

# 2011 - SCOTLAND

22 May 2011



## Stirling

How many inches of water make up a foot? Who cares, when its wet, its friggen wet here.

Thoroughly enjoying our highland tour  
It's cold and wet on every moor.  
The closer to Glasgow we now drive  
We notice wee little places still survive.

There's not a place we can call mundane  
Muthill, Bishops Bridge or even Dumblane.  
Braco, Doune, or strange Brig O Turk  
Funny place names that make us smirk.

Our drive was quite short today, it was,  
Couldnt linger long in Bum of Cambos.  
Stirling was our favoured place to aim  
Cliffs and castle it's biggest claim.

Not disappointed were we in any way  
Stirling's history, its buildings, oh what a day.  
We ventured on through Blair Drummond  
Buchany, Drumvalch, Callander but not far beyond.

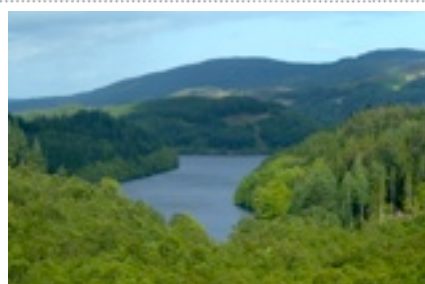
The Loch we passed by was Venachar  
The Trochach trails beckoned afar.  
Kilmahog, Braeval, Lendrick at end of tour  
We shopped at Aberfoyle and camped at Gartmore.

Horrible, ghastly - we heard the bad news!  
Bugga, bum, shit and big spews!  
A catastrophe or a positive sign?  
Don't you worry, Nowaks'll be fine.

Not seeing cold Iceland, now that's a real pity  
But it's no reason to get stressed, angry or shitty.  
It's other places we now have to plan  
Somewhere bloody warmer to get a sun tan!!!!



*Hotel near Aberfoyle in Trochach country*



*Green rolling hills and water everywhere*



*Glorious red kite*



We could easily become bird watchers. Scotland and England have great bird hides where you can sit and watch native birds in total comfort. Watching the great red kytes today was extraordinary.





*Discussing affairs of state with the Queen*



*Heather showing off her new coat*

#### STIRLING

The castle sits on an outcrop of land located in the "neck of Scotland" - the narrowest part of the country. To the east and west there are marshes or river flats so whoever controlled this castle controlled all traffic between England and Scotland. Hence its importance. We joined a tour and the guide told us all about the complex history of the place over the centuries. We wandered around the many buildings outside the castle complex and then walked the steep streets down to the van.

#### KITES

We then decided to head east in a bid to see some more beautiful country before we completed our Scotland leg of the journey. We mapped out a circuit of likely countryside and headed off. We happened upon a local farm where we could view Red Kites. The hide was full of people and we even had a lady to explain all about this amazing bird that has been successfully reintroduced to the area. They were so very impressive and I was amazed to see how big they were. Bird watching could definitely be added to our list of interests.

#### MOVING ON

Callander is a very picturesque place. Being a Sunday, tourists were everywhere. We stopped to get some supplies and went for a bike ride beside the swiftly flowing river and around the town. We met a lady who, after we explained where we had been and where we were going, told us that Iceland had another eruption! A quick trip back to the van to look up the news gave us more info on the sad story. Where to from now?

#### ICELAND ANYONE? NOT LIKELY!!

We then spent the next few hours discussing alternatives. My first suggestion was a week in Malta but lots of alternatives went through our minds. Malta did prove to be too difficult to organise quickly. So did Sweden. So the options were another week in Scotland or off to Ireland early -- via ferry. Ireland probably won but we would only know once we had confirmed (hopefully later in the day) that our flight was indeed postponed indefinitely.

We would see.

**Stirling Castle has had many different owners over the centuries. The Scots, then the English, then the Scots, then the English and then the Scots and the English and so on. Why? Because English and Scots are very quarrelsome.**



