

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #1 - Preparation

Hi Everyone,

Hope the summer is going well! George & I have been busy busy since we returned from our cruise around the Arabian Peninsula, Suez Canal, & Israel!! After we made it to Texas, we enjoyed a month there with family before heading northwest in the RV to McCloud.



We got there in 3 long driving days & almost immediately flew off to Alaska. Mt Shasta as beautiful as ever. What a really special mountain!!!



We had to get George's driver's license renewed in person, so we combined that with a visit with the Anchorage dancers! We got to do a 11 hour West Coast Clinic for them. We had a ball. Sure good to be with our first dance family! Didn't have time to visit any one else while we were there, but accomplished what we needed to!



It was a beautiful clear day when we flew back to McCloud. Flying over the Alaskan range was gorgeous!!



Besides the 2 weeks of dancing at our most favorite venue, we also got in several hikes in the area. McCloud Falls was just as pretty as ever – lots of water this year!



Even got to visit friends at their beautiful home on the Pacific Coast. View was fabulous & walking in the local area was quite interesting! Got to hunt for agates on the beach (we didn't have a clue what to look for, but Louise sure did!! She had a handful in about 10 minutes!!! Then she took us mushroom hunting. Another incredible new experience! She & Bud cleaned & cooked them for our brunch. Yum, Yum, Yum!!!



On our next to the last day there, we drove up to take the boat across Shasta lake to Shasta Caverns. Had done it before a few years back & it was even better this time. Great way to get out of the 95 degree heat for a while & visit with friends too! Sure would have loved a longer time on the lake!



Soon it was time to move on to Reno. We got there a couple of days before the dancing started, so got to visit with our grand daughter who just graduated from University of Nevada in Reno. Managed to take in the adorable new Jungle Book movie with her & took a quick trip to Virginia City (what a tourist trap!!!, but the icecream was incredible!!!).



Visited Sarah's friend where he works at a local Thai restaurant. It was yummy & it was fun having him wait on us!!



The dancing at our International Convention was awesome (had 530 dancers this year!!) I forgot to take many pictures this year! This was after our teach! We had about 100 couples there for it!



And we had a ball demoing & teaching our new Ph 6 rumba. Got a bit of grief for showing so much leg in my dress bought especially for the occasion! Forgot to get any pictures until I had already taken off my heels!! Enjoyed the remainder of ICBDA. So wonderful to be with our dance friends & to get to do all the dancing too! It was over too soon & we're already anticipating next year in San Diego!!



Normally we hang around a day or 2, but with the cruise vacation approaching, we had to get on the road heading to Colorado to park our RV for the flight! We had looked at several options & finally decided to park the RV at friends who live near Greeley, CO. They even had a 50amp plug installed so that we could leave the air conditioning on!!! WooHoo! Perfect! We drove a fairly short day on Sunday – just to Elko, NV. Then on through Utah (view of the huge reservoir near Park City) & Wyoming (Tree in Rock Rest Area near Laramie) on Monday & Tuesday. Got the RV parked & packed on Wednesday.



On Thursday we drove to Denver for our flight to Copenhagen. We flew over on Icelandic Air. Interesting experience! They are probably the ultimate example of a discount airline. No amenities AT ALL!! We did have assigned seats, pillows, blankets, & no charge for either the checked or carry on luggage. We were given 1 non-alcoholic drink on each leg of the flight. No food AT ALL. Not even pretzels! Luckily we knew in advance, so we ate a meal just before boarding & had some snacks with us. We had a breakfast sandwich on our 2 hour layover in Reykjavik, so we definitely didn't starve. They were about the fastest in delivering luggage we have ever seen. Even faster than Alaska Airlines who guarantees 20 minute delivery. There was no passport check in Copenhagen, so we walked straight from the gate to the luggage carousel & our luggage was already going around! Amazing. Our hotel had a shuttle & it arrived about the same time we figured out where to board it! So very easy getting to our hotel. We got checked in amid the chaos of arrivals & our room was on the 21st floor. Lovely view, but we didn't hang around enjoying it.



We took off to get some exercise & look for a place for dinner. Most interesting car outside the hotel. Had yellow roses taped to the windows???? Wedding? Funeral? Found a shopping mall about a half mile away & used it to stretch our legs & ate a lovely Italian dinner in their food court. Got a nice view back at our unusual hotel & enjoyed a stroll through a local park.



We headed back to the hotel, showered & took a short nap. By the time we woke up, 4 more of our group had arrived & we had our first toast! By midnight, we were all together & we enjoyed another toast!!!! The adventure begins!!!

More soon! Hang on for trip to Iceland!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicsts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #2 - Copenhagen to Bergen

Good Morning Friends & Family,



The next morning we were downstairs by 9:30am for our included buffet breakfast. As per usual for European hotels – there were lots of choices both hot & cold and coffee machines for our personal morning caffeine fix. We took the opportunity to run upstairs to see the view from the restaurant on the top floor. It was amazing! Even had a modern art piano up there! Soon we were in our ordered taxi & being delivered to the Holland America Line Zuiderdam.



Amazingly enough, our cabins were all ready for us to check in & the ship left port at 4pm! We were in the Explorer Lounge having our first toast at 5pm!



Our itinerary for this trip included some interesting stops. The first 2 stops were to be Norway. George & I had been to these stops 6 years ago on an Royal Caribbean Cruise, but were looking forward to seeing more of them. The other 3 couples were seeing them for the first time. None of us had been to Iceland or either of the Islands. Faroe Islands is actually owned by Denmark (they “share Royalty” as the Hotel Concierge informed me!!) and the Shetland Islands are Scottish.



Our first day was a relaxing cruise at sea. It was a Formal dress night & they served our favorite appetizer – escargot!!!!!! Yippee! They had assigned us a rectangular table that’s not our favorite, but at least we’re at a window! The evening entertainment was a full production Stage Show & the singers & dancers are pretty darn good!



Had not thought about how far north we were. Sunset was nearly 10pm & we'll be going even further north! Our balcony cabin is a bit larger than usual with lots & lots of storage compartments. There is even drawers under the seat in the couch and 2 huge drawers at the end of the bed, not to mention the usual closets. The bathroom even has a larger tub! The week before we cruised, they had offered us an upgrade (substantial price increase!!!) and we'd all decided it wasn't worth it. Good decision! We were at the aft end of the ship all side by side – we can look right into the balcony below us and we're directly below the swimming pool deck. It's the first time we've tried this alignment and it seems like it is going to be our favorite. So far the seas have been pretty smooth – especially considering where we are! It was a lovely way to start the vacation.



Started getting little bed creatures right from the first night!!! I think these 2 cabin assistants (from Indonesia) are going to be the most inventive yet experienced!!!



Our arrival into Bergen was a little foggy. We cruised through an archipelago, and I had opened the curtains about 5am, but it was too foggy to see much.



Our Bergen excursion was a walking/hiking tour. A bit concerned because it was cool (low 60's) & was raining when we first docked, but it ended up quite pleasant. Our guide, Edward, (English father & Mexican mother!!) met us on the pier & we set off for a walk through the city center. Bergen is Norway's second largest city (after Oslo) with a population of 200,000+, it felt like a small city, but was very clean & landscaped beautifully. There was a small farmer's market at the Fishing pier & everything looked fresh & well organized.



Then on to the funicular to get to the top of Mt Floien. We climbed 1200' above sea level in 8 minutes. Very pleasant views despite the crowd of people!



Had to use our imagination for the incredible view, but still enjoyed it!!! The first picture shows the HAL Zuiderdam in the center. Looks like a long way down!!! The beauty would be amazing if we didn't have the clouds.



The main object of the excursion was a short hike in the National Park atop the mountain to the small Skomakerdiket Lake. The cool damp mist made the forest look rather magical. Our guide was telling us tales of the local belief in elves – you can certainly appreciate that as you wander in the woods.



The clouds had lifted enough for use to see down below to the city from the 1800' total elevation.



All too soon, it was time to descend back to street level. The ride down was just as pretty & again only 8 minutes!!! Phooey!



Back down to the City Center & we took a short walk to see the Historical Pier area, called Bryggen pier. These wooden buildings of the German Hanseatic League of Merchants have been burned down & replaced for hundreds of years. They tilt hither & thither due to the unstable land, but they are still a bustling area of local sales! A little more touristy, but still an example of the importance of imports!!!!



Too soon, we were back on board & watching Bergen recede in the distance!!!!



Norway is beautiful rain or sun!!!



And of course we had happy hour to look forward to!!! We continued to watch our departure from the Ocean Lounge.



The scenery continued while we enjoyed another marvelous dinner!!!!



Enjoyed sunset from our balcony room with our evening bed creature!

And tomorrow we're on to Alesund, Norway!!! Hope you enjoyed our day as much as we did!!! See ya tomorrow!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #3 - Alesund, Norway

Hello Everyone,

Hope you are looking forward to continuing our northern adventure! Alesund was gorgeous!!! Let's get right to it!!!



When we first docked, our view of the dock was absolute, but before we had finished getting ready to leave our cabin, we had a Costa neighbor in front of us. We were destined to dock with them several times during this trip! It was amazing to watch them use their side thrusters to slide into the dock. Technology nowadays is truly magical!



After piling on the bus, the first stop was a walking tour of Sunmore Outdoor Folk Museum. We started at one of the State's Protestant Lutheran church's where the view of the cemetery was lovely.



Took a picture of this interesting old tree – something had caused a really unusual bumpy bark!



Basically the museum was a collection of historical old buildings. They had been collected from locations all around Norway & brought together to give you an idea of how things had been.



Some of the roofs were so overgrown, you could barely tell what was ground & what was the roof of a building. Our guide said the the sod was placed in 2 layers – one with grass down for insulation & a second layer with green side up!



One of the most amazing aspects for us was how they had balanced the foundations!!!! Looked terribly unsteady!!!



We only went inside a few of them. They seemed pretty sturdy inside but austere.



One school house was open. A well to do Norwegian had donated the funds for this school for the poorer population. To perform any trade in Norway, you had to have a certificate of General Knowledge (must have been somewhat like a GED?). It was quite simple for the higher educated, but for the poorer folks that had not had the opportunity for school, they could sometimes not pass the test – causing any more of a financial rift. This gentleman provided the opportunity for more to complete at least a minimum of education so that they could pass the tests. Up to a dozen at a time would actually live in this building for 3 or 4 months to get their education. There was the small classroom upstairs and very small sleeping quarters.



One newer example home was furnished. Our guide was pointing out that there were actually colors in the furnishings & walls which was rather unusual for the standard Lutheran believers. She said most of them did not believe in the frivolous use of color!



Inside the museum, there were other examples of early 19th century furnishings, clothes, & textile weaving.



After a short time on our own to use the free wifi, our bus started up the steep narrow road to the top of Mt Aksla for a scenic view. Our bus driver was not in the least deterred by close quarter passing lane!! Apparently this is standard procedure!



At the top was a restaurant with a wrap around deck where we were treated to an almost 360 degree panoramic view of Alesund.



Absolutely stunning!



We were not anxious to leave this lovely setting. On our last trip here, we had not spent any time in the city, we had taken a tour of the surrounding countryside. Which was also gorgeous, but we were pleased to see the city itself.



We descended back down into the city without incident & took a short drive around to see some of the famous “Art Nouveau” buildings for which this city is famous. There was a devastating fire in 1904 that destroyed over 10,000 homes & the city center. It was rebuilt almost entirely in the Art Nouveau fashion & is known throughout Europe for its lovely buildings that are mostly restored. Bill & Carol elected to take a walking tour to learn more about the buildings themselves & get to see inside many of them.



We still had a few minutes left of our tour time, so the bus driver & guide elected to drive us to the other end of town for another view point. We were appreciative of the effort, even if we didn't have time to get out for pictures. That is the restaurant on Mt Aksla above our ship.



After a short run back on board for lunch (heaven forbid that we skip a meal!!!), we came back out to walk around on our own. Here's a close up view of the steep walk up to the restaurant where we got the incredible views. That night our Asst Waiter told us that he had run up it in 6 minutes! And did it twice!!!!!! We didn't attempt it even once!



We continued a walk around on our own. Our guide had pointed out this cute little red lighthouse that is owned by a local hotel & rented out as an overnight accommodation for special events. They bring you breakfast in the morning! Of course there were plenty of trolls around. The Norwegians do love their trolls! It is just a beautiful little town. Don't think I had mentioned that the population is about 41,000.



This statute is to remind them that although the fishermen got most of the credit, their wives were home hard at work themselves.



We also found a statue reminder of World War I. The plaque says it is an original mine from WWI, dedicated to the memory of the seamen lost during the war.



We found a viewpoint of the back of the ship to show you our cabin. We are just below where the couple are standing. The other 3 couples are lined up moving to the right. A balcony for each of us.



Too soon we were back on board & leaving Norway! Got a little show on the way out when a Fire Station boat came by practicing with their hoses!



It was certainly a lovely evening for our departure.



Happy Hour was great fun as usual!



I insulted our cabin attendants because I thought my bed creature was a TURKEY and it was meant to be a PEACOCK!!!! But way cute none the less.

That's the end of our short & pleasant visit to Norway this time! Now heading across the Northern Atlantic towards ICELAND!!! Yippee!

Stay tuned for more to come!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

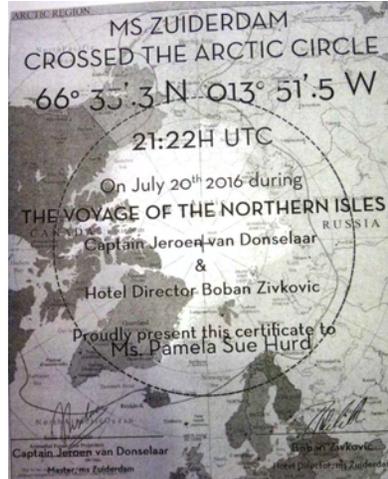
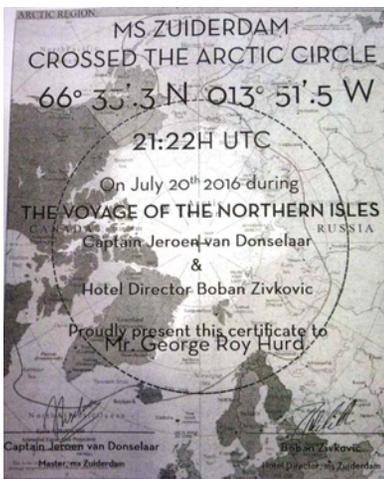
Northern Isles Adventure #4 – Isafjordur, Iceland

Good Afternoon Friends & Family,

We are continuing our Northern Atlantic cruise! No time for chit chat, we have places to go & things to see!



We had a day at sea to relax & I didn't take any pictures except of our Elephant bed creature! We of course had our regular lovely meals & there was a Salsa class. George was busy watching Game of Thrones & the others were out & about doing things, so I went alone. I ended up dancing the man's part with an American woman – never even got her name. We did well & it was fun. 2 of the Zuiderdam dance performers taught it and they were not too bad. They worked together pretty well. Both very young & cute. Otherwise, nothing much to report for this day of crossing the Northern Atlantic. Seas were pretty calm.



During the night of sailing into Isafjordur, we crossed into & out of the Arctic Circle, so we all received official certificates! This is the second time George & I have sailed into the Arctic Circle (on the previous Norwegian cruise, we visited Honningsvåg which is the Northernmost inhabited region of Europe). George had worked in the Arctic Circle lots of times when he did Radar Repair at Prudoe Bay. Always fun to do something that a small percentage of the World travelers have done.



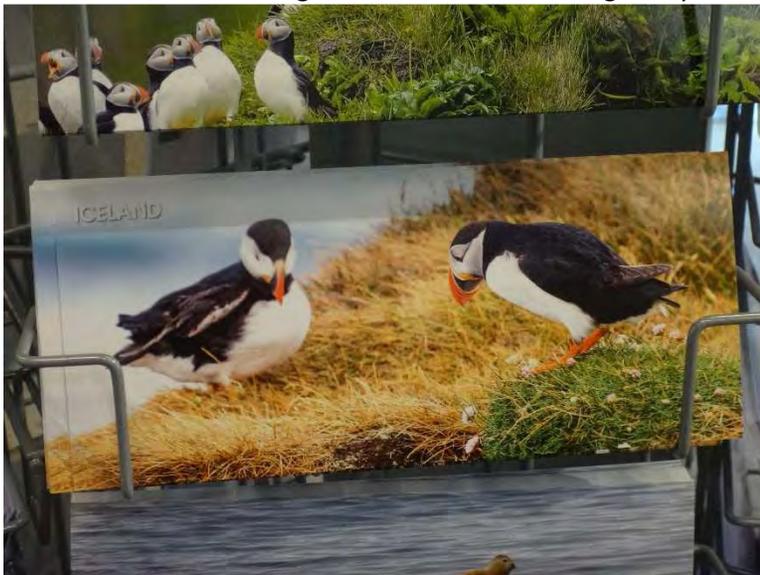
Our cruise into the port was quite beautiful. The Captain had opened up the deck on the bow of the ship & we had intended to go there, but didn't make it! Did watch it on the TV monitor. Our tour was not until 1pm, so nice relaxing morning. We were ready to leave the cabin in between meal times, so we walked about the ship for a while. Headed up to the gym to weigh. So far, we're holding our own on weight. Hard to believe as much as we've been eating!!! Met the others in the buffet at lunch & chatted until almost time to go on our excursion.



Our ship was too big to get into the dock here, so we had to tender. Not our favorite was to debark the ship, but today it was painless. Our excursion ticket was our ticket on the tender, so all we had to do was walk down together to the debarkation deck & load straight onto the tender. We were using our own life boats for tenders. It was a short ride over to the Isafjordur dock.



The dock didn't look like much – mostly small fishing boats in the harbor. Did find this funny car across the street from where HAL let us off. We didn't donate to the cause, but we did get a chuckle out of the ingenuity!!



We wandered down to a local store that had displays of some of the local fauna. Were hoping to see both the Puffins & the Arctic Fox on the excursion!



We still had about an hour to kill before our excursion, so we walked on into town, despite the chilly damp weather.



There were lots of gorgeous flowers everywhere. The highlight of the town seemed to be this statue dedicated to the fishermen.



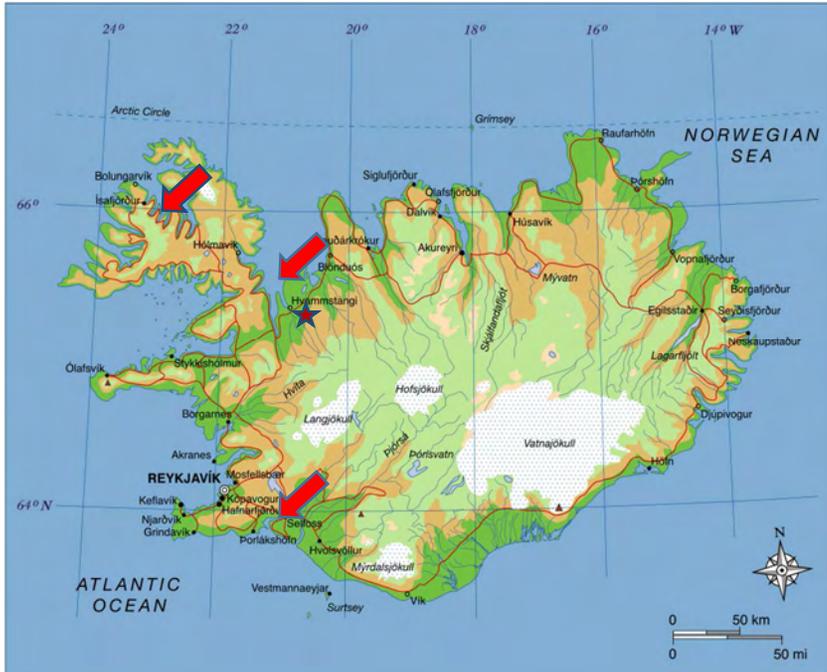
At the far end of town was the old hospital converted to the public library. We had been advised that it had free wifi & public toilets. There were also displays of life in Iceland & how the hospital used to look. Not too exciting, but it was free & gave us a chance to get warm & stay dry for a little while!



On the way back, we saw some sun trying to peak out of the clouds & got a view (& a whiff) of the local fisherman's hard work for the day.



Soon we were out on the water heading to Vigur Island in Djupfjord. Vigur means “spear” to do with the spear shape of the island. Even with the low clouds, the scenery was amazing. Sure would love to see it in the sunshine! They told us they had actually had quite a lot of sunny days this summer, more than usual, but we didn’t pick one of them unfortunately! Anyway, the boat ride was about 20 minutes & we could see our ship fading off into the distance.



So here’s a couple of maps to give you an idea of where we were. There were lots of fjords much like Norway. Isafjordur is way up on the Northeast corner of Iceland. We continued out & around the tip of the fjord to our little island (marked with the star). It had a population of 10! All farmers who live off the land & collect feathers from the Eider Duck to sell for down.



We disembarked the small boat onto a rocky beach. We could see & hear lots of seals out in the shallow water along with the birds. Our young guide led us up the hill towards a small windmill (the oldest & only Old Windmill in Iceland – built in the 1850). The soil was spongy feeling to walk on.



We immediately started seeing Puffins, both flying around & in the water. Along with lots of other birds & more seals.



After a short talk about the island, she led us over & told us to grab a stick. “Stick?” we all said. We soon discovered why! For whatever reason, the Arctic Terns began swooping & diving on us. They were really noisy too. You would hold the stick over your head to keep them off you!



None of us ever really got hit, but they would certainly dive within inches of your head! It was quite exciting! Here’s Bill being brave & lowering his stick!!! So brave!!!



Continuing our walk around the island, we saw birds, Birds, BIRDS!!! There were birds in the air, in the water, and on the ground. We saw Arctic Terns, Puffins, Guillemots & the Eider Duck (& probably others that we didn’t know the names!!!). Our guide mentioned that there were so many Puffins on the island they actually killed some of them. Because they burrow into the soil for their nests, there are sooooo many that they are decimating the island’s edges!! More than 10,000 of them return annually to reproduce!



These are the best pictures I got of a puffin, they were too far away for my no zoom camera! Those are other puffins floating in the water. Tom Feluk where are you when I needed you?



Here's a few of the Guillemot. I followed him/her around a bit & caught him going in to a nice "warm" building! These guys are commonly mistaken for penguins (unless of course you've seen a lot of penguins like we have & know better!!!!) The guide was a young girl & mentioned to me that several people kept asking her where the penguins were! No penguins in the North! Only Polar bears! Penguins are only in the South where there are NO Polar bears!



And finally the Eider Duck – the bread & butter for these folk.



We played with the Arctic Tern's some more. It truly did seem like they were just playing a game with us. I read on line that the locals love them, because they seem to be protecting the nesting area of the Eider Ducks. Whatever, it was fun to have them playing Alfred Hitchcock's "the Birds" for us.



They invited us inside a very modern “farmhouse” for a cuppa and a snack (fantastic ginger cakes & other pastries). This building also serves as the smallest Post Office in Iceland! Bill sent a postcard to his Dad. I bought a refrigerator magnet for me & a thimble for my Mom! Big spender – me!!!



They had an exhibit outside of the historical fishing boat – just a small row boat! Sure would hate to be out in the Northern Atlantic Ocean in that!!!!!!



Next stop was the tiny little workshop where they process the Eider Down. I can't remember the cost, but seems like it was similar to gold by weight, but of course it is so light you actually get quite a lot of material for the cost. The reasons for the high cost are numerous – processing is by hand & take over 9 hours for one person to process a single kilo gram! The largest market is Japan & only a few folks in Iceland still do it. They let us touch it – amazing how soft & light it is. They just collect the down from the nests during nesting season & spend the long dark winters processing it.



Soon we were boarding our boat back to the Zuiderdam & saying goodbye to the lovely little island of Vigur.



That evening as we cruised out of the fjord & around the tip of the peninsula, the skies got brighter & brighter & we were rewarded with a fabulous rainbow! I haven't mentioned the awesome gift of long days. We have been enjoying more & more daylight hours! Sunrise today was 3:33am and sunset was 11:40pm!!! Awesome!!! So ended our first full day in Iceland! On to Reykjavik tomorrow where the boat will dock overnight, giving us 2 full days there.

Hope you enjoyed it! Start planning your own adventure there! More soon!

Stay happy & healthy!!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pamspicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #5 - Reykjavik, Iceland

Hi Everyone,

Hope you guys are doing well. We're having a ball, eating too much & seeing some new sights to boot. Let's get going!



Before I start on Reykjavik, I need to mention that due to our late tour of the Vigur Island yesterday, we missed our 5:45pm seating in the main dining room. So we elected to pay extra for the Specialty Pinnacle Grill Steak house. For some reason, I don't have a picture of us at the table (I would have sworn I had him take a picture!!!), but I should share some foodie pictures because it was well worth the \$25 per person surcharge! They were probably the best steaks we have ever eaten!!!! The steaks & potatoes were served individually, but all the vegetables were served family style for all of us. It was YUMMY!!! Okay – now on to the sightseeing!!!



We had hoped that the beautiful skies we had seen going to bed last night would be here for our arrival into the port at Reykjavik too, but it was not to be. It was in the high 50's & a very light more misty like drizzle.



This Day's tour is called the most common (or famous) of the Day trips out of Reykjavik. We left Reykjavik heading east on Hwy 1. Turned north on 36. Showing a map to give you a bit of orientation. Wish the guide had been nice enough to point everything out on the map, but I had to research that myself after we got back!!!! I know some of you will be driving this on your own later this summer! It's a long, but interesting drive. If we had had better weather, I feel like it would be the highlight of the trip, however; at times in the bus with the rain piddling on the glass, we were mostly snoozing!! It was a long long long day!!



Had to take my standard picture of the ship from the bus parking lot!



As we drove out of town, I got tickled at the flat statues of sheep & cows everywhere. Reminded me of the flat black cowboys silhouettes you see in the US. Finally some live animals – horses. More of them later.



With the low clouds, the first hour was just lots of flat green. Really bright mossy green.



First stop was **Thingvellir National Park** (**Þingvellir** in Icelandic) -- a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and a primary site of Iceland's geological and historic heritage. It was here in AD 930 that the Vikings formed the Allthing -- the oldest still-existing parliament in the world. The name means "assembly area". The Nordics chose this as an annual assembly area in 834AD & thousands would congregate in both temporary shelters like tents & some semi-permanent places. Our guide said that some folks would "buy" shelters that would be there permanently so that had a comfortable place to stay (sounds like Washington D.C., huh?).



Here's a picture of what it should look like that I found on Wikipedia. There are glaciers visible in the mountains surrounding this gorgeous valley. Here's what we saw. You can see the same white building in the center of both pictures.



Besides being the location of the beginnings of Icelandic government, this is a geologic treasure. It was added to UNESCO due to the cultural significance, but now they are trying to get it listed due to the geologic conditions also. The North American and Eurasian Tectonic plates meet here. From the Visitor Center's first main overlook, you follow raised walk ways that were added 2011 after a huge hole opened up in the middle of the pathway! A huge cavass was discovered that was following the ravine. It was over close to 100' deep.



If you had a day or 2, it looks like the hiking here would be awesome. Any place this green is a dead give away of the weather though, huh?



I loved the looks of the rocks. Tried to research what caused this unusual pattern, but couldn't find it. Okay George, I'm coming, I'm coming!! Our guide only gave us 30 minutes to walk this incredibly interesting area. Even with the dreary weather, I could have spent hours.



Just more pictures of the area & some local birdlife. I believe that is a pink legged goose & that's a cluster of chicks to its right.



Just a few more pictures of this incredible area. Can't wait to see the comparison pictures that the Davis's & Sheridan's get!!!!



Looking back up at the map, after Thingviller, we went around the edge of the huge lake & hit 37 going north east. We past the Geysir Geo Thermal area & went on to Gullfoss. This is the Hvita River which forms the Golden Falls.



We all shuffled in to the dining room of the Hotel Gullfoss for lunch. It didn't really look like this – I took this picture off their website!! There were literally hundreds of tables filled with people & we barely had room to slide between the tables into our chairs, BUT huge containers of a lovely vegetable soup and big baskets of fresh bread were on the table & we ate our fill. The soup was perfect for a fast lunch on a dreary day! Had read complaints about this lunch service, but we didn't have any complaints. We ate & ran outside for the view!



For specifics about this site, I did a copy & paste from Wikipedia!! Gullfoss ("Golden Falls"); located in the canyon of the Hvítá river in southwest Iceland. Gullfoss is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Iceland. The wide Hvítá rushes southward, and about a kilometre above the falls it turns sharply to the right and flows down into a wide curved three-step "staircase" and then abruptly plunges in two stages (11 m and 21 m) into a crevice 32 m (105 ft) deep. The crevice, about 20 m (66 ft) wide, and 2.5 km in length, extends perpendicular to the flow of the river. The average amount of water running down the waterfall is 140 m³/s in the summer and 80 m³/s in the winter. The highest flood measured was 2000 m³/s. As one first approaches the falls, the edge is obscured from view, so that it appears that the river simply vanishes into the earth.



Our guide told us it was called Golden because in the sunshine (really there is sunshine in this place???) the water droplets appear golden against the scenery. Here's a couple of pictures from Wikipedia (says it is from 2006! Last time there was sunshine – just kidding!! How soon we forget what the real world is like when we experience a little rain!!).



The waterfall was almost destroyed in the early 1900's when foreign investor's (Donald Trump?? Just kidding!!) tried to harness it's power for electrical energy. The farmer & his daughter that owned the land at that time fought fiercely & eventually the plan was dropped. The waterfall was later sold to the Government of Iceland & it's now protected. The Farmer's daughter is considered one of Iceland's first Environmentalists! There was also a cute story about a young man & woman living on opposite sides of the river falling in love & eventually the young man "waded" across the raging river to claim her love & they had many children & lived happily ever after. Awwww!!!



Back in the bus, we backtracked southwest on 37 to Geysir. This is commonly known as "the Great Geysir." I couldn't resist a picture of the 2 young men giving each other a wedgie. Our guide said the statue was in honor of a type of wrestling done in Iceland. Anyway, on to the real reason we were there!



This Geo Thermal area has been attracting tourist since the 1800's. Even the King of Denmark visited here & was shown how to boil eggs in one of the holes. The opposite side of the street is side by side resorts offering many hot water treatments, but we were just here to look. We were entertained by a spouting of one of the geysers that commonly spews up a gout of water every 10 minutes or so. It erupted 3 times during the 20 minutes or so that we were wandering around.



This is The Great Geysir. This one was the first known geyser known to the Modern European World. It erupted regularly up until the early 1900's, but then mysteriously stopped. It erupted a couple of times in 2002 & reached heights of 122m!!!!!! Made it the highest gusher in modern history! It didn't do anything, but emit the notorious Sulphur smell while we were there (wasn't too bad actually). They actually did things like dig ditches around it back in 1935 or so to try & revive it and it revived for a little while, but then went dormant again.



We connected onto Hwy 35 & made a short stop to look at Faxi waterfall (supposedly Faxi means “mane”, like the mane of a horse?). Mostly to stretch our legs. Funnily enough, our guide made a big deal about kayakers using it as a “beginner’s” educational area. When I was reading about it on Wikipedia, there is a note saying the kayaks are STRICTLY FORBIDDEN!!!! Humm? It was a lovely stop & enjoyed seeing the salmon ladder to the left of the falls.



The next stop was lots of fun. It was an addition to the regular Golden Circle Tour. At a horse farm & agricultural center (they also have green houses & grow tomatoes), Fridheimar, we were given an enjoyable, informative, & education show about the Icelandic Horse. It is a specific breed brought to Iceland from Scandinavia in the 900’s – they do not allow imported breeds to intermingle with it. It’s main claim to fame besides it’s powerful stocky build is it’s ability to attain 5 specific gaits – besides the standard walk, trot, & gallop, it can also do “a smooth run,” and a “flying pace.” They showed us examples of them all (which to my shame I could not identify again – I can’t tell the difference between an axle or a toe flip in ice skating either!! – but show me an incorrect telispin & I can identify it immediately!!!). I did really enjoy when the young female jockey came around showing that she could hold a full mug of beer while riding & never spill a drop!!! It felt very nice to sit outside without any rain & relative warmth. Most of us took off our rain gear & jackets & enjoyed the fresh air!!!



Most of the riders were family members & the father is the trainer and the mother grows the tomatoes & is the MC. After the demonstration, we were invited inside the stable for a potty stop & a cuppa. You could pet & visit with the horses too. I didn't do that, but Barbara enjoyed that the most I think! A really relaxing & enjoyable visit. It was still on Hwy 35 going south west.



We continued down Hwy 35 & I suppose we must have been bored because we all noticed & commented on the lovely pastel colors of the hay wrapping!!!! There were pale blues, pinks, green, & of course plain white! Texas is so boring with its wire wrapping!!



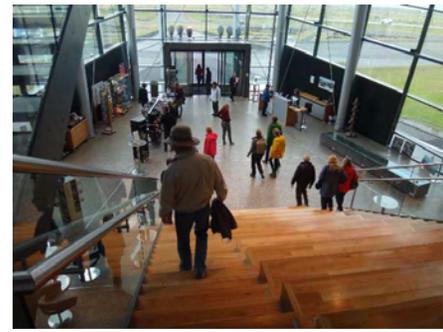
Just before the intersection of 36 & 35, we stopped to view this crater. Here's the info from Wikipedia about it:

Kerið (occasionally Anglicized as Kerith or Kerid) is a volcanic crater lake located in the Grímsnes area in south Iceland, on the popular tourist route known as the Golden Circle. It is one of several crater lakes in the area, known as Iceland's Western Volcanic Zone, which includes the Reykjanes peninsula and the Langjökull Glacier, created as the land moved over a localized hotspot, but it is the one that has the most visually recognizable caldera still intact. The caldera, like the other volcanic rock in the area, is composed of a red (rather than black) volcanic rock. The caldera itself is approximately 55 m (180 ft) deep, 170 m (560 ft) wide, and 270 m (890 ft) across. Kerið's caldera is one of the three most recognizable volcanic craters because at approximately 3,000 years old, it is only half the age of most of the surrounding volcanic features. The other two are Seyðishólar and Kerhóll. While most of the crater is steep-walled with little vegetation, one wall is sloped more gently and blanketed with a deep moss, and can be descended fairly easily. The lake itself is fairly shallow (7–14 metres, depending on rainfall and other factors), but due to minerals from the soil, is an opaque and strikingly vivid aquamarine.

Sure wish we'd had time to hike down to the water. By this time, our day had brightened considerably & it would have felt good to walk, but the day was getting really really long!!! & we were all thinking about Happy Hour & Dinner!! It was quite a ways down – you can just barely tell that those white specks down there are PEOPLE!!!



The scenery is really beautiful. So green & lush – water & waterfalls everywhere. Not too many people (compare that to London in a few days!!!!).



One last stop as we close in on Hwy 1 back to Reykjavik – the Hellisheidi Thermal Electric plant. Mostly a “comfort” stop, this company has gone to great lengths to invite the public to admire their electric production. It is the 3rd largest Geothermal Power Plant in the World & has been in business since 2006. It provides clean, green, renewable energy mostly to Aluminum plants in Reykjavik. And it has great toilets!



By this time we were all just wanting to be back on the ship, but the tour required a city drive through (actually had to drive through anyway to get to the ship) and our guide’s voice did drone on. It is actually quite a pretty city & if we hadn’t been tired & cranky, we probably would have enjoyed it quite a bit. On the good side, we ran straight onto the ship & into the dining room & enjoyed being waited on even though we were a bit on the disheveled stinky side! I did not see a single lip curl on either of our waiters or the wine steward!!! We still went for a walk & thought I was going to get a couple of games of Spite & Malice while George watched Game of Thrones in the cabin, but by the time I got upstairs, they were nodding off with the cards in hand, so called it an early night. I went back to the cabin & labeled some pictures. In bed by 11pm!!!!



I'll finish this missive with our best bed creature so far! A 2' long monitor lizard!!! He's adorable! Tomorrow is another day in Reykjavik. Unfortunately as usual I got behind on doing them & we are almost at Prophetstown for our big dance week! Will try to find time to work on them, but it's debate able!!! The last 3 days of the trip were wonderful and then we enjoyed 3 full full days of sightseeing in London that were fantastic! I really want to share them! So stay tuned & don't forget about us!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

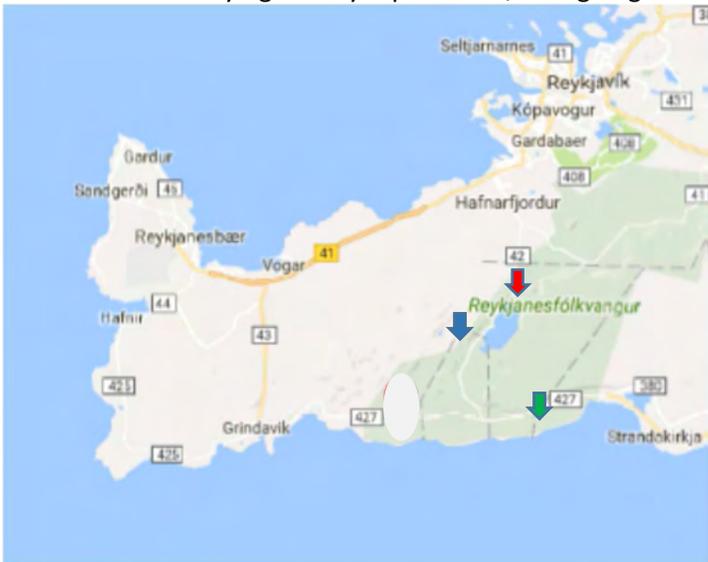
Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #6 - 2nd day in Reykjavik, Iceland

Hello Everyone,

So sorry for the break in the action! We just spent a lovely (tiring) week dancing at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. For those of you on the list that are none dancers, this is one of the biggest dance events of the year. Approximately 100 dance couples from all over the US, Canada, & the world (Australian, Japanese, & Swedish attended this year) come to learn & dance here. It was a great time. The only negative this week was the low quality air conditioning. Not sure what the problem was, but most nights, it was very hot in the dance hall. That was annoying, but most of us just danced & sweated!! Didn't deter George & me, we only missed at 3 dances all week! Great fun! If only the FitBit would count the real step of dancing – assuming most dances are about 60 measures & there are generally at least 3 steps per measure, that's approximately 180 steps per song and about 40 dances for a 3 hour dance – that would be at least 7200 steps. But then you add in syncopation & jives & cha chas, you should get about 10,000 steps! But Fit Bit generally only counts about 3000 for an evening dance. Most annoying! In my "spare time," I'm going to count the number of steps per dance & add up an evening program!!!!



Anyway, enough of that – I left you in Reykjavik. Our cruise ship overnighted there, so we had a 2nd day's excursion. We chose another full day tour. This one on the Southern Peninsula, Reykjanes, which is a bit south & west of Reykjavik, actually heading toward Keflavik where the airport is. It's just at the indent in the coastline past Vogar. We didn't make it all the way there, turned left & headed south to the coast, then followed the coastline back east & came back across.



It was again rather misty, but cleared as we headed southwest out of Reykjavik. First stop was an overlook of Lake Kleifarvatn (marked with a red arrow on the map). The most interesting fact about this lake is that it has no visible water coming into or out of it. Everything is from underground. There was a big earthquake in 2000 that apparently opened up fissures underground & the lake had a diminished surface area of about 20%, but as of 2008, it had returned to its original size.



I convinced George to come over & pose with me!



A short distance away was our first major stop – a geothermal area called Seltun (marked with the blue arrow).



This area reminded me somewhat of the fumaroles & mud pots at Yellowstone. There were lovely colors from all the mineral deposits. Thank goodness for the boardwalks as the ground looked entirely unstable to walk on. We were only give about 20 minutes, so Phillip & I took off at a fast pace to get around. Most of the others stopped at the toilet!!!



You can see Lake Kleifarvatn in the distance in the second picture.



Amazingly enough there were even flowers growing in this desolate moon scape! The colors were really amazing.



Just a short drive away, we circled through the parking lot to look at this lovely little green lake which is the starting point for a well-known (in Iceland anyway! Ha!) hike called Daladeid.



Soon we were following the coastline. The guide pointed out a little church that was in the middle of no where & told us an interesting story about a Viking that pledged if he made it to shore, he would build a church as a sign of appreciation & here the church had stood for hundreds of years. We didn't get close enough to really get a look at it. I was reading on line and apparently there are several little churches in the middle of nowhere that have been there since the late 1700's and early 1800's.



Our drive along the coast took us through the tiny fishing village of Eyrarbakki (marked with green arrow). This tiny village used to be the main harbor & port for the Southern Peninsula, but it fell into disuse after other places were found to have better natural harbors. Many of the oldest homes on the Peninsula are found here. We didn't see the oldest one (from 1725), but we passed by several from the early 1900's. Tiny little wooden farms – have no idea how they could have survived the harsh weather throughout all the years!



We soon came to the tiny little fishing village of Stokkseyri. Not sure, but think it's main claim to fame is that our guides girlfriend lived there!!! Pretty bleak place.



We were here to have lunch, but arrived a bit early, so took some time to wander along the coast & look at the ocean.



Lunch was to be the main event of the tour (called "a Taste of Iceland"). I'm not much of a seafood person, but have to admit that these tiny rock lobsters were delicious. Forgot to take a picture of the huge bowl before we had done all the damage, but it was fill to the brim with lobster, boiled potatoes, & onions. It was YUMMY!!! A bit messy! We were all covered in butter by the time we were done!



After eating, our guide gave us a few minutes to wander around. Next door was a double museum – ghosts on one side & elves on the other – hummmm? The most interesting exhibit was a couple of stuffed dogs. Presumably from one of the locals???? Kinda strange. One cute story though, there was a really young man taking money at the door. He looked to be 14 or so. I mentioned to him that I usually tried to take some of the local coins from countries we visited to one of my great nephews. I had forgotten to buy any this time & I asked if he could help me. He said he didn't have any in the cash register, but he had one in his pocket & he'd like to just give it to me. So very sweet! He gave me a 100 Kroner coin. I was so impressed at his friendliness that I wanted to reciprocate, so I ended up giving him a dollar. He didn't want to take it, but I insisted that I was giving him a "gift" too. The highlight of the day for me!



The drive back to the ship was interesting scenery. For a while we saw water in the distance, then we turned north & we were driving past miles of moss covered lava fields.



We never stopped to be able to get a close up picture of this scenery, but it was different than I've ever seen anywhere. This is NOT grass! This is an extremely heavy moss that is growing over the lava rocks. It is called Moss Heath and we were told by our guide that this heavy covering can take up to 50 years to grow. Mosses account for more than half of the vegetation growing in Iceland!!!!



I downloaded this picture that shows a bit more of a close up of how it looks covering the rocks. Maybe Mike Sheridan or Ken Davis can get a good picture of it when they go later this month!!



We had a lovely dinner that night. And a pod of dolphins blew past us while we were eating. I didn't get any pictures, but we all saw them. The waiters started playing with us about it & brought out cut outs that they pasted on the windows for anyone that didn't see them! After dinner we were given a beautiful evening! Made for a lovely walk around the Promenade deck!!! The long days were awesome. We had enjoyed **sunrise** at 4:06am and sunset was not until 10:58pm .



After our walk, it was time for our last major show featuring the Singers & Dancers. They were all quite good. We had gotten used to seeing most of them all around the ship as they were assigned other duties. One of the lead singers, Nathan (on the left on stage) was from San Antonio & had a lovely voice. The theater was rather small and had annoying poles scattered around, so you had to get there early to get a seat with a clear view. But the sound was really good. The entertainment on board was quite nice – we went to all the shows except one & loved them. Our one complaint is that the Ship's main band played for most of the shows & they were also the ones who were assigned to play in the only lounge with ballroom dancing where we met for Happy Hour. Since they also played for the theatre shows, we only got to have ballroom dancing on their off nights – which meant we only had ballroom dancing about half of the time we were on board!! But when they were there, they were awesome!! Best band we've had for our regular dancing.



Our bed creature was a cute little rabbit!!!



With the sunset getting more & more beautiful, we went out to enjoy another walk around the Promenade deck. We saw something.



It was definitely a sea creature of some sort, but it wasn't moving a lot, so we were afraid was some whale, but that it might have been dead. Hope not, but it still counts that we saw something!!



I'll leave you with this last beautiful view of Iceland fading off into the distance. We still enjoyed 2 more ports & then 4 nights in London! I'll finish with them as soon as I can!

Hope you are enjoying our adventure!!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #7 - At Sea & Runavik, Faroe Islands

Good Morning Friends & Family,

Let's continue with our lovely vacation!!!!



We had a welcome day at sea after leaving Iceland (it's tiring work on these excursions – don't ya know!!). We enjoyed the special champagne luncheon for being 2 star Mariner passengers. It was not as special as some we have experienced, but it was still enjoyable.



That night's bed creature was a precious little koala! These guys are soooo much fun!



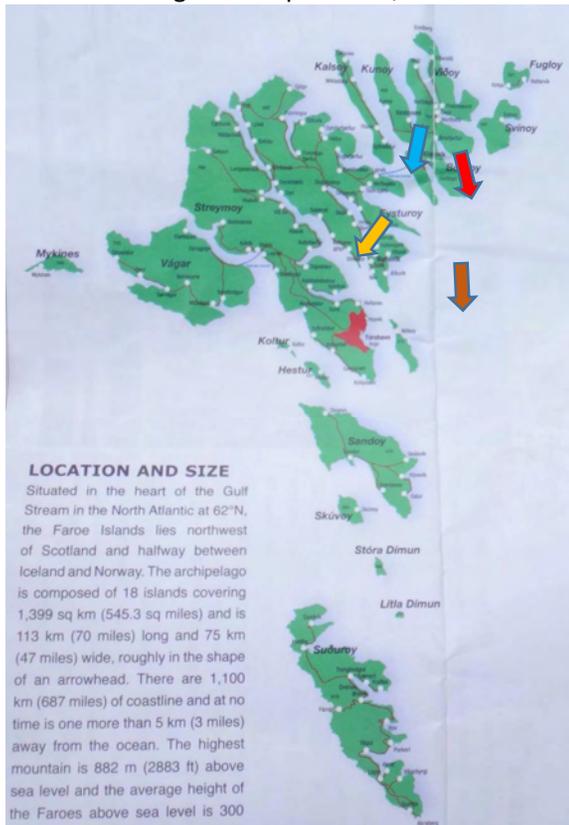
The next morning we arrived at what became my favorite port of call. It was overcast, but not raining & the clouds were quite high & just made the lovely green hills glow.



The Faroe Islands (/ˈfærʊʊ/; Faroese: Føroyar pronounced [ˈføɹjɑu]; Danish: Færøerne, pronounced [ˈfæɹøːˀənə]) are an archipelago consisting of 18 islands, between the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, approximately halfway between Norway and Iceland, 200 miles north-northwest of mainland Scotland. The area is approximately 541 square miles with a 2015 population of 48,700. They were originally populated by the Vikings. The islands are an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark. The land is rugged and has a subpolar oceanic climate: windy, wet, cloudy and cool. Despite its northerly latitude, temperatures average above freezing throughout the year due to the Gulf Stream. Between 1035 and 1814, the Faroe Islands were part of the Kingdom of Norway. The 1814 Treaty of Kiel granted Denmark control over the islands, along with two other Norwegian regions: Greenland and Iceland. The Faroe Islands have been a self-governing country within the Danish Realm since 1948. The Faroese have control of most domestic matters; areas that remain the responsibility of Denmark include military defense, police, justice, currency and foreign affairs. The Faroe Islands have representation in the Nordic Council as members of the Danish delegation. The Faroe Islands also compete as an independent country in certain sports. The capital and largest city is Torshavn on the island of Streymoy. We didn't make it there. Our ship docked at Runavik (population of less than 4000) on the south east side of the island of Eysturoy.



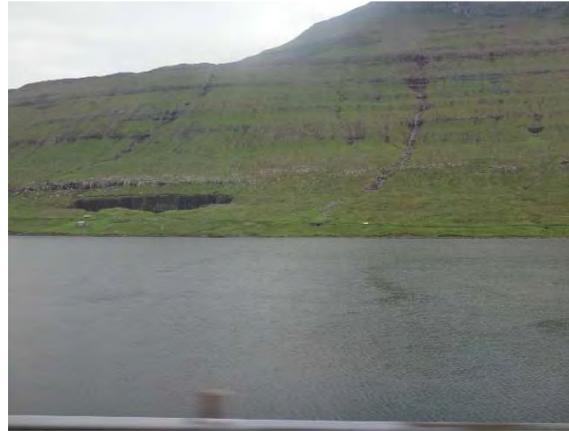
Besides the tug that helped us in, we were followed by a squadron of ducks!



Here's a map of the Faroe Islands. We started on Eysturoy at Runavik (yellow arrow) & crossed over to Streymoy & then back. I've marked the most prominent stops we made.



We headed down for our 8:30 tour & were delighted with our guide, Gunner. He was extremely well educated (Masters in Engineering, but found he enjoyed being a tour guide), lovely voice that was easy to understand & had a fun sense of understandable humor!! We headed north along Skálafjord, enjoying the scenery.



There were waterfalls everywhere you looked and so many fabulous shades of green. Note to self – if everything is GREEN, YOU CAN EXPECT A LOT OF RAIN!!!!



Soon, we were approaching the “bridge across the Atlantic.” (orange arrow) The bus stopped to let us off so that we could “walk across the Atlantic!!!!” Now that’s something that hasn’t been by too many folks!!! Love it! Similar to our experience on the Suez canal where we got to walk from Africa to Asia!! Sure sounds amazing, right?



It was interesting to walk across the bridge. Besides the spectacular views, we could look down on the water to see the eddies formed from the strong current due to the narrow channel. It is apparently quite challenging for the water traffic. Enjoyed seeing all the well behaved sheep gathering in single file cues on the far side of the bridge!



After reboarding our bus, we continued on the opposite side of the fjord – scenery is still spectacular.



And again, waterfalls everywhere!!!!



Driving through the gorgeous green valleys was so beautiful. The farm houses looked surreal in such a gorgeous setting.



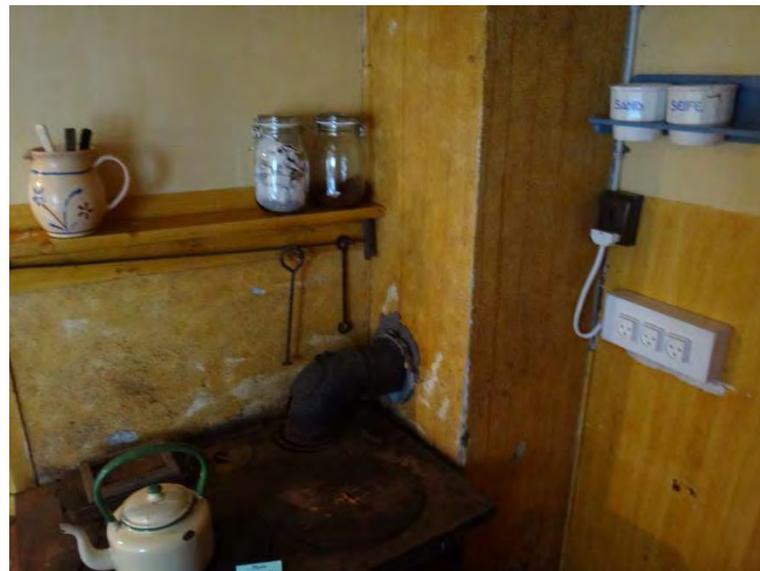
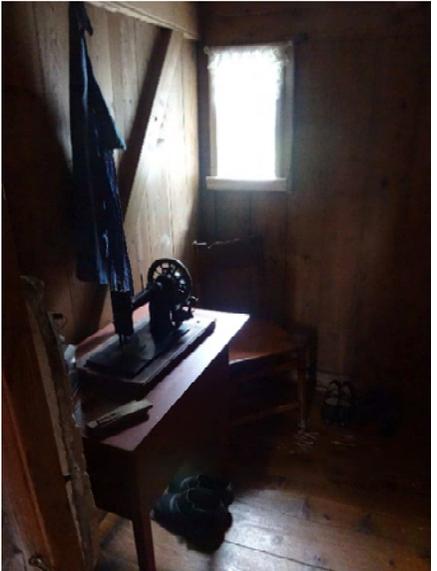
It only took about a half hour to cut across Streymoy to the village of Saksun (golden arrow).



This village used to have quite an active harbor, with a natural inlet to the sea. But a storm blocked the opening with sand & now only small fishing boats have access at high tide. It is a salt water lagoon. It is still an idyllic location.



Our main purpose for a visit was a farm house that is now a National Heritage Museum – **Duvugardar**. That's our wonderful guide, Gunner in the red jacket.



The inside of the cottage shows how life was lived here in the 17th Century. I especially loved the electrical outlet extension cord on the wall!!



Next stop was the tiny little church. It was originally built over the mountains in the northernmost village on Streymoy, but was disassembled in 1858 & brought to this location. We couldn't go inside, but took a few pictures through the window. Note the single board for the pews (ouch – hope the services were fairly short!!!! – maybe uncomfortable to keep the parishioners awake???) and I could just get the edge of the boat. I was told in Norway that most of their churches have a boat inside to keep everyone aware of the debt they owe to the ocean! Couldn't help but notice that many of the folks in this graveyard had lived almost 100 years!!



This is an active sheep farm. And the gentleman that was cutting & baling the hay really didn't care much for the tourist wandering in his workspace. Several times we had to jump out of his way as he whizzed along. I missed it, but apparently he could very quickly manipulate some apparatus that wrapped the hay for storage. These guys were just using plain on marshmallow white material!!



Is this green or what????



I downloaded this picture off of Wikipedia that was taken from further uphill.



Before departing this museum, I spoke to the guide about the special currency here in the islands. Although a Danish kingdom, they do have their own money that is unique to these islands. Some shops do accept Danish Kroner, British Pounds, & even the Euro. They use regular Danish coins. I purchased a bill from the guide with American dollars. He said he traveled enough that he didn't mind having US dollars. This was about 100 Kronur bill was about \$15. I thought it was really pretty.



We left this beautiful valley & drove back down & across the “bridge across the Atlantic” again. This time we headed up the west coast of Eysturoy. One aspect that stood out was how each village had its own fish farm. I believe they were mostly for Salmon.



As we approached the northwest corner of Eysturoy, we passed the final village, Eloi (blue arrow), & then saw a real surprise! Here on this group of islands in the middle of the Northern Atlantic, there was a large RV campground!!! Looked like it was dry camping (no hook ups) and several of the trailers looked to have the extra room on the side that we've seen before.



Our goal at this point was a stop to see Risin and Kellingin, two sea stacks just off the northern coast of the island of Eysturoy. The name *Risin og Kellingin* means *The Giant and the Witch* (or *Hag*) and relates to an old legend about their origins. The Giant (Risin) is the 71m stack further from the coast, and the witch (Kellingin) is the 68m pointed stack nearer land, standing with her legs apart. Our guide gave us the Legend & I've copied & pasted it here for you from Wikipedia. We stopped on the northern tip of Eysturoy & we're looking over toward Streymoy.

Legend of the Giant and the Witch



1996 stamp issued by the Postverk Føroya.

A legend tells how, once upon a time, the giants in Iceland were envious and decided that they wanted the Faroes. So the giant and the witch (his wife in some versions of the story) were sent down to the Faroe Islands to bring them back.

They reached the north-westernmost mountain Eiðiskollur, and the giant stayed in the sea while the witch climbed up the mountain with a heavy rope to tie the islands together so that she could push them onto the giant's back. However, when she attached the rope to the mountain and pulled, the northern part of the mountain split. Further attempts were also unsuccessful, and they struggled through the night, but the base of the mountain was firm and they could not move it.

If the sun shines on a giant or witch, it turns to stone. So it was that as they continued to struggle they didn't notice time passing, and as dawn broke a shaft of sunlight put a stop to their efforts by turning them to stone on the spot. They have stood there ever since, staring longingly across the ocean towards Iceland.



It was a beautiful stop. Again, very very green. Scientist predict that Kelligin will fall into the sea during the next 2 decades as it stands on 2 legs & has already been damaged by winds & part of it fell off.



Then we drove east across the top of Eysturoy to Gjogv. We didn't go down to the village to see the gorge which forms it's harbor, but we stopped for views from this high point on the north east corner. We were close to Slættaratindur, the highest mountain in the Faroe Islands (2894').



They let us off the bus to take a short walk along the road down towards Funningur which according to tradition was first area settled by the Vikings around 825. Enjoyed seeing the comfy sheep along the road. It was very pleasant to walk, but our bus had a hard time with the tight corner onto this windy vertical road!!!



The views down the mountain to the tiny village were just beautiful. We were all snapping pictures of the sheep, the mountain tops, & the birds.



I was pleased to discover that the bird I kept snapping pictures of thinking was a type of Magpie, was actually the Oystercatcher which is the National Bird!!!!



The little village was lovely, both in it's placement on the harbor below the mountains & the colors in the mist. I managed to get a photo of the tiny sod roofed church that has been there since 1827.



We completed the remainder of the drive back to our ship without a stop. The scenery continued to be picturesque. We managed the entire day without rain!!! Yippee!!!!



We got back to the ship & ran up for lunch, thinking we might have time to run back outside to walk around a little bit at the port. By the time we finished eating, it was pouring rain, so we settled for a nap!!! It had cleared back up again before we said goodbye to Faroe Islands about 3pm.



That evening we enjoyed another fun happy hour. We all ended up with champagne for dinner which brought on another toast to a great cruise!!! And I got to enjoy another lovely Indian meal!!!! Lovely lovely visit to a very interesting port.



I'll close this day's travelogue with our most fun bed creature yet! This hanging monkey was almost 2' long!!! We felt special because ours was definitely the biggest. The others guys had a small one!!!! Na Na NA NAH NAH!!

So, tomorrow is Lerwick in the Shetland Islands (Scottish owned!).

Hang in there, I'll get finished – just have lots of distractions!!!!

Hope you are all well & happy!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

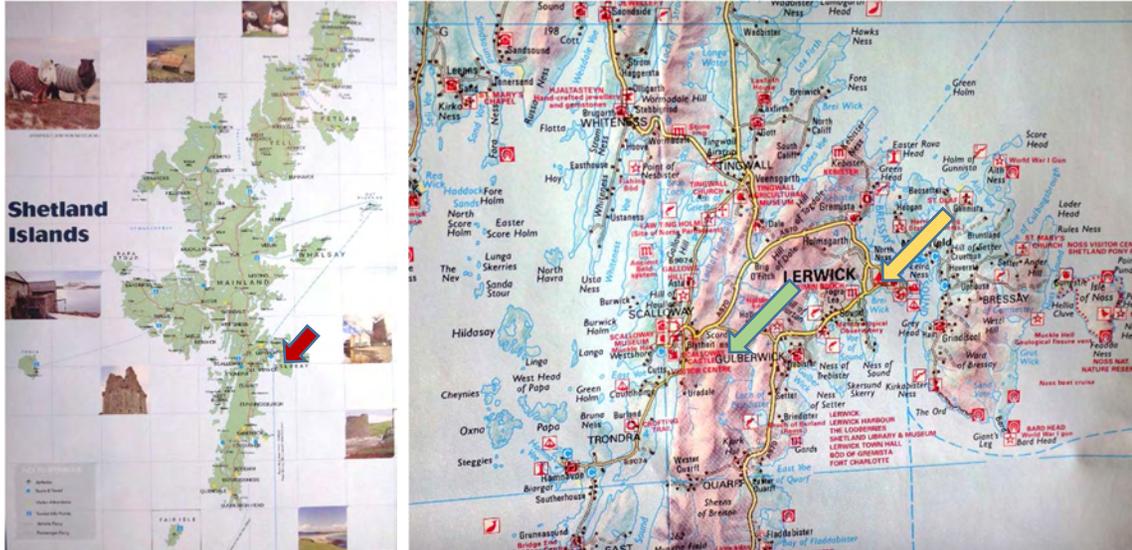
Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #8 - Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Sea Day & off the ship!

Hi Guys,

No prattle, I'm just going to talk about Lerwick.



The archipelago of the Shetland Islands consists of about 100 islands, but only 16 are inhabited. Most of the time, it is generally just spoken of as Shetland, they don't say Shetland Islands. Lerwick (marked in red on overall map & in gold on the blown up map), the capital, is on the largest island – just called Mainland. The entire group of islands has a total population of less than 25,000 and Lerwick claims 7,000 of them. More than half of them live within 10 miles of Lerwick!!! There were not a lot of choices for excursions here. We chose one that visited a couple of places so we could see at least a little of Mainland.



Not much to see but green hills as we came into port. Uh Oh – it's GREEN again! Yep, it's raining! Still quite light though, sunrise at 4:10am! We docked a bit before 8am. Had to tender to shore, but by the time we were ready to head off for our 11am tour, we could walk straight off the ship onto the tender without any wait time. The strangest thing to us, is that there was a local policeman at the exit to the ship that wanted to check everyone's passport as they got on the tender!!!! We thought that was very weird, but he was a jolly fellow & just glanced at the pictures & waved us on!



We got on shore about an hour before our tour & just wandered the clean cobble stone streets around the port. Everything was so clean & neat, we felt like we were at Disneyland! Maybe the IPCOT center!! We looked in some yarn stores for the fun of it & I thought how my sisters-in-law (both my brother's wife & George's sister) would have enjoyed seeing all the Scottish yarn!!



Soon we were on our tour bus & taking a last glance out the window at our ship moored out in the harbor. The drive out of town let us see that the rest of the town was just as clean & neat as the area around the harbor.



As we drove a little north to leave the city, we had views of Bressay Sound & could just see the coast of the tiny island of Bressay (population of 360!) in the distance.



As we cut across the island, we saw more water everywhere & the names were so much fun! Brig O’Fitch, Hill of Dale, Loch of Tingwall, Hollanders Knowe!



We stopped for a photo stop to look at Scalloway where we were heading (green arrow on the large map). Now we were looking past the west coast of Mainland into the North Atlantic. There are lots of little tiny uninhabited islands off this coast. The community of Scalloway (meaning “bay of the large houses”) was actually the capital of Shetland until 1708. Now it only has a population of a tad over 800. And the green hillsides are dotted with sheep of course. Typical Scotland, right? The medieval castle dominates the town and that’s where we are heading.



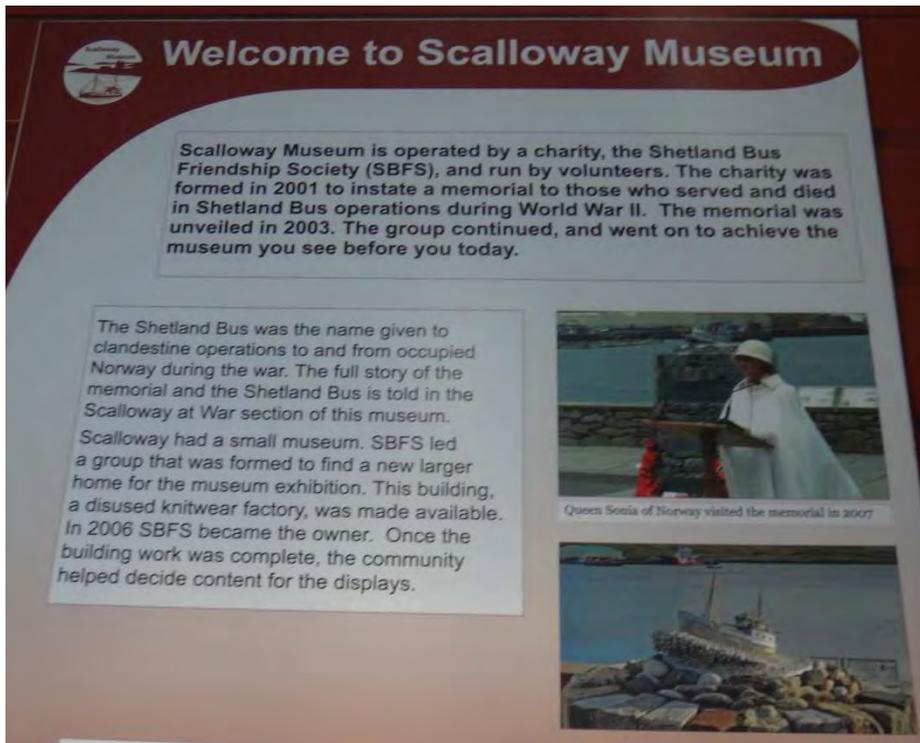
Scalloway Castle was built in 1600 by Patrick Stewart. Patrick’s father was an illegitimate son of King James V. First his father was presented with lands & made Earl of Orkney & Lord of Shetland. He fell into disfavor with the King & Patrick took over as Lord of Shetland in 1590. His mistreatment of the locals ran rampant, but did get this castle built before he was imprisoned & eventually executed! After it was used to house troops in the mid 1600’s, it fell into disuse & was turned over to state care in the early 1900’s.



It is totally empty inside, but we wandered around to make sure we didn't miss anything!!! On the outside, there was some nice brick work.



The museum next door has exhibits of the local fishing industry, examples of 1800's clothing (of the rich & famous apparently!!), & a lovely ship's pilot room.



The museum is actually maintained by the Shetland Bus Friendship Society. The Shetland Bus was a clandestine Special Operations Group that provided a link between Shetland & German occupied Norway during World War II. They were originally disguised as working fishing boats & were in constant danger from the Germans and Scalloway was their home base.



The next stop was what we were excited about!!! We were visiting the Shetland Ponies!!!



We were lucky enough that we even got to see a colt. Our guide said that since there had not a market for Shetland Ponies in recent years, they had limited births. This colt was actually purchased when they bought his Mom to return her to their herd from a sale several years ago.



We enjoyed interacting with the herd. They were sweet & friendly & cute as could be! Our guide explained that Shetland ponies originated in the Shetland Isles and there were strict rules to their pedigree. They cannot be smaller than 28" or taller than 42" at the withers. They can't be leopard spotted (like an Appaloosa) or champagne colored. They are generally well tempered & are great with children.



I was distracted by the adorable lambs in the pasture next to us. Reminded me of walking with David & Valerie in Scotland several years ago. Isn't this the cutest face????



This white pony was probably the most interactive! She was active in asking for attention. I didn't do much petting, I was busy taking pictures.



She was very photogenic!! And seemed to have something she wanted to say to me – like maybe –“do you have any snacks to give me????”



We made one more photo stop in Whiteness. It was just beautiful!!! Supposed to be some of the loveliest views in Shetland! Nothing to compare it to here, but definitely pretty!



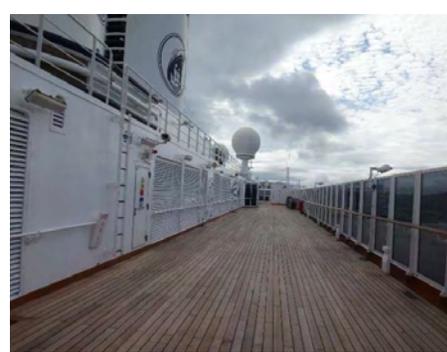
There was a sign saying that only 10,000 years ago, at the end of the last Glacier age, there was much less water & standing where we were now, the sea would be 10 kilometers away!! (note the little bits of blue sky!!!)



Soon we were back at port & ready to tender back to our ship. We had been lucky! Overcast, but...No rain!!!



Back on board, George looked for a wifi connection & I took another picture of our precious monkey before he disappeared!



We decided that it was time for a walk around deck. Unfortunately the Promenade Deck was closed while they did repairs AGAIN (I complained about this in my report to HAL about this cruise), but since we were docked, we could walk around the top deck. It was pretty up there & the views made our walk very enjoyable!



And best yet.....here's proof that we had sunshine on our shoulders. That should be a song don't ya think? Where's John Denver when you need him most?



That night, we enjoyed dinner in the Italian Specialty restaurant (gift from Bobbye, our Travel Agent!!! Thank you Bobbye!!!). George & I shared the pork loins. This restaurant made certain that everything was visually exciting. Tasted good too thank goodness!



We enjoyed watching the sail away from Shetland from our table in the Cannoletto. Goodbye to our last port of the cruise!!!



After dinner we enjoyed one more performance by the Ship's official Singers & Dancers. They were wonderful! And we had a crab on the bed!!!!



The last day of our cruise was a day at sea (love that as an ending – allows for relaxed packing & easing on to thoughts of what's to come!!!). We had a Wine Tasting scheduled. It was the most interesting wine tasting that we have experienced! Andrew, the Cellar Master led us through the testing process to become a Sommelier! It was really really fun! It was a blind tasting – meaning that when we tasted, we didn't know anything about the wine – tried to guess type of grape, where it was from, & who produced it and approximate cost! I didn't do very well, but George recognized the Cabernet Sauvignon and one guy at the table was even able to specify a winery! Really fun.



Sure hate seeing our vacation coming to an end!!! Our last Happy Hour on board ship!!! At least we had the band! And Bill & Carol had a final fling! They brought us popcorn to celebrate!



My last desert on board was my favorite! Pavlova!!!! But unsure what our last bed creature was????????? I think I preferred the monkey!



Sigh!!!! Our last morning on the ship! They did allow us to have breakfast delivered & even to stay in the cabin until time to leave! Most civilized! They have progressed from the years when we had to depart about 5am & wait in the theater for them to call for us. So there we were in the Copenhagen port with a view into another ship!



We were able to gather together for the last time in the hallway & all left together! Now we're on to London!!!! Don't go away! We had 3 full exciting days in "the Old Smoke."

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #9 - London - 1st day

Good Morning Everyone!!

Hope you are all doing well & ready to enjoy the last few days of summer!! George & I have arrived at the US Air Force Academy Fam Camp in Colorado Springs. Hopefully I can get us through the last few days of our July vacation so that we can concentrate on our 2 dance events coming up! That said – let's get to it!!! Oh & before I forget, so sorry about that large picture included in the #8 Travelogue. Not sure what happened. It was not showing on my computer. Certainly made the email much larger – hope it didn't cause anyone grief! I'll definitely be more careful!



After getting off the ship in Copenhagen, we took 2 taxi's to the airport & flew British Air directly to London Heathrow. We were brave & adventurous & took the Picadilly Circus line directly from the airport to our hotel! Carol & Barbara had found this Holiday Inn Kensington Forum & chosen it for its location close to the London subway system. It worked out perfectly!!! A direct shot on the train & less than a block walk to the hotel. Although we were dragging quite a bit of luggage, it was relatively easy to get it on the trains & it was only a few minutes train ride. We were dreading that it might be raining for our bag drag from the underground to the hotel, but we lucked out & it was a piece of cake. We had all purchased the London Pass with Oyster cards included for traveling on the subway & that all worked like a charm!!! We all purchased our own hotel rooms & I had booked through Orbitz while they had booked directly through the hotel. We had all bought the same package. Strangely enough when we finished checking in, we found that even though we all had the same type of Executive rooms, they were on the 21st floor & George & I were on the 5th floor. Some of us had been given magnetic entry cards to the Executive lounge & some had not. Some had been given coupons to use for free drinks & discounts for meals in the hotel & some had not. Oh well! We all checked out all the rooms & finally just decided to stay where we were. We made a few more stops at the reception desk & managed to make sure that we all had all the amenities we could! Although we didn't have much of a view, the room was fairly large, had free wifi & a nice bed! Perfect for a hotel stay!



By the time we had dropped our luggage in our rooms & took a potty break, it was time for our first London Happy Hour!!! We were all pretty tired from our day's travel, so we just decided to eat in the hotel. It did quite a variety of food & the location was perfect!!!



After dinner most of us decided to walk around a little just to relax. We were in a rather expensive area (about a block from Kensington Palace & the Royal Albert Hall). The Memorial to Prince Albert is directly across the street from the hall.



We stepped inside the Royal Albert Hall just to look around. This concert hall was opened by Queen Victoria in 1871. She named it in memorial to her husband Prince Albert who had died in 1861. It is run as a charity & has hosted the famous Proms (classical music festival) since 1941. The evening performance was still going on when we walked in. They have huge TV monitors showing the inside. Most of the performances for the 2 month event are sold out. We considered trying to attend, but decided we already had too much to do.



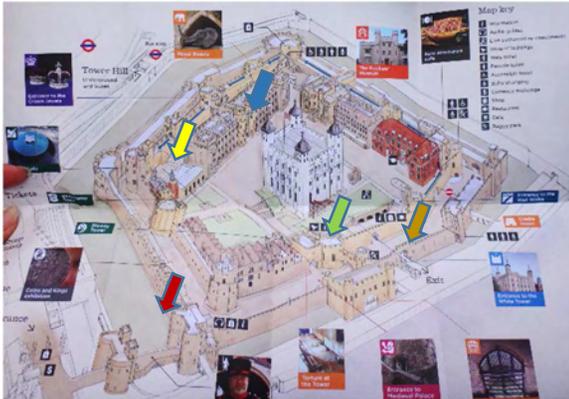
As we left, we took a closer look at the memorials to Prince Albert.



We finished up our casual stroll & enjoyed the gorgeous flowers decorating most of the buildings in the area. Then we finished up the night with a trip down memory lane when Phillip pointed out the location where he received his doctorate!! Cool! Way to go Phillip!



The next morning we enjoyed our included breakfast buffet & hopped on the tube to head to our first official tourist stop! The Tower of London!!!! We joined the huge cue & thanked our lucky stars that the London Pass got us to the head of the entry line!



We grabbed up our map of the Tower & started making our plan. Entrance to the Tower included a guided tour by costumed Yeoman Warder, so we figured we'd start with that. Most famous for its period of use as a prison in the 16th & 17th Centuries, it was originally built by William the Conqueror in 1078!!! It is officially **Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London**. Our guide was funny in a mean sarcastic kind of way!!! I can't remember any of the specific comments, but he was constantly threatening to throw us in jail if we didn't answer his questions correctly.



We met our Yeoman Warder near the entrance in the Outer Ward (marked with red arrow), while he told us some of the history. Then we went through the gate past the Bloody Tower (marked by the green arrow) & into the Inner Ward. The Bloody Tower is named from the story about the mysterious disappearance of 2 young Princes meant for the Throne. They were to be protected in preparation for their Kingship by their Uncle, Richard, Duke of Glouchester. Instead, they disappeared & he took the throne himself. Many years later a box of bones was found in this tower & although never proven, it is believed to be the bodies of the 2 young men, most likely killed by their uncle to allow him the throne. Boy those Royals were blood thirsty, huh? Our tour ended inside the Church of St Peter & Vincula built during the reign of Richard the Lionheart. I kept looking for mention of King Author & the Knights of the Round Table, but couldn't find anything!! What's up with that???



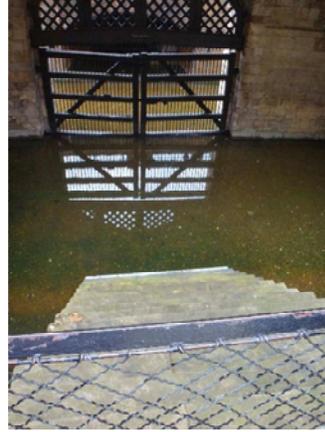
When the tour broke up, we walked across the Tower Green for a potty break. Queen Victoria had a memorial built where the scaffold used to stand where many of the most famous people were executed, notably Queen Anne Boelyn and Lady Jane Grey. It's disputed whether this is the exact location, but it is agreed that the executions were in the Tower Green to keep the nobility from the gawping of the local rabbel!!! We watched a changing of the guards (assume this is the Queen's House which is maintained in case the Queen truly wanted to still live here!). We were laughing because we originally thought they were going to just march right down the steps into the Toilet!!!



Next stop was to see the Crown Jewels (marked with blue arrow). We lucked out & there was not a line, so we made it straight in. No pictures allowed as you wandered the dark corridors that had exhibits about the Royalty's crowns & scepters & robes used for coronations & formal ceremonies. The estimated value of all these jewels is 32 BILLION!!!! Amazing. They make a big deal about the fact that these jewels belong TO THE PEOPLE and not to the Royals. Hummmm? I did find this one photo example of just one of the hundreds of crowns on site. There is a main room with several large glass cases. You ride a moving side walk on both sides of the cases so that you can see them from both sides, but not stop in front of them. I tried to make myself think they are magnificent & not just gaudy examples of immense wealth! As an on the side – there was also an exhibit about the Royal Menagerie – exotic animals kept in the Tower of London until 1835. There are wire sculptures of these animals all around (see the baboons on the wall behind the group? The Duke of Wellington closed the menagerie in 1835 & the animals went to start the London Zoo.



This costumed story teller related a long convoluted tale of the theft of the Crown Jewels in 1671. He told the story in first person as if he was the Anglo Irish scoundrel Colonel Thomas Blood. It is a funny & strange story that includes the smashing of the crown so that it would fit under his coat, breaking the scepter in half so that it could go down one of the accomplice's pants legs & the placing of the orb down the front of the other accomplice's pants!!! They were caught & the Jewels returned. When he met with King Charles to get his punishment, for whatever reason, instead of punishment, he was awarded some land in Ireland. Although lots of speculation over the years, no one really knows why!!! Funny story! You can Google it to get the entire tale!



Enroute to walk the walls of the Fortress, we stopped to see the famous Traitor's Gate (gold arrow). This is where prisoners were brought by barge into the compound. It was built by Edward I in the last 1200's to allow access from the Thames into the Tower.



Several of the towers in between the wall walks, were historically decorated rooms. There were lots of costumed workers & loads of statues to gawk at.



From one wall, we could look over into the cages where the Royal Ravens were kept! Apparently there have been Ravens kept in captivity at the Tower since Charles II. No agreement on the WHY?, but seems to be some sort of mythical belief that they bring luck & protection to the Tower. Whatever the reason, they have always been there & will apparently always be there! Ravens are a local domestic bird that used to be prolific, but almost became extinct! There is an exhibition about them, but we didn't have time to fit it in!



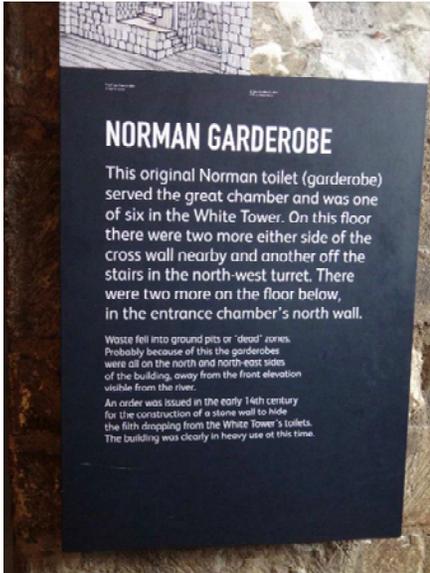
We got some lovely views of the Tower Bridge (not to be confused with London Bridge). Decided that the exhibition there would be our next stop!



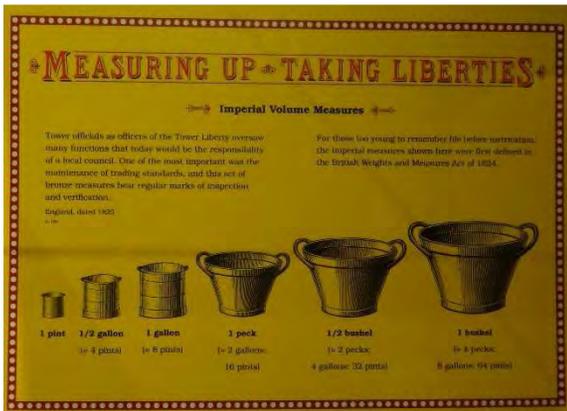
Our last stop in the Tower of London would be the White Tower. I got the first picture not realizing how it somehow looked like it was falling! Leaning Tower of London???? Anyway, this huge keep (largest in the Christian world?) and most complete palace of the 11th Century is now totally gutted and just used for an exhibition for the Royal Armouries. We were warned about all the steps to the top (no elevator), but it was not a problem for all of us dancing athletes!!



Beautiful examples of the armor worn by the soldiers throughout British history. How the heck did they move???? Much less fight? Must have been incredibly strong. Including the horses.



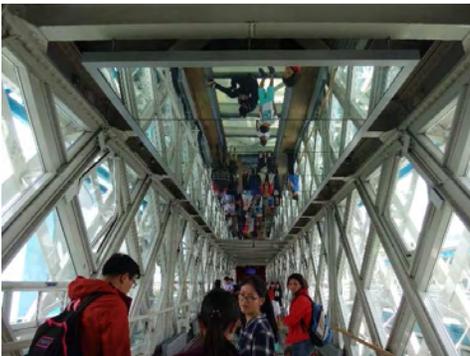
But most memorable was the Norman Garderobe – also known as the original Norman toilet!!! Lovely wasn't it? Look out below!!! Originally just fell out in the open into huge pits. In the 14th Century they decided to enclose the chutes to keep the public from viewing the Royal droppings!!! There were 6 of these in the White Tower.



As we approached the entrance to the Tower Bridge, I spied this explanation of the Imperial Volume Measurements set for legal trade in the early 1800's. These were the official brass measurement scales and while replaced with the Metric System in Britain, we still abide by them! Amazing isn't it?



Okay! Enough of history! Time for some fun! Up we went to cross the Tower Bridge & experience their new glass floor in the Exhibition Museum!!! This was FUN!!! Here's the facts: The bridge was built by the Prince of Wales in 1894 and is named after the Tower of London which is connected on one side. The bridge is 800 feet in length with two towers each 213 feet high, built on piers. The central span of 200 feet between the towers is split into two equal bascules or leaves, which can be raised to an angle of 86 degrees to allow river traffic to pass. The bascules, weighing over 1,000 tons each, are counterbalanced to minimize the force required and allow raising in five minutes. The bridge is free to cross, but we used our London Pass to go up in the Exhibition museum where we are 137.8' about the Thames.



We played as long as we could. The glass floors are actually 2 separate bridges. We went across one way & back the other. We all experienced it, although it was probably not Bill Goss's favorite since he's got an aversion to heights!! Even though we've been up in several towers that are much much higher than this (Shanghai's Bottle Opener & Dubai's Burj Khalifa), I even found it a bit disconcerting to be standing over moving water! Definitely gives you vertigo! Having the mirrors in the ceiling was a wonderful added effect that allowed really easy selfies!!



We met the others & all came down to cross over the regular part of the bridge. Really exciting break from all that history!



We found a corner Quik Stop & bought some lunch to eat on the City Cruise. Then ran to the boat & were able to just walk straight on board as it left the dock! Didn't have a wasted minute! Only rode from the Tower dock to the West Minster dock, about a half hour, just enough to eat lunch! I kept running from side to side to see what we were floating by!



I ran upstairs to get a few shots from the river - The Parliament building straight ahead and the London Eye just behind us.



No visit to London is complete without a Big Ben fix!!!! Here it is! In all its glory!

St Margaret's Church
Westminster Abbey

Visitors are welcome to this beautiful church. The present building, consecrated in 1523, is the third on the site. Since 1614 St Margaret's has been the church of the House of Commons.

Windows commemorate Caxton and Milton, who worshipped here, and Raleigh, who is buried in front of the altar, under the glorious window made for King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon in c1520.

After about nine hundred years of service as a parish church for the people of Westminster, St Margaret's was placed under the care of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster by Parliament in 1973.

It is still in regular use for worship and for recitals of music.




We were heading for a tour of Westminster Abbey. We've seen the outside many times, but had never taken the tour. Unfortunately they didn't allow pictures inside the church, but it was certainly beautiful! According to legend, there has been a church here since the 7th Century, but construction of this building was by King Henry III in 1245. Mind boggling! Since William the Conqueror, all the coronations have been held here on this site.



Here's a couple of photo's I got from Wikipedia to give you an idea of how gorgeous it is. Not quite to the scale of St Peter's in Venice or the Vatican, but pretty awesome none the less!!! Just knowing how long it's been here is amazing.



Next stop was Churchill War Rooms. It was only about a 10 minute walk from the Abbey.



I took a zillion pictures, but due to the low light, most of them are fuzzy. My little point & shoot just doesn't do good in low light. The bottom line was how incredible that this command center housed so many folks for so many years. As to facts, the need for the underground command center was recognized in 1936. The bunker was declared operational on Aug 27, 1939, just days before Britain declared war on Sep 3rd. It was used until the end of the war, Aug 1945. Although I couldn't find the exact number of folks that lived here during the war, the facility included dormitories for staff, private bedrooms for military officers and senior ministers, and rooms for typists or telephone switchboard operators.



Churchill's daughter even lived underground with him here. He preferred to sleep in his facility on Downing St (who wouldn't – rather than in this underground bunker!!!! & how about that pee pot at the end of the bed!!!!), but lots of folks stayed here for days on end, never seeing the light of day! The exhibits are wonderful – some having recordings to make you feel like you were hearing the day to day lives from the actual workers. It is an incredible museum. Made the war years come alive. Loved all the photos for purchase in the gift shop – the Eat Less Bread could be useful now, right? We could have spent lots more time here, as it was, we almost made ourselves late to the highlight of the day!!!!



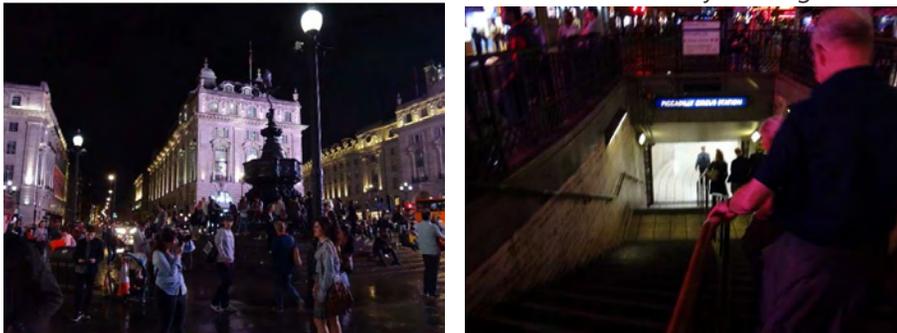
We rushed through all the crowds of people to the underground & over to the Theatre district for our booked seats at the Prince of Wales Theater to see “Book of Mormon”. We had not really given ourselves a lot of time, but luckily Carol spotted a restaurant about 2 doors down & they were very accommodating to set up seating for our group! So even though it was Friday night in the London Theater district, we were able to sit & enjoy a wonderful meal before our show!!! Are we lucky or what! I didn’t take a picture inside, wish I had because they had rearranged tables at the back for us that filled the back side of their entire little restaurant! Thank goodness there wasn’t a fire!!!



Obviously they don’t let you take pictures during the show, but I got all our happy faces before it started. We were already happy & had no idea how hard we would laugh throughout this musical.



I did find a few photos on line, just to give you something to look at!!! The show tells the story of two young Mormon missionaries who are sent to a small town in Uganda to bring news of the Latter Day Saints. They are shocked at the cultural differences, as a War Lord threatens the local villages and controls the area by fear. Both missionaries attempt to share the scriptures with the local people, although only one of them knows it well enough. Famine, poverty and AIDS threaten the town, and the duo must battle their own beliefs in order to succeed and make a change. Hard to imagine a comedy with a story line like that, but it ranks up there with one of the funniest musicals I have ever seen. It's totally sacrilegious & makes fun of every belief you can imagine, from capitalism to religion.



Anyway, too soon, the show was over. We had all been worried that after the hard day of sightseeing, we might have trouble staying awake, but that never became an issue!!! We made our way out on the street to find that London was party central!!! Worked our way to the station & headed across town. So ended an incredible day! It had started for most of us around 7am & it was midnight before we could get back to the hotel on the tube. Awesome day with lots of steps – fellow FitBitters!!!

I'll end here for now. Still 2 more days left in London. What a saga this trip is turning into! Hope you are enjoying it!!!

Lots of love,

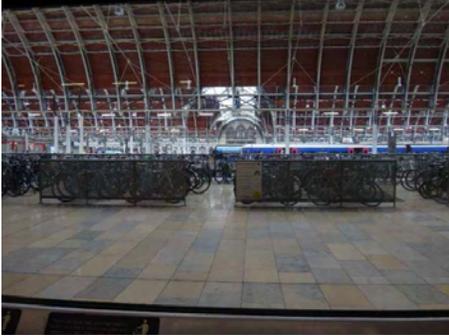
George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)
 Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info
 Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pamspicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #10 - London - 2nd day

Good Evening Guys,

Things still moving along here at Colorado Springs. Hope everything is fine with you all also!!! Let's continue with our adventures in London!!!



Our plan for the day was a tour of Windsor Castle!!!! I think I mentioned before that we were traveling with a London Pass & an Oyster Card? So using this pre paid system, there were specific directions on how to get to Windsor Castle. It's about 20 miles almost due east of where we were in London, so expecting about a 30 minute transfer. Since it was a Saturday, we thought we'd get a fairly early start, so we agreed on breakfast about 8am and ready to leave the hotel at 9am. Sounded good! But.....all good things are subject to exceptions! No problem getting to Paddington Station & then we transferred easily to the Great Western Railway to get to Slough. That worked fine. Then in Slough we had to get off the train & walk over the bridge to the other side to catch the train to Windsor. Easy enough, but the train was full!!!! So wasted an extra half hour waiting for the next train. Well, we pushed & shoved our way onto the next train to Windsor!!! Oh yes, that first picture is all the bicycles at the Paddington Station! Lots of folks that don't use cars in London, right? Assuming we wouldn't see that in New York? Or are there Americans that ride their bikes to the public transportation? And enjoyed the flowers & the green fields that we saw on the train enroute!!



The station at Windsor Castle was HUGE!!!! Shops, restaurants, people, etc. We wandered through but didn't stop anywhere, just straight on out to the Windsor Castle.



As we started seeing more & more people, we started to worry, but we thought that maybe our London Pass would help!! NOPE!!! We were in for a long long long wait!



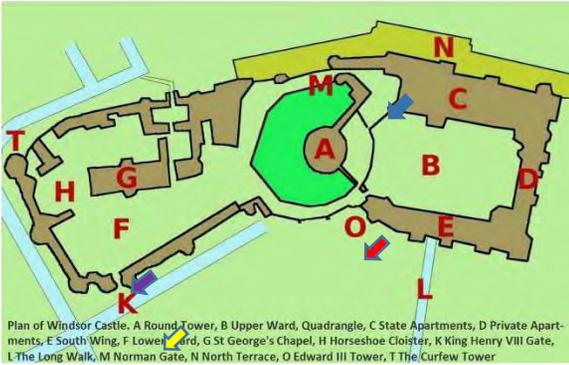
I took a few pictures of the outside of the castle as we joined the que & then we realized that the guard was marching down the street towards us! Maybe that's the reason for the press of people?



It was exciting to see the Guard marching by. Quintessential England, right?



Unfortunately, we found that the crowd didn't disperse after the first changing of the guards! And an hour later, we saw the second changing of the guards! Most annoying! And our London Pass tickets didn't help us at all!!! The guards looked just as spectacular, but can't say we were quite as excited!!!



Plan of Windsor Castle. A Round Tower, B Upper Ward, Quadrangle, C State Apartments, D Private Apartments, E South Wing, F Lower Ward, G St George's Chapel, H Horseshoe Cloister, K King Henry VIII Gate, L The Long Walk, M Norman Gate, N North Terrace, O Edward III Tower, T The Curfew Tower



But eventually after an interminable wait & much aggravation when several folks tried to break the line, we finally made it inside. Here's a map of the huge 12 acres of the Windsor Palace. And a wonderful aerial view that I down loaded from Wikipedia. Our first view of the castle grounds down the long entrance path on the lower left side from about K (yellow arrow on both pictures) – which is King Henry VII gate and also the exit – heading towards A, the Round Tower!!



Windsor Castle is a royal residence at Windsor in the English county of Berkshire. It is notable for its long association with the English and later British royal family and for its architecture. The original castle was built in the 11th century after the Norman invasion of England by William the Conqueror. Since the time of Henry I, it has been used by all monarchs, and is the longest-occupied palace in Europe. It is the preferred weekend home of Elizabeth II. Today, more than 500 people live and work in Windsor Castle – the largest inhabited castle in the world. And from a personal stand point – Don't visit on a Saturday in July!!! The long annoying wait in line by the street totally clouded the enjoyment of seeing the beautiful grounds!!! But on a good note, the weather was glorious & the grounds ARE fabulous!



We walked the long entry road up to St George's Gate (red arrow on both the map & the over view of the castle) – looked through into the courtyard, then followed the signs & the audio guide to turn back inside the walls.



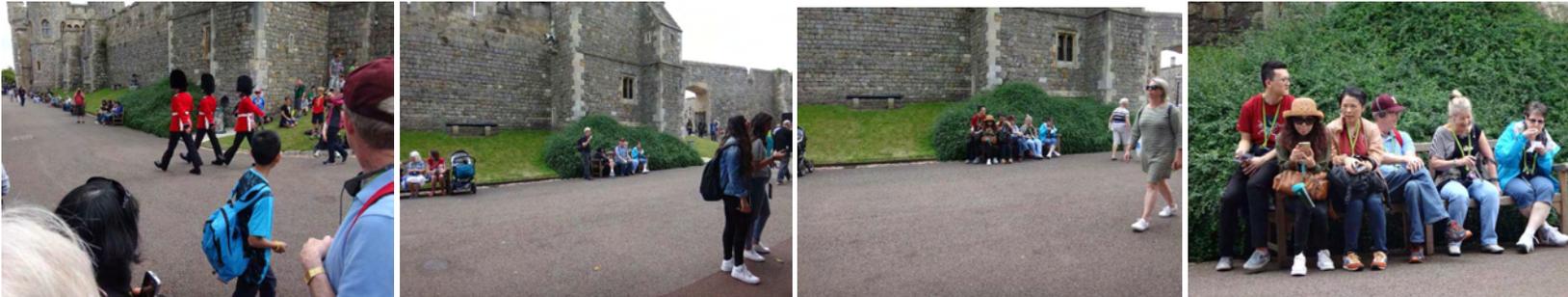
Now we were following along the road inside the wall & around the moat. There were different rooms along the way that were open with exhibits – one was to take your kids inside & make paper hats. I asked George if he wanted to do that, but he said he'd pass this time!!!! The audio guide pointed out that the openings for the archers were tall to allow them to shoot up for great distance. Of course – I'd never thought of that!



It was pretty looking at the garden down inside the moat. Just like in Alaska, the cooler England temperatures allow the flowers to just bloom like crazy!



We decided that even though it meant standing in another long slow line, ice cream was just the ticket! The ice cream was produced from milk provided by the Royal Farm, but tasted like regular ice cream to us! It was creamy & tasty & only about \$5 a scoop! Ha! Not really that expensive, but it was pretty pricey! No problem, we were donating to the British Royalty (and we all know they need our money, right?).



While we were enjoying our break, we got another show from the changing of the guards – this just a small kiddy sample, but a bit closer up. George & I had parked ourselves leaning on the North Terrace wall (blue arrow on the maps) & we got really tickled at the Asian invasion on our other guys chosen bench! At least they weren't trying to get Carol's ice cream! Only sitting on Bill's lap!!!



We finished up our treat & heading for a tour of the State Apartments. We had a choice – wish I had taken a picture, but I didn't. We could take the State Apartment tour that included a visit to Queen Mary's Dollhouse (not just your ordinary doll house, it was built in the 1920's & is apparently exquisite) or just a State Apartment tour. Easy decision – there was about an hour and a half wait for the tour including the dollhouse & we could walk straight in for the regular tour!!!! Of course pictures are not allowed, so I found a few pictures on Wikipedia to give you an idea of the grandeur. It was pretty awesome! On 20 November 1992, a major fire occurred at Windsor Castle, lasting for 15 hours and causing widespread damage to the Upper Ward. The Private Chapel in the north-east corner of the State Apartments was being renovated as part of a long term program of work within the castle, and it is believed that one of the spotlights being used in the work set fire to a curtain by the altar during the morning. The fire spread quickly and destroyed nine of the principal state rooms, and severely damaged more than 100 others. Fire-fighters applied water to contain the blaze, whilst castle staff attempted to rescue the precious artworks from the castle. Many of the rooms closest to the fire had been emptied as part of the renovation work, and this contributed to the successful evacuation of most of the collection. The fire spread through the roof voids and efforts continued through the night to contain the blaze, at great risk to the 200 fire-fighters involved. It was not until late afternoon that the blaze began to come under control, although the fire continued during the night before being officially declared over the next morning. Along with the fire and smoke damage, one of the unintended effects of the fire-fighting was the considerable water damage to the castle; more than 1.5 million gallons of water were used to extinguish it, which in many ways caused more complex restoration problems than the fire. Pretty amazing that there could be that much damage this day & age to such a historical landmark. Everything they showed us has been totally restored. There were a few rooms where the audio guide pointed out some discoloration on the ceiling. Otherwise, we would never have known. The cost of repairs is mostly covered by the income from both the Buckingham Palace tours & the tours here at the castle.



After the tour, we took a look at the Quadrangle (it is fenced off with no public access).



Once again watched the guard pacing from one door to the other. Boring life, huh? Sure dressed beautifully! How about Royal Guards for Halloween this year?



Before heading towards the exit, we took a look across the distance to Eton College. Beautiful view of the local area.



We continued our tour towards the Lower Ward (purple arrow on maps).



Last stop was St George's Chapel. The most significant fact about this chapel is that it is the Mother church for the "order of the garter." So inside (again, no pictures so this is from Wikipedia), there are standards from all the orders of the Knights (not the Round Table, still missing those!!!!). There were some empty spaces & blank standards – that designated that the person had died. It was a really beautiful church. And is regularly used.



We said goodbye to Windsor Castle as a crowd of folks came our way!



We headed back to the train station to leave about 4pm. Thought about eating there at the Royal Shopping Mall (especially since we found Bill's place!!!), but decided that with the train being the only way to get back to London, we'd better beat the main crowd home! We got really lucky, there was a train about to depart as we walked up to admire the Queen's locomotive, so hopped straight on & we were back at our hotel & ready for Happy Hour at 5:30pm! At that night at a restaurant called Garfunkel's! It was a chain that was in the mall. Made for a quick & inexpensive meal. So ended our second full day in London! Feeling the vacation come to an end! Only one more day for us! The others were staying a few more days, but we wanted to get back to attend RoundARama! Can't miss our dancing!!

So....more tomorrow!

Lots of love,

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)
Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info
Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pamspicts.shutterfly.com>

Northern Isles Cruise Vacation #10 - London - 3rd day

Good Evening Everyone,

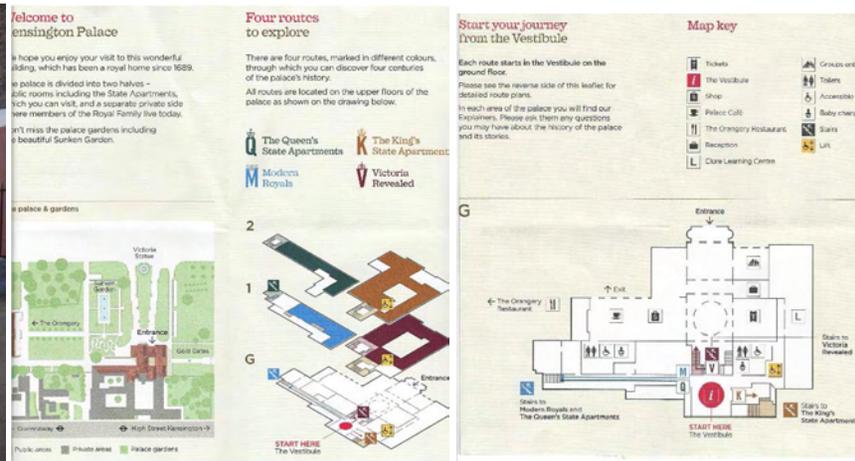
Well, I bet you thought I'd never finish this vacation!!! I must admit that the real deal didn't seem to last quite as long as the reporting of it! However, it was a wonderful vacation & doing these reports help me to not only remember them, but get it straight in my head what we really saw & experienced!! And you thought I was doing it for you, didn't you? So anyway, here we go, on to our last day in London!!



Slept in until 7am!!! Felt late from the previous 6:45am!! Had our breakfast & out the door of the hotel by 9:30am. Ran into our first issue one block away when we found the first cross road closed for a bike race!!! Phillip & Barbara raced across the road while the rest of us dilly dallied. Finally Bill & Carol and Bill & Sylvia decided to go for the tube and George & I decided to run across & join Phillip & Barbara to walk to the Palace. Really funny that London would close miles of streets for a thousand or so bicycles! But we all made it safely!



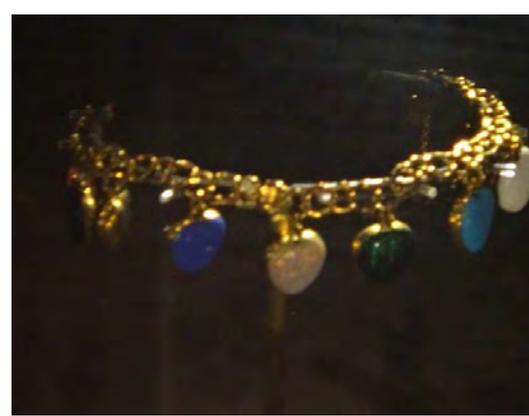
We got to Kensington Palace grounds first & not knowing which direction the others would come from, George & I stood in the open out in front & Barbara & Phillip went looking on either side of the building.



Didn't take long for us to all meet up at the entrance to Kensington Palace. The Palace is a London residence for many of the royals & has been since the 17th Century. It was built in 1605 & used by others just as a normal residence until King William III & Queen Mary II (jointly holding the throne) purchased it in 1689 as an alternate residence with fewer allergens to upset his asthma. The State Rooms have been open to the public as a museum since Queen Victoria saved them from destruction in 1897 & convinced Parliament to furnish the money to restore them. The State Room museum is operated by a non-profit charity. They have the apartments divided into 4 separate tours, with each of them having a talk by a Volunteer Docent, scheduled in 30 minute increments. Loved this beautiful photo of Diana in the vestibule.



The first tour was called Victoria Revealed. The docent had us gather in the first large room of this apartment grouping. Princess Victoria was born here at Kensington Palace in 1819 & was raised alone with her mother in these apartments. She described her childhood as lonely & unhappy. She was not allowed to ever be alone & could not leave the apartment unless escorted by several guards. The room (so called "Red Room," where the docent told us most of the historical facts was where she held her first official meeting with the highest in the government when she became Queen at the age of 18.



Victoria was introduced to her cousin, Prince Albert before she was Queen. They fell in love & she proposed to him. They were married in 1840, 3 years after she became Queen. They were married and had 9 children before he died in 1861. She was devastated by his death & very rarely made public appearances after that. She wore black until she died in 1901. They were pointing out that her waist was about 18" when she wore this coronation dress and it was more than 40" by her death. Not sure that being a royal would be a very pleasant life!!! This beautiful bracelet was in the collection. It was given by Prince Albert to Queen Victoria 3 days after the birth of her first child & a new locket was presented for each birth after. Inside the heart shaped lockets were locks of the children's hair. How sweet is that!!!



The next tour was called Modern Royals. It was basically exhibits of the clothing fashions worn by HM the Queen, Princess Margaret (her sister), and the well-known & loved Diana, Princess of Wales. The docent was obviously enamored by the fashions loved & worn by Princess Margaret especially. It was interesting that he pointed out that they (the nonprofit charity) had trouble getting Diana's dresses because they had to bid on them just like anyone else in the public when they were offered up in auction. He said he had always thought it sad that millions from around the world showed their affection for Princess Diana when she died, but there was virtually no one that noticed when Princess Margaret died. Apparently Princess Margaret was quite a card & done a lot of traveling, but just didn't get the social news appreciation that Princess Diana did. There were also diagrams all along the walls that were suggestions presented by the Royals costume designers! It was interesting to find that when they made state visits to other countries, they had special clothes designed for the visits (sometimes taking up to 3 years to complete) & they were not allowed to wear them anywhere before the visit. They could then wear them again afterwards. He said that some of the costumes in their collections had become iconic due to specific places where they were photographed. Can't say that I recognized any of them!! Ha! Guess I haven't been too much of a Royal follower!!



On the Queen's State Apartment tour, we saw where King William III & Queen Mary II actually lived after they purchased Kensington Palace in 1689. The most interesting thing about this tour (at least for me!) was about the entry staircase. I didn't get a picture of it because I only learned about it during the docent's talk when we were already up stairs. Anyway, the staircase was rather plain & the steps were only about 2" tall. We had all commented on that, but then the docent explained it. When the ladies came down the staircases in their floor length dresses, it would appear that they were floating down! It was considered a sign of wealth to have a shallow stairs! A little trivial fact that I'll probably be able to hang onto! Our docent's talk was in this huge drawing room was where the Queen usually spent her days – sewing, reading, etc.

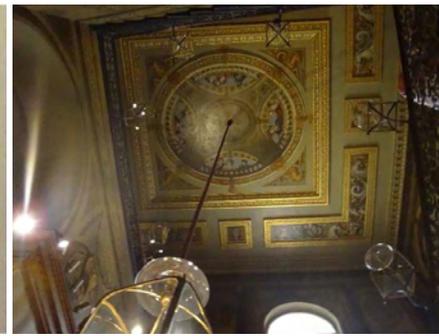


We were also shown the small dining room where they normally took their meals together & saw a small number of her HUGE porcelain collection. Most of these rooms looked out on the Gardens. We didn't visit them as we were heading from here to the Kew Gardens. My pictures of the Queen's bedroom were too blurry – but that was where she died of small pox at the age of 32.



The King's State Apartments

These magnificent apartments were created for George I and George II in the 18th century and became the centre of their courts. This is where everyone who was anyone wanted to be seen. The artist William Kent's fabulous decorations are paired with sumptuous court dress.



Our last stop was to view the King's State Apartments. This area was definitely more what I was expecting for the Royalty! Obviously the men got more lavish treatment, huh? No respect for us silly women! I'll bet Queen Elizabeth put a stop to that!!! This extravagant staircase was designed by Christopher Wren, but just plain wood. In 1724, the paintings were done by William Kent to depict an 18th Century Court.



There were 8 rooms included in this tour, but the most impressive was the King's Staircase & the King's Gallery. The view from here was of the grand entrance to the Palace. The dial positioned over the fireplace is still connected to a wind-vane on the roof so that the King could see which way the wind was blowing, where his navy was likely to be heading, and when the posts were likely to arrive. Created for King William III, it is still (amazingly) in working order. 'I particularly like the way the map on the wind dial rather arrogantly shows Great Britain the same size of France. That was wishful thinking – of course it's much smaller!' Lucy Worsley, Chief Curator. Took several pictures of these fancy dressed manikins. The costumes were made of paper!! George was not quite tall enough to wear one of them!



We left Kensington Palace about 1:00pm & walked straight to the Kensington station. Walked along a beautiful route past several embassy's. Kensington Station was definitely the prettiest one. Most of them are just functional.



Our last Sight Seeing stop of this trip was to the Famous Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site & one of London's top Tourist attractions. Luckily it was included in our London Pass & easily accessible by the Tube. Although there were lots of folks there, our London Pass let us directly in with no que at all! Yippee!!!! I had asked for this stop to get us outside & just looking at pretty things with no Historical significance! I was rather over whelmed with all the Historical names & dates being thrown my way! Luckily we had fabulous weather to accentuate this stop. Kew Gardens is a botanical gardens and the world's largest and most diverse collection of living plants. Founded in 1840, from the exotic garden at Kew Park in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, UK, its living collections include more than 30,000 different kinds of plants, while the herbarium, which is one of the largest in the world, has over seven million preserved plant specimens. The library contains more than 750,000 volumes, and the illustrations collection contains more than 175,000 prints and drawings of plants. Kew Garden has been dated as formally starting in 1759, though can be traced back to the exotic garden at Kew Park, formed by Lord Capel John of Tewkesbury, consists of 300 acres of gardens and botanical glasshouses. Interestingly enough, Kew Gardens has its own police force, Kew Constabulary, which has been in operation since 1847.

Welcome to Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. There are over 100 world class attractions to enjoy at Kew Gardens, from iconic buildings and glasshouses to inspirational art collections and landscapes.

Key attractions marked in red on the map

Seasonal highlights marked in purple on the map

Treeing Walkway (04)
Situated in the Hesperian, the Treeing Walkway rises 1.5 metres into a canopy of pink, white and yellow wild rose flowers and offers an unobstructed view across the Gardens. As it is suitable for visitors with restricted mobility.

Palm House (02)
The largest tropical glass structure in the world, Palm House has been named in an honour of the Gardens. Explore a lush tropical atmosphere and discover how the plants we see on the planet from these regions of the world.

Princess of Wales Conservatory (07)
Named after Princess Margaret and opened in 1987 by Queen Elizabeth II, the conservatory is a masterpiece of glass and steel, with a roof of red, blue, green and white tiles.

The Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art (030)
Explore the first public gallery in the world dedicated to the science of Botanical Art and enjoy the gallery's Mixed exhibition area - a collection of plants which represent the diversity of today's vegetable world.

The Hive (05)
The world's only beehive-shaped structure. The Hive comes to Kew Gardens. The Hive was designed by the world's leading light and dark wood experts. The building structure will be surrounded by a beautiful wild flower meadow.

The Arboretum (06)
The Arboretum is one of the oldest and largest of the Royal Botanic Gardens. It is a place where you can see the world's largest collection of trees and shrubs. The Arboretum is a place where you can see the world's largest collection of trees and shrubs.

Rose pergola (04)
The first rose pergola in the world. The pergola is a place where you can see the world's largest collection of trees and shrubs.

Kew Kitchen Garden (04)
The Kew Kitchen Garden is a place where you can see the world's largest collection of trees and shrubs.

Vicarium Garden (04)
The Vicarium Garden is a place where you can see the world's largest collection of trees and shrubs.

Davies Alpine House and Rock Garden (04)
The Davies Alpine House and Rock Garden is a place where you can see the world's largest collection of trees and shrubs.



We had timed our arrival so that we could participate in last free walking tour of the day. It was entitled Herbageous Borders Tour, supposed to highlight the longest double herbaceous border in the country. But because most of us on the tour (it was limited to 15 people), the guide made it more general. One funny thing about the tour. When we first approached to sign up, I said, we are a group of 7 (Bill had returned to the hotel to rest from the feelings of a cold coming on!!) would like to sign up together. The lady's response was – "oh no. Groups of more than 6 have to request a private tour & we don't have any space available today!" Hummmm? So back I went to the group & we signed in individually! That took care of that!!!



We took off for the tour – basically at the Victoria Gate Entrance – there is a coffee shop there. Marked by a white arrow on the map. We were pretty much following the yellow line, which is actually the overall suggested route for the gardens. We walked fairly quickly through this main part, heading to the Broad walk. We would come back to the Palm House later.



According to our guide & some reading on line, 1 person made a major contribution (over 700,000 pounds!!!!!!) a couple of years ago and an ambitious rework of the Broadwalk borders was initiated. This was the first year after a totally new planting of flowers planned for maximum beauty during the high tourist season of June/July/August. They were quite pleased with the results – AS WERE WE!!



The Broad Walk was originally designed by William Nesfield as an impressive formal promenade to the newly opened Palm House. Here's a comparison of the "boring" grass & trees of the 1840's to today's riotous profusion of colors!! Apparently he had planned the walk to be marked with cedars, but unfortunately the type that he chose were not suited to the climate & most died. In the years since, a lot more research is done in choosing what & where to plant.



Mostly, I was just enjoying the lovely walk outside & the beauty of all the trees & flowers.



Our guide did point out some of the more interesting plants, one that had won an award for the best “newly” integrated species (it was a Daisy type that had cross pollinated on its own & would even produce seeds for generation of its new species). Also one that collected water beads and the water was used by alchemist to try & make gold. And I just happily snapped pictures of flowers all around! Tried to get good close up pictures of the thousands of happy honey bees, but was not really successful!



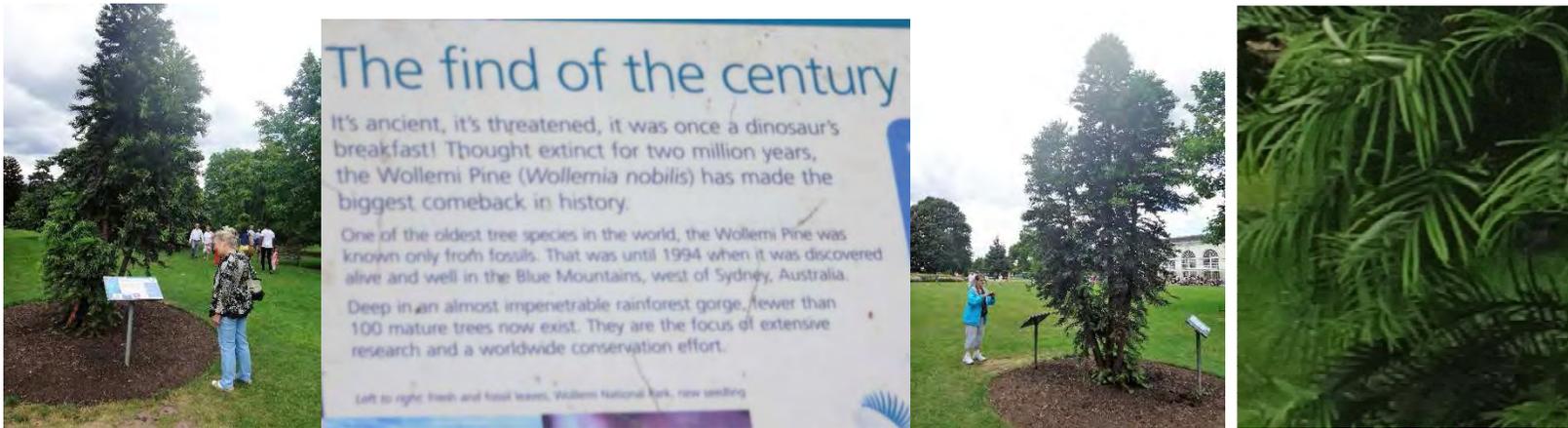
From there, the tour picked up a little speed (as I need to or I’ll put posting pictures for the rest of my life!!! I did really enjoy this place! She mostly just pointed out places we should return to visit on our own, like the Bee Hive (more on that later), the Orangery (originally a Citrus house, but not suited for Citrus at all, so now a gift shop & cafeteria), marked with a yellow arrow. Still distracted by this lovely butterfly that posed for me. And then off the path & across the grass (purple arrow), past the Princess of Wales Conservatory (not named for Diana, but a previous Princess of Wales).



We ended at the Aquatic Garden to see the awesome water lilies because they were almost all in full bloom! Marked with a baby blue arrow. As a last trick, she took one of the fallen blooms of the Lotus & showed us how when dipped in water, the droplets do not adhere. You can't even tell it was wet. Apparently they call it "the Lotus effect."



First stop after we left our guide was the Bee Hive. Marked with an Orange Arrow. It is an open-air structure standing at 55.7 tall and weighing in at 40 tons, The Hive encapsulates the story of the honey bee and the important role of pollination in feeding the planet, through an immersive sound and visual experience. The Hive is the design of UK based artist Wolfgang Buttress. It was originally created as the center piece of the UK Pavilion at the 2015 Milan Expo. It is constructed from around 170,000 parts including thousands of pieces of aluminum which catch the changing sunlight. There are 1,000 LED lights dotted around its core which glow and fade, while a unique soundtrack hums in response to the activity of real bees in a beehive behind the scenes at Kew. It was really interesting to feel like you were in a hive! Would have loved to see it at dusk to see the lights. In the sunlight you couldn't tell much about them. Our guide said it was originally just supposed to be a visiting exhibit, but it was such a hit, it would probably become permanent.



We decided to head back to the Orangery for a snack & a rest. This tree & sign caught my attention as well as Barbara & Carol. An ancient species from dinosaur age that was thought to be extinct, but less than 100 of them were found in the Blue Mountains in Australia!! Some things are almost too amazing to be true!!!



After a short rest, we made our plan. Although it was already about 3:30pm & had been a long day, I couldn't stand to leave without visiting at least a few of the exhibits. I fought for a few more stops. Some were not a problem, like a short back track to the Princess of Wales Conservatory. It is one of the most advanced, energy-conscious public conservatories in the world. Its computer-controlled system creates ten different tropical and sub-tropical habitats under one roof, allowing it to be home to a collection of rare and diverse plants. The conservatory is named after Princess Augusta (Princess of Wales from 1736 until 1751) who helped to establish the Gardens at Kew. The conservatory was opened by Diana, Princess of Wales in 1987. It was an interesting maze from one climate controlled environment to the other. I especially loved the orchids, but there were literally thousands of other plants in the 10 zones. We didn't make it to all of them. I read on line that there were helpful lizards given free reign in Zone 1, we didn't see any of them either unfortunately!!



We ran back across to the Palm House (big red arrow) that we had passed at the start of our walking tour. Under a time crunch, we basically ran through this impressive facility. Experts consider Kew's Palm House to be the most important surviving Victorian iron and glass structure in the world. It was designed by Decimus Burton and engineered by Richard Turner to accommodate the exotic palms being collected and introduced to Europe in early Victorian times. This pioneering project was the first time engineers used wrought iron to span such large widths without supporting columns. This technique was borrowed from the shipbuilding industry and from a distance the glasshouse resembles an upturned hull. The result is a vast, light, lofty space that can easily accommodate the crowns of large palms, while boasting 16,000 panes of glass. I included an aerial view to give you an idea of the immense size of this conservatory!!! And we got to spend less than 10 minutes running through it. I tell you it's worth an expensive flight to London just to return to Kew Gardens!!!



We only ran past the unbelievable Rose Garden that is immediately behind The Palm House. They were totally replanted in 2015 for Kew's 250th celebration. I didn't get any close ups, so downloaded this one little picture. Also read this interesting fact: During WWII, when Britain was unable to obtain citrus fruits, Kew helped identify species, varieties and hybrids of native British roses that contained vitamin C. The hips richest in vitamin C were those produced by roses in northern England and Scotland. Between 1941 and 1945, volunteers harvested nearly 2,000 tons of hips. These gave rise to some 10 million bottles of National Rose-hip Syrup.



Now was the hard part! I had insisted I wanted to see the Tree Top Walk (marked with big light green arrow in center of map). But....it was a long way across the park! I said that anyone that didn't feel like going could just meet us at the gate, but they all hung in there (with nary a complaint I might add!!!). We passed some really gorgeous things on our arrow straight trek across the grounds, but just snapped photos on the run! I was encouraging everyone that there was an elevator to save them from the 118 steps to the walkway. However, when we arrived – the elevator was closed!!! I was afraid a mutiny would arise, but instead everyone mentioned that we had climbed more steps than this every day on the cruise ship! Hooray!!!!!!



Opened on International Biodiversity Day 2008, the Treetop Walkway stands in the Arboretum, between the Temperate House and the lake. It was designed by Marks Barfield Architects, who also designed the London Eye. The 59' high, 656' walkway enables visitors to walk around the crowns of lime, sweet chestnut and oak trees. Supported by rusted steel columns that blend in with the natural environment, it provides opportunities for inspecting birds, insects, lichen and fungi at close quarters, as well as seeing blossom emerging and seed pods bursting open in spring. The walkway's structure is based on a Fibonacci numerical sequence (hello??? Yep, I've copy & pasted this part – what the heck does that mean????), which is often present in nature's growth patterns. But anyway, I think everyone was happy that we came. It was really fun to be in the tops of the trees. Had to get a picture of Carol to prove to Bill that she had done it! Really the only worrisome part was that the walkway was a see through screen of metal AND IT WOBBLED PRETTY SEVERELY!!! But we were brave!



Most exciting for me was when I noticed the green parrots all around us. When I looked it up (not listed on the Kew Garden website) I found that Kingston parakeets, also known as the Twickenham parakeets, are feral rose-ringed parakeets and have been found in and around London since 1855. It is assumed that they were pets that escaped & are surviving & actually proliferating! Whatever, it was fun to see & hear them! Made me feel like I was in Australia (or Leisure World in Mesa that now sports a huge flock of Lovebirds!!!).



Soon we forced ourselves to come down to earth! Still had quite a walk to the entrance & on to the train!!! And Happy Hour was calling us!!!



Included this one aerial photo from on line. Just to show you how awesome it really it!!! The Temporate House in the background is currently closed for restoration. Guess that will have to be NEXT TIME!!!!



We tried to take the most direct path to the exit. I snapped away as we walked!! We did make one very important stop (yes potty too) for ICECREAM!!! Figured we deserved it – about a 20,000 step day!! Felt great! Sure do recommend the Gardens to anyone visiting London. It was awesome & there were tons of things we didn't get to see!



I'll end our London trip with a picture of the trains! They were an important part of this trip. Sure wish the US had a public transportation system that came even close to what's available in London! And most other European cities I might add. BUT.... That said – the next morning we were to leave London from Heathrow. It would be a straight shot from our hotel on the Piccadilly line to Heathrow. Our flight was not until 1pm, so we had breakfast at the hotel & about 9am, we said our goodbyes & pulled our easily rolling luggage down to the station. Figured we had enough money left on our cards from the London Pass to cover our trip to the airport. Just as we got to the entrance to that line, 2 workmen came out & posted a sign that the Piccadilly Line was closed. CLOSED! TOTALLY OUT OF BUSINESS!!!! Yipes! Now what? We talked to one of the 2 workmen & he advised us to take the tube to the Paddington Station & then buy a ticket on the Heathrow Express. That's what we had to do. So instead of a free trip to Heathrow, we had to pay about \$60 a piece for the Express ticket. But we made it easily & then found that our flight with Icelandic Air was delayed by an hour anyway! But according to the others, the Piccadilly line was closed for most of the day due to some kind of power outage. So just as well that we had elected to pay for the Heathrow Express. One other comment. That last night in London, we all sat & worked out how many things we had used our London pass for compared to the cost individually & figured we had easily saved \$100!!! Cool! And that's with just the entrance fees, not including how much we saved with the Oyster travel card. So if you are planning a trip to London – consider the London Pass with the Oyster card! We recommend it – not only saved money, but save time in many of the queues!



After another delay in Reykjavik, we finally made it back to Denver & Terri met us to take us back to our car. We struggled to stay awake on the 2 ½ hour drive to the RV & had one day to catch up on laundry & head to dance at RoundARama at Purdue University. Enjoyed the views of the National Grassland all around us & even saw a herd of Pronghorns crossing the field. The drive was uneventful (thank goodness) and the dance was awesome, so we were very glad that we had rushed to attend it!

So ended the 6th Cruise of the Cruise Buddies!!! It was AWESOME! Can't wait for the next!

Those of you who do virtual travel with us, start anticipating this coming December when we will visit the wondrous Patagonia with a pre tour of Iguassu Falls and a post trip to EASTER ISLAND!!!!

Sending love & happiness!

George & Pamela

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos www.DanceRounds.info

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>
