evans and I walked up into town but it was not as picturesque as some of the other places we have been. I did find a souvenir in the Railroad shop: Thistle place mats and napkins that will match my earthenware china.

Two tours had been offered. One was to the Inverewe Gardens⁸⁹ which are world class but that would have involved sitting on the bus for two hours each way. We opted for the shorter tour to Plocton and Eilean Donan. John Gilly, our bus driver took us on a narrow winding room to Plocton⁹⁰. The reason was a herd of Highland Cattle who were pastured next to the road⁹¹. We all got out of the bus to photograph these shaggy beasts.

Then we drove into Plocton and were given an hour to walk around. The town made me think of a New England town with its white houses and a low tide that left seaweed covered beaches around the rocks. We walked out to a small island that would be inaccessible at high tide and then walked out on the peninsula to view a heather thatched cottage that someone was maintaining possibly as a guesthouse.

Back on the bus we drove about a half hour to Eilean Donan Castle.⁹² The name means island of Donan, the monk who was sent by Saint Columba to bring Christianity to the people of Eigg and other places. This castle is called the most photographed castle in Scotland. Several movies have been made here including Highlander with Sean Connery in 1986.⁹³ The castle's roots go back 800 years but in 1715, in conjunction with the Jacobite uprising, it was blown up and stood in ruins for 200 years until Lt Col John MacRae-Gilstrap bought it. He rebuilt it and then left it in trust for his family to use as they wished. Thus he avoided inheritance taxes. They come and stay at a nearby house. The castle is entered over a drawbridge into the billeting room where the soldiers would stay. Above was the great hall filled with antiques and memorabilia. I was impressed with the collection of antique knife boxes. We climbed even higher to see the small guest rooms. One is supposed to be haunted! In the basement was the kitchen. Here realistic models of food were displayed and human sized models of servants were preparing a meal. It was an amazing sight. In the scullery there was even the sound of dishes being washed (by the ghost of course). A display on an even lower level told the history of the castle and showed pictures of its restoration.

Starting with the peepholes into the great hall, there were somewhat secret passages and spiral stairs that were off limits to us but which I felt sure the Gilstrap children must have enjoyed.

In short it was a delightful castle to visit. Afterward John drove us up on the mountain for a couple of photographic stops of the castle and the Five Sisters of Kintall Mountains which legend says were maiden daughters turned into stone so they might remain young for future suitors⁹⁴.

Packing and the farewell cocktail party concluded the evening. Brian the hotel manager and David appeared in kilts. At dinner they paraded the haggis with a bagpipe and it was then ceremoniously served. Even mixed with Drambuie⁹⁵, I think you must be born Scottish to appreciate this dish⁹⁶. Then Beth Hunter entertained us with Scottish ballads on her Clarsach,⁹⁷

⁸⁷ <http://www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk/>

⁸⁸ <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/kyleoflochalsh/kyleoflochalsh/>

⁸⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inverewe_Garden

⁹⁰ <http://www.plocton.com/>

⁹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highland_cattle

⁹² <http://www.eileandonancastle.com/>

⁹³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highlander_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highlander_(film))

⁹⁴ <http://www.visitdunkeld.com/five-sisters-of-kintail.htm>

⁹⁵ <http://www.scotchmaltwhisky.co.uk/drambuie.htm>

⁹⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haggis>

⁹⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cl%C3%A0rsach>

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

an ancient Scottish harp.

Thursday, July 24. We were off loaded to the bus at 8:15 for the two-hour ride into Inverness. I said goodbye to Evans and Charity who are off to London for the weekend. I had to cool my heels for an hour before I could check in. My plan was to go to Yorkshire to see the Matthews family but there was no good way to get there. I could go to London and turn around and come back to Leeds Bradford. I could go to Manchester by way of Belfast or I could go to Leeds-Bradford by way of Belfast. I opted for the latter since it is much closer to where the Matthews live. However this involved a three-hour layover in the Belfast Airport⁹⁸. On inquiring, I found the city only about 10 minutes away. Never having been to Northern Ireland I decided to hire a taxi to show me around. Gary Galbraith was a very good guide.

Belfast has been the capital of Northern Ireland since its creation in 1920. Shipbuilding was its main industry. Gary first of all took me to the shipyards where the Titanic was made⁹⁹. The original dry-dock is still preserved with the bollards used to tie the ship down. Two huge cranes nicknamed David and Goliath carried the material to the ship. There is also the White Star¹⁰⁰ building commemorating the line the Titanic sailed for¹⁰¹. It long since merged with Cunard¹⁰². Now the only action is repairing ships. As a result there is a lot of poverty.

We drove into town and paused so I could get a picture of St Ann's Cathedral¹⁰³, which is Protestant. Then we drove by the King Albert Clock that leans much like the Tower of Pisa. They don't seem to be able to stop the settling and so the clock will fall down sometime in the future.

And then we came to where the Troubles were¹⁰⁴. Gary said they are all over now. However, he didn't want me to shoot pictures in a conspicuous way. We came to Boundary Street. An ugly green and high corrugated steel wall. That separates the Catholics from the Protestant neighborhoods. Periodically there are gates in the wall, which are shut at night.

He reminded me that the Protestants came over and burned down a large section of the Catholic neighborhood and many lives were lost. There were two memorial gardens where the dead are buried. On both sides of the wall were murals on the walls of buildings with patriotic slogans. One even depicted William of Orange who started all the trouble at Culloden.

It is one thing to read about the Troubles and another to see where it happened. I also find it hard to believe the troubles are over if they still have the wall and lock the gates at night.

We returned to the airport and I flew to Leeds Bradford Airport¹⁰⁵ where Jim Matthews met me and took me to their home in Ilkley¹⁰⁶. It's a wonderful Victorian house with gracious high ceilings and many bedrooms. I even got lost trying to find mine! The house is in walking distance to downtown Ilkley and also close to the moors.

Friday, July 25. Stephanie, Rebecca and I set out for Haworth¹⁰⁷ where the Bronte family¹⁰⁸ lived in the old parsonage. Their home is a museum filled with many pieces of the original furniture as well as artifacts from their lives. It made me want to go back and read Wuthering Heights again. Behind the manse you could see the moor that so influenced the Bronte sister's stories. We walked down to see the graveyard by the parish church but the Brontes are buried in the church itself so we did not see their graves.

We then drove to Fountains Abbey¹⁰⁹, which is a wonderful ruin. Thirteen Benedictine monks were exiled from St Mary's Abbey in York for taking place in a riot and were taken under the protection of the Archbishop of York who gave them the property where the ruins now stand.

⁹⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfast>

⁹⁹ <http://www.titanicinbelfast.com/welcome.aspx>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.nisp.co.uk/NISP-News.aspx?id=26&archive=False>

¹⁰¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Star_Line

¹⁰² <http://www.cunard.com/>

¹⁰³ <http://www.belfastcathedral.org/>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.belfastcathedral.org/>

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.lbia.co.uk/>

¹⁰⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilkley>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/brontes/bronte.asp>

¹⁰⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountains_Abbey

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

They applied to be a Cistercian Monastery in 1132. It operated for 400 years until 1539 when Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the Monasteries¹¹⁰ and confiscated the property.

The temperature must have been close to 80 degrees and families were picnicking and playing games on the lawn. I had made the mistake of wearing a knit outfit and was sweltering! It is such a contrast to Scotland!

The ruins were lovely and we walked through the original solarium, which retains its vaulted roof. We saw the cloister and the kitchen and refectory. The roofless basilica itself with its long nave must have been beautiful in its time. From the size of the ruin this must have a very wealthy abbey.

Stephanie had other plans but Becca and I decided it was time to visit Brymor Dairy¹¹¹ and have some ice cream. We checked out the cows and chickens and ducks and then entered the ice-cream store. Alas no pistachio but I had a delicious chocoholic cone.

We drove home via the R A F Menwith base¹¹² where both Jim and Stephanie work and Becca goes to school. Stephanie wanted to buy some gasoline. It was a minor problem getting me onto the base for I had neglected to bring my passport but the guard looked me over and decided I wasn't a threat.

For dinner we walked to a new Italian restaurant in Ilkley called Piccolinos¹¹³. Ilkley seems like a pleasant place to live with Victorian charm.

Saturday, July 26. Jim plotted a course that could take us to see Hadrian's Wall¹¹⁴ but it looked like 3 hours each way so we settled for the Lake District in Cumbria instead.¹¹⁵ I have never been there. We drove north across the moors and into this beautiful section of England so endeared by poets, artists and writers. We stopped in Windermere at a huge grocery to buy sandwiches and crisps and then drove to Ambleside¹¹⁶ where we found a bench facing Lake Windermere¹¹⁷ to have a picnic. Lake Windermere is the largest natural lake in England.

There were so many activities to watch. Ferries and Cruisers, rowboats and kayaks, two young boys even had some blow up rubber boats. There were many ducks and even one fat goose. It soon became evident why. People came to feed them. I gave Becca the remains of my sandwich and she stood on a little jetty and attracted a large flock.

We then drove on to Grasmere¹¹⁸ where Wordsworth made his home for many years. Dove cottage¹¹⁹ was originally a tavern and the lower rooms were painted black to cover up the tobacco stains. Above were several small rooms where the family slept. It was impossible to imagine Wordsworth, his sister, wife and three children all living there. Samuel Taylor Coleridge¹²⁰ also came and stayed for a time. The windowless children's room was papered in newspapers to try and keep the wind from coming through the wall. Many of the furnishings were original to the family. The small garden behind was where he got the inspiration for his poem about daffodils, the wild narcissus that grows here.

I particularly liked the small museum, which linked illustrations with quotations from the poems to show how Wordsworth got his inspiration. It really made his poetry come alive. He was appointed poet Laureate to Queen Victoria but during his tenure he never found any inspiration to write a line of poetry. Attached to the museum was an exhibit of William Turner's¹²¹ works, although, unlike the Lake Poets¹²², he did not spend much time here.

The Lake District is a National Park, carved by long ago glaciers. The whole area is so beautiful

¹¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Monasteries

¹¹¹ <http://www.brymordairy.co.uk/>

¹¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menwith_Hill

¹¹³ <http://www.piccolinorestaurants.co.uk/ilkley.html>

¹¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian's_Wall

¹¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_District

¹¹⁶ <http://www.amblesideonline.co.uk/>

¹¹⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windermere_\(lake\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windermere_(lake))

¹¹⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grasmere>

¹¹⁹ <http://www.visitcumbria.com/amb/dovecott.htm>

¹²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Taylor_Coleridge

¹²¹ <http://www.j-m-w-turner.co.uk/>

¹²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Poets

2008 SCOTLAND, BELFAST, YORKSHIRE AND LAKE DISTRICT

and we had a wonderful day of sunshine to enjoy it. Rolling fells or hills dotted with sheep were defined with slate rock walls as carefully laid as the slate houses with no mortar. Craggy mountains rose behind the many lakes.

Our lady in the GPS took us on to Hill Top where Beatrix Potter¹²³ made her home on a farm. This house must look much as it did in her day for the illustrations in her books can be seen in real life starting with the entrance doorway. In the stairwell is a cuckoo clock that looked so much like the antique wag-on-the-wall I bought in the Black Forest many years ago. Across from the entrance was Mr. McGregor's garden¹²⁴. I didn't see Peter Rabbit!

Back in the car we followed the GPS again and to our surprise it led us to the ferry across the lake. We would have been delighted to take it but had just missed one and would have to wait 40 minutes for another. We backtracked making the poor lady recalculate several times. I think even "she" got lost at one time.

Back in Ilkley, Jim grilled us a chicken dinner with grilled vegetables to go with the delicious couscous Stephanie prepared.

After dinner they took me to see the prehistoric stones¹²⁵ near their house, which have the same curious round holes we saw on the stones at Clava Cairns. We then checked out the remains of Olicana¹²⁶, the small Roman fort in town. It was mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book. There is not much to see but the mound and remnants of a wall

Then we went up on the moor to watch the sunset. Jim took timed exposures so he could recreate it on his computer. I never realized a sunset draws a curve due to the rotation of the earth.

Before going to bed I made one last attempt to make friends with Houdini, the resident cat. They say their cat sitter never even sees her! I did manage to get within 3 feet of her but that was all. She was a feral¹²⁷ kitten which Stephanie and Jim tamed by patiently playing card games in the bathroom where she was confined until she decided they were okay.

Sunday, July 27. We drove into Manchester where I caught the Delta flight to Atlanta. The only glitch was that we had a 20-minute wait for the bag in Atlanta as they got jammed on the belt. My chair pusher said that yesterday a flight from Stockholm had to wait an hour and a half for the bags!

Evans Scotland pictures can be found at Harrell.smugmug.com. My pictures are at Meges.smugmug.com.

¹²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatrix_Potter

¹²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Rabbit

¹²⁵ <http://www.timetravel-britain.com/articles/country/ilkley.shtml>

¹²⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olicana>

¹²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feral_cat