

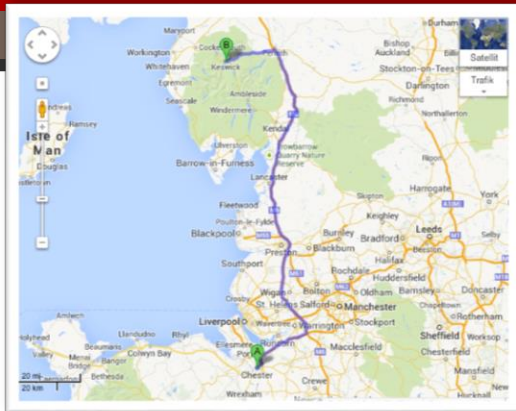


United Kingdom



...Wales, England and
Scotland round trip...

The summer of 2013



Chester and Cheshire “return to the scene of the crime” ...

...Having debated if we should go for a longer and more adventurous trip to central Asia (Tove and I), I eventually had to give in. We settled on a “drive around the UK” instead together with Hannah. We agreed this was a better option this summer and would be convenient, as we could then pick-up the “boys” on our way back as they had attended summer school at the Collage of Saint Albans outside of London.

...Having picked up the rental car at Heathrow we set-off to Chester in Cheshire on the west coast. This was the first time we were back to Chester since we lived here in the early 90-ies. We had picked a Bed-n-Breakfast place south of Chester at **Egerton Manor Farm** – a highly recommend countryside B&B. We were just as lucky when picking a place to eat not to far from the B&B – great food and atmosphere.





The Lake District - Cumbria

Windermere, Keswick and Kendal – rolling hills!

On our way up to Lake District, we of course wanted to drive by our old “cottage” on Ferry Lane in Chester to see if it looked as we remembered it!

The Cottage had a new owner and looked quite a bit different from how we remembered it. The main door and all windows had been changed to double-glazing. Probably from an energy point of view advisable, but it had certainly taken a lot of the charm away when they had removed these original stained glass windows.

Chester was however every bit as charming as we remembered it. Very touristic with hoards of tourist walking up n down the medieval streets. We drove thereafter all the way up to Windermere in Cumbria to our pre-booked **Lindeth Fell Hotel in Bowness-on-Windermere.**

This had been carefully chosen due to its combination of stylish housing as well as a good kitchen/restaurant. We had a great room overlooking the fantastic landscape and were not disappointed.

We used this as our base to see the Lake District area. We covered many lovely small villages such as Windermere, Ambleside, Grasmere and Keswick – but to mention a few. We were also very fortunate with the weather (as can be seen in the photos) and tried out some lovely (but quite steep) walks through the hilly landscape. We got some really good exercise.

We agreed that we would come back another time and spend more time around this nice area to try a few more and longer walks. Highly recommended.





Scotland – Seafood and cosy “Inns” to stay in.



After the Lake District we set off to **Glasgow**. As we were aiming to get a bit further up into Scotland than so, we started out early in the morning and only stopped over for lunch in Glasgow.

Having been once before, many years back, I did however not remember much of this city. We strolled around a little bit in the city centre and had lunch at the well know **Willow Tea-room** on **Sauciehall Street**. All in all we didn't think very much off Glasgow and decided it was not worth to spend the night here.

We continued up north towards Loch Lomond in the Trossachs national park district. We made a stopover in the exceptionally **picturesque village of Luss** – one of the most scenic parts of Loch Lomond's western shore. We thereafter continued on to the district of Argyll and Bute on the northwestern side of Scotland. Very close to where we eventually stayed the evening we also had **dinner at the Loch Fyne Oyster Bar in Cairndon** – which was recommend to us, we gave it a 5 out of 5 – amazing seafood! The night was spent in the **lovely B&B** (see picture to the right) **Creag Dhubh in Inverarray**. The Inverarray Castle is also nearby here.

We then set-off to Oban on the coast. We opted for the more scenic route going south **through Lochgilphead** and then cutting north up through **Arduanie and Kilmelford**. There were many old settlements to stop by and investigate on along this lovely route.





The Isle of Mull and Iona

The Inner Hebridean Islands

A couple of hour's stopover to stroll around and have lunch at the lovely city of Oban we travelled on to the Isle of Mull. Our lunch in Oban at the top seafood restaurant Ee-Usk on the north pier was indeed also another hit. The only drawback was that I could not have a glass of Chardonnay with my seafood – as Tove could – since I was driving.

All the direct ferries were however fully booked so we had to take the long detour up north towards Fort William, take a small ferry there across Loch Linnech and then south again to catch yet another ferry to Isle of Mull. This took 4 hours extra driving, but what a fantastic drive it was. Much of it was one-lane dirt road with hilly landscape and no houses...

We stayed 2 nights in **Tobermory**, a picturesque town with brightly colored houses. The first night at the terrible Carnaburg Hotel (stay away) and the second night at a private B&B house named Lonan B&B (much better).

We tried two different seafood joints in Tobermory – Minish (half decent) and the fantastic Café Fish on the pier in the harbour. It was outstanding, but very difficult to get a table.

Isle of Mull is in deed a very beautiful island with many scenic drives to make. A stop at Duart Castle is a must. This 13th century castle is still inhabited by the clan Maclean. It is also possible to have lunch here.



The old Duart Castle on Isle of Mull – still inhabited!





...From castles to abbeys on the west coast...

Two lovely islands of the Inner Hebridean worth visiting ... Try the colourful Tobermory as the base for staying and eating...

..Having originally planned to travel all the way up to Isle of Skye, which would have been interesting and nice to visit, I'm glad we did not make this very long trip. It got us a chance to stay longer here at Isle of Mull and also a chance to go across to the tiny Island of Iona.

Isle of Iona is often mentioned as one of the biggest attractions on Scotland's west coast. A restored Abbey stands on the site where Irish missionary St. Columba began his crusade back in 563 and made Iona the home of Christianity in Europe. In the Abbey graveyard, 48 Scottish kings are said to be buried. We noted it is a popular place as it was quite crowded with tourists.

On the way back from the Isle of Iona, and back to the significantly larger island – **Isle of Mull** we had a lovely ride over on the boat. Getting back to Tobermory we opted for the lesser-travelled roads via Ben More. We drove along the waterfront along tiny roads and had to stop occasionally for sheep passing our way. We also had a chance to stop at some deserted castle ruins, which were almost overgrown. Some of these were difficult to find. Had it been at home, these would have been given much more significance and attention, but here the country is littered with historical buildings of course.





Edinburgh vs. Glasgow 5-0...!

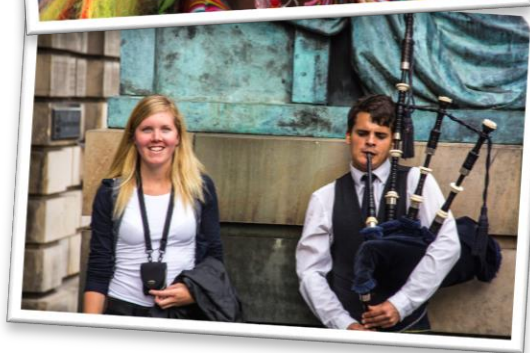
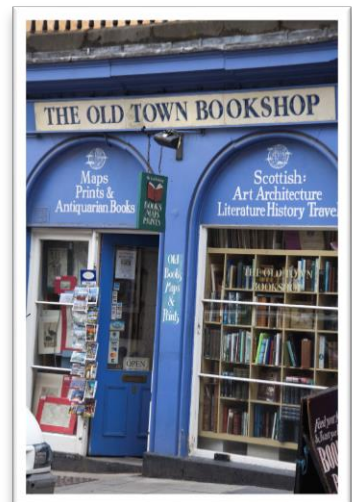
Full marks to this ancient and marvellous city...



We opted for the Haymarket Hotel, walking distance to the Edinburgh castle and centre of town. It was not easy to find a decent and affordable triple room in this town.

For restaurants we selected the recommended Passorn (High class Thai cuisine) ranked 16 out of ca: 1600 restaurants in the trip advisor guide.

There are many things to do and see, I suppose in this historic town. We choose to spend most of it at and around the castle itself. "The Royal Mile" or High street is also worthwhile to walk along. We tried the "all-free" city tour, but cut it short after only 10 minutes. It was not as good as the one we tried in Dublin a few years back. We will come back and see more next time around. The also have many music and jazz festivals to visit in the summer time.



Edinburgh has already become a favourite – we will return....





Bells' Saint Albans (London)

From Edinburgh via Durham to London...

From Edinburgh we set-off in the early morning heading south again. We aimed for London and got as far as Durham where we had to make night. On the way there we drove the A7 through Jedburgh, continued on the A88 over the Cheviot Hills and stopped at the border between Scotland and England, which was quite spectacular.

All through Northumberland onwards to Durham we eventually arrived at Durham in the late afternoon and checked in to the SAS Radisson Hotel on points. We had dinner at the recommend Indian Spice Lounge that was exceedingly good...



We left early the following morning for the last stretch of this journey of more than 2300 km in all. From Durham to London, and more specifically St. Albans. We booked us in to the White Hart Hotel, which had a lot of history. (see picture below). The hotel and pub had all the charm one can expect and want. We also opted to have dinner at this place – as it was listed and highly recommended. It was a beautiful setting, but the service resembled a bit of “faulty towers”. I had ordered a steak (medium rare) had the food come back out two times before they got it right. The wine also had to be exchanged (but that is not so uncommon – especially when travelling with my wife who is quite picky on wines).

On the final day we went to pick-up our twin boys at the Collage of St. Albans where they had spent a couple of weeks on an English course. Time to fly home to Sweden again....

