

Iceland – Greenland Cruise

Princess Cruise – August 13, 2009

Our first day was at sea, we meet a nice couple at breakfast who agreed to share our Scotland tour. We played bridge in the afternoon with another couple who were Dutch but lived in Spain near Gibraltar.

August 14 – Dublin Ireland

Yesterday I attended the destination lecture and picked out a few places I'd like to visit. I had heard about Irish Coffee and wanted to try it. What better place than Dublin, the capitol of Ireland.



St. Stephen's Green is one of the large parks in Dublin, the flowers are quite vivid this time of year.



St. Patrick's Church,
Episcopal

St. Patrick was the man who came to Ireland around 500 A.D. to bring Christianity to the pagans living here. He baptized his first convert in a pond that used to be in the vicinity of the church that bears his name. St. Patrick's Day has become a symbol of the celebration of Irish heritage in the United States and commemorates the memory of this famous person, a keystone of Irish history.



We then continued to Dublin Castle, we expected a castle but found government buildings. Nevertheless, we saw these sand sculptures, yes, made of wet sand. They depict the four elements, wind, earth, fire and water.





In the first picture, overleaf, the man is being filled with water, however he can never be full because the water runs out his hand. To the left the artist has tried to capture the wind as it runs between the fingers. Fire is obviously depicted above and mother earth on the sphere to the left.

One thing I wanted to try was Irish Coffee, so we stopped in a pub to get one.





We then went to the area just beyond the Custom House where these sculptures depict the starvation from the Potato Famine in the 19th century. Note the dog in the rear center.

August 15 – Greenock, Scotland



As we disembarked the ship, we were greeted by a pair of Scots.



In Luss, in the Highlands, the houses have extensive flowers. The frequent rains facilitate the maintenance of such beautiful floresty.



Near by the house was Loch Lomond. Frequently one sees lakes surrounded by low mountains in these areas.



The lake area has a church with a graveyard in which Vikings are buried.



In Aberfoyle, we stopped to see a working dog demonstration. The young lady on the left taught the border collie a few essential commands so that she could direct the dog to herd the geese through these various channels. The dog understands her words which are complimented by the movements of her cane.



More evidence of the rains and the beautiful flowers.



On this tour of Scotland, I hired a tour guide to show us a cross-section of the Scottish countryside. I asked this couple to join us and share the cost. One of the great benefits of a private guide is you go where you want and stop when you want. With only four of us, we get a great photo of this large bull and our comrades, Bob and Barbara.



Sheep graze in many pastures and on most hillsides however they are not native to Scotland. They were introduced by the English after the United Kingdom in the 1700's.



William Wallace, for whom the movie, Braveheart, was commemorated has this memorial in Stirling. He was the uncrowned king of Scotland who was executed for treason by the English.

We also saw the area in which Rob Roy lived.

August 17, 2009 - Faroe Islands

This island archipelago is autonomously governed but is a protectorate of Denmark. We joined another couple from our dinner table, Richard and Janet and hired a cab to take us around. We saw a few of the islands which are often connected by undersea tunnels. We drove to the top of a



high hill and saw the islands below us. Weather was cool but the sun was out and warming.

This is a land of small, waterfront villages on the sides of grass covered mountains. There are few trees.



The sea makes unusual rock formations.

“The hills are alive with the sound of sheep.”



Sod roofs provide insulation and don't make noise in the rain.

Waterfalls bring spring water down many of the hills.



The church is securely locked, however the key is left in the door.



Here you see the same rock formation in the background, near the church.



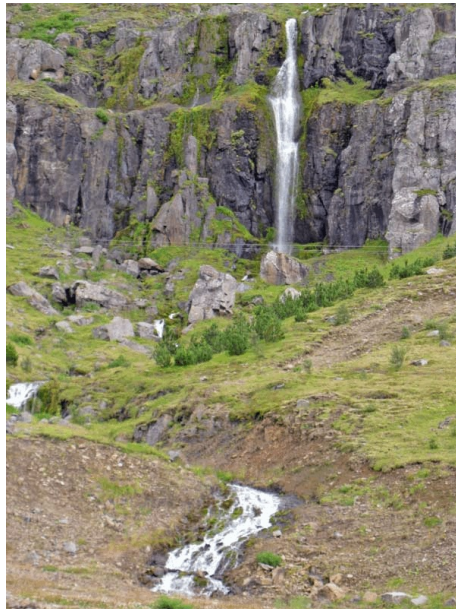
From the top of the mountain, the fjord brings in the sea.

August 18, 2009 - Seydisfjordur, Iceland





Original buildings were built from kits supplied in Norway. There are few trees, no lumber. This blue church has an impressive organ for a population of 750 in the village.



Some one decided to hang these oranges from their bush to make a citrus tree, of course citrus can't grow up here. What we have plenty of is waterfalls and fresh water.



These photos show exhibits in the technology museum. It showed the use of technology to develop Eastern Iceland.

August 20, 2009 - Reykjavik, Iceland



As we pass through downtown Reykjavik, we pass the Prime Minister's home, formerly the assembly place for the congress. Iceland was the oldest democracy in modern Europe beginning in the 10th century.



This is the home of the most famous sculpture in Iceland who made many statues of people working. The population disparaged the statues saying they were too blocky but now we say they are very strong and sturdy workers. Below are other works of this artist.



Geothermal power makes for inexpensive electricity and the largest grid of underwater hot water pipes in the world. This is one of the stations where the power is controlled.



Church and President's house. The president is the head of the state and serves for many years, the Prime Minister is the chief executive officer.

Art is very important to Icelanders. They also read a

lot of books. In fact our guide said that when he was young the television did not broadcast on Thursday so that children would be encouraged to read.



City of Reykjavik, from the tower





Reykjavik is the principal seaport of Iceland. Here is the harbor.



These pillars commemorate the capital city of Reykjavik showing the steam from the geysers. You've seen a lot of the city, but the rest of Iceland is a lot of lava.



The biggest tourist trap in Iceland is one of the feature sites of the capital, the man-made lagoon is heated by thermal springs and the effluent of the power plant.





The mineral rich, hot water is presumed to be healthy for the skin. I had a good time in the lagoon and found the water varied between warm and hot depending on how close you were to the intake.

August 22, 2009 - Prince Christian Sund

There is a passage at the south tip of Greenland that ships can transit if the weather is good. We were lucky enough to do so. In this very deep channel, the mountains descend dramatically into the lagoon and glaciers and icebergs are very common.





This is a lot of what Greenland is like, mountains descending precipitously into the water with glacial snow and ice, even in late August. Occasionally, one will see a small village on the coastline. The central Greenland is a ice pack two miles deep, it has never been explored and if it melted, the seas would rise 20 feet. All of the world would be as Venice.



As we drove by this little village, this family in their boat drove along side us. They entered their harbor a bit beyond the village.



One more glacier picture before we reach Qaqortoq.



August 23, 2009 – Qaqortoq, Greenland

The people of Greenland are very patriotic and many houses fly the national flag. We see this town on the side of the mountain as our

ship anchors in the harbor.



Husky puppies and snowmobiles represent the winter season yet to come.



Houses are simply made, all are from prefab brought from abroad as there are no trees for lumber in Greenland. The mailbox near the door and the closes on the line are typical.

There is a general store, a computer store, a police station and a few other shops.



As usual, kids ride their scooters and slide on the public playground equipment.





The helicopter pad takes care of serious transportation issues. The capital of Greenland, Nuuk is just a little ways North of us.

The village put on a show for us displaying their native costumes.



We visited Qaqortoq on Sunday morning. At this church, there was a christening in progress. The candles you see at the sides and the front are real. The church service was well attended. Afterward, the congregants stood outside and chatted.

On the hill beyond the church is the town cemetery.



The kayak demonstration starts with the two men in their waterproof suits in their kayaks on the bridge. They wriggle a bit and fall off landing head first, straight down in the water. They immediately right the kayaks and paddle off. I bet the trick is to hold onto the paddle as you fall into the river.

This young family was there to watch the show.



August 26, 2009 – St. Pierre, France in America

This little island town of ships, narrow streets and quaint houses is actually considered to be France, even though its just a few miles east of Canada.





The most notable point in St. Pierre is the Hotel Robert where Al Capone stayed. They have a wall of photos and memorabilia commemorating the Chicago gangster.



Fishing was the primary industry of this French province. This carousel is a permanent fixture and a few youngsters were riding while we walked by.



This memorial to sailors lost at sea, in war is nearby the Catholic church. We were able to enter the church from the rear and see the beautiful stained-glass windows within it.



The canons are in the battery at the harbor. The lighthouse is just a bit farther east.



Our friends,
Richard and
Janet Skelly.



August 27, 2009 - Sydney, Nova Scotia

This fiddle is the highlight of the harbor but nobody we asked knew the significance.

We hired a cab and driver and visited the town of Baddeck and the Alexander Graham Bell Museum. Bell was a naturalized citizen of the United States but had a summer home in Baddeck that he established after he invented the telephone and had become rich and famous.



On the way, we stopped at a Gaelic College where the arts such as weaving are taught.



The Bell museum portrays Bell's telephone, his graphophone (record player), his airplane design, leading to his development of the hydrofoil, the first boat to exceed 18 knots.



His work on the telephone was the predecessor of his passion for assisting the deaf. His wife was deaf so Mr. Bell was innovative in teaching the deaf to speak. He had developed a written speech language to



help deaf people make the sounds necessary for speech. This led to the mechanical creation of speech and the hearing aid, a modified telephone.



The museum is in the area where Bell had his vacation home, a beautiful lake with plenty of flowers, the town of Baddeck.

Here we are with the Bells in the park with our friends, Richard and Janet.