

SCOTLAND 1993

Wednesday, Sept.8th:

From Dulles on United, 6:15pm flight to Glasgow, Scotland. About 7 hours, some sleep for L., none for T., Dinner and Breakfast, 25 folks from Lancaster, PA on a very jolly tour and one sweet High School Senior from Greenock, Scotland as a seatmate for us. She was a delight and a preview of many nice people to come.

Thursday, Sept.9th:

Arrival in Airport involved no customs inspection at all, despite two hunting rifles, only a pleasant man asking three or four simple questions. A cab to the Rental Agent's (Europcar) and a little 4-door Ford, just large enough for the luggage. A manual transmission! On the 'other' side of the road, in rush hour in Glasgow. T. decides to drive as L. considers hysterics. He drives bravely down A77, through a blur of traffic and Jet Lag. Welcome to Scotland. In Fenwick (one of L.'s Ancestral areas) the Hotel Penwick offers a nice breakfast and a welcome break. We are in the country now, a wide open, rolling, green and windswept land with echoes of Labrador, without the countless bogs and lakes. Fat, sleek cattle and sheep everywhere and stucco farm buildings, many joined all together to withstand fierce winters. We reach Ayr, our goal, and find the Caledonian Hotel after some maneuvering among the one-way streets and awful Round-a-Bouts. Nice Hotel and a large room with a glorious view of the Ayr Harbor, the roofs with wonderful chimney-pots and lovely buildings of every shade of earthtone colors, of several types of stone and many with slate roofs.. The Architecture is a mix of Georgian and Regency, with great thick walls along little winding streets and a tower, the remains of a Church from the 11th Century in a fenced Park, bordered by a charming Victorian row of homes. There are surprising and fascinating views around every corner and the people in shops and restaurants are friendly and interested in our visit and our reactions to their town and their country. We spend the day in a rather vague mix of napping, eating and walking through the pretty streets of Ayr. L. finds maps and T. finds postcards and there are several interesting shops to explore ... when the heads clear and the internal clocks adjust. Meanwhile, Ayr is welcoming and welcome, after waiting and planning for so long. The weather is mild with mixed clouds and sun all day; in the evening the usual rains arrive. Well, said the waiter at Dinner, that's why our Golf Courses are so green ... but you should have been here last week... ! Where have we heard that before?

Friday, Sept.10th:

Today, north to Fenwick, a beautiful and very small town near Kilmarnock, for a bit of Searching. The church is marvelous and the graveyard is filled with surprisingly imposing stones, including those of several martyred Covenanters, but not a Hemphill, nor for that matter a Boyd in the bunch. Then, on a tip from Ray Hemphill in Georgia, we go a few miles into the country to a tiny town called Moscow. And here, at a corner, is a little sign, about three feet long:

HEMPHILL. This is the sign directing us to the farm called Hemphill, to which, if the available records are correct, some Boyds fled under political duress, and from which they then took the name. To see it is a moving moment. We drive down that small road and on the right we find the farm, with another, fancier sign. There is a modest grey stucco house and a barn and other buildings, not in perfect order but a welcome sight for L. who has waited and wished to see this place. These are the green fields that her ancestors saw and the skies that covered them. She is touched and grateful to be there. We go on along the road out of Moscow to Kilmarnock, to find Dean Castle, once a home of the Boyds. This is challenging but accomplished at last and the Castle proves to be a wonderful, powerful tower and palace within a massive wall. The walls of the buildings are 101 thick and the whole thing seems built to last forever, but actually it had burned in the 1740's and has been restored since by a man who had inherited it. Fire did what no human enemy could do to that impenetrable place. We take the guided tour and see the Great Hall with its collection of about and a terrible hole leading down to the Dungeon: one way. unnerving. (As Dungeons go, says the Guide, this one was pretty decent. Everything is relative, as they say.) we see the private Chambers, with toilet, so called, and a lovely collection of medieval musical instruments. There are several other fascinating rooms, one with banners and crests and a portrait of William Boyd who fought at Prince Charlie's side at Colloden, along with his son, Charles. There is a Ghost of course: William Boyd's head is said to be looking for his body, from which it was separated after Culloden, by the Axeman at the Tower of London. He is said to have seen his own head rolling down the stairs before his death, in a vision, and that he arranged for four friends to catch it and bring it back and bury it at the Castle. This they did, and it searches on ... but it doesn't roll down the stairs! We take many pictures of the wonderful wall with its dramatic angles and views and enjoy the day immensely. We stroll the grounds a little, seeing a small collection of sheep and goats and chickens and peacocks and leave just as the promised rains arrive. A satisfying day in Ancestral lands.

Saturday, Sept.11th:

Today, South along the coast, touring ruins and castles and whatever else is there. We stop first to see the Heads of Ayr and the ruin of the old castle there, but from the car, as there seems to be no good way to approach it. Then on down the coast, through handsome residential areas and wonderful little villages. We arrive at the wondrous ruin of Castle Dunure, high on a cliff overlooking the sea. We hike from the little town along the beach and up the cliffs and gaze in wonder at this grand remnant of a long ago time. The history of these places is often grim and bloody but they are wonderful to see. There are fine elderly men wearing Wellies and walking dogs every where we go and the flowers! Every little cottage and corner has flowers growing, hanging and climbing all over and around it and the colors and variety are a tribute to the care and the climate, particularly that daily rain! We proceed to Castle Culzean, former seat of the Kennedys. This is fully restored and open. We take a tour,

buy some souvenirs, join the National Historic Trust for Scotland and eat a fine lunch in the little restaurant. The grounds are very grand and they have Palm trees in the garden! After this elegant interlude, we go down the coast to Turnberry, a golfing resort, and then into the country away from the water. As we go inland, we fall in love with the little towns, such as Maybole, with magnificent ruins all around it, and Crosshill and Stratton with their pretty cottages and shops and flowers everywhere. The Doon Valley captures our hearts, with its little road winding across the hills, sheep free ranging over the fields and farms and cottages scattered all around. The road has cattle grids and lay-bys and it dips and dances through this green country, between showers and sunshine. We have as our goal Dalmellington, where Ray Hemphill had found a stone in memory of Hemphills. We do indeed find the graveyard and the stone. There has been much vandalism and the town has a disquieting feeling of bad vibes, the only place we have felt in Scotland so far to be anything less than warm and welcoming and good. We leave.

When we return to Ayr, we rest a while and then do a little shopping. Dinner this evening is in a really first class Bistro that Gordon Hyslop in Frederick has told us about and it is every thing that he has promised. When we return to the Hotel we call Gordon's father to say hello and find him to be a warm and wonderful gentleman and a delight to talk to. We hope we will meet him one day.

What a day! our last in Ayr, and one to remember. And one to tempt us to return as soon as we can.

Sunday, Sept. 12th:

This morning we must drive into Glasgow, drop off the rental car and go to Queen St. Station to catch the train to Inverness. We have our usual good breakfast in the Hotel, check out and load up the little Ford. off to Glasgow. our landmark to find the rental office is, of all things, a MacDonalds! We take a cab from there to the station and meet up with Lisa. We board the train at 1:55 and settle back for about a 4 hour ride, with T. rejoicing that someone else can do the driving now and L. saying a silent farewell to her Ancestral lands and promising to come back soon. The train is smooth and quiet and while Lisa sleeps in a smoking car up forward we lounge at ease in a first-class coach, reading and snacking and watching the serene southern countryside becoming the wild and rugged Highlands, right before our eyes. The hills begin to tower over us, the glens are filled with mists, the rivers run in stony beds and even the cattle and sheep are smaller and tougher-looking, having to deal all their lives with this hard country. The heather is blooming, though, giving a warm wash of color to the cold stone cliffs and the sweeping fields. We stop at several little towns, some, like Stirling, with grand castles, with banners flying in the wind. We see cottages, farms and ancient Tower Houses, side by side, and always, always flowers. We cross some legendary rivers, the Spey, the Findhorn, and go over the only wooden viaduct in Scotland at Moy. It is a wonderful ride. We

arrive at the Inverness Station, and there is Mike to meet us, with Frank, his assistant, and Dale Hedgepeth, his friend and Agent in the States. We cram everything into two small cars and begin a long drive to Whitebridge, where our Hunting Lodge, Corriegarth, is located. (Corrie, in our language, would be like a draw, a dead-end valley.) When we see it, it seems like some dream of a Scottish Hunting Lodge, gray and a little grim but with a stern elegance, dozens of wonderful rooms that we may never have the time to see entirely and beautiful wild hills all around. We choose our own rooms, each with a view of those hills and the fields and hedgerows and stone walls. There are sheep in a meadow and a horse grazing near the house. We have a very late dinner, due to our late arrival with some of the food. The cook is named Hugo and is a sweet young man and, to judge by our first meal, every bit the gem in the kitchen that Mike has claimed him to be. We sit for awhile in the living room/lounge/parlor by a cozy coal fire and begin to get acquainted. The long day begins to take a toll and one by one we drift off to bed. This is going to be a fascinating week, beyond any doubt. And here we are in the Highlands of Scotland, in a grand Hunting Lodge. At last.

Monday, Sept. 13th:

To awaken in a Scottish Manor House, in the Highlands, with the mist hanging low over the hills, cannot be compared with any other morning. L. hears a piece on the Radio Scotland broadcast about National Dormouse Week, which begins on Oct. 27th. Beats body-counts! Breakfast in the kitchen, warm and companionable. Lisa is sleeping off jet lag, T. meets the stalker, John Hunt (!) and readies the gear for the first day's hunting. L. sees them off, Mike, John and T. to hunt in the hills. L. will go to Inverness with Frank, to get cameras repaired, find a gun case for T., retrieve Lisa's gold-headed cane from the Station, it having gone on to the end of the line the day before, and do grocery shopping for Hugo. We have a beautiful drive, through deep mixed forests, along Loch Ness, through lovely rugged country so different from Ayrshire, so wonderful to see. Inverness is a very attractive town and all the errands go as planned, including lunch in the little Station, cane in hand. We shop at the Safeway, which is a touch of home for L., and head back through sun and showers. The weather is Labrador revisited, with all the moods and variety of that land. Rain gear always ready. Very familiar. We have tea in the kitchen with Hugo and separate for various chores and naps, while Hugo works on his dinner and the hunters are somewhere in the hills. L. takes a walk down the little road and along the edge of the fields, to smell the air and see the local flora and to photograph the house from a distance. It has a moody and slightly shabby charm. She returns and stretches out on her bed to listen to the radio, Bach, Mozart, and news and drifts off to sleep for awhile, to wake to that glorious view onto the dappled hills. The hunters return, no stag but a wonderful day, and Lisa awakens and showers and pronounces herself alive. We have tea and coffee in the kitchen, while Hugo cooks up a storm. our small group is very democratic, sitting and sipping and chatting with "the Staff", which causes Mike to twitch a little. He tends to observe strict English protocol

regarding staff/client matters. Hugo has adjusted to the new kitchen and turns out a perfect dinner of roast lamb and all the finest trimmings. He is a skilled chef, although young. We will soon be very spoiled. He has a sunny temperament and never fusses at people under foot in the kitchen or at any requests. We are fortunate. We gather in the lounge by the fire after dinner and exchange stories and begin to yawn. Bedtime tends to be later than usual for us here, but the company is too pleasant to leave early. The beds are very comfortable, though, with tons of covers and pillows. The first night L. heard a tiny squeak, at regular intervals, in the darkness. Listen: a mouse? A bat? ... no. The bed springs, every time she breathed. The bath rooms are everywhere, and very interesting. The tub in one near our rooms is over 6 feet long, and T. is in Heaven, soaking at full length, but L. has to use the mixer-hose to try to shower: not so great, but it beats one spigot for hot and one for cold, with no mix at all!

Tuesday, Sept. 14th:

This is Lisa's first hunting day, and a day for T. to tour. L. will go with him and Frank. Lisa, Dale, Mike and John set out, after a brief stint on a target for her. Due to the passing showers and bright morning sun, the most brilliant rainbows come and go in the west all morning. one appears to end at a cow; Lisa says she would prefer a stag, thanks. They rumble off in the Land Rover and T., L. and Frank leave for Inverness and Culloden. After some errands in town, they have lunch in the Gunsmith Pub and drive down to Culloden. At the Visitors Center they view the Audio-Visual program, which explains in painful detail the terrible waste and futility of this battle. Then T. & L. go onto the Battlefield, leaving Frank to sit and wait, as his post-heart attack body won't quite take too much walking. The battle field has the mass graves of the clans, marked with simple stones. The place is so small compared even to Gettysburg, and so very cold and sad and haunted. The mood is finally very blue and the emotions are very close to the surface. The blood of Ancestors has a voice that calls more clearly than any other. They return to the Visitors' Center for coffee with Frank in a subdued state, but finally pull out of that and begin the drive home, this time along the northern bank of Loch Ness for a change. They see a lovely coast, more elegant and manicured than the rough and wonderful south coast. Also, the ruins of Castle Urquhart, which T. & L. tour. A powerful and imposing place, even in its decay. From the top of the tower, in the fierce wind, they can see up and down the gray white-capped Loch Ness, a time, but they are just too far away to shoot and they do not come closer. We all return to the Argo, having enjoyed the day nonetheless and with vague plans to hunt later. We settle down to read and wait again, while John goes spying for a deer he saw earlier and as everyone else is still off somewhere on errands and/or tours. Hugo's magic in the kitchen is producing wonderful aromas and T. lights the fire, bringing a cozy warmth to the Lounge. This is such a beautiful room, with bright clear colors and huge windows, fascinating prints and paintings and remarkable books all around. An enormous brass telescope stands before the front window, facing the eastern hills. The cows are visible from both the front and side windows and

L. has begun to recognize them, mothers, children, as they graze back and forth in the lush green meadows around the Lodge. The Father of All Cows, though, is a huge Charolais bull. Awesome. Lisa has a Moo-off with him one day and his voice and his temper shake the house! She wins, but he does not give up gracefully. The Lodge belongs to Andrew Frazier, son of a Lord Ian Frazier. We have pieced this together from odd bits of information. He has also a home near London, a flat in London and a home, for much of the year, in Hong Kong. He uses this grand place just for hunting, deer, grouse, etc., off and on during the year, and leases it, as in our case, for others to use also. How can he bear to leave?

At the lodge we eat in Baronial splendor in that huge dining room, as the others have come in to warm up and have gone right out again for a late hunt. We are talking in the lounge by the fire when they return: victory for Lisa. A spectacular 9 point stag, about 5 years old, with a beautiful head and killed with one shot. Dressed, it weighed 238 pounds! John says that many men could not have made the long crawling stalk that she had to make. She holds her trophy for photographs and as this hurts her weary legs and bad knee, she pronounces this "Bambi's Revenge". There is great excitement all around. Mike and Gordon, John's assistant, and John dress out the animal in the building just behind the Lodge, which has a room especially for this purpose, as well as one for birds, one for guns, one for bikes and such and other rooms for miscellaneous storage. It is a wonderful building, long, low and stucco, with red roof and doors. **Now** the true purpose of this one room, with a hook and a drain and kind of bench to hold the carcass for butchering, is clear. As L. watches them reduce this large and complex creation to a collection of component parts she is amazed at the speed with which this deconstruction can be accomplished, having taken 5 years to put it together. T. & L. finally retire, but the Victorious Hunter and friends stay up re-living the hunt until very late, or so we are told the next morning. And so the first stag is taken and we all are very happy for Lisa.

Thursday, Sept. 16th:

This is another day of hunting for Tom. L. & Dale go along and John, but Gordon is not with us today. Up into the hills, spotting lots of stags this morning, including Sika for Dale later this evening. We see some decent "beasts", but none within range. At last, after lunch, we park on the lower road and begin a long uphill stalk right up a very high hill. John & T., Dale & L., across the field and up, up, up. The hill is clothed in heather and bracken, with a network of sheep trails and some very hazardous rocks and holes hidden under it all. Stalk, crouch, stalk, crouch, up and up and up that great, high hill. The hunters disappear over the next ridge. Dale & L. continue on to a point from which they can see the deer, including a large stag, some smaller ones and some hinds. They lie low and wait to see the hunters appear on the far ridge, crawling. They wait, everyone waits, the observers unable to see what the hunters see. Why are they waiting? And suddenly the hunters are standing, talking, and beginning the walk back down the hill. When we all

meet up, we hear the painful tale: the long, tough stalk, the patient wait while four poor stags obstruct the shot and then the traitorous wind that betrayed them to the good stags, which fled the field at once. And so we return to the Land Rover to eat and drink coffee and comfort each other on the loss and congratulate each other on a fantastic stalk. L. walks down the road a little to dip a cup of cold, peat-colored water and sit by the spring. The breeze is soft and the sun is filtered through the alders. There are sheep bleating (the song of these hills) and there is sublime beauty and peace. This place expands the spirit and heals the soul. When Dale has finished "interviewing" T. & John about their stalk we all pile into the Land Rover again and return to the Lodge for Dinner. Not quite yet: Lisa & Mike are out after Roe. Frank & L. pick them up a little after 8, without Roe but having had a fine time trying. Dinner is spectacular as always, and the star of the show is desert: a lemon soufflé, delicious beyond description. The master's touch. We retire early, because all the good conversation is making us short on sleep. This night we catch up a little. Lisa finds sleeping a bit more challenging than some of us as she has the "Mammal in the Wall". After everyone has had a guess (Badger. Rabbit. Pine Martin.) L. see a large gray rat running from the house to the shed. Mystery solved. It sounds as though it is eating the house, starting with Lisa's room, changing to Hugo's wall and then back again.

Friday, Sept.17th:

Today Mike has arranged for T. & L. to go up to Beaulieu to hunt. We have misgivings. John's style suits T. so perfectly. Frank drives us up to the lovely little town and we meet Lackie Smith, driving a Range Rover and towing an Argo. He drives us to the Estate and parks in a grove of the ancient Caledonian Pines. These are sadly rare and endangered and there are very few areas left that have them. We are very fortunate to see these great powerful, brooding trees, all hundreds of years old and Beaulieu is one of only three areas that have enough of them to attempt a reestablishment program for them. We go into the Reserve and have what can only be termed a shoot, not a hunt. We decide that this animal is not going to count. The trees will be our best memory of the day, and the town of Beaulieu and the glorious ruins of the Priory, dating from the 13th Century. We take photographs there and then head for the Lodge. The mood is down. We find that Lisa has shot a fine Scottish feral goat - which was #2 in the World Record book! - but is also troubled, about certain aspects of her hunt. Mike is down about everyone else and finally T. & L. ask John to take T. out in the morning to erase the negative memory of this day and Lisa will go with Mike to get a Roe Deer in the early morning. We have our usual marvelous meal, starring a superb salmon mousse, and go to bed exhausted from emotions, but feeling better.

Saturday, Sept.18th:

This will be the last day of hunting for all. Lisa & Mike go early for Roe Deer and she takes a beautiful perfect miniature, actually a good size for that species. After breakfast T. & L. meet John and Gordon and off they go in the Land Rover,

up into those beloved hills for the last time. John is tense and quiet, desperately anxious to get T. a Stag; T. is happy and excited to be hunting where and with whom he wishes; L. is happy for him and deeply grateful to be back in the hills that have captured her heart; Gordon is sighing: he was "out last night", and says that this will certainly be a long day. After only a short drive up the track, at the low wood where they had often seen various animals, they stop. John says that those will do, and off go John & T., while L. & Gordon settle in for the duration. Talk, snack, walk, nap, more talk, all the while watching the surrounding hills with the binoculars and listening for the shot. L. explores another little spring, sipping from a tiny waterfall, to taste that earthy peatwater, certainly possessed of mystical qualities. She wonders what they are! Back to the Rover and going on 4 hours later the shot, one shot, is heard. Gordon tries to raise John on the Walkie-talkie. Silence. They wait. And wait. During these hours the conversation has certainly ranged widely over many topics, including local flora, fauna ("There are Voipers like, but I've never seen none. And we have a worm like, sort of a wee snakie, but tis a worm.") and lots of bulletins on the wildlife in the hills ("There are some hinds, and a Sika stag; there's a Red, but tis only a little staggie like, lyin' in that bern.") At long last T. & John, trying to act blasé or even sad, but exuding a certain glow. The truth is that they have braved veritable hordes of Sika, a Roe doe and the ever-present sheep, sheep, and T. has taken a switch, a stag with long delicate horns. These are culled to take them out of the gene-pool and so he has not only had an absolutely thrilling stalk and a perfect one-shot kill but has done the herd a service and has a really lovely, balanced and graceful set of antlers. The rejoicing goes on non-stop as they drive to the top where the Argo awaits and Gordon takes it to pick up the stag. John & T. & L. return to the Lodge and the re-living, one of the best parts of any hunt, goes on: "Crawling between the stumps and stones and the Sika and the sheep was like crawling through a minefield!" When the Argo arrives Dale & L. take pictures and John & Gordon go for the "cooker" which boils the head so that it will be allowed into the States. Then T. goes to clean his rifles and L. has tea in the kitchen with Frank & Hugo and then begins, reluctantly, to organize her packing. Lisa is going to try for another Stag; Dale will hunt Sika later. John and Gordon are carefully dressing the stag and the day, a fine day, begins to draw to a close. Dinner is a little late, but everyone is present, Lisa without stag, Dale with a good Sika stag. Dinner is a masterpiece, including lamb ragout, leeks, carrots, potatoes, all preceded by a real Haggis (!) and followed by a perfect pineapple cheesecake. (L. hears the voice of Jenny Craig softly summoning.) Because this is the last night the talk goes on a little later in the lounge and L. is snapping pictures for the memories. Bed is welcome, but there is an underlying longing to turn the clock back and make the week begin instead of end.

Just before Dinner, John comes to say good-bye. We exchange addresses and affectionate farewells, all agreeing to be friends, near or far, from now on. And indeed, there is a certainty, apparent from the beginning, that there is a real bond, the kind that does make friends forever. It's always a delightful surprise

to discover a friend unexpectedly, where ever that happens. We agree that today has indeed erased the negative aspects of yesterday and that one off day in a week is a very good score for any hunt or holiday.

Sunday, Sept.19th:

Last mornings are always difficult when a place and the people there have been so special and so dear. We have our "lasts": Coffee together in L.'s room, looking out on the cow fields and the hills beyond, which today are battered by fierce winds and driving rain. (Frank says, looking out the window of the lounge after breakfast, "Scotland is crying because you're leaving".); Last so-called shower for T. This is a two-person project, L. adjusting the temperature of the water through the mixing hose, which counters by trying to escape from the spigots. When it succeeds, scalding or freezing water bursts over the tub and its occupant and water of the opposite extreme sprays out of the hose. Poor T. howls and scrubs and L. tries to subdue the beast. Semi-success: cleaner man; last breakfast with the others in the bright kitchen, a cheerful room even on a dark morning. Last porridge, which L., to her absolute astonishment, has learned to like, even to crave, in the mornings. It is "Medium Ground", which is indeed much nicer than the gluey flakes she had to eat as a child; a last "interview" by Dale, in the lounge, squinting into the Video camera light and trying to say intelligent things about the week while beginning to miss this place so much; finally, all the luggage is piled in the front hall. Lisa has a little rental car and she will drive down to London to meet up with friends and tour for about three weeks. Lots of hugs, addresses traded, tips left in the rooms, notes written, everything loaded into 2 cars and off into the wet grey morning. L. rides with Frank, T. with Mike. Dale is staying another week, for which we envy him mightily, but he goes along because he just loves to see new things, one of his real charms. L. watches the by-now familiar scenes go by and says good-bye for now, with the absolute certainty that we will return. Gordon goes by in the Land Rover and waves. on to Inverness. At the station we happen to meet one of the couples who will be staying at the Lodge next week. Snarl. L. experiences her usual jealousy regarding the next people in while she is going out of a favorite place. She and Frank and Dale have a little lunch in the Snack Shop and suddenly the train is there. Fond good-byes, promises to keep in touch and half-formed plans for next year. Already, lovely little mental images of the week past are flickering before us and the ride to Glasgow, amid many bellowing children, is a blend of emotions and memories. We check into the Stakis Ingrham Hotel in Glasgow and enter that gray zone of Culture Shock that accompanies coming out of the country. Fitful slumber.

Monday, Sept.20th:

Breakfast, cab, airport. Because there is no bulkhead seat, as requested, for T's long legs, United earns our lifelong gratitude and destroys our future travel budgets by upgrading us to Connoisseur Class, their version of Business Class. Caviar, smoked salmon & prociutto canapés, filet minion, chocolate mousse, Godiva chocolates. God said: Let's let 'em down easy, Reality will come soon

enough. And indeed, only Hugo could have fed us as well or better. We look again and again, with different eyes, at a copy of the Scottish Sporting Gazette. All the images seem real now, the Estates, the Beasts, the styles and the lovely landscapes. And we make plans for the next time. And head for home. This has been, without doubt, one of the most wonderful Holidays either of us have ever had. Thank you Scotland.