

# 2023 Knight Family Calendar

## The Enchantments of Scotland, Ireland & Iceland





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The 2023 Knight Family Calendar is a photographic journal of the voyage my sister Kathi and I took to three beautiful lands, Scotland, Ireland and Iceland, at the autumn equinox of 2022. We are happy to share some of it in our 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Knight Family Calendar.

To tell the story, we pared some 1200 photos to 120, but still needed room, so we added four extra pages at the beginning, and printed the year's calendar at high resolution on glossy paper.

The cover photograph, depicting sheep dogs at work, was taken at Gleensk in County Kerry, Ireland. We selected it not only because sheep outnumber people wherever we went, but even more because it typifies the connections of people we met, and places we went, with the land, with living, and with history. We hope you see some connections of your own as you follow our calendar through the year.

Happy Holidays,

Dennis



*Above left:* Gliding into Edinburgh at sunrise over the verdant Scottish countryside.



*Above center:* Edinburgh Castle, built on an extinct volcano, has domain over the city's landscape.



*Above right:* Dolly, the first cloned sheep, is featured in the National Museums of Scotland.

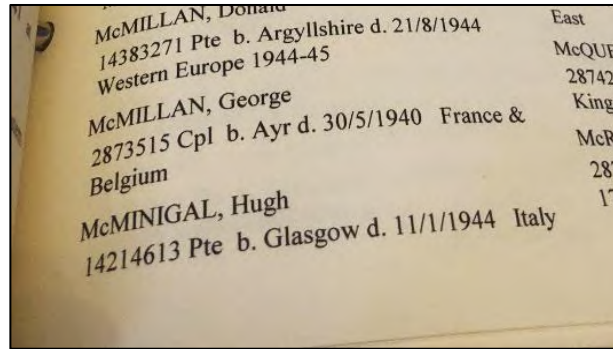
*Bottom center:* On the Royal Mile is St. Giles Cathedral where the Queen had lain in state just five days before.



*Bottom right:* It was a free day after the morning's landing with the formal tour not starting until morning. We walked miles around Old Town in the castle's shadow enchanted as if in a Harry Potter movie. Many quaint shops line the Royal Mile.







*Above:* Our MacMillan clan's Uncle George MacMillan died in 1940 at the Battle of Dunkirk, as recorded in the Scottish War Memorial Hall at Edinburgh Castle. We were helped by a young attendant who loved the challenge, found the page, and discretely allowed us to photograph it despite rules to the contrary.



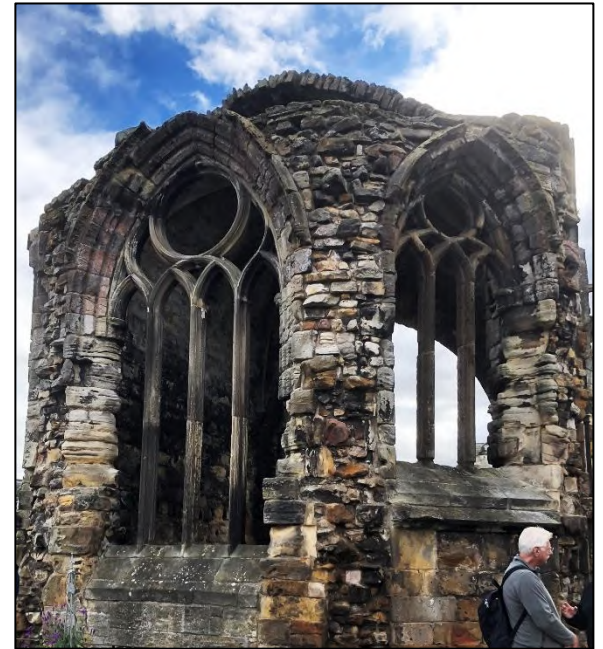
*Above:* RRS Discovery, moored on the River Tay at Dundee, Scotland, ventured to Antarctica in 1901. (Photo shot from moving tour bus, hence the odd reflections.)

*Top Left:* Rooftop view from Scottish National Museums

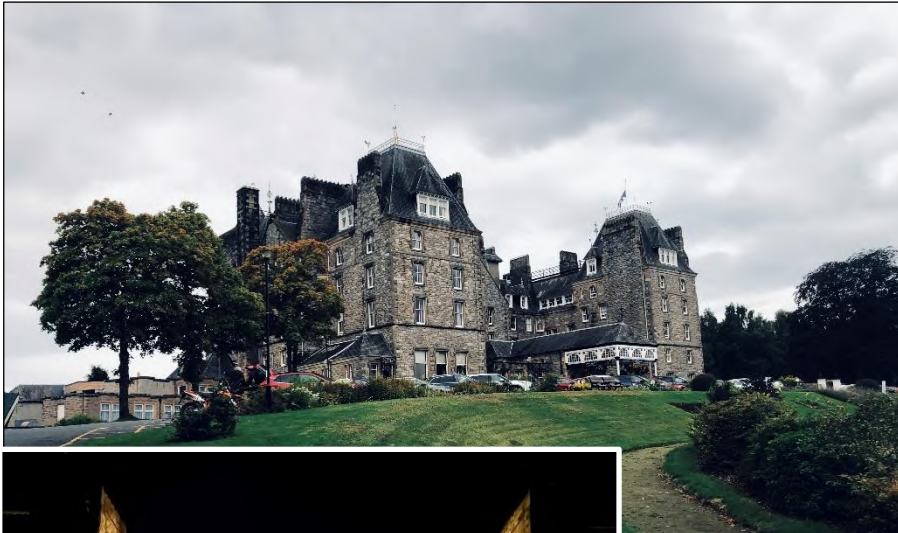
*Bottom Left:* A cannoneer's view, Edinburgh Castle

*Top Right:* On the Swilkan Bridge at St Andrews. The links were closed that day for the Queen's funeral, so we had unchallenged run of the storied home of golf.

*Bottom Right:* Blackfriars Chapel, St. Andrews Village. In 1559, Protestant reformers violently expelled the Dominican friars from their destroyed place.

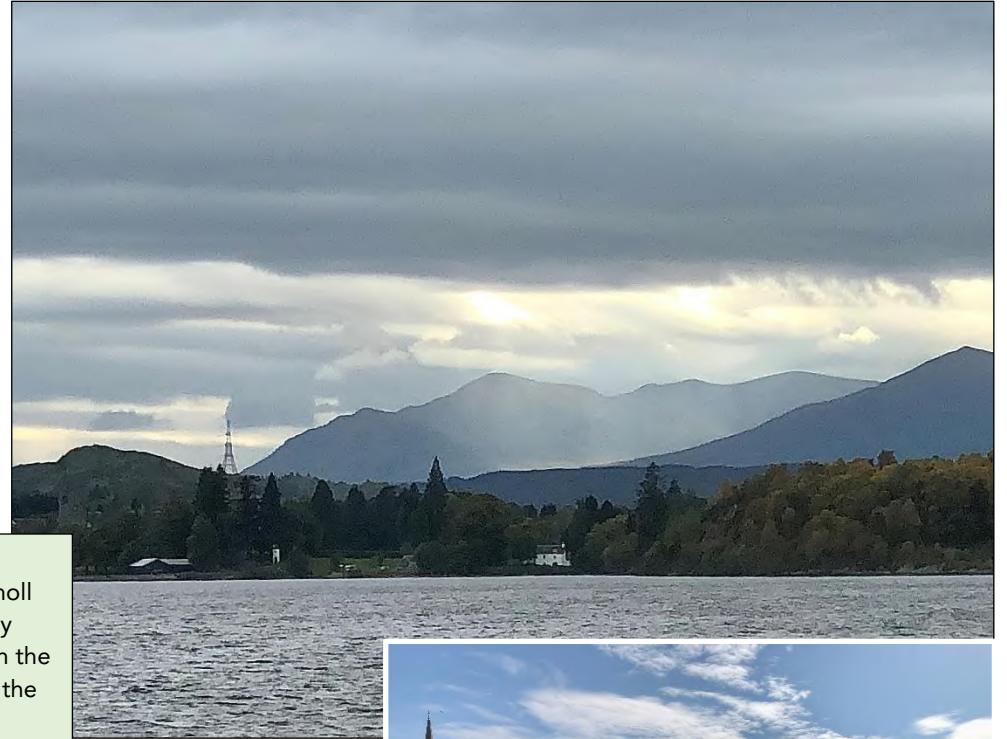






*Left:* Two nights at the luxurious but quirky Atholl Palace Hotel, with lovely gardens, tucked away in the woods at Pitlochry on the River Tummel (*bottom photo*) known for salmon.

Our days included a long drive through Inverness, the Scottish Highlands and Cairngorms National Park, travel along the beautiful shore and then a cruise on Loch Ness.



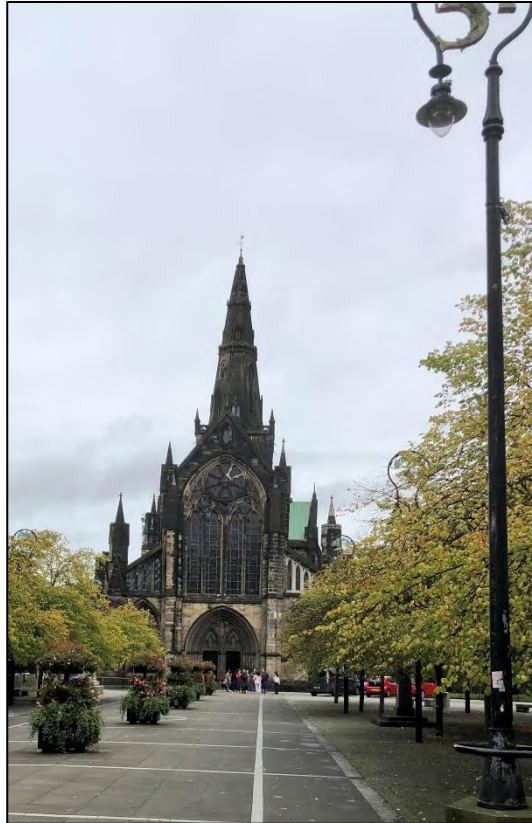
*Loch Ness*



*Scenes at Inverness*







*Left Stack:* Scenes at Stirling Castle. One of the largest, it was important in the Wars of Scottish Independence, suffering at least eight sieges. The geometric fields, once royal gardens, are now favorite public spaces.

*Top Center:* Glasgow Cathedral. Construction began in 1136 and took 350 years. Great changes were made during the Protestant Revolution, yet the basic structure and interiors seem very unchanged.

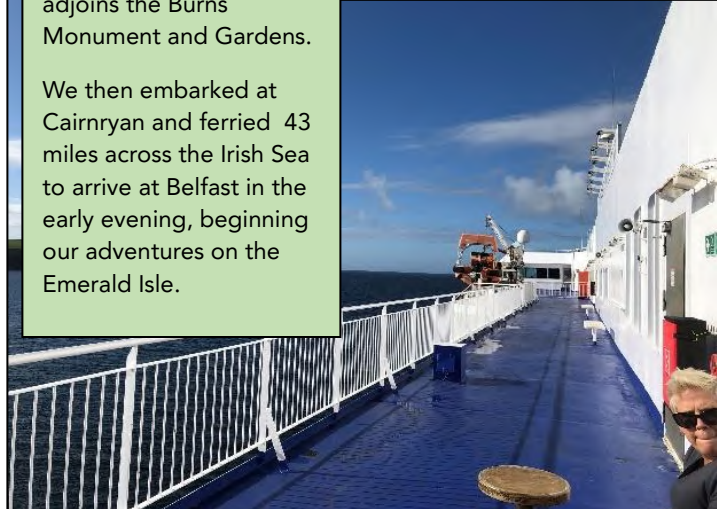
*Water Scenes:* The Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond, a lovely and lively place for humans, ducks and dogs.





We ended our time in Scotland with a visit to Alloway and the 1759 birthplace of the beloved bard, Robert Burns. The bench evokes the green fields of Ayrshire that influenced his work. The Alloway Parish Church (Church of Scotland) adjoins the Burns Monument and Gardens.

We then embarked at Cairnryan and ferried 43 miles across the Irish Sea to arrive at Belfast in the early evening, beginning our adventures on the Emerald Isle.



The peace walls in Northern Ireland were erected as a solution to "The Troubles," keeping Catholic neighborhoods apart from Protestant ones loyal to the crown. Murals on the Catholic side depict the H-Block Martyrs, imprisoned protesters who died in 1981 in a hunger strike against British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to gain recognition and rights as political prisoners.

Our driver Paddy Farrell, much like our dad did, wears his Irish sentiments on his sleeve. He showed us a bodhran (Irish drum) he carries to commemorate the H-Block Martyrs, painted for him inside the prison by a friend who joined but survived the hunger strike.

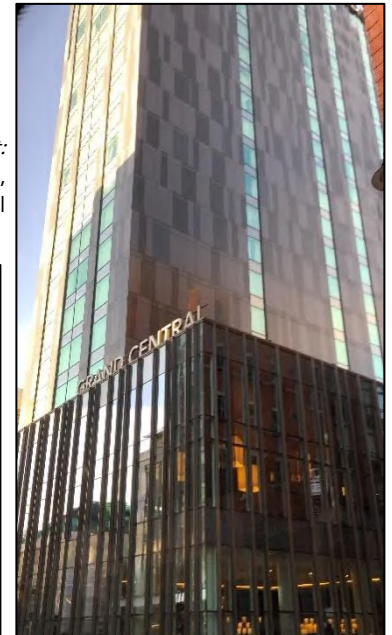


Above: Belfast City Hall



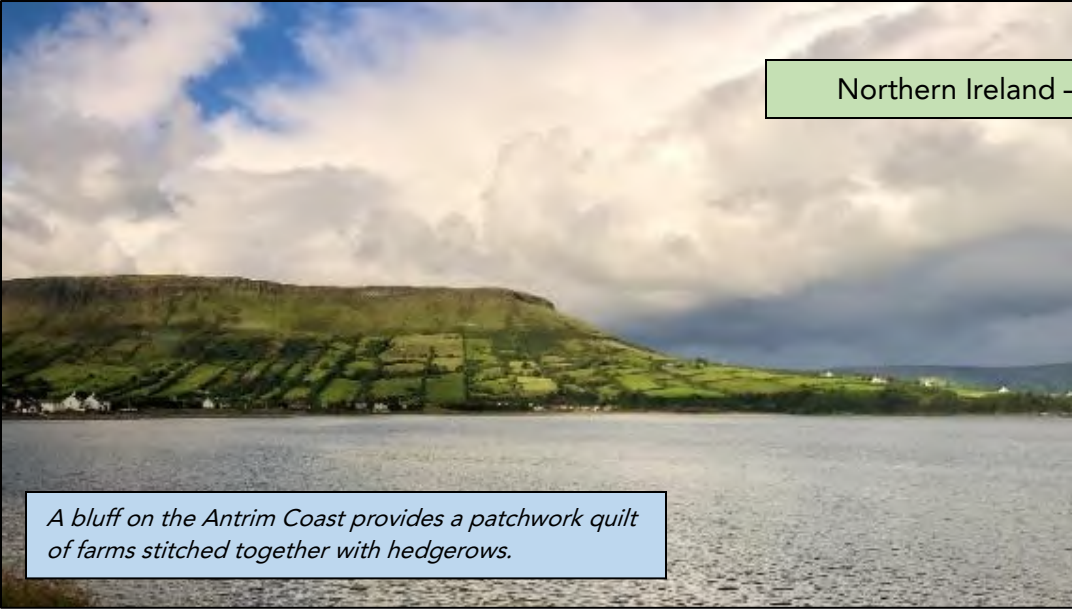
Right: Queen's University

Right:  
The Grand Central,  
Our Belfast hotel

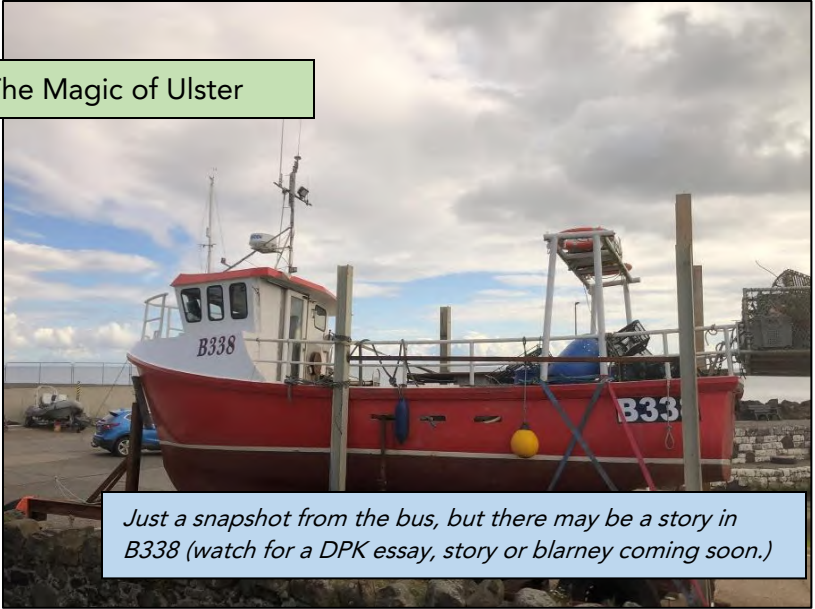





## Northern Ireland – The Magic of Ulster



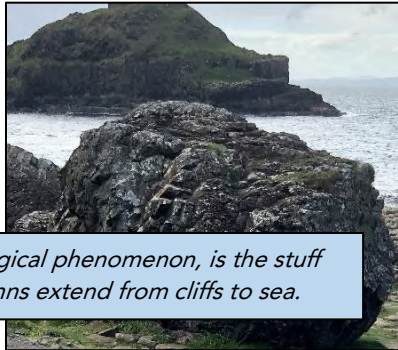


*A bluff on the Antrim Coast provides a patchwork quilt of farms stitched together with hedgerows.*



*Just a snapshot from the bus, but there may be a story in B338 (watch for a DPK essay, story or blarney coming soon.)*



*A rope bridge at Ballycastle, strung and used by fishermen, links the mainland to the wee island of Carrickarede.*



*The Giant's Causeway, a prehistoric geological phenomenon, is the stuff of myths and legends. 37,000 basalt columns extend from cliffs to sea.*



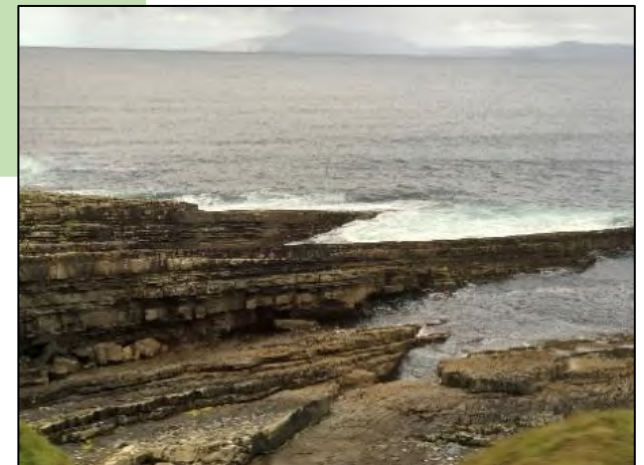
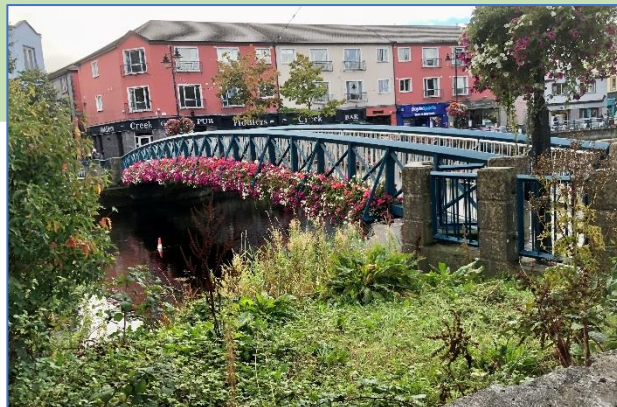


*Left Stack:* Lough Eske Castle, our hotel at Donegal and our first stop in the Irish Republic. We found its 5-star rating to be spot on by every criterion.

*Center:* Benbulbin Mountain in a cascade of morning fog is featured in the poetry of W.B. Yeats. The unidentified castle is one of thousands in Ireland, some still in use. Below is the colorful town and river of Sligo.

*Right Top & Center:* Belleek Pottery has been in operation since 1857. The River Erne flows by the shops.

*Bottom Right:* Mullaghmore, a windy point on the rugged North Atlantic, down the road from Donegal.







Kylemore Abbey, a Benedictine monastery founded in 1920 by nuns fleeing war-torn Belgium. The castle, built in 1868 as a private home, was acquired in 1903 by the Duke of Manchester, who then lost the castle in 1920 to settle gambling debts. That was when the Sisters purchased the magnificent castle and its extensive grounds.

We watched master glass cutter Sean create a candy dish at Connemara Celtic Crystal in Moycullen. Afterward we were able to buy a like dish, maybe even the same one. It was signed and dated by Sean and shipped to our sister Maureen as a thank you for inspiring our trip to the Emerald Isle.



We visited this thatched cottage at Letterfore where our driver Paddy Farrell showed us around and taught us about the history of peat bogs and the ancient burning of peat for warmth and cooking.



Killary Fjord in County Galway is said to be the only fjord in Ireland



Our day on the Ring of Kerry, the Iveragh Peninsula, known for its spectacular mountain and coastal scenery, was something of a rainout and we didn't get many pictures, but, begorrah, 'twas not a lost day.



We started the morning before the rain with Irish Coffee at the Red Fox Inn. Made to tradition, it met all that the taste buds anticipated. It is served in a steamed glass with (in exact order) ¼ gill (4 tbsp) Irish whiskey, 2 tsp brown sugar, boiling coffee to within ¾ inch of the top of the glass, stirred briskly until the sugar dissolves, then adding lightly whipped cream poured over the back of a teaspoon so the cream doesn't sink. Our driver Paddy Farrell would not have us be stirring our coffee by threat of being tossed from the bus, if not from Ireland.



We visited a mountain sheep farm to see sheep dogs do their work. The trainer handled them with a different lexicon of commands for each dog to keep them from responding to the other's. The multi-horned sheep is of Viking extraction.



*Bottom row, left and right:* Some random shots from the bus show the futility of photography that day although the colors still glistened through.





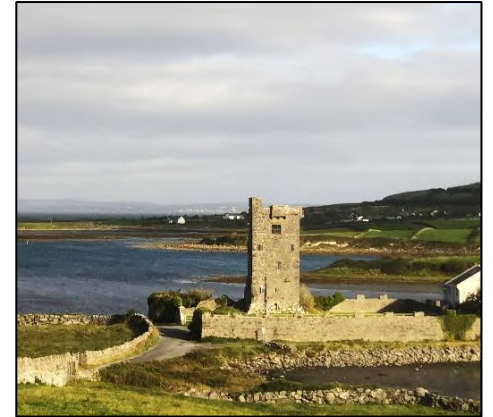


*Left:* The Cliffs of Moher as seen from the viewer's left (*top*) and right (*bottom*). The cliffs are a must stop for every Ireland visitor. It was exhilarating for us 'though we were nearly blown off into the Atlantic.

*Right:* From the road it appears this abbey at Muckinish West is still in use.

*Middle Row:* Coastal scenes near Gleninagh

*Bottom:* We enjoyed a show at Killarney not originally scheduled for the tour.

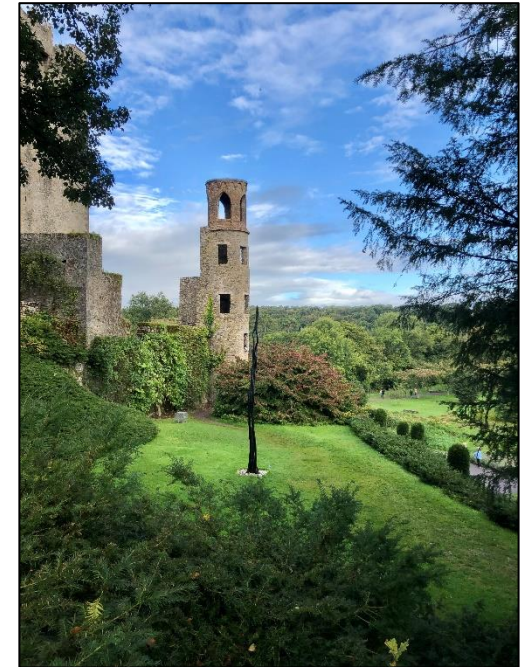




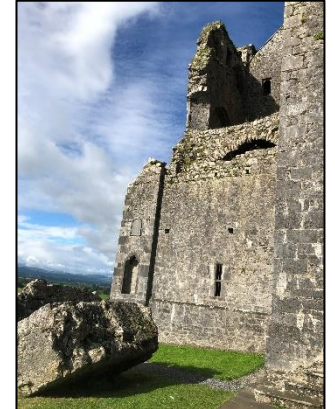


The photos in the left column, taken enroute to Blarney, are of Macroom, the Sullane River and Macloneigh. The plaque on the bridge is in the Irish language and indecipherable. Every crest and bend in Ireland yields yet more beauty of the isle.

Nothing typifies the gifts of splendor and gab like Blarney Castle in County Cork. We declined, as we are a bit old, and already endowed with the blarney, to hang by our heels and kiss the famous stone. Instead we walked the beautiful grounds and visited the very fine Blarney Woolen Mills.







The Rock of Cashel, also known as St. Patrick's Rock, is a historic site located in County Tipperary. According to legends, the Rock of Cashel originated in a mountain 20 miles to the north when St. Patrick banished Satan from a cave, resulting in the Rock's landing in Cashel. Another legend says that it was where Saint Patrick picked up a clover to explain the Holy Trinity. The roofless St Patrick's Cathedral is still used for ceremonial events and musical performances. The landscape (*lower left*) shows the rock wall surrounding the Rock and the ruins of a monastery just beyond the wall.



Scenes (*clockwise*) along Dublin's River Liffey. The bridge pivots for ships to pass, modern buildings show the economic vitality of Ireland, and folks know they're arriving in Dublin by the iconic twin smokestacks. The Liffey is truly the heart of the city economically and in its vibrant culture. It greatly influenced the work of James Joyce, including *Finnegan's Wake* and *Ulysses*.





We were deeply moved in learning more about the Famine and the story of Irish emigration over the centuries. The Dublin Famine Memorial statues were designed and crafted by Dublin sculptor Rowan Gillespie, and they were presented to the City of Dublin in 1997. The haunting sculptures are of six life-size figures dressed in rags and clutching their meagre belongings and children as they walk towards the ships that will take them away from Ireland. The tall ship, the Jeanie Johnston, carried thousands of starving children, women and men to Canada and the U.S. during the famine. This painstakingly built replica is adjacent to the Epic Museum of Irish Emigration.



After our visit to the emigration museum and environs on this, our only full day in Dublin, and the last in Ireland, was filled with a visit to Christ Church with a visit to the belltower and even of ringing the bell to the glory of all Ireland. Our Ireland adventure concluded with lunch at the Guinness Storehouse, some time for shopping in Dublin, and then a festive night of traditional Irish folk music and dancing at the Merry Ploughboy.



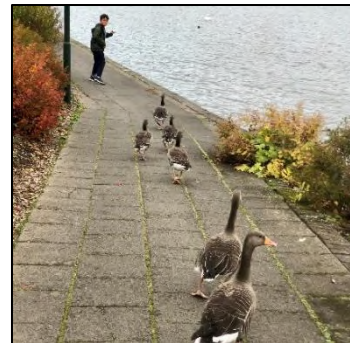




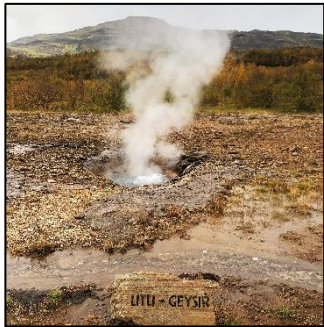
We arrived in Iceland with no specific itinerary except day trips around the island. These are scenes of Reykjavík, the main city and center of commerce.

*Clockwise starting above left:*

- The most prominent building in all Iceland is Hallgrímskirkja (Church of Iceland (Lutheran)) in the city's center. The architect was inspired by Iceland's waterfalls and mountains.
- A boy fed the geese on the lake at City Hall. Now he can't get away from them.
- The blockhead is the Memorial to the Unknown Bureaucrat (they have a sense of humor at city hall.)
- Reykjavik City hall sits on Lake Tjörnín.
- IDNO, a historic theater with a nice restaurant we enjoyed. It provides a backdrop for the blockhead memorial near City Hall (*corner of picture.*)
- Reykjavik has a walkable and colorful central shopping district.
- Harpa, the city's beautiful concert and performance hall is a modern but pleasing architecture.
- A view to the north from the lake at city hall.
- A view of the city from the harbor.







Geyser fields and waterfalls (the dramatic one above is named Sulfoss) are all over Iceland, known as the Land of Fire and Ice. Whereas Ireland comes in Kelly green, Iceland is a beautiful mossy green, brought by humidity on the volcanic soils that otherwise don't yield so much natural growth. In the Sulfoss area we visited a greenhouse. Iceland grows many fruits and vegetables, even bananas, in its greenhouses.



Thingvellir National Park is a place of geological and intercontinental significance, lying on divergent tectonic plates, the crest of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, and the boundary between North America and Europe. This means Iceland sits on two continents. Although Iceland is a European country, Reykjavik is North American. The scenery in the National Park is ruggedly magnificent. It is the original, outdoor site of Iceland's parliament, founded in the year 930, one of the oldest continuous parliaments in the world.







*A Day on the Snaefellsnes Peninsula and in Snaefellsness National Park. Kirkjufell Mountain with its waterfall, shown above, is one of the most photographed sites in Iceland. Other photos show the windy, craggy coastline. Bottom right photo is looking inwards from the coast into the national park. The rusted wreckage of a WWII aircraft marks a beach where we went hoping to see a seal colony, but they were out to lunch.*

