



*Great Britain Mother - Daughter  
Adventure  
2013*



We traveled across England, North Wales and Scotland in June of 2013, covering over 3000 miles by car in 23 days. This travel journal contains our itinerary, what we learned about planning a trip, and some of our highlights. It will hopefully save other's time in planning a similar trip.

The experience proved rich in sights, sounds, tastes, and perspective. Great Britain oozes with history from Celtic tribes and Roman legions to centuries of kings and queens. The British countryside with its rolling green landscape, dotted throughout with sheep, broken here and there by dramatic cliffs and ocean vistas, is spectacular. The cool, mostly damp weather draws all to an afternoon "cream tea" - a tiny pot of Earl Grey, fruity biscuit and a deliciously thick butter.

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For the traveler, it's impossible not to miss the role Christianity played in shaping Great Britain. The skyline, from every little burg to the great cities, is dominated by the spires and clock towers of ornate churches. Bridges, pathways and arched town entries present scripture or etchings of crosses. The many castles, whether still inhabited or in ruins, provide a glimpse into a marvelous history.

**Planning a Trip**

Our plans for a Great Britain adventure began when I read CS Lewis' Narnia Series aloud in a British accent to Maggie. At four, she thought that clever. Now, at 13 the thought of me "speaking British" is embarrassing.

Things kept happening to delay our trip, and all for the better because Maggie could not have handled the rigors of "wander travel," as I call it, prior to age 13. Most children cannot fully enjoy the countryside and history prior to the teen years.

There are a million sites to see and many ways to go about experiencing this beautiful collection of countries.



York Cathedral (Left),  
Manchester airport picking  
up the car (Ri)

The ideal involved driving no more than four hours to a destination and then enjoying the town or city into the evening. Our second day would entail heavy sightseeing.

We would make a rough plan using Rick Steve's Great Britain guide book coupled with local recommendations after arriving in an area. There are just too many unknowns to plan everything in advance.

Because the food is generally heavy and expensive, for the most part, we found eating one real meal a day worked well with snacks to supplement.



### A Geography and History Lesson

United Kingdom (UK) or Britain all mean the sovereign state made up of four separate countries (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). Each country has it's own unique culture and history.

Great Britain- UK Mainland - British Mainland is the main island of the UK consisting of England, Scotland and Wales.

British Isles encompasses Great Britain and the island of Ireland as well as the smaller islands scattered around the UK, such as the Isle of Man.

Ireland is a sovereign state in Europe made up of about five-sixths of the island. The capital is Dublin, in the eastern section. It shares the only land border with Northern Ireland, part of the UK.

Great Britain emerged as a political union in 1707 under Queen Anne. In 1801, under a new Act of Union, Ireland merged creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1921 the Irish War of Independence led to most of Ireland seceding from the Union.

Britain is not Europe exactly. Mainland Europe includes France, Italy, Spain and all the rest.

### Time

Great Britain time is five hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

### When To Go and How Long To Stay

Weather is always unpredictable but crowds are predictable. We had mostly great weather and virtually no crowds by going the month of June. School does not get out in the UK until July.

Always plan to visit big attractions first thing in the morning (most open at 9:30 am or 10:00 am) or end of the day (most close at 4:00 pm). Many things close at 4:00 pm. Plan accordingly.

Our trip covered exactly three weeks. It makes no sense to do a trip under two weeks, unless you plan to just see London and surrounding area. We found the driving time much longer than anticipated in some cases. See notes below regarding what we'd do different.





River Thames from London Eye (Left),  
White Cliffs of Dover (Right)

### What to Take and Not Take

Save suitcase space by not packing shorts or a bathing suit. Even on the sunniest day, the high was just at 70 degrees. The average was 50 degrees and windy. It rains or at least threatens to do so daily.

Take a rain coat and multiple layers from short sleeves to fleece jackets. Jeans are the best all around for bottoms. An umbrella will come in handy, but hotels usually have them for loan. Water repellent walking shoes are helpful.

### Do Bring

- Electrical plug adaptors.
- A GPS with UK map download (if you decide to drive)
- Rick Steves' Great Britain book

### Don't Bring

- Hairdryers or curling irons, they won't work due to the different electrical settings and most hotels provide hairdryers
- Your cell phone under US plan! Verizon's global plan does not work!

### Phones and Computers

Verizon phones just don't work over here, even the global phones when you pay for international service. Internet is spotty at best, even with a jetpack. Walls are thick in the old buildings. At times a hotel wifi can only be picked up in a reception area. Just get over it and enjoy the experience. Use your devices when possible to catch-up but don't plan to have them on a reliable basis. All cell phones can take emergency calls by dialing 999.

### Cost and Dollars to Pounds

It's very expensive. The dollar is weak as of 2013. If you do the math on the cost of a trip and still decide to go, don't look back. The taxes, fees and general expensive nature of the UK are not likely going to change.

*1 US Dollar equals 0.66 British Pound Sterling (GBP) as of June 2013.*

Airfare in 2013 was \$1,300 per person. Over half of that was consumed by taxes and "fees."

Car rental was \$1,000 all said and done due to taxes, fees and mandatory insurance, again more than half the rental cost was made up of fees.

**Take an ATM card and credit card. The ATM is a better deal usually at only 2% fee from your bank.**

Credit cards charge 3% per transaction generally. A few cards exist with no fee.

Most places take plastic, but you'll need cash too. Use the ATM to get cash out in chunks of about \$400 at a time. Don't mess with travelers checks or exchanging all your dollars to pounds at an airport or other exchange spot.



Blenheim Palace (Ri), Penzance (Left)

Be sure and call your bank and credit card company before you travel to let them know when and where you'll travel. Otherwise, your card will get rejected for security purposes.

Be careful about on-line use with UK hotels, etc. Our card number was hacked and several thousand dollars spent before we caught the fraud.

Make a note that your US dollar will not go far. Add roughly 6% to everything. So, a \$20 breakfast is really \$32. And that's just a basic Continental.

### **Route Planning and Transportation**

Public transportation is ubiquitous and fairly affordable, but nothing says freedom like a car. If doing this trip again, I'd recommend spending half the time with a car and half without. You only

need a car when going to remote areas or just touring around. Maggie got extremely bored in the car and at times I felt stressed-out with navigating roundabouts and avoiding speedy drivers.

Driving on the left is not hard. Don't let that intimidate you. Gas is really, really expensive, approximately \$10 a gallon in 2013.

For whatever time a route planner gives on-line or GPS, add three to four hours. Be prepared to drive about 30 to 40 mph when off a motorway and from 60 to 90 mph on the motorway.

Our trip involved a circular route all the way around the UK, beginning and ending in Manchester. This is an easy airport to navigate. If going again, we would fly into a London airport, stay four or five days, take a train a little ways out, such as Canterbury

or York, and pick up a car there for the remainder of the trip.

The car could be dropped and a train taken back to the airport for departure.

Expedia and Trip Advisor are good sources for finding a nice accommodation in your budget and desired location. The reviews are helpful. Note that rooms don't have a private toilet and shower unless specified as "en suite." Make sure they have both toilet and shower or you'll be disappointed.

Bed & Breakfast's abound. We like the sense of privacy and space afforded by a hotel but that does add to the cost. Most hotels include breakfast.

## Cultural Sensitivities

Tipping is not expected nor is great service. If you dine where there's a table cloth, tip at 10 percent. Often they'll add it for you on the tab.

Don't talk disparagingly in any way about their national health care system or any of the government benefits or nonsensical ways some things are done.

Be prepared for a range of anti-American sentiment. Most will be friendly but conversations usually reveal a disdain for our "Capitalism" or "excessive materialism." One fellow at a hotel talked about the American invasion of Europe - meaning our participation in WWI and II.

"Americans are forward," a woman told me in Penzance. She was nice enough but like many Brits they are not comfortable with the sort of chit chat we enjoy, especially Southerners.

Know that as soon as you open your mouth or even before, they know you are American and have already formed an opinion. The point is to be polite and "when in Rome, do as the Romans."

Everything closes from 4pm to 5pm. Everything. The exception is pubs and some restaurants. Don't be surprised to find shops closed by 3pm.

If you are particular about accommodations and/or have any mobility issues, you may not like GB. There are few elevators (lifts) and they are not particularly concerned with your every whim and need. This is somewhat refreshing at times. Take it or leave it.

Practice saying Brilliant (Brill for short), fantastic, bloody and rubbish.

## Food and Drink

Unless you are a big morning eater, you'll never put away a full English (or Scottish or Wales) breakfast. Order the items you like. It takes some experimentation. Their bacon and eggs are awesome.

A meal for two whether breakfast, fish and chips or something else is a minimum of \$20 pounds.

Black pudding is cows blood. It's an acquired taste. Haggis is mutton, also an acquired taste.

Scottish Oat Cakes are awesome and you can't get them at home.

Fish and Chips abound but are not all created equal. Look for reviews and what's on your neighbor's plate prior to ordering.

We discovered some great restaurants and dishes in the UK. See some of our favorites at the end.

## About churches and God

The beauty of the state churches and cathedrals stands in stark contrast to the disinterest of the people. Gorgeous churches are to be found everywhere you go. They are mostly seen as relics of a long-ago history where church towers were designed for protection of the village and their interiors meant for worship and community gatherings.

It seems only the multi-purpose function remains for many. Services we attended in both England and Scotland were sparsely attended, mostly by elderly who still remember the war.

In most places the church doors stand open, anyone can walk in. donations are requested in exchange for lovely cards and candles, book marks, booklets written by Vicars.

A walking tour guide led us into a tiny church in York with incredible stained glass windows. One depicted end times with fire. Our guide said, "See the fire burning everything up and then the people rising toward heaven. This is what they believed back then."

Each church is unique. Take time to visit as many as you can, especially Bath and York Cathedral.

# Route and Highlights

Here's our itinerary with a few highlights and notes.

## Day One to Two- Manchester & Harrogate

Don't go to sleep when you arrive, unless it's bedtime in the UK. Go ahead and get acclimated to the time change.

Manchester is an easy airport to navigate but we recommend starting in London.

Harrogate is a nice, sleepy, upscale little town. Betty's is a highlight for tea and pastries.

We hopped the train to York for two at \$12 Pounds.

York feels like a Medieval theme park but it's real. This is where Constantine was made emperor of Rome in 306 BC. It was Constantine that made the way for Christianity to go from being made up of a few persecuted Jews to becoming the dominant religion of Rome and the world. He had a dream before a battle. In the dream he met Christ and saw "in hoc signo vinces" ('in this sign you will conquer', Greek: *εν τούτω νικά*) on a flaming cross. He placed the symbol of the cross on his

men's shields, vowing if they won, he'd believe. They found victory the next day at the battle of Milvian Bridge.

In York, The Secret Walking Tour was well worth the 2 hours and \$11 Pounds. It met at the gate of the York Museum. Stops included a church containing breath taking stained glass, the local brewery, the tiny but ornate chapel in the convent, gardens hosting an "endangered beetle" that I could have sworn was a June Bug and much more.

Go to Even Song at York Minster. No cost. Lovely. Light a candle in memory of your beloved for a donation. The stone carvings of every king of England amaze as does the sheer size of this cathedral.

## Day Three to Four - East Anglia

We made our way to a tiny borough called Mellis in East Anglia to visit an old pen pal. The highlights, other than our hostesses cooking, included the town, church and castle at Framlingham. This is where the short reigning Queen Mary was coronated. She came to be called Bloody Mary for attempting to put the

Catholic church back in power after her powerful father Henry VIII created the church of England in order to divorce Mary's mother Catherine of Aragon and marry his mistress Anne Boylen, the mother of Queen Elizabeth I, the Virgin Queen (she never married). Many heads rolled as Mary sought to put things back Catholic.

Elizabeth, a Protestant, was quite shrewd. She reined 1533 until her death in 1603. She oversaw the Discovery Voyages that opened up the New World making way for Jamestown in 1607, and the rest of course is history.

In Mellis, their tiny church holds an invaluable piece of art carved from a very large oak in the 12th century. Each of several gold inlaid squares depicts the crucifixion. It was hidden in a barn to escape the austere followers of Oliver Cromwell in the mid-1600s. Cromwell helped do away with King Charles I and dominated the short-lived Commonwealth of England. Zealous Puritans of that time felt the ornate art of the Catholic tradition un-Christian.



## Day Five to Eight- London

The car in London made no sense. Fortunately, one of our favorite hotels along the way, the Thanington, allowed us to park there and hop on a train into London. It was an hour ride with cost for two at \$40.

You can waste a lot of time getting oriented in London. It would take months to really soak up the place. I love history and Maggie loves to shop. Here are our highlights and recommendations:

The Mad Hatter Hotel, an old hat factory, was a great location and bang for the buck. We paid in US \$, roughly \$200 a night. Well worth it considering the location (just 5 minute walk from Southwark Tube station), cleanliness, size of rooms and bath, fresh milk and coffee in the room and friendly staff.

Spring for a two-day pass on the Original Tour bus - big, red buses, open on top. You can pay the driver at any stop. These tours follow a big loop around the city and offer three different variations. You can hop on and off as desired and most have a live guide. The quality of the guide is hit or miss. They hand out a decent map worth holding onto.

The Tube (underground subway) is very nice but not cheap nor easy to navigate.

We found it most useful when going out at night. Ask for help from an attendant in figuring out which trains to take.

It's best to have \$10 bills for getting fare cards. The machines were finicky about credit cards and coins.

Don't over estimate what you can enjoy doing in one day. The walking and looking is very exhausting. A tea or coffee around 5pm helps.

### Worth doing in London:

--A walk along the Thames and ride on the London Eye (a giant ferris wheel with enclosed cars and great views of the city)

-Churchill's War Rooms and the museum. Amazing. Very advanced interpretation. When the war ended in 1945, after six intense years, they shut the lights off and left. The museum has preserved everything just the way they left it.

-Westminster Abbey is steeped in more than a thousand years of history. Benedictine monks first came to this site in the middle of the tenth century, establishing a tradition of daily worship, which continues to this day. The Abbey has been the coronation church since 1066 and is the final resting place of seventeen monarchs.

The present church, begun by Henry III in 1245, is one of the most important Gothic

buildings in the country, with the medieval shrine of an Anglo-Saxon saint still at its heart. \*Careful to get in the right line. One is for cash only and the other for plastic only.

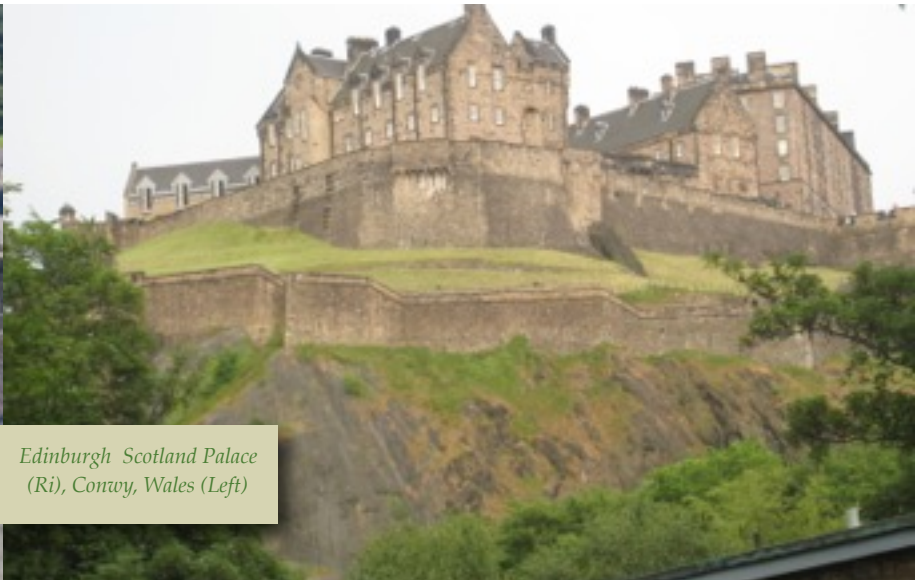
-St. Paul's Cathedral

-Tower of London with Beefeater tour is well worth the \$20. Get a discount outside gates at gift shop. See chapel where the beheaded queens lie. The Crown jewels too are most impressive.

-Fortnum and Mason is a favorite store of the Queen.

Ironically, the day we browsed, Anarchists protesting against the arrival of Obama and G8 summit in Ireland the following week led to a lock down. Only in a "free" country could 100 protesters take up the time of the city's police force and disrupt business to air their grievances against organized society.





Edinburgh Scotland Palace  
(Ri), Conway, Wales (Left)

-Wicked at Victoria Apollo at 17 Wilton. Get off the Tube at Victoria Station and follow signs for Buckingham Palace. Decent seats for \$32, each in Circle Seating. Great acting, singing and dancing. An interesting re-imagining of the Wizard of Oz where the good guys are really the not so good and the Wicked Witch of the West is really the victim of a planted legend and hysteria. Worth a night out on the town.

-Buckingham Palace is a great short stop for photos. Crowding around changing of the guard probably not worth the time. Take a photo and throw a coin in the fountain, say a prayer for the Queen. And don't miss the Queen's gift shop.

-Globe Theatre for Shakespeare. A 10-minute walk from Mad Hatter Hotel.

We saw Taming of the Shrew. Tickets \$5 each for standing.

### Teenage Shopping

Finding the right shops for a teenage girl can be challenging. The best bet is to go to Top Shop, H&M and Fat Head. Liberties is good if you have money to burn on "designer" fashions. Don't waste your time at Harrods. It's quite garish and so very over priced. \*The gift shops at all of the great historical sites are very classy and good spots to buy interesting souvenirs.

### Day Nine to Ten - Canterbury

The Thanington Hotel is not really a tourist stop, but what a delightful place with very friendly staff. Ask for young Toby. What a delight

this young man was in terms of service, conversation and his willingness to show us around the town.

The Cathedral is literally surrounded with up-scale shops. Modern tourism meets old. Thanks to the murder of Thomas Becket in 1170, pilgrims have made the Cathedral a major attraction for nearly 1000 years.

Took a nice boat tour on the river Stout for 40 minutes. Starts at Weaver's Tavern.

Stumbled onto the Canterbury Library and Museum. Awesome collection of art and artifacts from all over the world. Free.

## Chaucer's - The Canterbury Tales Prologue

When April with his showers sweet with fruit  
The drought of March has pierced unto the root  
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power  
To generate therein and sire the flower;  
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,  
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,  
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun  
Into the Ram one half his course has run,  
And many little birds make melody  
That sleep through all the night with open eye  
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-  
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,  
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,  
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.  
And specially from every shire's end  
Of England they to Canterbury wend,  
The holy blessed martyr there to seek  
Who helped them when they lay so ill and weal  
Befell that, in that season, on a day  
In Southwark, at the Tabard, as I lay  
Ready to start upon my pilgrimage  
To Canterbury, full of devout homage,  
There came at nightfall to that hostelry  
Some nine and twenty in a company  
Of sundry persons who had chanced to fall  
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all  
That toward Canterbury town would ride.  
The rooms and stables spacious were and wide,  
And well we there were eased, and of the best.  
And briefly, when the sun had gone to rest,  
So had I spoken with them, every one,  
That I was of their fellowship anon,  
And made agreement that we'd early rise  
To take the road, as you I will apprise.  
But none the less, whilst I have time and space,  
Before yet farther in this tale I pace,  
It seems to me accordant with reason  
To inform you of the state of every one  
Of all of these, as it appeared to me,  
And who they were, and what was their degree,  
And even how arrayed there at the inn;  
And with a knight thus will I first begin.

## "Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, slain in his own cathedral in 1170, for his defiance of King Henry II.

The issue here, or one of the issues, was one of court jurisdiction. King Henry claimed that a cleric accused of an ordinary crime ought to be tried in the King's Courts like any layman. Thomas, who was Henry's Chancellor and his close friend, vigorously upheld the king's position. However, when he was made Archbishop of Canterbury with the king's support, he reversed himself completely and upheld the right of clergy to be tried only in Church courts, which could not inflict capital punishment. Henry wanted an arrangement by which (for example) a priest accused of murder would be tried by a Church Court, which if it found him guilty would degrade him to the rank of a layman, whereupon a King's Court would try him, and if it found him guilty would order him hanged. Thomas objected that a man could not be tried and punished twice for the same offense.

Henry, being angered at opposition from someone whom he had counted on for support, was heard to exclaim in anger, "This fellow who has eaten my bread has lifted up his heel against me [see Psalm 41:9]. Have I no friend who will rid me of this upstart priest?" Four of his knights promptly rode to Canterbury, where they confronted the Archbishop and demanded that he back down. When he did not, they killed him. Public reaction was immediate and vigorous, and reckoned Thomas as a saint and a martyr, and Henry as a blaspheming murderer. Thomas was very soon canonized, and his tomb was one of the most popular places of pilgrimage in Europe for the next three-and-a-half centuries. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is concerned with a group of pilgrims on their way to the tomb of Thomas."<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/266.html>

## The White Cliffs of Dover

It was about 6pm by the time we arrived, so everything was closed. We parked the car near a foot path sign in a residential area and began hoofing it toward what we knew had to be the cliffs. It was a much longer walk than we'd guessed but well worth it. We ended up at the light house and found a narrow foot path with access to the very edge of the cliffs.

The wind was stiff so standing near the edge was nerve racking. We could see the cargo ships leaving the Dover port and sea gulls cruising the line. We were too late for the castle but it's dominance on the horizon looked inviting.

## Matthew Arnold from his poem Dover Beach, published in 1867.

' The sea is calm tonight,  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits:- on the French coast, the light  
Gleams, and is gone: the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.'

The history of Britain is intricately linked with the White Cliffs from the Roman invasion to the assault made by Germany in both World Wars.

The first recorded description of Dover describes the scene that Julius Caesar saw in 55 BC when, with two legions of soldiers, he arrived off Dover looking for a suitable landing place and ' saw the enemy's forces, armed, in position on all the hills there. But they did land just along the coast in Deal and a year later a full scale invasion followed. As an aid to navigation for the Roman ships, two lighthouses, Pharos, were built on top of the cliffs.

## Day Eleven to Fourteen - Cornwall

It was not easy to reach, but Cornwall was my favorite region. The last king of Cornwall died in the Tenth Century leading the region to join the United Kingdom. The Cornish identity is recognized through the Duchy of Cornwall - presided over by the Duke of Cornwall (otherwise known as the Prince of Wales).

Early Mediterranean peoples traded with the Cornish and the ancient Romans traded with Cornwall for copper and tin.

Through its Celtic roots, Cornwall had its own language - similar to Welsh and Gaelic but quite distinct from the Saxon languages, which became today's English. The Cornish language was last spoken regularly in the late

1700s. Some today speak a revived Cornish.

We detoured to Brighton Beach en-route - the Myrtle Beach of England - but not worth the diversion. Though a very old board walk conjures dreams of lively merriment from long ago.

As a lover of American history, I had to see Plymouth. This is the only place, save Devon, that colonists from GB could shove off from by law for the New World in the 1500s. The fateful Lion with the 115 souls destined to become the Lost Colony left from Plymouth. Of course the Mayflower too left from Plymouth in 1620.

Alas, it eluded me. The GPS took us to a narrow street in Plymberon. A heavy rain made the evening dark and the address for our hotel in Penzance revealed another 2 hours of driving.

Maggie read the entire book *Of Mice and Men* and played 100 games on her iPhone, slept, and generally looked sullen.

We rolled into the narrow alley outside the The Abbey Hotel with just a hint of day light remaining and Ms. Libby greeted us warmly. What a relief.



# From Penzance to Tintagel

Coffee in the room. Fresh milk. And she made me a pot of English Breakfast Twinning's in a silver pot with raw sugar cubes and a tiny pitcher of milk and two hard cookies that tasted good.

I found out the next morning dining in a room with a nice fire burning and my coffee served very hot along with steamed milk that the Abbey Hotel owner is Jean Shrimpton, formerly the model Twiggy. Her son, his family and friends run the hotel and very nice restaurant, The Slip Way.

You need reservations for The Slip Way and it's worth it.

The best part of Penzance was just walking around town. Lots of great shops as well as places to get cream tea and pasties.

We hiked out to St. Michael's on the Mount while the tide was low. This tidal island, now part of Marazion, is only accessible during low tide. It's always closed on Saturdays but you can walk over and have a peek.

Records indicate that prior to 1099, St. Michael's Mount was six miles from the sea, surrounded by a thick wood. A flood or tidal wave reportedly overflowed the land, destroying towns and everything else in the way.



We got up early Sunday morning and joined the very small and aged congregation at St. Paul's church for worship.

We made our way to the windswept cliffs of North Cornwall to experience Tintagel Castle.

The Castle is believed to be the birthplace of King Arthur who, as legend has it, was protected from the evil magician Merlin by his magical sword, Excaliber. Remains of the 13th century Castle stand today. It was also once a Roman fortress and retreat for Richard I.

King Arthur is claimed to have been the son of King Uther Pendragon and the Queen Igraine of Cornwall, whom he seduced while her husband, Gorlois, was under siege elsewhere.

Arthur was the first born son of King Uther Pendragon and heir to the throne. However, these were very troubled times and Merlin, a wise magician, advised that the baby Arthur be raised in a secret place with his identity kept secret.

As Merlin feared, when King Uther died there was great conflict over who should be the next king. Merlin used his magic to set a sword in a stone. Written on the sword, in letters of gold, were these words: "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone is the rightwise born king of all England."

Arthur, quite by chance, withdrew the sword for another to use in a tournament.

As king, he gathered Knights around himself and fought back against the Saxons.

Arthur's base was at a place called Camelot. His knights met at a Round Table. They carried out acts of chivalry such as rescuing damsels in distress and fought against strange beasts. They also searched for a lost treasure, which they believed would cure all ills - this was the 'Quest for the Holy Grail'.

Under the guidance of Merlin, Arthur had obtained a magical sword from The Lady Of The Lake. This sword was called 'Excalibur' and with this weapon he vanquished many foes.

Queen Guinevere, Arthur's beautiful wife brought romance to the story. His equally beautiful half-sister Morgan le Fay added a dark side.

Unfortunately, as peace settled over the country things turned sour within the court of Camelot and civil war broke out. In the final battle at Camlan, both Arthur and Mordred, Arthur's traitorous nephew, were mortally wounded. Arthur was set upon a boat and floated down river to the isle of Avalon. Here his wounds were treated by three mysterious maidens. His body was never found. Many say he rests under a hill with all his knights - ready to ride forth and save the country again.

Before shoving off, we enjoyed a steak pasty at Pangeea's and a stroll up the small main street filled with shops working every imaginable angle - Celtic pagan, Christian, Hindu and Merlin magicians.

### **Days Fifteen to Sixteen - The Midlands**

We were warmly welcomed at Duke's <http://dukesbath.co.uk/terms> in elegant Bath. Duke's is a short walk up Pultney Street to the bridge and into town where the top of a long ago Roman fortress wall remains.

Bath was another nice surprise for a days worth of shopping and sight seeing. The tours outside Bath Abbey are free but our guide felt inclined to share too many political opinions. We peeled off and did some fun shopping and our own tour of the Abbey and Roman Bath House. Make sure to get there in time to walk up into the Abbey tower.

We spent some time trying on vintage clothing in a tiny little shop and experimenting with "handmade, biodegradable, animal-friendly cosmetics" at a place called Lush, found everywhere in the UK.

Bill's is a great late lunch spot, including freshly made juices and home made deserts.

Afterwards the sun was warm, so we paid \$2 to enter the parade gardens and sit in deck chairs for great people watching.

The Bizzare Bath walk was a bit burlesque, but worth the \$13 for something different that night.

From Bath we went to Blenheim (Blenhm). A wonderful palace where now nine Duke's of Marlborough have lived, beginning with John Churchill the brilliant military strategist who married a commoner named Sarah. They

became powerful players in Queen Anne's court. They fell out of favor later in life and went into self imposed exile outside the country. Queen Anne provided the funds for the building of the palace. It took 20 years to build. John only lived there two years before dying.

The great Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim.

We made a quick run through the Cotswolds, stopping only in Chipping Camden. It was there that we found the best antique shops and ate a great dinner at Huxley's.

### **Days Seventeen to Eighteen - Wales**

Our plans had not included Wales, but on a whim we spent two nights in Conwy. The Castle Hotel, literally right downtown and steps away from the castle, was billed as five-star. The room was spacious for UK standards. We enjoyed the back garden and laid back atmosphere.

We experienced one of the best weather days while in Wales, so we caught a red open air tourist bus to Llundono, a beach destination. We walked on the beach and old fashioned pier.

Conwy is surrounded by the remains of a castle and fortress erected by Edward I in the 1300s. We enjoyed fish and chips and tasty Welsh ice cream along Conwy's small beach front.

We left Conwy early and stopped at Trefrew Mills. The mill shop was a shopping gold mine. I found a white mohair coat and Maggie picked up some lambs wool and leather house shoes to die for. The quick, free tour of how lambs wool is harvested and processed was interesting.

We met the friendliest people in Wales, including owners of a little grocery/cafe in Trefrew. The people served us tea and scones before we headed out for an arduous drive to Edinburgh, Scotland.

Conwy marked a point quite honestly when we should have headed back to Harrogate, but we pushed on to Scotland. It was not that we didn't love the sights. It was the distance and car time. We had become road weary.

### **Days Nineteen to Twenty-One - Scotland**

Scotland is even more breathtaking than the photos reveal. Absolutely stunning landscape.

The drive into Edinburgh was harrowing. We had reservations at the Castle View Hotel during some sort of festival. So, the city

was very crowded. The hotel, birth place of *Wind in the Willows* author Kenneth Grahame, was in fact a great location. The five flights of stairs to our tiny room provided a workout.

Edinburgh is a city full of great history and sites; worth a day just walking around.

We learned quickly that Robert de Bruce was in fact "Brave Heart", not William Wallace and that only highlanders wear kilts, other Scots would not be caught dead in one. Robert de Bruce's heart was carried into battle by his men, one threw it into a horde and said where thou heart goes I will follow.

Edinburgh Castle is worth the \$16. Walk the Royal Mile filled with shops, street performers and caricature artists. Very entertaining.

if you get a parking ticket, and you will if you park on the street, which is about the only place to park, go to the council office on High Street and ask for forgiveness and it will likely be given.

We enjoyed a very fancy, albeit traditional Thai meal at Time 4 Thai on Castle Street.

Caught a Noon day service at Mt. Gilead Cathedral on the Royal Mile.

We left Edinburgh, one day was not enough, and headed to Inverness. It was the Summer

Solstice yet Inverness offered nothing to write home about. We stayed at a B&B with literally no front or back yard/patio. The entire town rolled up at 5pm.

In spite of gathering clouds and promise of heavy rains we pushed on for Isle of Skye.

We stopped off at one of the more famous castles built up and broken down several times by various kings and conquerors and host to many movie shootings - Elaine Donan.

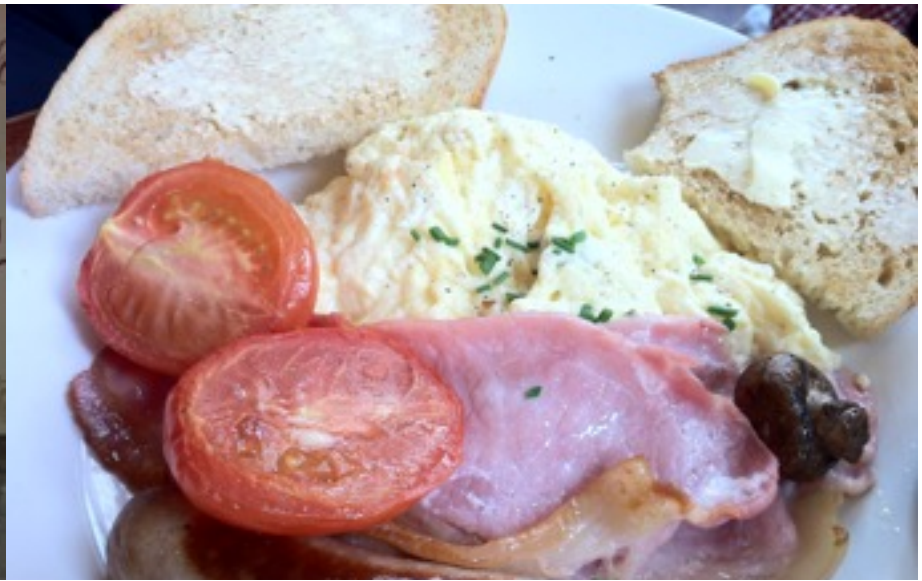
We drove and drove through the rain and narrow winding roads until we arrived at Old Inn Skye around 3pm. Given the heavy rain, the only thing to do was visit Talisker Whiskey distillery, a short walk from the Inn.

Old Inn Skye is a jumping off point for mountain climbers. The proprietors serve up fabulous food and service but we stood out like sore thumbs among a lively crowd of young climbers.

The rain sacked our plans to take a boat cruise out for sea life viewing. We canceled our reservation for lunch at the famous Three Chimney's restaurant and our last day at Old Inn and pushed through a grueling 10 hour drive back to Harrogate.

The Scottish highlands are beyond gorgeous. The driving is not for the faint of heart. 14





### Recommended Reading

*Domesday Book* <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk>

*A Short History of England* by GK Chesterton <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20897/20897-h/20897-h.htm>

*The Royals of Great Britain* <http://www.royal.gov.uk>

*Biographical sketches of memorable Christians of the past* <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bio/bioalpha.html>

Compiled by James E. Kiefer

### More About Food

Those who say food in the UK is bad or boring, have not been lately. A few of our favorites follow.

- Pearl barley risotto with smoked mozzarella and tomato at Bill's in Bath
- Cornish Pasty in Penzance
- Cream Tea across Cornwall
- The afternoon tea mix with cream and two Sultana

scones at Betty's in Harrogate.

- Sweet and Savory Crepes in Harrogate
- Old Inn Skye carmel and chocolate chip ice cream and Lemon posset with lemon shortbread
- Welsh Keylime Pie Ice Cream and Fish and Chips in Conwy
- Huxley's, Chipping on Camden, Smoked Salmon and Smoked Chicken salad
- A Proper English Breakfast (everywhere we went), including toast in a rack; bacon, sausage, egg; tomato and mushroom
- Oat Cakes (if in Scotland). A must try for all.

### Ah, Cream Tea

\*It's only found for real in Cornwall or Devon. Don't

bother buying it back home or anywhere else, once you've had the real thing.

According to official site, "Clotted cream (sometimes called clouted cream or Cornish cream) is a thick cream made by indirectly heating full-cream cow's milk using steam or a water bath and then leaving it in shallow pans to cool slowly. During this time, the cream content rises to the surface and forms 'clots' or 'clouts'. Although its origin is uncertain, the cream's production is commonly associated with dairy farms in South West England and in particular the counties of Cornwall and Devon. In 1998 the term Cornish clotted cream became a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) by European Union directive, as long as the milk is produced in Cornwall and the minimum fat content is 55%."