

PHOTOS BY ELEANOR

Clyde and Eleanor Moore

916-961-1560

E-mail address: clyde2@ix.netcom.com

WEB Page: www.photosbyeleanor.com

England & Scotland Trip

2/29/96 – 3/27/96

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£ = \$1.53

We didn't think that we would be returning to the United Kingdom (UK) so soon after our September 1994 trip, but we found a real good deal and couldn't resist. Virgin Atlantic and Joe Boxer underwear had a special offer in August. All we had to do was purchase five pairs of men's underwear to qualify for a 'free' companion fare from San Francisco to London. This 'deal' was an attempt to get more business during the slow travel season and travel must be completed by 3/31/96. That's all it took for us! We flew to London on 2/29 and were away four weeks. We knew it would be cold that time of year, however, it was colder than we thought! We wore our coats every day. The sun was out for perhaps seven days of the trip, the rest of the time it was cloudy, rainy, snowed and windy but we had a great time and can't wait until we go again!

Dwight dropped us off at the airport at 1:30 PM for our 4:30 PM flight. We went through the lines without incident and soon it was time to leave. We had a nice flight; I was looking forward to flying with the Virgin Atlantic Airlines as the Sacramento Bee rated them in the top ten airlines. True to their top ten rating, the flight left on time, dinner and a snack prior to landing were great and the movie, and Get Shorty was good. The only reservations we had for this trip were plane and car reservations. Since we landed in London at 10:30 AM, we thought we would have the Visitors Office at Heathrow get our accommodations. They did fine; we stayed at the Strathmore Hotel in the Kensington area of London.

The accommodations consisted of a double bed, in suite facilities and a continental breakfast for £60 per night. We enjoyed our stay there and liked the hotel better than the Adelphi (94 trip). The hotel was two blocks from the Underground (train system). It was all we could muster, getting our four bags and us to the hotel before we ran out of energy. We found the street where the hotel was, however, when we got to where the address should have been, the building there was abandoned. We thought we were in trouble, but Clyde asked someone where the hotel was and then we found it. The street numbers aren't in numerical order and the streets change names at no recognized pattern! We made it! We napped for a few hours then ordered a sandwich from room service and went back to bed for the night, we were zonked!

Saturday, 2 March

Started with gray skies and cold. Breakfast was fine, the continental breakfast included fresh fruit, juice, toast and cereal. We headed to Piccadilly to Leicester Square for half price theater tickets. Mack and Mabel was recommended as a 'must see' if it is playing. It was and half priced tickets were available for the matinee. The part of Mack was played by the under study. Tickets were £34, show started at 3:00 PM and was over by 5:30 PM. Great show, we had dinner close by at Garfunkels. Clyde (C) had Fried Plaice £5.25, Eleanor (E) had Seafood Tortalinni £5.25, Sprite and Heineken for a total of £13.15 (plus tip). We recognized four of the dancers from the show that came in for dinner. Back to the Hotel, we still weren't used to London time.

Sunday, 3 March

Took the Tube to the Liverpool Station to the Petticoat Lane Market. There has been a market here for the last forty years. Lots of stalls, leather goods, food and all kinds of things. Bought two T-shirts, socks, umbrellas (forgot ours at home), two lipsticks for £1 and magnets. It was crowded, a lot of people were shopping in the cold weather. Stopped at a Pub for a rest and lager. Took the Jubilee Line north to Swiss

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cottage (highest point in London), walked to the Buckland Hotel, one of the hotels I wrote to for reservations. Small old rooms for £55/night. We were much happier at our Hotel. We had a late lunch at the Old Swiss Cottage Pub, E Lasagna/salad, C Roast beef/veggies, and red wine/lemonade for £11.

Monday, 4 March

Time to rent the car and leave London for points north! We checked out of the hotel at 9:30 AM and took the Underground to Bond St., to the English Heritage Office on Oxford St. We needed new maps and while we were there we renewed our membership for another year (due 5/96), £33 for the year. The English Heritage restores many of the ancient and newer historic properties in England, Wales, and Scotland. It is a good cause, considering how many castles we have been to and like so well. We went back to the hotel to get the baggage and a cab, £10 to Alamo-Britain. We were very disappointed with Alamo, they wanted to sell us everything, more add-ons. The reservation didn't state that we had paid for the Heathrow drop off, an extra £20, paid it again and we'll have to deal with it when we get home. One upgrade was included to a 'B' category. We had a blue Peugeot, little toy car powered by diesel fuel. We were told that diesel is available everywhere and it's cheaper at the pump and we'll get better mileage. I think we saw one station in the entire trip that had diesel one pence less than regular gasoline, otherwise, it was one to two pence higher. Our bags barely fit, three in the trunk and the two small ones had to go in the back seat.

We left Alamo about 1:30 PM, we thought we would find Kenwood, a newer Heritage property on the outskirts of London, no luck. We took the A41 out of town. We passed a castle sign at Berkhamstead off the highway, few ruins were left, and the caretaker's cottage was surrounded by what was the moat. We then backtracked to Hemel Hamstead to find the Information Center and accommodations for the night as it was already 3:45 PM. As we were looking for the Center, the surroundings looked familiar. Then we remembered our 94 trip, returning to London on a Sunday, we looked here for the Center and a B&B for the night and couldn't find it then. After asking several people we found the city center that had a listing of local accommodations but this wasn't the Visitors Center. Clyde called the Hamstead Hotel/Pub, they had a room that included breakfast for £39. We had a late lunch earlier at the Finchley's Pub, C fish/chips, E Chile/rice, lemonade/water for £8.81. We went to bed early, we were very tired tonight! It's always an ordeal the first day with a car.

The accommodations at the hotel were OK, it was the first full English breakfast for this trip. Clyde had beans with eggs/bacon, Eleanor added a tomato.

Tuesday - 5 March

We sure didn't get very far from London on the first day, we hoped we would do better today. Our journey took us through Waddesdon and we stopped at the Waddesdon Manor House, the House didn't open until 28 March, beautiful grounds and magnificent House. In Oxfordshire, North Leigh, we found the remains of a large Roman Villa. The most important feature is an almost complete Mosaic tile floor intricately patterned in reds and browns. Our next stop was the Minster Lovell Hall and Dovecote (Oxfordshire), the handsome ruins of Lord Lovell's 15th century manor house standing in a lovely setting on the banks of the River Windrush. A delightful medieval dovecote with nesting boxes nearby. A resident walking by warned us not to leave valuables in the car. Clyde stayed with the car and I toured the ruins and the church. They were restoring the old church, which dates back to 1066 (Battle of Hastings).

Our last stop of this day was the Goodrich Castle, £2 Heritage. The ruins were remarkably complete, a magnificent red sandstone castle with 12th century keep and extensive remains from the 13th & 14th centuries. Nice ruins, the castle keeper said we needed to be out by 4:00 PM as she left exactly at 4:00 PM! "Roaring Meg" certainly left her mark on Goodrich during the Civil War she could be heard booming across the River Wye. She wasn't a fearless heroine from a bygone age, but a massive cannon, locally made that bombarded the castle and it's Royalist occupants into submission. Today she stands silent in nearby Hereford Cathedral, a reminder of 'Goodrich's turbulent past. Although around 700 years old, Goodrich is remarkably well preserved with massive towers and graceful arches, its own chapel and an exciting maze of

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small rooms and passageways to be explored. A narrow spiral staircase leads to the top of the castle to view the marvelous Wye to Symonds Yat countryside.

On to Hereford for the night. Clyde noticed a B&B sign on the road, we went back and stayed there, £30. The owner was a nice lady, she had been in the B&B business for 34 years! Mrs. Laura Dickinson, Corbiere, 352 Ross Rd, Hereford HR27QN, tele (01432)265154. We asked someone in town where a good pub was and went to the Starting Gate Pub. C fish/chips, E Beef potpie, wine/lemonade and cocktails for £21, good food.

Wednesday, 6 March

We talked with Mrs. Dickinson at breakfast. She and her husband were soon going on a holiday to Ecuador (April). Her son still lived with them (38 years old). It was a bad time for finding work, 3,000 were just laid off including her son. The son didn't want a house of his own, he couldn't afford the mortgage. We told her about my brother never moving out of Dad's house. The breakfast was good, she served what looked like lemon marmalade. I asked her if she made it, no it was Roses lemon/lime marmalade. I said I use Rose's Lime Juice in Margaritas. She asked what that was and then came back later and wanted to know how to make them for BBQs this summer. Mrs. Dickinson's husband retired two years ago. They had a severe winter this year but a mild summer in 1995. Many residents were on water rationing but they weren't because they had a fishpond in the back yard. She added that many Germans visit her B&B every year for the two big livestock sales. The sale in the spring is for cattle and the Welsh ponies are on sale in August.

We went to town at 9:00 AM as it was Market Day. We went back to the cathedral, a copy of a world map made in the 12 century was on display. Beautiful windows and alters. It was a spectacular cathedral. We took photos of the cathedral overlooking the old bridge. We then walked through the old town and bought a new road atlas for £8.99. We left Hereford at 11:00 AM. While we were at the market we went into a barn having an auction for chickens, another barn was selling cattle and vendors had merchandise to sell. It was overcast, but the sun was trying to come out. We passed through the village of Hillside and stopped for photos of the Hillside Cottage. The owner said the cottage has been in the family for over 400 years, this lady 's family since 1920. She said to come back when the roses are in bloom. The daffodils were just starting to come up, they were late this year due to the hard winter.

At 12:30 PM, we arrived at the Witley Court and Church, wonderful place. From its Jacobean origins to the late 1930's when it was left as a decaying shell, the features of Witley Court have risen and fallen spectacularly. During the 17th & 18th centuries the house was on the up and up. Thomas Foley bought it in 1655 and enlarged it. By 1750 his successors had created a Georgian Manor complete with it's own church and John Nash, the architect, was brought in to add portions to the facade. Then, when the Dudley family bought the house in 1837, they transformed it into a luxurious place, in the Italian style, set in elaborate gardens with two immense fountains surrounded by a thousand-acre deer farm.

There was a terrible fire in 1937 and Witley Court fell into decay, but it is now being preserved as one of the most spectacular country house ruins in England. The church is still being used as the Witley Parish Church, £2.50, Heritage. It would cost £15 million now to build and it last sold for only £21,000 after the 1937 fire. The Heritage bought the property in 1972. We got back on the road at 2:00 PM, really enjoyed this house and the church was beautiful. Wrong turn off A49, photo of Croft Castle a private residence. First fill up for the car, we went 295 miles, £16.50 for diesel at Ludlow. It was 4:00 PM and we were at the Moreton Corbet Castle, Shropshire. A ruined medieval castle with the substantial remains of a splendid Elizabethan mansion. Corbet added to the castle in the 16th century.

We drove on thinking we would see a B&B sign for the night. Clyde saw one just as we got back on the highway from seeing Corbet Castle. I said it's too early, we'll find one close by a larger village. Of course there were no signs at all for B&Bs. We ended up at Newcastle under Lyme at the Borough Arms Hotel & Restaurant on King Street for £49.95, which included a full breakfast. This was more than we wanted to spend, but it was a good stay and excellent breakfast. We walked down town for dinner, C had a steak and E had Lasagna, £7.50 each, lager/lemonade for £20, a two-course meal at the Goo's Restaurant.

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Thursday, 7 March

BEAUTIFUL MORNING, THE SUN IS OUT! It's cold and crisp but we'll take it. We were off on the M6 north at 9:00 AM. At 11:15 AM we stopped at Preston to see the St. Walburgs Church, the principal Roman Catholic Church of Preston. A grade one listed building with a magnificent 300-ft. limestone spire. The guidebook indicated it's open 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Thursday, but the door was locked. Photos of the outside and the Guildhall, it was really getting colder and very windy!

Arrived at Lancaster at 12:45 PM, the story of Lancaster began more than 1900 years ago. The Lancaster Castle stands on the site of three Roman Forts, of which the earliest was established by the General Agricola, in AD 79. The Romans extended the frontier of the Empire up the north West Side of Britain at Lancaster as it was above the River Lune and it dominated the lowest crossing place. The Romans fortified the site before penetrating the hill country of the Lake District.

The Roman example was followed 1,000 years later when the area's first Norman Baron, Roger of Poitou, built himself a small castle about 1093. In the previous year, he had helped William Rufus to conquer Carlisle and thus to include within his kingdom of England both Cumbria and the northern half of Lancashire. Before then, the whole area north of the River Ribble had been a 'no man's' land claimed by the Kings of both Scotland and England. As thanks for Poitou support, William Rufus gave him vast estates covering most of the present country along with the responsibility to defend this area and the southern Lake District against attacks from the Scottish armies.

Before the Norman Conquest, this area had been administered from Halton, five miles up the Lune, but Roger established his headquarters here on the old Roman site and perhaps even within Roman ramparts due to the extent of the view. In those days, the main road from Scotland ran around the west coast of Cumbria and across the sands of Morecambe Bay and, from here the Castle garrison would be able to see the dust cloud of an approaching army on the other side of the Bay. No trace of Rogers castle survives above ground, it's hoped that excavations will soon reveal its plan.

Today, the Lancaster Castle is used as a prison but it is due to close at the turn of the century. The castle will be restored to it's splendor and opened as a tourist attraction. The castle made history in 1612 with the Pendle Witches. Eight women and two men from the Pendle area were tried and executed in Lancaster for witchcraft. They were charged with cursing people who subsequently died, given the high rate of mortality, this is hardly surprising. The witches were mainly superstitious peasants who acted stupidly and weren't nice to their neighbors. The witches were marched from Pendle to Lancaster along the Trough Road through the Forest of Bowland to await the Assize Court in the Castle. It was the best documented witchcraft trial in Britain and possible the world. Not even the trial of the Salem witches in the States was as well documented at the time it happened. The courtroom in which they were tried is now the Barristers' Library. The witches were taken along Moor Lane to the hill where the gallows stood. All condemned prisoners, witches included, were entitled to one free drink on their way to the scaffold, usually taken to the Golden Lion pub (still in business).

Lancaster was one of the key castles in England's War of the Roses, York was the white rose and Lancaster the red rose. We were back in the car heading to Penrith, we were seeing the first big hills and mountains with snow on them! Beautiful valleys and hillsides, everything is green. There are three lanes of traffic on the main road, the first and second lanes are trucks and more trucks, just like Interstate 5 in California!

At 2:00 PM we arrived at the Brougham Castle at the River Eamont, Cumbria. These impressive ruins on the banks of the River Eamont include an early 13th century keep and later buildings. It's one-time owner, Lady Anne Clifford restored the castle in the 17th century. There is an exhibition of Roman tombstones from the nearby fort. The castle doesn't open until April 1st.

The Penrith Castle, Cumbria, is a 14th century castle set in a park on the edge of town. Photos include a statue to the heroes of the War in South Africa, 1899 - 1902. We decided to return to Hadrian's Wall since the weather on our last visit was gray and overcast, wouldn't sunset photos on Hadrian's Wall be great!

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We walked to Pennineway, Shield on the Wall for the sunset photos, was it cold and windy, but we were lucky to have the sun out in the winter in northern England! Photos of Clyde at the Wall in his Apple T-shirt! at Steel Rigg. We had just enough time to hike the 1.75 miles to the top to see the sun setting, what a view it was. The wall was quite thick (3 feet) in parts and less in other areas. Earlier, we stopped for photos at Cawfields Wall/Fort (we were here during our 94 trip). The sunset photos were just east of Cawfields. Just think, there were civilizations living here two thousand years ago. As the wind blows, you can hear the ghosts, 'centurions, man your posts' and one centurion says, hell no, it's too cold or you do it Caesar!

We stayed in nearby Hall Meadows, Mrs. Heather Humes on Main Street in Haltwhistle, Northumberland NE490AZ, tele 01434 321021, £15 each. This is one of our favorite B&Bs of this trip! Heather recommended the MileCastle Inn on the Military Road in Haltwhistle, tele 01434 327372, C Cod/chips, E rabbit/wild mushroom pie, fresh vegetables, pint of Kilkenny (made by Guinness, 5% alcohol) and lemonade with tip was £14.80, Excellent Dinner! Beer reportedly played a role in keeping the conquering Romans from overrunning Scotland. A heather ale (yes, brewed from the tips of heather plants) is believed to have rendered the native Picts so boisterous and spoiling for a fight that the Romans turned tail back to the South. (United Hemispheres 8/96)

Friday, 8 March

We left Haltwhistle at 9:15 AM after buying orange/apples/bananas for £1.92. We'll be in Scotland soon, heading now to Dumfries and the Firth of Clyde. It's gray and overcast and cold today. The morning news said it was supposed to clear, we'll see. Arrived in Scotland at 9:55 AM, haste ye return, and we did! Photos of Comlongon Castle and Hotel near Clarencefield, nice grounds. They had two longhair highland cattle and horses. We filled up at Dumfries, 334 miles took 238 liters for £13.30. There were a few castles and abbeys in this area that we needed to return to as the two rolls of film taken in this area from our 1994 trip were lost in processing. Caerlaverock Castle (Lark's Nest), one of Scotland's finest castles, is everyone's idea of a medieval fortress. The scene of two famous sieges, this moated castle has a children's adventure park and model siege engine in its grounds. It is on a triangular site surrounded by moats. Its special features are the twin towered gatehouse and the Nithsdale Lodging, a Renaissance range dating from 1638. Next repeat was Sweetheart Abby, the splendid ruin of the late 13th/early 14th century Cistercian Abbey founded by Dervorgilla, Lady of Galloway, in memory of her husband John Balliol. Dervorgilla is buried in the presbytery with a casket containing her husband's embalmed heart. The sun is trying to come out and turned sunny at 1:30 PM.

Orchardton Tower was built in the 15th century for the Laird of Orchardton, Scotland's only circular tower house. The lofty tower house was the type of fortified residence preferred by the Scottish gentry throughout the later middle ages. It came in all shapes and sizes. Some were simple rectangles, many had small wings attached giving them interesting L,T-and Z-shapes. But there was only one circular tower house built, Orchardton Tower. In this respect Orchardton is unique, but otherwise it is typical. The main accommodation is in the tower, a storage cellar in the basement (separately accessed); the hall, the main living room; the laird's private chamber on the floor above, a further chamber above that, and battlements at the wall top. The rest of the accommodations lay outside the tower house. This would have consisted of a great hall, a larger reception and feasting place, more chambers for guests, servant's quarters, kitchen, brewhouse, bakehouse and other service buildings, like stables. All were enclosed within a stoutly built courtyard wall, called a barmkin. Such was the residence built probably by John Cairns about 1450. Later on, the castle was bought by a member of the Maxwell family. The adventures of one of them, SIR ROBERT MAXWELL OF ORCHARDTON, a fervent Jacobite captured at the battle of Culloden, figures in Sir Walter Scott's novel Guy Mannering.

I climbed to the top for photo of our car and the countryside. To my surprise this is the second day of wearing my sunglasses. I really thought I was taking them needlessly, but glad I had them now, it is just beautiful.

At the Dundrennan Abbey, the beautiful ruins of a Cistercian Abbey founded by David I. Mary Queen of Scots spent her last night on Scottish soil here. The abbey, built in the second half of the 12th century,

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stands in a small and secluded valley. Next stop was MacLellan's Castle, a castellated town house built by the then provost of Kirkcudbright from 1577, with particularly good architectural details. Stones from an adjoining ruined monastery were used to build the castle by Sir Thomas MacLellan. At 2:50 PM, we were at the Cardoness Castle, the well preserved ruins of a town house of the 15th century date, the ancient home of the McCullochs. The four-story tower house stands on a rocky platform above the Water of Fleet. The fireplaces in the great and upper halls are particularly fine. We're heading to the coast (NW) at 4:00 PM and now seeing some snow along the road, even on the East Side where the sun shines on it. In the Strathclyde area we bought some jam at the Teapot Trial Shop, time to find a B&B. Stayed the night at the Janevins Guest House, Mrs. Fawcett 8 Holmston Rd in Ayr, KA73BB, tele 0292 264536 for £14.50 each. When we asked Mrs. Fawcett what the weather was going to be, she replied that in Scotland you can have the four seasons all in one day.

Dinner in Ayr, in the charter of Foundation for the Royal Burgh of Ayr, King William granted to the burgesses who would settle and dwell in the five pennilands. These lands became known as the Burrowfield and marked the original boundary of the ancient parish of Ayr, lands which extended from the River Ayr, to the Doon and over toward the curtican. It appears that this was a valuable right for many of the town's citizens providing them with a six acre plot of land which could be used for private profit when it was cleared from its wild state at a yearly rate of twelvecence. History was found on the menu. Ayr is the scene of the 'burning of the barns'. In 1297, William Wallace put the torch to 500 English soldiers and their barracks. C had lentil soup £1.25 & tuna sandwich, E had stroganoff £4.95, Kilkenny/lemonade for £11.75+ tip. Music from an CD of Pure Moods played while we eat, it was nice.

Saturday, 9 March

Just south of Ayr is Robert Burns's country, we went to the memorial statue, the Kirk where his father is buried, the Tam O'Shanter Bar, the Brig O'Doon (the old bridge over the river Doon). Mrs. Fawcett suggested we see the bridge it was a favorite of her family, her daughter had her wedding photos take here. Her daughter lives in the United States and owns a flower shop that she named the Brig O'Doon. Took photos of a pair of Highland Cattle across from the Robert Burns Park, nice animals. HIGHLAND COOS, Highland Cattle are an ancient breed of beef cattle. The breed is characterized by its unique hair coat, picturesque horns, distinctive forelock and solid colors of white, silver, yellow, red brindle, dun and black. Highland Cattle originated in the Highlands of Scotland, thus their breed name. They are know for their quality, lean and low cholesterol beef. Highland Cattle are browsers, as well as grazers and are most hardy. They can and do survive and perform on forages by-passed by others. Yet, they are most esthetic, each with individual personalities and quick to respond to training and care. Highland Cattle adapt and thrive on the varied terrain and climates and forages found in the Highlands of Scotland, Western USA (since W.W.II) and British Columbia.

We took the A77 south to Crossraguel Abbey, founded in the early 13th century by the Earl of Carrick the remains include the Church, cloister, chapter house and much of the domestic premises. The early form of the abbey's name suggested it meant the Cross of Riaghail, and referred to a great standing cross. The remains are remarkably complete including stained glass windows. Next stop was the Culzean Castle by Maybole, beautifully furnished castle designed by Robert Adam in 1777. The castle wasn't open until Easter. Taking the back road to Dunure Castle ruins, early castle pre 13th century, Kennedy of Carrick. Mary Queen of Scots stayed here in August 1563. Photos of the Firth of Clyde coastline, it was windy and cold but the sun was out. Next stop was the Dundonald Castle, Dundonald was the first home of the Stewart Kings, a 14th century castle. Losing the sun rapidly, 1:45 PM.

We're on assignment now, for a friend at work, Craig Hunter. Craig would like a photo of the castle of his heritage, the Hunterston Castle. It was difficult to find, the only signs were to the Hunterston Power Station. We tried a road that wasn't marked and came to an old abandoned manor home, then we saw a castle in the next field. We asked the two ladies in the car park if this was the Hunterston Castle, confirmed it was! We knocked on the door, no answer then walked around and took photos. The sign on one of the doors said Clan Hunter Office. Two kids on bicycles came to the car as we were leaving asking if we were looking for someone. Yes, we said, we were from California looking for this castle for a friend of ours. Mum wasn't home but the boys would tell her. As we were leaving, a sign said absolutely no trespassing, private home.

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We never did find a town or village. Largs and the surrounding area were nice, big homes, must be a good spot for taking holidays.

In Port Glasgow at 4:00 PM, photos of the Newark Castle. The oldest part of this castle is the tower built soon after 1478 with a detached gate house. The castle was originally built by George Maxwell. The main part was added in 1597-9 by Patrick Maxwell. The castle is virtually intact, a rarity! Patrick was infamous for murdering two of his neighbors and beating his wife of 44 years who bore him 16 children! In for the night at Dunbarton (near Glasgow), £30. Diesel fill up at £.49, 265 miles took 24.65 liters for £12.30. We earlier tried the Milton Inn for B&B lodging, however, their price was £42 for the night, too much. We went there for dinner, C had fish/chips, E macaroni/cheese lager/lemonade for £11.13, nice portions and was it packed! Jim and Anne Crowe ran the Balgawine B&B at 245 Glasgow Rd, Dumbarton G821EE, tele 01389-767496. Anne didn't know where the Eileen Donan Castle was and she hasn't been to Skye, too cold!

Sunday, 10 March

We're off at 8:50 AM to gray skies, the forecast is for clearing in the afternoon. Heading to Loch Lomond. Photos of the Carraig Thura Country House Hotel. We thought we were heading on the A82 north, but found ourselves on the A83 to Inveraray and Oban. Photos of the Inveraray Castle, Catholic Church, Arctic Sailing Ship and the Old Jailhouse. A young girl walking her dog said their school was on the news and will soon be on the TV program 999 (like our 911 emergency). A man had a angina attack near the top of the church tower. The only way to get to him was with a helicopter. The Inveraray Castle on Loch Fyne was the family home of the Duke of Argyll. The construction of the present castle was begun around 1744 by Archibald, the 3rd Duke, to a plan by the English architect Roger Morris, the new edifice superseding a much older 15th century Campbell stronghold that stood nearby. Parts of the new castle were later remodeled by John, the 5th Duke, to designs by Robert Mylne, who radically altered and improved the internal layout leaving it very much as it appears today. The castle wasn't open until Easter. Off on the A819 north to A85 to Oban, photos of a castle across Loch Awe, looked new and lived in, nearby were castle ruins at Neind of Loch Kilcharn. Castle Loch near power station, photo of Scotland long hair calves. The sun is coming out, some mountains sure have a lot of snow! The Visitor's Center doesn't open until noon on Sunday (Inveraray).

Followed the map to Dunstaffnage Castle and Chapel near Oban, a very fine 13th century castle built on a rock with a great curtain wall. Close by are the remains of a chapel with beautiful architectural detail. The castle's colorful history stretches across the Wars of Independence to the '45 Rising'. Following the Battle of Culloden in 1746, Dunstaffnage Castle was the prison of Flora Macdonald after she helped Bonnie Prince Charlie escape to France. The castle ruins sure look nice surrounded by the blue sky, the day turned out really nice. We had lunch in Oban, even took of my coat for a short time, no wind. We had soup/sandwich £4.15 and bought twelve postcards, a Scotland Music CD and biscuits for £13.45. Photos of the harbor at Oban, stopped at the Visitors Center, more brochures to last a few days. Photos of a castle like railroad bridge over the Loch Creran near Creagan. The Stalker Castle, Stewart of Appin, on Loch Linnhe stands guard to the entrance to Oban. Unfortunately, we couldn't get close for good shots of the castle.

We arrived in the Glencoe area and after visiting the famous pass of Glencoe and the massacre that took place there, we went to Loch Leven. The 'Curse of Scotland' is Glencoe, or the Glen of Weeping, where the Campbells slaughtered forty of their Macdonald hosts to repay their hospitality. The order for the massacre is said to have been written on a playing card, the dreaded Nine of Diamonds!

We've had the car for one week now and put over one thousand miles on it, two weeks to go! We stayed the night in Fort William, several B&Bs have been closed, too early or painting & remodeling for the Easter tourist season. Stayed at the Hillview Guest House, R & M Burton, Achintore Rd, Fort William, Inverness Shire PH336RW, tele 01397 704349, £16.50 PP ensuite. Nice people and great service, our room faced Loch Linnhe. Fort William has more rain than any other place in Scotland, >80 inches a year. They've had nice weather until we got there, as it was raining when we woke. We ate at the Ben Nevis Restaurant in Fort William, C pork lion, E chicken, lager/lemonade for £12.80 + tip.

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Monday, 11 March

Gray and rain, the weather forecast on TV called for SE England to get snow storms tonight, rain in Scotland and snow in the mountains. We left the B&B at 9:30 AM, stopped at the same Ben Nevis Woolen Mills we shopped at during our 94 trip to see if the rain would quit, it didn't then and didn't now. Headed west to the Glenfinnan monument on Loch Shiel, a memorial to all the clansmen who followed Bonnie Prince Charlie in the war of independence. The monument was erected in 1815 as Prince Charlie's Standard was first raised here 250 years ago in 1745. This was the beginning of his campaign to regain the throne for the House of Stuart. At least this visit we can see the monument, last trip it rained so hard we didn't even get out of the car. I walked to the monument as the rain stopped for a while. We then headed back toward Fort William and went north to Inverness. Clyde called Mrs. Munro last night for B&B accommodations Mon-Wed, we were looking forward to seeing her again. More rain and the skies are getting darker as we head north. A short distance north was the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge, photo in the rain.

Photo of the Laggan Swing Bridge near Invergarry on Loch Oich and Loch Bridge. We stopped at Fort Augustus, the Caledonia Canal System is getting an overhaul and repair. This system connects the waterway through five lochs. Hope to find a brochure on this, looks interesting. We had a light lunch, tuna sandwiches/coke £2.40 at a take out place. We decided to go straight to Inverness via Loch Ness after stopping at the Fort Augustus Abbey. We thought we would go by the Eilean Donan Castle for photos but the skies were too dark, it must be storming there. Stopped at the Urquhart Castle, didn't go all the way down as it was to gray and overcast, not raining but dark. We found Mrs. Munro's farm without looking up the directions, good for us! Mrs. Munro said she couldn't remember us when Clyde talked with her on the phone, too many visitors, but as soon as she saw us, she remembered us and welcomed us like family. We had dinner at Dows Bar/Diner, the same place we ate the first night we were in Inverness on the 94 trip. C Roast lamb E scotch broth lemonade/water for £7.30 + tip. Still good!

Tuesday, 12 March

We dropped four bags of laundry at Pullars laundry in the Super Market complex near Mrs. Munro, £15. The laundry should be ready for pick tonight after 7:00 PM. We filled the car, £52.0/liter, 21.35 liters for £11.30, having drove 304 miles since the last fill up. The wind howled last night, SE England is getting snow and sleet. It was overcast, windy and cold and started sprinkling at 9:30 AM. We bought fruit at the market and noticed that the checkers sit down! They scan the groceries and the customers bag their own, sure looks better (for the checkers anyway) than our system. I noticed in one of the brochures that their seasons are somewhat different than ours. Spring starts 3/15; summer 6/16; fall 10/5 and winter 1/10. Mothers Day is 3/17 and daylight savings time starts the last Sunday in March or 3/31.

After stopping at the police station to see what their weather forecast was, we drove to the Eilean Donan Castle, they said it was clear there. However, when we got to the castle, it was raining. Here we were taking photos in the rain, Clyde held the umbrella for me and then I held it for him while he shot. Someone should have been taking photos of us taking photos in the rain, we probably looked silly! It rained the entire time we were there, so we left at 12:30 PM, we tried! We arrived back in Inverness at 2:00 PM, Clyde cashed a \$500 travelers check at the Royal Bank of Scotland for an exchange rate of £316 including a £4 service fee, better than the last time. Still raining, so we decided to stay near Inverness. Went to the Stuart Castle then went into town to the Information Center. Castle Stuart was the 17th century home of the Earls of Moray and the Stuart family. Photos of the Inverness Castle, 1830's, now used by the Sheriff's Department. A nice statue of Flora Macdonald was in front of the castle. We were glad to see that she had a memorial. Flora helped Bonnie Prince Charlie escape after Culloden and was imprisoned. Photos of the old town house, tower/clock and cathedral. Stopped at the Brodie Castle for photos, it doesn't open until Easter. Men are busy working on the castle. It's big and the sun came out for five minutes while we were there, felt like taking a photo of the sun!

Stopped at the DHU Distillery, a perfectly preserved time capsule of the distiller's art. It was built in 1898 to supply malt whisky for Wright and Greig's Rodered DHW blend. We had dinner at the Auld Distillery Befeaters outside of Inverness, C haddock/fries

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E lasagna lemonade/lager for £15. Filled the car and bought a newspaper, sure seemed like we didn't accomplish much today even though we went 243 miles, took 19.38 liters for £10.25. Stopped at the cleaners to pick up our laundry, only a small portion was ready. The rest of the clothes weren't dry, come back at 7:00 AM Wednesday. Looks like it is going to snow tonight, very cold!

Wednesday, 13 March

The sun is trying to come out but it is cold and windy. Photos of Boath Doocot and Motte, 17th century Doocot, or pigeon loft, stands on castle hill, the site of the old royal castle of Erin, built about the middle of the 12th century. This castle was one of a number of strongholds established to assert and maintain the authority of the Scottish King in Moray, at that time a center of Celtic revolt. Here William the Lion issued his second charter to the Burgesses of Inverness. In the 1180's the castle was betrayed and then probably destroyed by its constable, Gillecorm of Maddertie, to the forces of Donald McWilliam, a claimant to the throne. The Marquis of Montrose raised the royal standard here before the battle of Auldearn, May 9, 1645, in which his army defeated the covenant forces. We found it this time, it evaded us the other night.. The church dates from 1757. At 11:00 AM the sun is out and it is snowing! We're heading east and are just south of Elgin. Stopped at the Balvenie Castle (oops, we were here on the last trip), snowing again. Balvenie was a castle of enclosure first owned by the Comyns with a curtain wall of 13th century date. Added to in the 15 and 16th centuries and visited by Mary Queen of Scots in 1562. Stopped at the Kildrumny Castle in the Grampian mountains. Though ruined, this castle is the best example in Scotland of a 13th century castle, with a curtain wall, four round towers, hall and chapel. This was the seat of the Earls of Mar, it was dismantled after the 1715 Jacobite Rising. Called the "Queen of Highland Castles", it was the headquarters for organizing the 1715 Rising by the last Mar owner, "Bobbing John". Photos of the Glenbuchat Castle ruins, it's really snowing now!

Old Scotland Secret for : Haggis and Neeps, take the paunch of a sheep, part fill it with pluck, heart, liver and lights, mix the oatmeal, suet and onions, then season with salt and pepper. Result, the proverbial haggis contained within the paunch. Modern Scottish butchers offer pre-cooked haggis which only requires to be immersed in boiling water and simmered for about 20 minutes, first pricking the paunch lightly to avoid bursting. Serve with Neeps, i.e., mashed turnip, and Scotland's traditional drink, whisky! "Truly a taste of Scotland". I read that the Welsh call Haggis, Faggots and they're served with peas! Another tidbit of information, Mrs. Munro pays £80 tax per year just to receive TV signals, cable fees are extras!

The next stop was the Corgaroff Castle, a 16th century tower house converted for use as barracks for Hanoverian troops after Culloden. It's last military use was as a base to control the smuggling of illicit whisky in the early 19th century, 1827 - 1831. It is still complete with a star shaped fortification reconstructed whisky still and barrack room. It is in the heart of the Grampian Mountains. Closed for the winter. We soon realized that we shouldn't be driving in this area today, with all the snow and the wind we were driving at times through white outs. At one point we didn't think the car was going to make it up the hill with all the snow on the ground. I told Clyde he was doing fine. I didn't tell him until a few days later, that I was quite nervous and thought we shouldn't be here. Clyde did fine, we made it! Went to Mrs. Munro's and changed clothes as we were going to Cromarty for dinner (enjoyed it on the 94 trip). Our laundry was done, great job!

We crossed the bridge going north to the Black Isle, stopped at the Fortrose lighthouse. Had dinner at the Royal Hotel, E pasta, C haddock in herb butter, lager/lemonade £16.50 including tip. Photos of the lighthouse and even got photos of the sun setting! Great dinner, filled the car, we went 237 miles today, £52.9/liter for £10.35, felt like we accomplished something today with all the driving in the snow! We decided to stay one more night with Mrs. Munro, since the storms were below us, the forecast for the very north of Scotland, John O'Groats seemed to be good weather.

Thursday, 14 March

We're off on an adventure! The most northern point in Britain and mainland Scotland, that's where we're going today! We'll give it a shot, the furthest north we got on the last trip was Brora, passed there at 10:00

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AM, still overcast. All the news today and last night was full of the terrible tragedy in Dunblane (south near Stirling) of the massacre of sixteen children 5 - 6 years old and their teacher. Killed by a fanatic active in boy's clubs/gym. He killed himself after the slaughter of the innocents. Nothing like this has ever happened in Scotland before. The last disaster was the plane bombing at Lockerbie. Mrs. Munro said there are so many permits required just to get a rabbit gun for the farm. Hand guns clearances are most difficult. The murderer had 4 or 5 hand guns for his cowardly act in Dunblane.

It's 11:00 AM and only 47 miles more to John O'Groats, (113 miles from Inverness). Clyde thinks this is just like a trip to Tahoe or Reno, speedy driver! The first castle stop will be Dunbeath, sure are a lot of lorries (trucks) on the highway (both directions). It is cloudy but no rain/snow yet! 11:20 AM, photo/potty break at Dunbeath Harbor and Castle on the bay (new castle). Very cold and windy. A statue of a boy carrying a big salmon honoring a highland writer was in the harbor. We're on the North Sea. Tried to find the Castle of Old Wick, followed one sign to a road along the sea to a dead end, no more directions. Arrived at Wick at noon and then at John O'Groats at 12:30 PM. We took the lighthouse road to the tip of Scotland. Photos of Duncansby Head and Stacks of Duncansby, on the Pentland Firth. Good thing there was a monument on the walk toward Duncansby as I rested my camera on it, otherwise the winds were blowing so hard I didn't think the photos would be clear. Stopped at the John O'Groats Hotel for tea, the electricity was out, so I had a scotch to warm up. Edradour Malt, 10 year old scotch, malt of the month at John O'Groats. Edradour is Scotland's smallest distillery above Pitlochry, £1.80 nice and smooth! It did warm me! Good The innkeeper said the recorded winds there were 108 mph in a storm of 1991. It snowed last Christmas, very rare! More snow was on the ground heading south on the A895. We noticed throughout this area a number of abandoned old stone structures (farmsteads?). The innkeeper asked us if we heard of the 'clearings'. The Duke of Sutherland (Dunrobin Castle), was notorious for removing people from their farms to take them over to raise sheep. The Sutherlands had a statue of himself built and installed on a mountain (Dunrobin Burn at Golspie) at the people's expense. The historic Sutherlands were not liked, the current Earl is OK

Heading west, stopped for photos of the church used by the Queen Mum at Canis Bay, Church of Scotland. The Queen Mum's castle, Castle Mey, is in Mey, she vacations here in August and October. Of course there was no access to the public, photos from East Mey. Next stop is Dunnet Head Lighthouse, Caithness, built in 1831 by Robert Stevenson with his son Alan, Dunnet Head Lighthouse stands on the most northerly point of Britain mainland. The lantern in the tower is 346 feet above sea level and in clear weather can be seen for 24 miles. At the base of the lighthouse stands the white washed blocks of the light-keepers houses. We took the road to Dunnet Head, photos of the lighthouse, on Easter Head, two black ponies, the Thirl, cliffs and lochs in the area. It is hailing now. There is a West Dunnet and a village of Dunnet. Mailed a post card at the Dunnet Post Office to Dennis Dunnett at work, his heritage is from here. Saw Highland Coos and then a jogger running through the village in shorts, sweatshirt and hat, he must have been freezing. It's 3:00 PM, heading south to home (Inverness). We've run into all kinds of weather today, sun, rain, snow, hail and major wind all day! The car is filthy!

Back in Inverness at 5:25 PM, just in time for the 5:00 PM commute traffic. Today was a long way to drive, but the roads were good. It wasn't as scary as the Grampian Mountains on Tuesday. Good job Clyde! We stopped for dinner at Dows, C roast beef, E turkey tortilini, lager/lemonade £15 with tip. Filled the car and got a newspaper, we drove 291 miles today, took 22 liters for £11.65.

Friday, 15 March

First day of spring, we left Mrs. Munro at 9:00 AM, £128 for the four nights, we sure enjoyed our stay with her, just like our 94 visit. We're going to look for the Dulsie Bridge one more time and then back to Culloden when it opens at 10:00 AM. It is overcast and cold today but the wind isn't blowing (yet)! The A9 highway is still closed, this was the way we wanted to go south to Stirling and the distilleries. There is too much blowing snow in the Grampian Mountains. We'll leave the same way we came in, along Loch Ness, one more chance for photos at the Eilean Donan! We cashed another travelers check at the Royal Bank of Scotland at Nairn, £317.02 exchange includes the £4 service charge. Loch Ness is the greatest volume of fresh water in the British Isles containing more water indeed than all the lakes and reservoirs of England and Wales put together!

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The Urquhart Castle has been the scene of violence since at least the 13th century. The most conspicuous of the ruins visible today rest upon the even older remains of an iron-age stone and timber fort. When Edward I invaded Scotland in the late 13th century, this position was again fortified, this time by Englishman Sir William Fitzwarine, who defended it against the Scottish warrior, Andrew Moray. Fitzwarine successfully withstood a siege, but when William Wallace's army marched westward from Aberdeen, the English abandoned the site. In doing so, they turned over a castle with improved defenses to the Scots, which enabled them to endure a lengthy siege during Edward's next foray into Scotland. Eventually, the English won, but only by starving the defenders into a desperate, doomed attempt to escape. Once again the English occupied the castle, this time until 1306, when Robert Bruce rose in rebellion and drove the invaders out of Scotland. Thereafter, Urquhart Castle remained in Scottish hands, but its history became no less turbulent. Its very reason for existence, guarding the strategically important route along the western shores of Loch Ness, made it a constant target in the struggles between the Highland clans. In 1509, James IV awarded Urquhart to John Grant in return for his loyal and just service, on the condition that John improve its defenses. These improvements comprise another large portion of the ruins on the site today. Renovations alternated with episodes of vandalism until 1692, when its garrison blew it up rather than risk its capture by the Jacobites. By then, advances in artillery had signaled an end to the age of fortifications such as Urquhart Castle, and no attempt was made to rebuild. Today, the struggle is over how best to preserve the site, rather than restore it.

Photos of the Bell Tower at Ardcloch, dated 1655. This tower was built in 1655 as a watchtower and belfry for the parishioners of Ardcloch, whose church had been erected in 1626 down in the glen beside the River Findhorn. The monogram MGB is carved above the fireplace and indicates that the tower was built by Alexander Brodie of Lethan and Margaret Grant, his wife. Brodie, an ardent covenanter, was attacked on several occasions by the royalist faction and the erection of this tower may have been in response to his precarious position. We finally found the Dulsie Bridge, a fine old stone bridge built in 1764 spanning the Findhorn Gorge, a famous beauty spot. Back to Culloden at 12:30 PM. One more time to the Eilean Donan, fairly nice today (clouds, some sun) as we approached the mountains the sky darkened and started snowing. But the closer we got to the castle at a somewhat lower elevation and the snow/rain stopped. Took lots of photos, tried to get into the castle £2 (not Heritage) but it isn't open until April 1st.

The Eilean Donan originally belonged to the Mackenzie, until the 15th century. Mackenzie then gave it to the MacRaes for their support in one of the wars. It is still owned by the MacRaes. Heading back to the A82, probably stay in Fort William tonight, it's 3:30 PM already. We bought a T-shirt of the castle, £7.50. Photos on the A87 of Loch Loyne, up in the world, later on Loch Lochy and Clunes Forest, Gleann Cia-aig or Sirona Choire Ghairbh Meall na Teangu.

Staying at the Cameron House tonight, it's 5:00 PM and we're in Fort William. The B&B we stayed at on Sunday was closed, went back into town to find the Cameron House, £13.50 ensuite. Filling up the car to kill time before the restaurant opens, you can get fuel for the home here too; 10 kilos of coal is £1.79; 25 kilos of coal is £3.99, burning peat is £3.30; kindling is £2.79 and logs are £2.99. At the Esso filling station, diesel is £56.9, took 19.7 liters for the 219 miles we drove today, for a total of £11.25. Dinner in Fort William at a seafood restaurant, Crannog. C had the fisherman's grill, £11.25, E had scallops/saffron with dill, £11.95, Dalwhinnie malt/lemonade for £25.80. The dinners came with a salad and boiled potatoes. We splurged tonight, it was excellent seafood!

Saturday, 16 March

It's overcast, cold and windy. We're going back to the Spean bridge Woolen Mills to see the tartans made. Even though the brochure says they have a weaver on the weekends, not in winter. Photos of the bridge, built in 1819 by Thomas Telford. The surrounding countryside was the training ground for the commandos (reference the status to the commandos taken here earlier in our trip). Photos of the new and old Inverlochry Castles. Saw two little deer on the drive into the new castle. Back in Glencoe and it's not raining but it is windy. We found a monument in the village, photos, but it was to the war dead of WWII. We asked someone where the monument to the Glencoe massacre was, it was to the right of the WWII statue. We found it this time, after the man led us to it!

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Continuing south on the A82, through Glencoe, it's as windy here as it was at John O'Groats at the stack! Gray and very dark, 11:00 AM. We passed the Glencoe White Corries Chairlift and Ski Area, sign said it was open. With these winds and poor visibility, I didn't see how it could be open. Clyde said he has driven in more snow in Scotland than ever at home. Even Clyde doesn't drive to Reno or Lake Tahoe when it's snowing. We have chains in our car at home, but no chains in this car. We never saw a sign for chains or chains mentioned anywhere! Photos of the ducks at our potty break at the Lochearn Head, ducks sure were friendly. We went on a tour of the GlenTurret Distillery, Scotland's oldest, first distillery, built in 1717. The sign says 1775, but they have been pouring since 1717.

The first recorded record of 'barrels of malt' was in 1494. The three key ingredients for malt are water, barley and peat. The distillery is located between two glens as it provided a good view to see when the Excise men were coming. It looked like a small distillery and only six people were on the tour, £2.90 each. A statue of 'Towser' the Cat, the official distillery mouse catcher was in the courtyard. Towser lived Apr 21, 1963 - March 20, 1987 and he was born in the still house. He is in the Guinness Book of records for having caught 28,899 mice (how did the mice get counted?). It was 2:00 PM, heading to St. Andrews. One of the tour books said that William Wallace attended Dundee Grammar School for a short time. It was during the occupation of Dundee in 1288 that the young Wallace got involved in a fight with the English Governor's son and slew him. He then had to flee for his life!

In St. Andrews at 4:00 PM, found the Cadzow Guest House in town, 58 North Street St. Andrews KY169AH, tele 01334 476933, Elizabeth and Sandy Small, £17 PP, ensuite. We went to the Old Course, it looked like it was closed due to all the snow on the course. Back in town we shopped until the stores closed at 5:00 PM. We had dinner at the Victorian, C haddock/chips, E Lasagna, lager/lemonade £10.75, dinner was OK. Tonight was the big boxing match between Tyson and Bruno, it was shown in Scotland at 4:00 AM on Sunday. The B&B owner said Clyde could watch the match with her husband. I said thank you, but I doubt it if Clyde will be up at 4:00 AM! Tyson won the match in the third round. It was a nice B&B, good breakfast!

Sunday, 17 March

Mothers or Mothering Day and St Patrick's Day. We saw one St Patrick's T-shirt last night but no other references to the Irish Holiday. It was raining, we headed to the Stirling area. The forecast is for clearing in the west and central Scotland, just where we were going. At 9:30 AM all the radio and TV stations had a minute of silence for the families of the Dunblane massacre. Queen Elizabeth and the Princess Royal (Anne) were to attend services this morning in Dunblane. The newspapers reported the funerals will start Monday and end on Thursday. They're scheduled so not to overlap for the families to attend others as well as their own children. Eventually the gym will be demolished and a memorial garden will be erected at the site.

Photos of Balvaird Castle (closed), outside of Gateside on A912. Photo of a clock tower in the town of Tillicoultry. We filled up the car at 11:20 AM, we went 229 miles on this tank, took 22.70 liters @ £50.9/liter for £11.55. We were on the outskirts of Dunblane, trying to avoid the town and it's traffic. We could picture the activities in Dunblane, we had stopped to visit the Dunblane Cathedral on our 94 trip, it was beautiful. Photos of the Doune Castle on the Teith River, built in late 14th century for the Regent Albany (closed). Its most striking feature is the combination of keep, gatehouse and hall, with its kitchen in a massive frontal block, £2 (Heritage), one of the best preserved medieval castles in Scotland. Built largely in the 15th century by successive Dukes of Albany, closely related to the throne and Regents of Scotland during James I's captivity in England. The castle later passed to the Earls of Moray. We decided to go to Loch Katrine to see if we could find better weather. We had lunch at the Kilmahog Woolen Mill shop/coffee stop, tuna and turkey sandwiches for £3.30.

Photos of the old Brig O'Turk and of the Holiday Bond Park. This was a castle/hotel that looked like Scotland's version of a timeshare, not to shabby! Photos of Loch Katrine in the heart of the Trossachs Mountains, Rob Roy Territory (Ellen's Isle)! Lots of snow as we head to Aberfoyle. Next stop is the Bothwell Castle, the largest and finest 13th century stone castle in Scotland, much fought over during the Wars of Independence. Part of the original circular keep survives, but most of the castle dates from the 14th & 15th centuries. It's in a beautiful setting on the River Clyde. It took us over an hour to find a B&B in the

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Glasgow area, we're in for the night at the Hillcrest Private Hotel, C Gillies, 94 Hamilton Rd, Motherwell ML13DJ, tele 01698 261174, £20 each, too much for the old place. We walked to the Mandarine, C sweet/sour pork/chips, E chicken curry/rice, lager/lemonade for £19.75 + tip. Not too many places serve dinner on Sunday, especially on Mothers Day. I enjoyed the food, it wasn't Clyde's favorite.

Monday, 18 March

Fair breakfast. After we ordered breakfast we noticed a menu on the counter, besides the standard cooked breakfast, they offered, beans on toast and spaghetti on toast for breakfast! We got an early start, we wanted to be the first visitors at the Stirling Castle, the further north east we went, the darker, colder and more rainy it got. But as we were seeing the castle the weather improved a little. We really enjoyed the town of Stirling on the 94 trip. "Guarding the route between the Highlands and the Lowlands, the Stirling Castle has been at the forefront of Scottish history. It was constantly fought over and saw two great Scottish victories. During the 15th & 16th centuries many powerful nobles were attracted to Stirling by the presence of the royal court. Numerous great State occasions took place in the Castle, which was embellished with much fine building, notably the magnificent Great Hall of James IV. The Hall was now being restored to medieval splendor by modern masons along with the outstanding Renaissance Palace of James V and the Chapel Royal of James VI. Mary Queen of Scots was crowned here and fell in love with her second husband, Lord Darnley. The Queen Anne Garden is nice. The Castle is also home to the fascinating Regimental Museum of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders."

"From medieval times Stirling was, strategically, the most important place in Scotland. Whoever held Stirling, controlled the nation. To the west lay treacherous marshes, to the east the broadening estuary of the River Forth, which could not easily be crossed below the Stirling Bridge. Hence all the key north-south routes came by Stirling, leaving its great cliff-top fortress ideally placed to command this all-important narrow 'waist' of Scotland. So it was that Stirling came to be known as the brooch or clasp of Scotland, the Key to the Kingdom.

The great battles of the Wars of Independence, when Scotland struggled to be free of English domination, inevitably took place around Stirling, at Stirling Bridge in 1297 and at Bannockburn in 1314. In the uneasy peace that followed, Stirling Castle gradually evolved into a splendid renaissance palace, the favorite royal residence of the Stuart dynasty. Yet drama was never far off. No less than seven battle sites can be seen from the Castle ramparts. With such a central place in Scotland's history, it is indeed fortunate that so much of Stirling's heritage has survived. Centered around the Castle and, below it, the Old Town is the finest concentration of historic buildings in Scotland, including many important medieval and renaissance sites." History from the Stirling Visitors Bureau.

We fondly thought of the 'old Stirling Bridge' where William Wallace won the decisive battle of the late 13th century. It's impossible to drive around Stirling without seeing the Wallace Monument. That is, when it isn't fogged in like it was today. This 220 foot tower dominates the surrounding plain. It wasn't open when we went up the hill, it was just as well, we really didn't want to climb the 246 steps to the top. "Wallace was a major Scots hero. In 1296 Edward I of England believed that he had Scotland under his thumb. King John of Scotland had been humiliated. Stripped of his title, he was in exile in France. Edward thought he could dominate the Scots in the same way as he already ruled the Welsh. He didn't, however, think he would encounter Wallace!

Through a series of daring attacks, this fierce freedom fighter became acclaimed, 'the hammer and scourge of the English'. The invaders had killed his wife and brother; some revenge was gained by slaying the English sheriff of Lanark. Marshaling a well disciplined national fighting force, Wallace became recognized as the Guardian of Scotland. With his great two-handed sword and loyal followers, he cut swaths of resistance throughout the country, culminating in the siege of the English garrison at Dundee in 1297. Edward was enraged. To deal with the rebels, he sent a massive army north: 10,000 infantry men and 800 cavalry. The finest fighting force in Europe was armed with the most advanced weapons of the time: longbows. It got as far as Stirling Bridge, Wallace attacked as the army was divided by the River Forth. Over 100 English knights and 5,000 infantrymen died that day; the rest fled in disarray.

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Eventually he paid a heavy price for his convictions. In 1298 his army was heavily outnumbered at the Battle of Flakier, and destroyed. After years in hiding, he was captured and sent to trial in London. He was hung until semi-conscious, disemboweled while still alive and his body cut into quarters and displayed at Newcastle, Berwick, Stirling and Perth. Wallace left a legacy: a belief that inspired the whole of Scotland. In 1314 King Robert the Bruce led the Scots to full nationhood at the Battle of Bannockburn. The Wallace monument was completed in 1869. The Hall of Heroes include writers, explorers, inventors and statesmen. King Robert the Bruce, Sir Walter Scott, David Livingstone, Robert Burns and James Watt, among others." History from the Stirling Visitor Bureau. In front of the Edinburgh Castle were only two statues, Robert the Bruce and William Wallace.

We left Stirling and headed toward Edinburgh. Stopped at the Culross Abby Church, parts dating to the early 15 & 16 centuries. Then on to Dunfermline and the Abbey and Palace. It was closed for lunch (12:30 PM to 1:30 PM), we had lunch at a tea shop, tuna sandwich and sweets, £2.42 and walked back to the abbey through the Pittencrieff Park. This town is the birthplace of Andrew Carnegie. Andrew donated 76 acres of beautiful parkland, aviaries, animals, art, and the pavilion with restaurant. At one time Andrew was the richest man in the world. There is a Carnegie Hall here, just like in New York. The Abbey never did open, the keeper must have called in sick today.

Photos of the Firth Bridges from North Queensferry (RR and auto bridges). Went into Edinburgh and found the Alexandria B&B for the night, 144 Glasgow Rd., Edinburgh, tele 01313 17111, £16 pp. We dropped our bags off and went to the Blackness Castle. It was built in the 1440's and massively strengthened in the 16th century as an artillery fortress, Blackness was an ammunition depot in the 1870's. It was restored by the Office of Works in the 1920's. We had dinner at the Garsey Nicol's Pub in Bo'ness, E had chicken tikka masala £3.95, C had haddock/chips for £3.95, lemonade/ale for £11.12 including tip. Good food, lots of it at a reasonable price.

Tuesday, 19 March

We did so well yesterday getting to Stirling when it opened, we thought we would do the same for the Edinburgh Castle. When we drove north through Edinburgh on the 94 trip, we got royally lost, we drove into the city apprehensively. We lucked out, the traffic was heavy, but we had good maps and found the castle without much difficulty. The castle opened at 9:30 AM, we got to the car park about 9:20 AM. The guard wasn't going to let us park, but after we asked if we could go ahead and park, he responded, make sure you stay in the car until 9:30 AM. There was heavy security at the castle. The weather was much better than the 94 trip, it was cold and very windy. March's weather this year was better, overcast but not too cold and no wind, so far anyway.

The Edinburgh Castle, capital of Scotland, £5 (Heritage), and St. Margaret's is part of the original castle. The Mons Meg cannon was stored where the prisoners were once held. The Scottish Honors were on display in the Crown Room, the Royal Sword, Crown and Scepter. The Honors could only be worn by Scotland's King/Queen. A displayed photograph showed Queen Elizabeth holding the sword and crown but she didn't wear them. The last coronation that Scotland had was King Charles II in 1651.

Craigmillar Castle, only 2.5 miles SE of Edinburgh, the castle was built round an L-plan tower house of the early 15th century. Craigmillar was much expanded in the 15th & 16th centuries. It is a handsome ruin and includes a range of private rooms. Mary Queen of Scots fled to this castle after the murder of Rizzio and it was here that the plot was hatched for the murder of her husband, Lord Darnley. The castle and garden covers 1.25 acres. Next was the Crichton Castle, a large castle of which the most spectacular part is the range erected by the Earl of Bothwell between 1581 & 1591. A spectacular facade of faceted stonework in an Italian style was added by the Earl after a visit to Italy. Mary Queen of Scots attended a wedding here. The castle is closed in winter. We drove on, it was getting cold. Stopped for a photo of the Dalhousie Castle (now a hotel), looks nice!

The skies were getting darker and it was cold. We stopped to warm up at the Carfraemill Hotel, good potato/leek soup. We felt warmed, on to the journey. We were near Lauder and the Thirlestane Castle

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(closed until 4/1). Built originally as a defensive fort in the 13th century it was rebuilt in the 16th century to become the home of the Maitlands. As the seat of the Earls and Duke of Lauderdale it was enlarged and embellished over the centuries. It is still the home to the Maitland family, beautiful grounds, horses, pheasants, rabbits. A member of Charles II Cabal Cabinet, his ghost is reported to haunt the castle.

Stopped at the Leaderfoot Viaduct, one of the finest examples of Victorian railway engineering lies two miles east of Melrose at Leaderfoot. This magnificent sandstone structure of 19 arches spans the River Tweed, 123 feet above water level. It was built in 1865 and it finally went out of use 100 years later, 1965. Melrose Abbey, probably the most famous ruin in Scotland, founded around 1136 as a Cistercian Abbey by David I. It grew rich and powerful but over the centuries it suffered repeated English harassment with 1545 marking it's end as a monastic house. The red sandstone ruins show some of the finest stonework in Scotland, including on the roof that of a pig playing bagpipes! History has it that the heart of Robert the Bruce was buried within the Abbey. The abbey keeper said they plan to excavate Bruce's heart next year! Time to warm up so we ate again at the Abbey Coffee Shop, Tuna toastie and lentil soup, £3.00 for both of us. We're staying in Melrose at the Dunfermline House, on Buccleuch St., Mrs. Susan Graham, tele 01896 822148, £20 PP, excellent B&B. They asked if we wanted porridge for breakfast as they needed to prepare the oats over night!

Wednesday, 20 March

Mrs. Graham fixed a great breakfast. The porridge was extra good. One of the men staying there was on a fishing holiday. Evidently this area is renown for its great salmon fishing. In the winter it is £15/day for a fishing permit, prime fishing season (when it's warmer) is up to £800. Permits for fishing on the famous Tweed River are available from Angler's Choice in the Square. We stopped at Abbotsford, a romantic mansion and home of Sir Walter Scott. He died here on 9/21/32 and is buried in nearby Dryburgh Abbey. Scott's own library and Scottish antiques are on view in Abbotsford, his descendants still live here. The home opened late March, but we were there at 9:30 AM, it doesn't open until 10:00 AM. Next stop is Dryburgh Abbey in St. Boswells. Both beautifully situated and of intrinsic quality, the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey are remarkable complete. Much of the work is of the 12th & 13th centuries. Sir Walter Scott and Field Marshall Earl Haig are buried in the abbey. There is a statue of Haig on his horse in front of the Edinburgh Castle. Nearby, is the Abbey House and Hotel and the estate of the widow Carmoch, who is in her 80s, beautiful gardens and home.

Followed a sign to the William Wallace monument near Dryburgh. In 1814, the Earl of Buchan commissioned this monumental 7 meters high sandstone statue for William Wallace. It is situated on a hillside overlooking the River Tweed, secluded in woodlands of Beech and Scots Pine Trees. Nearby was Scott's View overlooking the Eildon Hills near St. Boswell, Bemersyde. Scott's View overlooks the River Tweed, nice view, too bad it was so foggy. On the way to Dryburgh Abbey to bury Scott, his horse drawn funeral wagon naturally stopped at this view as Scott did whenever he passed this way. Today we can see just a little of the hills. Next stop was the Hermitage Castle, it was very deceiving from the outside, looks small, but it isn't. Another big building of the castle is behind the frontal view. A vast and eerie ruin in a lonely situation, but with fabric from the 14th century. Mary Queen of Scots made her famous ride there to meet the Earl of Bothwell.

In Jedburgh was the home of Mary Queen of Scots. She lived here in 1566 for four weeks. She presided over the courts while she was here. She became seriously ill here and almost died. Clyde went to the bank to exchange a traveler's check, £314.19 plus £4.79 service charge. Might as well fill up the car, we went 336 miles on this tank, took 24.62 liters @ £58.9/liter for £15.79.

Back in England at 1:07 PM, near Branxton is Flodden Field, in 1513 James IV lost 10,000 Scots including the king and the heads (heirs) of many Scottish noblemen. The English Duke of Argyle in King Henry VIII's reign won the battle and lost 1500 - 4000 men. The Scots were devastated for years after with these losses. It was a beautiful country side and farm lands. The dead of both sides were buried in a trench near the battle site and the churchyard in Branxton.

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Next stop was Etal Castle, a 14th century border castle located in the picturesque village of Etal. There is a major award-winning exhibition inside about the castle, border warfare and the Battle of Flodden, which took place nearby. Photos of an ancient leftovers (ruins) of a tower near Duddo. Norham Castle, next stop, is set in a promontory in a curve of the River Tweed, this was one of the strongest of the border castles, built c.1160. The castle is right on the border!

We stopped at a RR crossing on the way to Lindisfarne Priory. The gates were down and red light was flashing, no sounds and no train in sight. Then a low rumble started and a train on the way north passed us like a bullet. It must have been going 100+ miles an hour. Then silence, the gates stayed down. Five minutes passed and a second train roared by from the same direction. I sure couldn't live by these tracks and listen to the passing of these trains.

We arrived at Holy Island to find high tide, the causeway was under water. Oh well, we'll try this one on the next trip, its 3:15 PM. We passed a B&B sign on the highway that advertised a winter special, £12 PP mid week. The Cott B&B, Warenford, Bilford Northumberland, NE707NZ, tele 01668 213233, Jan and David Thompson. David phoned while we were looking at the room, he just arrived at Heathrow. He and a friend returned from his trip to San Francisco for the Tyson/Bruno fight, not too shabby! We couldn't resist a sale like this, we were the only ones staying there that night. We went to the coast and took several photos of the Bamburgh Castle. The castle was shaded, even though the sun was out in the first photos. Then the sun shined on the castle, so we took several more photos. It was so nice seeing the sun again. It was very windy and cold on the coast, but this was a beautiful and very large castle. We had dinner at Mackay's Seafood Restaurant in nearby Seahouses, C haddock/chips, E kipper special with tea, £5 total, good smoked kipper that was smoked in the restaurant.

Thursday, 21 March

This is on of the best B&Bs on the trip (not ensuite). Jan fixed an excellent breakfast. David manages a hotel in a small village (Macbeth) about fifty miles from here. He turned 50 years old this year and will be retiring. He's only home one or two nights each week as he needs to be at the property. They're buying the local rural paper for his retirement career. Jan was nice, she showed me all her treasures (collectibles). Our expenses for last night's dinner and B&B came to only £30, a record low spending for the day. Our first stop was the Preston Tower, a master piece of 14th century masonry. the clock was installed in 1864. William the Conqueror failed to establish law and order north of the River Tyne and from then until the union with Scotland in 1603 the Border Country was ravaged by warfare and raiding so that it was essential to live in a castle or Tower. Robert Harbottle built the tower soon after 1392. He enjoyed the confidence of Henry IV who made him Sheriff of Northumberland and Constable of Dunstanburgh. His descendant, Sir Gueschard Harbottle was slain in a hand-to-hand encounter with King James IV at the Battle of Flodden. After the union, the tower was pulled down and the stone used to build cottages and farm buildings round the tower. In 1864, the surviving half of the tower was preserved by building a new wall on the north side.

It was gray, overcast and a very chilly wind today. There were patches of snow on the ground. We took the old A1 into Alnwick as Jan suggested. There was a good photo spot of the Alnwick Castle. This castle was described by the Victorians as 'Windsor of the North'. It is the main seat of the Duke of Northumberland, whose family, the Percys have lived here since 1301. This border stronghold has survived many battles, but now peacefully dominates the picturesque market town of Alnwick. The overlooking landscape was designed by Capability Brown. The stern, medieval tower belies the treasure house within, burnished in palatial Renaissance style, with paintings by Titian, Van Dyck and Canatetto, fine furniture and an exquisite collection of china. Other attractions include the Percy state coach, the dungeon, gun terrace and the grounds.

The next stop was the Warkworth Castle, the magnificent eight towered keep on it's hill above the River Coquet, was the home of Harry Hotspur, the warrior immortalized in Northumbria ballads and Shakespeare's Henry IV. From here, Hotspur (Sir Henry Percy) and his father, the Earl of Northumberland, dominated the Border in the 15th century and fought off the Scots on behalf of the King. They helped remove Richard from the throne, but when his replacement, Henry IV, displeased them Warkworth became the nerve-center for the

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plots to overthrow him. They failed, and both Hotspur and his father died on the battlefield. Upstream from the castle by boat, this curious hermitage is cut into the rock of the river cliff.

It is real foggy now, 12:30 PM, low fog and a lot of snow on both sides of the road. It is difficult driving as we can't see, not good! We went south on A68, we looked for the Aydon Castle in Corbridge, we tried to find it on the 94 trip, but it eluded us. We found it this time, but it doesn't open until 4/1, even the sign was covered over. It's just not meant to be for us to see this castle! On the A688 to Barnard Castle, the substantial remains of a large castle standing on a ragged escarpment overlooking the River Tees. Parts of the 14th century Great Hall and the cylindrical 12th century tower can be seen. It was built by the Baliol family, I took photos from the river, it's raining hard now. We then looked for the Bowes Castle, the ruins of Henry II's tower keep which was five stories high set within the earthworks of a Roman Fort. We couldn't find the road to the castle, saw it from another street, oh well, we'll miss this one.

We looked for the Richmond Castle but couldn't find it, we must be tired. We parked the car in town and asked some folks walking by where it was. They led us there, it was very cold. This castle, a medieval fortress with a fine 12th century keep and 11th century remains of a curtain wall and domestic buildings. There are magnificent views from the keep, if it wasn't foggy! The folks showing us the way suggested we see the Middleham Castle. So, next stop is the Middleham, the childhood home of Richard III stands controlling the river that winds through Wensleydale. There is a massive 12th century keep with splendid views of the surrounding countryside from the battlements. This is a massive castle, difficult to get a photo of the whole thing, very cold now. We had a late lunch at the West Auckland tea/snack shop. C had tuna sandwich, E Cornish Pastie/tea £4. Another £30 day for B&B and dinner, not bad!

We stopped for the night at the Carlton House B&B, Carlton Miniott Thirsk North Yorkshire YO74NJ, tele 018454 524139, Mrs. June Lee, £12.50 PP, no TV or tea service in the room and a shower down the hall. It worked out fine, we went to bed early we were very tired tonight. No one else stayed the night there. We went 299 miles on this tank, 27.3 liters @ £53.9/liter for £15.00.

Friday, 22 March

It is overcast and cold but not raining! We're on the A170 east to the coast. First stop of the day was the Helmsley Castle, the 12th century castle lies close to the market square with a view of the town. Spectacular earthworks surround a great ruined Norman keep. There is an exhibition and tableau on the history of the castle in the Elizabethan buildings. Friday is market day in Helmsley, cute town. Next stop was the Rievaulx Abbey, 'everywhere peace, everywhere serenity and a marvelous freedom from the tumult of the world'. Those words would easily be taken to describe Rievaulx today, one of the most atmospheric of all the ruined medieval abbeys of the north. In fact, they were written over eight centuries ago by St. Aelred, the monastery's third abbot. A long line of Cistercian monks lived in the beautiful River Rye Valley from the 12th century until the 16th century. The Cistercians, with their ascetic lifestyle and capacity for hard work, wanted to be isolated from the world. Although much of what was built by the monks is destroyed or ruined, most of the spectacular presbytery, the great eastern part of the abbey church, stands virtually to its full height. Built in the 13th century to contain the shrine of St. Aelred its soaring beauty conveys a sense of the glory and splendors that Rievaulx once possessed.

Next stop was the Pickering Castle, a splendid motte and bailey castle, once a royal ranch. It is well preserved with much of the original walls, towers and keep, and spectacular views over the surrounding countryside (fog permitting). On to the Scarborough Castle, there are spectacular coastal views from the walls of this enormous 12th century castle. The buttressed castle walls stretch out along the cliff edge and the remains of the great rectangular stone keep still stands to over three stories high. There is also a site of a 4th century Roman signal station. The castle was often attacked, but despite being blasted by cannons of the Civil War and bombarded during WWI, it still is a spectacular place to visit. Too bad so much of the castle was in ruin, it must have been something in its day.

We're staying near the York/Harrogate area at the Princess Lodge Guest House, £32/night. Whixley - York - YO58EE, tele 1423 330168. We had soup and fish/chips at the Little Chief near by, £8.20. We're staying two nights here. Nice lady, she has been in the B&B business for six years and has up to 25 guests a day in the

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summer time. A man staying the night there was from Melbourne Australia and was here for a business trip of three weeks. He owns his own PC business. He asked if we knew about computers, I told him I managed computer operations at the Teale Data Center in California. He said he had heard of Teale! At times, it was difficult to understand his accent. He said he travels a lot, about 25% of every year.

Saturday, 23 March

It rained last night and is gray and overcast today with light mist, we're heading to York. In old town York until 2:00 PM, lots of shops and eating places. We toured the York Minster, circa 1080, one of the largest cathedrals in northern England. We took the A64 to Castle Howard, over 1,000 acres of parkland with lawns, woods, lakes and fountains. Ray Wood is planted with an outstanding collections of rhododendrons, shrubs and trees from around the world. The rose garden must be fantastic in the summer! Daffodils were in bud but no blooms yet. The castle has been in the Howard family since it was built in the 18th century. During all those years it has always been open to the public.

Sunday, 24 March

Another gray and overcast day with fog and mist. We're on the motorway today, the M1. We went 278 miles on this tank, 22.63 liters @ £53.9/liter for £12.20. First castle of the day is the Conesbrough Castle on the River Don. People were re-enacting the War of the Roses with miniature soldiers in the visitor's center, a good place to keep warm. The spectacular white circular keep of a 12th century castle. It is the oldest circular keep in England and one of the finest medieval buildings. An exciting audio visual presentation evokes a dramatic episode in the castle's history. This castle is managed by the Ivenhoe Trust and is free to Heritage members. In 1317 the castle was under siege by the Earl of Lancaster's men. John Dewarrenne abducted Lancaster's wife holding her hostage within the castle to witness the turmoil throughout the household. This castle provided the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's novel, "Ivanhoe", £2.50. The next stop was what looked like an interesting house in the Heritage book, the Sutton Scarsdale Hall in Derbyshire. The dramatic hilltop shell of a great early 18th century baroque mansion, it must have been something in its day! It's 2:15 PM and we're in Leicester seeing the Jewry Wall in St. Nicholas Churchyard, one of the largest surviving lengths of Roman Wall in the country. Over nine meters (30 feet) high, it formed one side of the exercise hall of the civic baths.

Next stop was Kirby Hall, richness and variety of architectural detail distinguished this Elizabethan countryhouse from others. Begun by Sir Humphrey Stafford in 1570, it was completed by Sir Christopher Hatley, a talented courtier to Queen Elizabeth. The fourth Sir Christopher Hatton devoted his energies to the garden. His death in 1706 marked the end of the hall's golden age. The peacocks roam the inner courtyard and the house is now theirs! It must have been something in its day. Bought a guidebook for £1.50, too bad we didn't have more time here. On to Stamford for the night, I read about the old village in the British magazine at home. The village has been used in many movies through the years, as recent as this winter. Charles I spent his last night of freedom in one of the old homes here. He was later captured and sent to the Tower of London and executed. Stamford is known for its many churches, must have ten to fifteen churches in the small Georgian stone town. We're staying at the B&B, £38 for the night. A man also staying here completed a two week job and was returning to his home in South Wales.

Monday, 25 March

Guess what, a gray and overcast day. We stopped at the Burghley House upon leaving Stamford. It has been the home of the Cecil Family for over 400 years. The largest and grandest House of the First Elizabethan Age, was build between 1565 and 1587 by William Cecil, Lord High and the Treasurer of England. He was the most trusted and able advisor to the Queen. The House remains a family home for his descendants. The 6th Marquees' Sporting Career, David, 6th Marquees of Exeter, achieved as Lord Burghley, an international reputation as a hurdler and sportsman between 1924 - 1933. His Olympic Gold medal, won in the 1928 Games and his Silver medal won in 1932 are displayed along with many of his other trophies. His athletic achievements were immortalized in the film, 'Chariots of Fire'.

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We arrived in London at 11:15 AM, looking for Kenwood and the sun is trying to come out! Standing in splendid, landscaped grounds on the edge of Hampstead Heath (a really nice residential area), Kenwood contains the most important private collection of paintings ever given to the nation. There is a selection of Old Masters, among the finest, a self portrait by Rembrandt, and paintings by such eminent British artists as Turner, Reynolds and Gainsborough. The outstanding neoclassical house was itself remodeled by Robert Adam, 1764- 1773, who created the magnificent library. Many rooms contain displays of new classical furniture. Outside, the historic landscaped park with lawns and a lake form a perfect setting to the lakeside concerts held here in the summer. In the 18th century, Kenwood was occupied by a succession of Scottish lords. For the great judge, Lord Mansfield, Robert Adam, transformed the brick house into a majestic villa. Later, the Earls of Mansfield remodeled the parkland and Kenwood remained in the family until 1922. When developers attempted to buy the estate, the grounds were saved by public purchase, the brewing magnate, Edward Cecil Guinness, first Earl of Iveagh, bought the house and bequeathed it and his picture collection to the nation in 1927. Lunch at Kenwood's Coach Restaurant, C tuna sandwich, E cream celery soup, coke/water for £4.25.

Next stop was halfway around the London orbital (70+ miles) to Lullingston Roman Villa, discovered in 1939 in the fertile valley of the River Darent in Kent, it was one of the most exciting archaeological finds of the century. The original villa, with timber walls built on flint bases, dates from the end of the 1st century AD in the years of prosperity, fifty to a hundred years after the Emperor Claudius had invaded Britain (AD 43). Kent was one of the areas favored by the Romans, and it was there that they built some of the earliest villas or country estates. It was embellished and extended even rebuilt during more than 300 years of occupation. The remains that are visible today include a wonderful mosaic floor, a sequence of bath houses, and layers of changing religious observance from a shrine and Roman Celtic mausoleum to a Christian church, making the villa a priceless window into the world of the Roman settlers. From the end of the 4th century, disaster gradually overtook Lullingston. A serious fire destroyed a substantial portion of the house, the Roman imperial system decayed and by 420 the villa had been abandoned. Photos of the Lullingston Castle and the viaduct RR bridge. Back on the M25 to Maidenhead B&B, its spitting (sprinkling) now, 3:30 PM. We had dinner at the Harvester, bar food, E chicken/leak, C chicken/fries, lager/lemonade for £11.63.

Tuesday, 26 March

Spent most of the day in the Windsor Castle, £9 entrance fee (not Heritage). Windsor has been in the family for over 900 years. It is the oldest royal residence to have remained in continuous use by the monarchs of Britain and is in many ways an architectural epitome of the history of the nation. Its skyline of battlements, turrets and the great Round Tower is instantly recognizable throughout the world. The Castle covers an area of nearly thirteen acres. It was founded by William the Conqueror c. 1080 and was conceived as one of a chain of fortifications built as a defensive ring round London. It occupies the only naturally defensible site in the Thames valley, a chalk ridge 100 ft above the river bank.

Norman castles were built to a standard plan with an artificial earthen mound (motte) supporting a tower or keep, the entrance to which was protected by an outer fenced courtyard or bailey. Windsor is the most notable example of a particularly distinctive version of this basic plan developed for use on a ridge site. It comprises a central motte with a large bailey to either side of it (known as the Lower and Upper Wards) rather than just on one side as was more usual. As first built, the Castle was entirely defensive, constructed of earth and timber, but easy access from London and the proximity of the Castle to the old royal hunting forest to the south (now Windsor Great Park) soon recommended it as a royal residence. Henry I is known to have had domestic quarters within the castle as early as 1110 and Henry II converted the Castle into a palace. He built two separate sets of royal apartments within the fortified enclosure: a public or official state residence in the Lower Ward, with a hall where he could entertain his court and the barons on great occasions, and a smaller private residence on the north side of the Upper Ward for the exclusive occupation of himself and his family.

Edward III's State Apartments survived more or less intact down to the seventeenth century, the later medieval kings hardly altering them. Edward IV remodeled the old chapel (now the Albert Memorial Chapel) at its east end; he also added a new range to the west of the State Apartments which Elizabeth I extended by

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a long gallery (all now occupied by the Royal Library). Henry VIII built the entrance gateway to the Lower Ward, and his daughter, Queen Mary I, built the present lodgings for thirteen Military Knights on the south side of the Lower Ward, facing St George's Chapel. During the English Civil War in the mid-seventeenth century, the Castle was seized by Parliamentary forces that ill-treated the buildings and used part of them as a prison for Royalists. King Charles I was buried in the vaults beneath St George's Chapel after his execution at Whitehall in 1649. At the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 Charles II vowed to reinstate the old glories of the Crown.

William III and the early Hanoverian kings spent more time at Hampton Court than at Windsor; today the surviving seventeenth century State Apartments at Hampton Court give an idea of the former arrangement and furnishings of those at Windsor. Windsor, however, came back into its own in the reign of George III, who disliked Hampton Court, which had unhappy memories for him. In 1805 King George revived the formal ceremonies of installation of Knights of the Garter at Windsor, which had fallen into disuse at the time of the Glorious Revolution in 1688. In many ways Windsor Castle enjoyed its apogee in the reign of Queen Victoria. She spent the largest portion of every year at Windsor, and in her reign it enjoyed the position of principal palace of the British monarchy and the focus of the British Empire as well as nearby the whole of royal Europe. King Louis Philippe visited the castle in 1844 and the Emperor Napoleon III in 1855, very successful visits of heads of state from around the world.

For the most of the twentieth century Windsor Castle survived as it was in the nineteenth century. Queen Mary, carried out much careful restoration work to the fabric and the works of art. The Queen, when Princess Elizabeth, and her sister Princess Margaret, spent most of their childhood there during the Second World War; and during the present reign Windsor Castle has been the principal home of the Royal Family. The Court is officially in residence in April and during Ascot week in June when the annual Garter Day celebrations take place with the installation of new knights and a choral service in St George's Chapel. The Queen and her family spend most of their private weekends at the Castle.

On 20 November 1992 a serious fire broke out in the Queen's Private Chapel at the north-east angle of the Upper Ward. It is thought to have been caused by a spotlight igniting a curtain high above the altar. Despite the efforts of the Castle staff and the fire brigade, the fire spread rapidly at roof level, destroying the ceilings of George IV's, St George's Hall and Grand Reception Room as well as gutting the Private Chapel, State Dining Room, Crimson Drawing Room and various subsidiary and service rooms in the north-east corner of the Castle. By great good fortune the rooms worst affected by the fire were empty at the time as they were in the course of being rewired. As a result, miraculously few of the Castle's artistic treasures were destroyed. The principal casualties were a Pugin sideboard and a painting of George III at a Review by Sir William Beechey which were too big to move. The work of repair began immediately after the fire. Already the shell of the damaged portion has been made weather tight with new roofs and windows and work is proceeding on the interior. George IV's damaged rooms including the ceiling of the Grand Reception Room, will be reinstated exactly as they were, but the chapel area is to be redesigned, and a new more impressive timber ceiling is being devised for

St George's Hall. This restoration is expected to be fully completed in 1998, (from the 1995 Windsor Castle Official Guide Book). Only one painting was lost to the fire, £1.20 parking, guidebook £3.50. We were among the first visitors as we arrived early, before opening time, then lots of people showed up. We heard many foreign languages spoken on the tour, very nice castle!

Leaving Windsor Castle, we drove toward London and found ourselves at the Marble Hill House, Hampton House and Hampton Court Palace. The house looked abandoned but saw signs it's a theater. The palace is wonderful and what groomed gardens, too bad we didn't have more time. We drove through Astor (horse racing fame) to dinner, back at the Harvester. Winter special was thirty three percent off the price of dinner when dining between 5:30 – 6:30 PM. C had fish/chips, E turkey, lager/lemonade for £14.21, good meal, it was nice to have a salad. We're staying with Stephanie and Freddie House near Windsor, we stayed here during our 93 trip, nice couple.

Wednesday, 27 March

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Of course the sun is out today. We're leaving on a 1:30 PM flight to San Francisco. The London Times reported sun with clouds through the United Kingdom today, it figures, we're going home! Shopping at the duty free stores in the airport included two bottles of scotch, Dalwhinnie and Glenlivet, a 12 year old single malt. Dalwhinnie is one of the six 'Classic Malts' carefully selected to best represent each of the main whisky producing regions of Scotland. They embrace the full diversity of regional tastes and styles. Dalwhinnie is the highest distillery in Scotland, set in the Grampian Mountains. This 15 year old scotch is a gentle, delicate malt from the wild and windswept Highlands. It is a subtle, smooth delicately smoky malt with a heathery honey finish. Appropriately, the Classic Malts symbol is the Quaich, which for centuries has been the traditional Scottish drinking bowl reserved for toasting the finest single malt whiskies. The Classic Malts range also includes Glenkinchie, a 10 year old soft, sweetly aromatic malt from the "Garden of Scotland". It has a fresh, grassy sweetness balanced with a warming, dryish finish; Cragganmore, a 12 year old elegant, sophisticated Speyside with the most complex aroma of any malt. Astonishingly fragrant with sweetish notes and a smoky maltiness on the finish; Oban, a 14 year old combining the sophistication of the Highlands with a touch of the peaty style of the Islands. It is rich and full-bodied with a mellow fruity finish; Talisker, a 10 year old and the only malt produced on Skye. Its seaweedy, smoky nose and sweet maltiness is perfectly complemented by its spicy, long finish; and Lagavulin, a 16 year old distinctive and powerful Islay malt. It is deeply smoky and peaty with a velvety, complex finish. Scotch lesson for this trip! The Dalwhinnie is an excellent single malt, very smooth!

Item of Interest, in the British Lottery, a 'lucky dip' is equivalent to California's 'quick pick'!