



The English Lake District

During April, we visited friends from our 2015 stay in Lancashire. While we were there, we also took a one-day tour of the Lake District including a Victorian trolley, a steam train ride from a lovely little Victorian station, and a lunch cruise on Lake Windermere.



There was also a trip up the Blackpool Tower, with a view of the “Coney Island” type amusement park on the pier.



We enjoyed it so much, that we spent another week this summer in The Lake District, in Cumbria – which in June is incredibly green and verdant.





We stayed in a 170 year old vicarage converted into a B&B – dog friendly, so Molly got to join us on our hikes.



There are hundreds of miles of hiking trails in Cumbria. The most memorable, for us, was this one to a former slate mine. The piles of gray stone in this photo are the cast-off slate that the miners brought out, but which was not good enough for use in buildings.



Here are Wendy and Molly on the patio, where we ate a number of meals.....



or fences



Which we shared with one of the locals who joined us each night at our table.



This was known as Slater's Bridge. The slate miners used it to cross the river between town and the mines.



One portion was a single eight foot long slab of slate.



The other half was an arched bridge made of smaller slate stones.



This is Cathedral Cavern, named for the giant arches that look like they could have come from a cathedral.



Like any good hike, it ended at a wee quaint pub....with awesome broccoli and stilton blue cheeses soup and great choices on tap.



This was another hike, at higher altitude. Which ended at the highest pub in Cumbria

(building in left of picture), at Kirkstone Pass.
What a view !



The next hike visited Aira Force (from the Norse fors meaning waterfall), where the water runs down from the fells (Norse for high ground) and cut a ghyll (rocky ravine) in the way down. Remember, the Vikings ruled this part of Britain for a long time.



I swear I saw a number of beautiful water nymphs frolicking in this pool, and washing their long red hair in the falls behind those rocks. Wendy claims she saw nothing, and the camera obviously didn't pick them up either. It must be something to do with magical creatures.....



.....or my trip to the Drunken Duck Pub.....



Named for a local tale of a farm-wife who found her ducks dead in the barnyard, so rather than let them go to waste, she plucked them.....before realizing that the still had sprung a leak into their food trough. When the ducks sobered up and found themselves featherless, she felt so guilty, that she knitted them all sweaters. That's no less believable than my story of the nymphs.....

This next photo is a prehistoric earthwork, known as King Arthur's Round Table. It consists of a 20 meter circular raised area (highlighted in yellow), surrounded by a concentric ditch and then a concentric dike. No one knows what it was originally for, but it got its name because it gives the appearance of a large round table inside the walls of a large round room. That is not what it is, as since it is prehistoric, it came long before the

Arthur legend. But it is interesting nonetheless.



During the trip we also made a visit to Doune Castle, in Scotland perhaps best known for being the castle in the Monty Python and the Holy Grail.



And we stumbled across the Doune Hill Climb sports care event, sponsored by the Motor Sports Association (MSA) and part of the Scottish Hill Climb Championship. On a day when my old IUPUI Motorsports team was racing at the Road America circuit, in the rolling hills of Wisconsin's Kettle Moraine woods, I was walking alongside a track cut through a very similar woods, with the course surrounded, and often overhung, by trees.



There were a number of interesting cars competing. #105 is a Lotus 2-Eleven, from Wick near our home in Thurso – I’m gonna have to find that guy.



#39 is a Westfield Megabusa. #40 is a Fisher Fury.



A pair of obligatory classic MGs.



And #47 is a Westfield XTR2. If ever I decided to bring Thumper over from the USA, this hill climb stuff could be an entertaining pastime.



We also attended a Masonic celebration of the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Grand Lodge of England. I was invited to participate as the token American, so I wore my western-cut tux, boots, and bolo. Wendy wore her cow girl formal and white boots. Same outfits we got married in, and they fit !



“Did not strong connections draw me elsewhere, I believe Scotland would be the country I would choose to end my days in.”

Benjamin Franklin