

INTRODUCTION:

We have been asked to tell about our foreign trips. So we decided to alternate--in chronological order, beginning in 1995. Before we begin, I would like to congratulate Phyllis for having such good programs over the last several years. She is entitled to have a mediocre program once in a while...

(Turkey) '95

'96 We flew to Ireland in 1996, landing in Dublin where we picked up our bus tour. We headed south and visited many interesting places. We visited the Blarney Stone, but didn't go up to kiss it. Upon returning to Dublin, we took a new guide for Northern Ireland. The entire country was the cleanest country I have ever seen! No trash along the roads, in the streets, not anywhere. Also, everything was well painted: houses, doors, fences, etc.

Ireland was discovered by the Vikings who built Dublin—which means “Black Hole.” The weather was a lot warmer than where they came from—and they liked it. Before this trip neither of us knew about the prehistoric monuments in Ireland: We visited four—but there are more than 300!! (Angagh bought a book about them.) One optional excursion we took brought us along a road along a river. Nearby was a tall circular stone tower with the lowest opening about 50 feet from the ground. A rope ladder hung down from the opening to the ground. The original inhabitants built it to protect themselves from enemies.

At another location along the river we drove up to the top of a plateau about 40 acres in size, 12 to 20 ft. higher than the rest of the terrain. By the way, we were interested in seeing the peat bogs—and they were exactly the same as we had heard. They are called “Irish Gold” because after getting the peat out, they stacked it up in piles to dry—and later sold it. Fifty years later the same bed can be harvested again. (And I should mention that I am half Irish!)

'97 (Old Mexico)

'98 It is a long, long, way from CA to New Zealand—17 hrs. to be exact. Then on another plane to Melbourne in Australia—3 and one-half hours more, making a total of 20 and one-half hours in one 24 hr. period. After visiting Melbourne we flew to Alice Springs in the Outback where the American Tracking Station for satellites is located. An American colony operates it.

On to Ayers Rock—one huge monolith. There we visited the Aborigine Museum. Also, the two of us flew in a helicopter over the Olgas, which is a group of gigantic monoliths. From Cairns, we took a boat out to the Great Barrier Reef where a small island had been built for the tourist trade. Next, we took a tram ride over the Rain Forest. Our last city in Australia was Sydney, a most interesting city with its Coat-hanger Bridge and its famous bird-like Opera House!

New Zealand is called the Garden Country—and it lives up to its name. We were even taken to a bottling plant because its grounds were so gorgeous!! Also, New Zealand has more sheep than people! From New Zealand we flew to Rarotonga which is an island in the Cook Islands—just for an hour.

On the way home we spent 3 days in Waikiki, mainly to break up the long flight home.

'98 (Honeymoon in Britain and France)

'99 The next trip—4 weeks—took us to Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal—plus Gibraltar. Some of the cities we visited were Rome, the Vatican, Florence, Venice, Athens, Olympia, Madrid, Toledo, Lisbon, and Oporto. All were fantastic!

'99 (Central Europe)

2000 The Holy Land—Israel and Jordan. We visited many famous and historical places in Israel, including Masada, where the remaining Jews committed suicide rather than to surrender to the Romans in 73 A.D., and Qumran—where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The Old City of Jerusalem was surprisingly small: only about one square mile, while the modern city of Jerusalem was very large!

The reason we went to Jordan was to visit Petra, the Pink City of the Desert! This ancient city was not discovered by the rest of the world until the 19th century. It was founded by the Naboteans, a nomadic Arabic tribe around the sixth century, BC. They came to this huge canyon on the crossroads of the ancient world where the pink stone was easily carved and where there was plenty of water. They settled and collected tribute from every caravan who passed by, by providing shelter and water—for a price. When the

Romans arrived, they added a Roman city. Today it is Jordan's greatest tourist attraction!!! Please look at the book on Petra on the table.

2002 (Costa Rica)

2002

This year we took a cruise on the Gulf of Mexico (beginning in Houston) on a new 800-passenger Greek cruise ship called the Olympic Voyager. There were 4 stops, 2 in Mexico, one in Honduras and one in Belize. There was a choice of activities on shore; but we chose to see the Maya ruins in Mexico and Honduras and a city tour in Belize (which used to be called British Honduras).

This is the end of our prepared program. We are so happy with all our travels that it is difficult to keep our story short. Each country could be a program by itself if we went into details. So--let us know what you would like to hear in the future....

(We did not include trips to Canada
or the U.S.)