

RECAP OF OUR JOURNEY TO IRELAND , SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND

Jim and Anne Bevis

Greetings, dear friends,

Thanks for your interest in our once-in-a-lifetime 50th Anniversary journey to Ireland , Scotland and England . It was an amazing journey, each step of the way. Thanks to all of you who prayed for us and to those who made anniversary gifts toward our trip. Even though Anne and I contracted bronchitis during the journey, we never missed an experience. Each day was high adventure.

In making an effort to identify the highlights, I would list these hallmarks:

1. The goodness of the Lord which we experience every day, in some way.
2. The incredible beauty of Ireland and Scotland . Beyond description.
3. The opportunity to experience the lands of our heritage i.e. Robert the Bruce, William Wallace, St. Patrick and many others.
4. The extraordinary opportunity to visit the Bevis-Marks Synagogue in London .

DAY 1 – OCTOBER 2.

EN ROUTE

We departed from the Atlanta Airport on Delta for our nine hour flight to Dublin .At the last minute, God gave us wonderful seats after we had been assigned middle seats.

DAY 2 – OCTOBER 3

DUBLIN

We arrived in Dublin , Ireland . Connected with our tour group and enjoyed our first evening in Ireland at the Burlington Hotel. After a briefing from our Tour Director we had our first night's rest in Ireland – an incredibly beautiful land.

♪♪♪ We had a wonderful guide who really knew his history, he was incredible in his ability to make the day interesting. We started the day off with a thought for the day from the driver and then all the married couples should start the day with a kiss. He had many funny stories as well. Did you know that chickens are called “chucks” in Ireland ? Instead of “okey-dokey” they say “okey cokey”, cookies are “biscuits”, candy is “lollys”, trucks are “loresys” a wife is “me lady”

DAY 3 – OCTOBER 4

DUBLIN

On our first day of touring, we took a sightseeing tour of Dublin , a city of approximately one million people. We saw the President's Home, toured the Dublin Castle , the guest house of all visiting royalty to Ireland . In the evening, we went to a local for dinner and an Irish Cabaret.

♪♪♪ The Viking town of Dublin was, by the 10th century, dominated by a fortress which was captured by Anglo-Norman invaders in 1170. In 1204 King John order construction of a castle which became the administrative headquarters of the English colony in Ireland . Amazing !!!

DAY 4 – OCTOBER 5

DUBLIN – WATERFORD

We drove to Kildare on our most comfortable tour bus to visit one of the country's main racehorse breeding center. Most interesting. We continued to the medieval town of Kilkenny to see the 9th century Reginald's Tower and the 13th century castle. As we drove through the Wicklow mountains we visited St. Kevin's Monastic Center where monks were trained by St. Kevin and St. Patrick. We have a deeper appreciation for the ministry of St. Patrick in saving Ireland from the pagans. We spent the evening at the Dooley Hotel in Waterford .

♪♪♪ You can't help but be aware of the sacrifice, the lives that earnestly desired freedom from oppression and the freedom to worship God not the Monarch who saw himself as the head of the church. It was amazing to see the remains of Abby's dating back to the 9th century/ So awe inspiring and reminded me that the "stones do cry out". In the Wicklow Mts. Glendalough is the site of a monastery founded in the 6th century by St. Kevin. The monastery was a center for learning for over 600 years, surviving several raids by Vikings. St. Kevin lived to be 120 yrs. Old. Born in 498 died in 618. He is credited with many miracles, one was turning water into Ale. He gave some poor travelers the meal he had prepared for his workers, they were upset so he took the bones from the meat and the water prayed and the bones were re-covered in meat and the water turned to Ale.

DAY 5 – OCTOBER 6

WATERFORD – KILLARNEY

With the other 26 members of our tour, we took the coastal road via the fishing village of Dungarvan to Ireland's second city of Cork. We made a brief stop at the Famine Graveyard where many were buried in unmarked graves during the famine on 1845-1850. We visited Blarney Castle where we climbed the 120 steps to the tower of Blarney Castle to kiss the Blarney Stone. We spent the evening in the Killarney Towers Hotel.

♪♪♪ This Castle was another high point of our journey. Blarney Castle dates back to the middle ages and is famous for its "Stone of Eloquence". Legend has it if you kiss the stone you will be struck with eloquence and never be at a loss for words. ☺ Yes, I did kiss it !

DAY 6 – OCTOBER 7

KILLARNEY

We took the Ring of Kerry bus tour where we saw superb seascapes, towering cliffs and spectacular mountains. We were most impressed with the unhurried Irish life and the warmth of the people as we traveled through charming villages. In the evening we went to a wonderful country inn, the Kate Kearney Cottage. After an excellent dinner we were entertained by a trio providing traditional Irish music. At the band's invitation, Anne joined them in singing "Danny Boy", "St. Louis Blues," and "When Irish eyes are smiling" She was the hit of the evening.

♪♪♪ What a fun night, we had sung some Irish songs on our Coach and someone set me up to do a little number with the band. This was a place where participation was a must and I got volunteered. They love American Music especially the blues so "St. Louie" got the spot light. :) I literally sang for my supper.

DAY 7 – OCTOBER 8

KILLARNEY – LIMERICK

After another peaceful night's sleep, we journeyed through the picturesque Village of Adare proclaimed to be the "prettiest village in Ireland." From Adare we went to Limerick, one of Ireland's largest cities. Limerick is located on the shores of the Shannon, Ireland's longest river. We saw the ruins of King John's Castle and St. Mary's Cathedral. After dinner, we went to a wonderful Irish Music show featuring Liam O'Connor, formerly of River Dance. Lim is an amazing accordionist who holds the Guinness Record for being able to play eleven notes per second. The show included singers and Irish dancers. We spent the night at the George Boutique Hotel in downtown Limerick.

♪♪♪ One of my most favorite evenings. Liam and His family thrilled the audience with their talent. His wife was an extraordinary singer, she sang with such connection to Ireland. Their daughter could dance the Irish (river dance style like none other, she looked to be about 12 and her two little brothers played the Irish drum. They stole the show. The show ended with Mrs. O'Conner singing Amazing Grace and I felt every word of that song.

DAY 8 – OCTOBER 9

LIMERICK – ROSSES POINT

We visited Galway, one of Ireland's most cherished cities. We saw the Cathedral of St. Nicolas where Columbus reputedly heard Mass before sailing for America. We visited Eyre Square, dedicated to the late U.S. President John F. Kennedy. It was in Galway that we encountered the "Taste Buds," fifty young people running throughout the central city covered in red, skin-tight costumes. We moved on to Cork, the town where "The Quiet Man" was filmed with John Wayne and Maureen O'hara. We spent the evening in the Yeates Country Hotel.

♪♪♪ Maureen O'Hara still owns a home in the area, it is said you often see her strolling the street of her hometown. Lovely experience.

DAY 9 – OCTOBER 10

ROSSES POINT- BALLYGALLY

We visited the famous Belleek Pottery Center before passing the Blue Stack Mountains on our way to Londonderry in Northern Ireland. We had a wonderful, local guide who led us on a walking tour of Londonderry. Leaving Londonderry, we continued around the coast to Giant's Causeway, an amazing volcanic rock formation at the sea side of Antrim. It is one of Europe's most unusual natural phenomena. We spent the evening at the Londonderry Arms Hotel.

♪♪♪ The Belleek Pottery Center is known for its marble works and amazing pottery. Established in the early 1800's. You would also know that Londonderry was very much in our modern day history with the IRA warfare and the conflict between the Protestants and Catholic, the peace agreement was only signed in the early 2000's. Tony Blair was the negotiator and Prime Minister of England at that time.

DAY 10 – OCTOBER 11

BALLYGALLY – GLASCOW

At the port of Larne, we took an ocean-going ferry to Scotland. It was a pleasant two and a half hour sail across the North Channel. We drove the Ayrshire coastal drive, taking in the magnificent views of the Firth of Clyde and the Island of Arran along the way. We visited the town of Alloway, where we visited the Robert Burns' birthplace and Memorial. We spent the evening in Glasgow at the Raddison Blu Hotel.

♪♪♪ Robert Burns was the National Poet of Scotland. We visited the house where he was born complete with thatched roof and furniture of that time period early 1700's. Close by you see the Auld (old) Brig (Bridge) O'Doon famed for their scenes in the poets prose "Tam O' Shanter". I was shocked to find out that Robert Burns composed the song "Auld Lang Syne" which means "all through time". I can still smell the beautiful, fragrant roses that surrounded his home place, a wonderful quiet and restful setting.

DAY 11 – OCTOBER 12

GLASCOW – HIGHLANDS

It was only a short drive from Glasgow to the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond where we enjoyed a refreshing boat cruise on the lake. As we drove through the Highlands (mountains) of Ireland we saw the dramatic scenery of Glencoe's Valley of the Weeping. It was here in these very mountains where William Wallace lived and where "Braveheart" was filmed. We passed the island of Iona which was the center of Celtic Christianity.

♪♪♪ We came home and watched "Braveheart" again. We recognized so many sights that we had visited in the film.

DAY 12 – OCTOBER 13

HIGHLANDS

We stopped at the prehistoric Clava Stone Circle before crossing Culloden Moor, where Bonnie Prince Charlie's Jacobite army was defeated. The Clava Stone Circle is a pre-historic burial cemetery dating back to

2500-3000 B.C. We traveled on to Iverness, the capital of the Highlands, and mysterious Loch Ness “monster” is supposed to live. In the evening, we enjoyed a Highland Dinner and sampled haggis, a traditional Scottish dish cooked in a sheep’s stomach. Following dinner, we had an evening of traditional Scottish entertaining at the Highland Hotel, our hotel for two nights.

♪♪♪ HOWEVER, we did NOT see the Lochness Monster. The Scots don’t call Nessie a monster, she is a horse. We stood by watching for a “peek” but Nessie didn’t show, instead we spent a little time skipping stones in the lake and drinking hot chocolate in the cold, misty air. I also DID NOT eat the Haggis, the recipe is heart, liver, lung, oatmeal, and herbs cooked in a sheep’s stomach. I read recently where the Pope visited Scotland and requested this dish. UCK!!!

DAY 13 – OCTOBER 14

HIGHLANDS – EDINBURGH

A scenic drive took us through the Grampian Mountains to the Duke of Atholl’s Blair Castle , the site of Britain ’s only private army. This fully furnished castle was one of our favorite places. We had lunch in the beautiful town of St . Andrews, the home of golf and the prestigious St. Andrews University . We continued on to historic Edinburgh , the capital of Scotland . We spent our last two evenings in Scotland at the Edinburgh Marriott Hotel.

♪♪♪ This setting was breathtaking with peacocks on the front lawn, a Scottish “bag piper” playing on the parade grounds. The castle is said to have been started in 1269 by John Cormyn. It is still inhabited by members of the Clan Murray family who hold the title of Duke of Atholl.

♪♪♪ St. Andrews is known for its golf, its universities and beautiful scenery. It is the historical birth place of golf (oldest golf course in the world.) The earliest written evidence was a license issued in 1552. St. Andrews was named after St Andrew the apostle. The “burg” was an ecclesiastical center during the middle ages. Many aristocratic young men attended St. Andrews University including Prince William. I believe our tour guide said that John Knox preached there also.

DAY 14 – OCTOBER 15

EDINBURGH

On our last day of touring in Scotland , we took a guided tour of Edinburgh Castle, a magnificent castle on a mountain high above Edinburgh . We visited the “Crown Jewels of Scotland” worn only by royalty and a special “rock” called the “Rock of Destiny” which was a part of the exhibition. It is sent to London each time a new monarch is enthroned.

♪♪♪ This meant the most to me. In the early ‘ 30’s, my grandfather Isom had our geneology researched and we found Robert the Bruce, and the Bucanhann clan as a part of our Scott-Irish lineage. Our tour guide was ever so gracious to point out all the impact that these two families had on Ireland and Scotland . Edinburgh Castle was the fortress castle in which Robert the Bruce was crowned King of Scotland. He and William Wallace play a huge roll in the independence of Scotland . The Bruce was manipulated by his father to betray Wallace as he fought against Longshank. He did join in with Wallace’s fight to carry out Wallace’s commitment for an independent Scotland but only after William had been murdered. This Castle is a 12th century fortress that is built into volcanic rock, it is still used today as a military headquarters and also for visiting dignitaries. We also saw the room where King Charles the 1st was born. Was an amazing , historical journey.

DAY 15 – OCTOBER 16

EDINBURGH – LONDON

In the morning we said our “good-byes” to the tour members and Anne and I headed for the Waverly train station where we boarded the the modern East Coast train for our four-and-a-half hour journey to London ’s King Cross station. It was a beautiful ride along Scotland and England ’s East Coast as

we traveled through many towns including Newcastle , Doncaster and York. We arrived in London and went directly to our hotel, The Hilton Islington for our final two nights.

♪♪♪ One of our favorite modes of travel is the train. We were riding along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean and the beautiful green hillside's dotted with grazing sheep. I've never seen as many sheep as I saw in Scotland and Ireland they are everywhere! The second night of our stay, before we flew out for Atlanta , our hotel had a "fire alarm." Some prankster broke the glass and we weren't allowed back into our rooms for 2 hours. The hotel engineer took forever (it seemed) to get there and turn the alarm off. Thank goodness we didn't have an early flight.

DAY 16 – OCTOBER 17

LONDON

We arose Sunday morning and set out on our journey to the Bevis-Marks Synagogue in London . Anne had found this place on the internet and we thought it might be significant in finding out more about my English heritage. Although we were not disappointed, we found no direct connection with the Bevis' in Florence , Alabama . This magnificent and historic synagogue opened in 1701 and has had continuous services each week for the last 300+ years. It is the oldest surviving synagogue in the British Isles . We were privileged to be present when the synagogue historian was giving a very informative lecture on the history of the synagogue. We sensed the presence of God in this place. We left having been warmed in our hearts.

♪♪♪ Yes this was the icing on the cake! The beautiful Synagogue complete with its original furnishings was amazing! The candelabra's, huge ones, 7 of them, representing the 7 days of the week, hanging from the ceiling and still uses real candles, Check it out on the Web it is quiet a place. Bevis Marks is in the business district of London. We had a hard time finding it but the Lord literally sent a young man to us who heard me ask a street worker how to get to the Synagogue. This unnamed young man pulled out his I-phone, looked on his GPS setting and had us on our way. So many memories, what a way to celebrate 50 years of marriage and ministry! I like to celebrate! Jim and I enjoyed this special time together, a year unlike any other in our lives. I don't think you grow old until you lose your love for adventure and these 50 years with Jim have been full of adventure, I'm so thankful we got to do this together and by the way, he just keeps getting better as the days go by.

My thanks too for all the love, the gifts that helped make it possible, the encouragement from so many that said, "Go, enjoy, it's a dream of a lifetime. I left part of my heart in Ireland and Scotland I may have to go back. ♪♪♪ It's a memory I'll keep "all through time" (Auld Lang Syne)

DAY 17- OCTOBER 18

LONDON – ATLANTA

On Monday, October 18, we traveled to Heathrow Airport and boarded our Delta flight home. An amazing journey! An extraordinary opportunity to visit the lands of our Ancestry (Anne – Scot Irish and Jim – English) with the love of my life. We will take the memories of this journey into eternity

You will find my comments noted with the love ♪♪♪'s (Anne)