

Athy-Scotland-England-Spain, October & November 2013

Sunday 20 October 2013. Set out from Jaffrey on a beautiful mild day for the bus terminal in Nashua. Took the Boston Express bus to Logan. Checked my bag and then went to Terminal B for dinner at Legal Sea Foods. Through security. Now waiting for my Aer Lingus flight to Dublin.

Boarded the plane; about 2/3rds full. Left on time and arrived early.

Monday 21 October 2013. Joe was there to meet me. Rainy. Headed to Enniskerry through heavy rush-hour traffic. Welcomed by Barbara. A good full Irish breakfast. Then a long nap.

Later in the day Joe and I went into Enniskerry to pick up some dry-cleaning, then to Dun Laoghaire to the Shackleton-Hurley photos exhibit at the Ferry Terminal. Back home and a drink then a very good Fish Pie for dinner. To bed reasonably early.

Tuesday 22 October 2013. Slept in to past 9am. Breakfast. Now typing up these notes. Overcast and some rain. Into Bray with Joe: he renews his car registration and I use the ATM. Later in afternoon we drive into Dublin to the Collins Barracks—the National Museum, Decorative Arts and History. A marvelous building. Have a later lunch there. Back in Enniskerry around 6pm. Drinks and then later into the village to ?? restaurant for a nice dinner.

Wednesday 23 October 2013. Up and pack. Joe will take my main bag to my B&B in Athy today. He takes me to the airport to meet his daughter and to leave me at the bus to Belfast. A nice ride, nearly 2 hours. Arrive and go to the Crown Bar for a beer and fish and chips (probably the worst I've ever had). Over to the Vodafone store and get a new SIM card and put £20 on it. Go to Boots for some medicine, then a look at the Linen Hall Library, somewhat akin to the Boston Athenaeum. Then to Jury's Inn to meet Jim McAdam at 4pm. Have a cup of coffee and type up these notes. Jim picked me up shortly after 4pm and we left Belfast and rounded Lough Neigh to the north. After leaving Churchtown we went on to a track and started to climb. Then arrived at their house which is about 8 years old and designed by them. Some lovely features: double-glazed windows, lovely plaster work, a restored Aga, in-floor heating, lots of light. We enjoyed a drink then had a very nice beef bourguignon type of stew. Wine and conversation. To bed.

Thursday 24 October 2013. Lovely sunrise. After porridge (with whisky) and toast I had a look around the outside with Jim, admiring his 1960s Massey Ferguson tractor. We had lettuce and nettle soup for lunch and not long afterwards Jim and I set out for a circular tour of the district, through Cookstown and Moneymore. Stopped at Springhill, a National Trust property. The house was closed but we walked around the grounds. Draperstown. Stopped at the Shepherd's Rest pub and had a pint in front of the coal fire. On to Plumbridge through the Glenelly valley—very picturesque. To Gortin, reputed to have 13 pubs but we only counted 5. Eventually back to the house. Had a drink, then off to Maghera where Jim is to give a talk. On the way stopped for dinner in Magherafelt at

the The Church Street Restaurant. Quite nice. Jim's talk was on *Irish Polar Explorers—Arctic and Antarctic*. Back to the house and to bed.

Friday 25 October 2013. Heavy rain during the night and foggy in the morning but better as the day progressed. Jim, Geraldine and I set out after breakfast and headed south through Cookstown, ??, ??. Drove around Armagh and saw both cathedrals—the Catholic and the church of Ireland. A nice city. Eventually joined the main road between Belfast and Dublin, got on the M50 and then headed west on the road to Athy. Stopped at Avoca for lunch—fish and chips. (Better than the ones I had at the Crown.) Got to Athy and went to the Council chambers for the 4pm reception. Enjoyed a glass of wine with Headland, Zaz, Charles Swithinbank, the Burtons, Brad Borkan, et al. The McAdams then took me to the Aurora House where I would stay for the next two nights. Picked up a few things then we went on to Seamus and Miriam Taaffe's house for a dinner of Irish stew. There were Paul Davies and Geir ??. Then to the Heritage Centre for the opening reception. Met up with Jonathan, Arthur and Carol Shackleton, Janice Tipping, and others. The Australian ambassador opened things and not long after we were over at O'Briens enjoying a drink. Sometime later I walked back to the Aurora House, about a mile.

Saturday 26 October 2013. Not a bad morning. Had a full Irish breakfast, then set out by foot to the Heritage Centre. Met up with Joan Booth by the railroad station. The talks on Saturday and Sunday were excellent on the whole. Had lunch with Jonathan at Bradbury's, joined by Paul Davies and Joan Booth later. Walked back to the B&B, changed and was picked up by Frank Taaffe at 5:25, and went, along with a Spanish couple, to Frank and Bridg's house for the usual drinks party. Then to the Clanard Court Hotel for the annual banquet, good as usual. By taxi to O'Briens for a pint or two. Seamus gave me a ride back to the B&B sometime after midnight.

Sunday 27 October 2013. A bright morning. Walked into Athy and arrived about 9:30 for the start at 10. Another good day. Had sandwiches and a beer for lunch and a beer at the close at O'Briens and then with Jonathan to pick up my bag at Aurora House, then to the market to buy wine. We then drove to Abbeyleix and Arthur and Carol's house. Ion and Monica arrived and we had a nice dinner of fish pie.

Monday 28 October 2013. Bank Holiday Monday. A nice Full Irish cooked up by Arthur and not long after on our way to Mullagh, arriving around 3 or so. Have some lunch and get settled. At 8pm have a hearty dinner of pork (from the Shackleton's farm) along with soup and desserts done up by the two WOOPERS, from Switzerland and Germany (Laura and Suzanne). Both Jane and Hannah showed up. I am now writing these notes up at 10:30pm.

Tuesday 29 October 2013. After breakfast the Woofers, Jonathan and Daphne and I went off to a foxhunt at ?? House in Navan. Lovely day and very colorful. Back again and spent most of the afternoon working on the computer and relaxing. Dinner at Lakeview but can't quite remember what we had.

Wednesday 30 October 2013. Jonathan and I drove into Dublin and our first stop was with John ?? an older man who had a painting that he thought might include Frank Shackleton. Couldn't determine one way or another. A marvelous flat with lots of Georgian architectural salvage added. From there we went to Jonathan's sister, Lydia, for lunch with her two daughters, Ruth and Rachel. Lydia, Jonathan and I then went to Airfield, ah historic house and garden that was just re-opening after much renovation. Extensive gardens and landscaping some of which Daphne's been working on. From there to a nearby shopping center where Jonathan picked up a printer for Daphne. Then back to Lakeview House. That evening we went to ?? on the road to Virginia and had a very nice though expensive dinner. With us: Jonathan, Daphne, Hannah, Jane and her boyfriend Patrick.

Thursday 31 October 2013. Up around 6am. Jonathan drove me to Virginia where I got the 7:25 bus directly to the airport. No difficulties at the airport. Arrived at Glasgow airport on time and picked up a car at Enterprise: a big hulking Vauxhall with automatic transmission. Had the GPS on and no problem finding the Erskine Bridge and following directions. Stopped at Luss and walked around this restored village on the shore of Loch Lomond. Had fish and chips and a pint at the Lock Lomond Arms. Up through Tarbet, to Cairndow, then over to Inverary where I parked and went to the Tourist Information Centre and picked up brochures. Also dropped into the George Inn which Falcon had recommended. Had a look around and visited the loo. On again through very pretty countryside though it was raining most of the time. Through Lochgilphead and eventually arrived at Craobh Haven and found Falcon and Jane's with no difficulty. Their two sons arrived on foot at about the same time (Christopher and Charles). Had a cup of coffee and later some gin and wine along with a delicious homemade chicken pie. Some conversation then to bed rather early.

Friday 1 November 2013. Up around 8 and after a shower, had a bowl of cereal and toast and coffee. Jane and Falcon off to walk the dogs. I'm now typing up the past two days. Rainy and gray. Around 10 Falcon and I drove up to Lunga House, a fantastic place inside and a perfect venue for the SouthPole-sium. Spoke with Meg and went over details and asked questions; then toured the place. Then drove around the estate: many small non-conforming houses that the Laird has allowed to be built. We drove out to the end of the peninsula, to a very old church ruin, to Ardferrn where we had lunch in the café, then peeked inside the pub. Also had a look at the Village Hall. Then to Kilmartin where we checked out the museum (but didn't go in). Bought a map of the area at the shop. Then we went to some of the nearby burial mounds and a stone circle. Then over the Crinan canal to the canal entrance at Crinan. A very quaint place. Then drove back to Falcon's just as it was getting dark. A full day. To the pub that night for a Halloween Blast.

Saturday 2 November 2013. After breakfast I headed south to see the Landmark Trust houses at Saddell. Very rainy with some road flooding. At Tarbert stopped for coffee and a sandwich and decided because of the weather to head back to Falcon's.

Once there, worked on my photos and had a short nap.

Falcon cooked up a good dinner and afterwards we watched an episode of Monk.

Sunday 3 November 2013. Up at 7am and off by 8, heading for Glasgow Airport. Up to Oban, then east to ??, then south along Loch Lomond. Some snow on the distant mountains. Got to the airport about 11:30, returned car and had plenty of time before the flight. Had a pink and a bowl of skink soup.

Arrived at LHR and tube to Waterloo. Checked in to the Union Jack Club. Had a drink or two in my room, then up to Caprini for veal marsala. Back to the Club and to bed.

Monday 4 November 2013. Full Monty breakfast at the UJC. Got a call from Mark Heathcote and learned that it's today not tomorrow that I'm due to meet up with him and Gill Blenkinsop. Get organized and take the tube to Sloane Square and catch the 319 bus to Wandsworth. Give Mark a ring and shows up in 10 minutes or so and fetches me. We go back to his house and then in his car to Gill's house, a large family house associated with the Oates family. Brian Oates lives across the street. She has some very nice things: A first edition of Cherry Garrard in dustwrapper; vol III of the South Polar Times signed by Caroline Oates; an oil portrait of LEG Oates and his sister as very young children; two oil portraits of Caroline Oates; some of Bowers' journals transcribed by Caroline Oates; some other letters and documents. She says that Brian has a lot more Oates stuff. She's not sure what to do with it all. Possibly to SPRI.

Back to Mark's for lunch with him and Sue. I then walk back to the bus stop and go back to Sloane Square. Then tube to Green Park and to my bank. Can't create a new account as I don't live in the UK. So I'll keep my savings account and use up my checks over time.

No 9 bus to the RGS where I relaxed in the Members Room, met Mike Bullock quite by chance, met up with Wendy Driver, Cathy Cooper, Lora ? and Mark Heathcote for a very good talk by Alan Hinkes, a mountaineer who has climbed all 14 over 8,000 meter mountains. Went to the Gore Hotel afterwards for a nice dinner. Mark and I walked to South Ken, then tube to Waterloo, to the UJC and to bed.

Tuesday 5 November 2013. Over to Waterloo to use the ATM, then breakfast at McDonalds. Back to the UJC and typed up these notes. Spoke with Mary Cavanagh. Headed out to the Spanish Tourist Office which unfortunately has relocated. So to Leicester Square to buy a ticket for "Jeeves and Wooster." Same as theatre price so I headed for the Duke of York. £57! Then went over to the "Lamb and Flag" for a pint and ham and cheese sandwich, where I'm typing this up. Then to Stanfords to buy a map of the Costa Brava. Back to the UJC and rested my eyes for a bit. Later, a drink, then to Leicester Square by tube and to The Salisbury for a pint and peanuts. The show started at 7:30, a full house. Very good and very funny. Three actors playing numerous roles. Back to the UJC and a pint in the bar and then to bed.

Wednesday 6 November 2013. Checked out of the UJC after a big breakfast and took tube via the Northern Line, change at Warren, to Kings Cross. Just made the 10:15 to Cambridge, arriving around 11. Took a cab to the Warkworth House Hotel and checked into Room 2. Got reorganized and then headed to the Panton Arms where I am now typing this up. Then to SPRI and to the Archives which open at 2pm. Started up again on the Cape Adare Times. At 5 to the hotel and a drink, then over to the Prince Regent to

meet up with Pete & Donna Cavanagh. First time Pete & I have met since the SIAFU trip. Went from there to the Chinese restaurant on the corner for a meal. Back to the hotel and to bed.

Thursday 7 November 2013. Good breakfast at the hotel then over to SPRI at 9:30. Worked most of the day with a break for lunch at the Alma and a visit to the Royal Bank of Scotland. Met with Naomi to go over details of publishing the Cape Adare Times. Then back to the hotel to fetch my bag. Got a taxi to the station and was soon on my way to Bishops Stortford. Mary Cavanagh met me at the station and we went back to her place, nice as ever. Had a drink, then down the hill to an Indian restaurant. Terrific food. Then to bed.

Friday 8 November 2013. Mary dropped me off at the station and I took the train into London. To the National Arts Library at the V&A, ordered some auction catalogues, then to The Crown for a pint and an hamburger. Took the tube, not from South Ken which was closed but from Knightsbridge which I had to walk to, to Victoria and then to West Dulwich for the James Caird Society AGM and talk, by Angie Butler, and dinner. Took the train back and a taxi to Mary's. Here friends Elaine and Claire were there. We chatted and then to bed.

Saturday 9 November 2013. Up early and around 7:30 off by cab to Stansted. No difficulties. Had a nice breakfast, then lined up for the plane. About a 2 hour flight to Girona. Warm and sunny. Picked up the rental car and headed off for Empuriabrava where Mary's flat is. A gigantic marina community. Nice 2-bedroom small flat with a balcony. Not too far from the sea. Upstairs to Delores' flat, a friend of Mary's. She prepared a nice lunch of sandwiches, tomatoes, cheese, wine, etc. Walked around the area, along the beach and one of the main streets. Many shops were closed as the season is over. Later met up with Delores again and drove to Palmadora and walked around this old town. Dark but with lights most everywhere. Casino in the old castle. Met friends of Delores: Dorothy and E? Had some local champagne (cava) at a restaurant. Then we headed back stopping at in Muga at Restaurant Le Muga. Had some local dishes including fresh mushrooms. Back to Mary's and to bed.

Sunday 10 November 2013. Headed off after breakfast. To the Aero Club to watch some skydiving: pretty hairy! Also there is the ??, a big wind tunnel affair that gives one the sensation of skydiving. Then to Castello, the nearby old historic town where we parked and walked around. Had a look at the Cathedral. From there to Cadaques, approached by a twisty road going up and going down. Drove through the town then to the edge where Dali's house is. Need to book ahead so couldn't get in. My right knee hurting. Continued on and stopped for lunch at the ?? Had a good paella and wine. Gradually worked our way back and went through Para?? again, this time in daylight. Back to Mary's flat for a quick lie-down then a drink. Met up with Delores and drove up to Roses to see Pilar a friend of Delores and Mary's. Walked up the road with them and had tapas and wine at a local place. Watched some TV, then to bed. During the night the Trans Montana winds started blowing.

Monday 11 November 2013. Trans Montana winds still blowing but a sunny and blue sky. Had breakfast and typed up these notes. Didn't do much during the day: dropped a chair off for the canvas to be prepared. Drove out to a sporting goods store for Mary to find ski trousers. Had a long lunch at a seafood place overlooking the beach. A little siesta. Finished up the gin. Around 8 went out to a Thai restaurant up the road. Watched a little TV.

Tuesday 12 November 2013. Got up around 4:30am and had a glass of juice. Headed off by 5 and were at the Girona airport by 7. Checked in and were soon on our way. Had a coffee and a breakfast bun at the airport while waiting for a taxi. To Mary's house where I'm now typing up these notes.

Went into Bishops Stortford. To the Post Office for stamps; then the station to buy a ticket for tomorrow; then to the Library to check e-mail. Some other errands, then back to her house. Now typing this up after finally getting around to doing some postcards. A drink or two. Mary shows up around 6:30 and after a bit we go to Il ??, the Italian restaurant, and have a nice dinner. Walk back to her house and to bed.

Wednesday 13 November 2013. Up around 7 or so and finish packing. A cup of coffee, then Mary drives me to the station. Take the train to Tottenham Hale, take the tube to Finsbury Park and change to the Piccadilly Line. Change to the Heathrow train at Barons Court. Fly to Dublin, and now waiting to get my flight to Boston. Reading e-mail and typing up these notes. Through security twice and finally on our way from Dublin. Soon after I arrive, the Boston Express bus to Nashua arrives. My car is still in the parking lot and it starts up fine. Stop at Market Basket on the way back and get some groceries. Also gas, the price of which has dropped significantly since I left. Arrived at a cold house: turned the water on and the furnace and went to bed.