

2016 Scot Tour Daily Report

A "postcard" like the one below was added here for each day of the Scot Tour. The adventures of the participants could also be followed on our Facebook page. Although the USWCA was not on Twitter or Instagram, you could use #uswcascottour2016 to find postings on social media.



Friday, September 23, 2016



Pictured in the group photo:

Back Row L to R - Beth Lepping, Sandy Bromenschenkel, Mary Glowacki, Karen Brattesani, Cheryl Drake, Tracy Lawless, Shelley Dropkin, Jacquelyn R. Schmidt, Sally Augustin, Nancy Drischler, Gwen Krailo-Lyons, Lisa Johnson, Carol Ann Neso, Julie Denten, Donna Pearson
Front Row L to R - Vietta Kampen, Linda Christensen, Stacie Pinnavaia, Kathy Hyslop (captain), Maryanne Wessels

September 16-18, 2016

POST CARD.



Scot Tour Team 2016 Meets in Pewaukee, Wisconsin

The 20 women representing the USWCA on the Scot Tour in November 2016 met for a fast-paced weekend in Pewaukee, Wisconsin during the USWCA Fall Meeting, September 16-18, 2016.

Time was well-spent getting to know each other and finding out details about plans for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They learned about their exciting itinerary, team assignments, packing checklist, and roles and responsibilities. They enjoyed practicing creative songs and were honored to meet previous tour participants who eagerly shared stories about their experiences as well as helpful hints.

Anticipation levels are high as they look forward to their departure from Newark on November 4. Special thanks goes to the Scot Tour Committee led by Star Pfiffner for all of their hard work that makes this tour possible.

October 29, 2016



October 29, 2016

POST CARD.



Getting Ready to Leave

It has been a busy few weeks since our meeting in Pewaukee in September. Time is flying by, and in only a few days on Thursday, Nov. 3 we will be convening in Newark, New Jersey to prepare for our departure to Scotland on Friday.

We are meticulously reviewing our itinerary and packing lists to make sure we have what is required. We have purchased or made our hostess gifts and have accumulated our pins to give to our opponents in Scotland. We have listened to our songs expertly created by our entertainment chairs and are attempting to memorize them. We have read intently the messages from our fearless Captain who has provided helpful tips and other important last minute details.

We are counting the days. Just a few more sleeps, and we will be on our way!

The USWCA Scot Tour Team

November 3, 2016

**Good Night
from
Newark, NJ**



Robert Trent Hotel



Thursday, November 3, 2016

POST CARD.



First Stop--Newark

After months of preparation we are finally on our way! We are staying at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark tonight, and tomorrow morning we will get together to finalize some preparations and practice our songs.

This evening we enjoyed dinner at McGovern's Tavern just a short walk from the hotel. We talked, laughed, ate, and enjoyed maybe just a few adult beverages.

It is great to all be together as our journey is finally underway. Words shared by the group tonight to describe how we are feeling at this stage of our journey included "anxious," "excited," "torn," "ready," "grateful," and "tired."

Tomorrow night we will be on our way to Edinburgh. Wonder what words will describe our thoughts and feelings as we finally arrive in Edinburgh. Stay tuned!

The USWCA Scot Tour Team

November 4, 2016



(No text was available to accompany this postcard.)

November 5, 2016



Saturday, November 5, 2016

POST CARD.



We're here!

Once through security we received a warm welcome at the airport by the ladies from the Edinburgh Curling Club at Murrayfield. Their banner, US flag and smiling faces signaled our arrival. Arriving at their club a little later, we entered their front door through their arch of brooms proudly formed by their members.

We then enjoyed breakfast including fresh pastries, fruit, and fresh baked bacon and egg rolls prepared by the club chef and graciously served by members of the club. We watched a little curling as well since Murrayfield was hosting the Edinburgh International Curling Championship.

We then toured Glasgow and visited the Riverside Museum where we had lunch with a lovely view of the the River Clyde and a tall ship Glenlee.

After a jam-packed day we settled into our rooms at the charming Glynhill Hotel in Glasgow, and after some rest we practiced our songs and enjoyed a tasty buffet dinner with our couriers and bus driver.

Thank you to the ladies from Edinburgh Curling Club, The Royal Caledonia Curling Club, our bus driver Kevin and our couriers Jan and Mary Anne for your warm welcome that helped make our very first day in Scotland so special.

The USWCA Scot Tour Team

November 6, 2016



First Time on the Ice



Sunday, November 6, 2016

POST CARD.



On the Ice!

We were all so excited to get on the ice today. We curled a practice game against the Scottish ladies from 2011 USA Tour at the Braehead Curling Club. What a wonderful way to begin the curling part of the tour! How exciting it was to connect with people we knew from when they toured the USA and to make new friends as well. (Be sure to ask us about "WooWoo.")

To cap off the day we enjoyed a wonderful opening dinner that started by us being piped in to the banquet room at the Glynhill. Over 50 people stood and clapped as we entered--it was quite touching! We were honored by the presence of several dignitaries in the curling world including Kate Caithness, OBE, Ladies' Branch Honorary President of the Royal Caledonia Curling Club (RCCC), and Clive Thompson, RCCC President. Our group entertained everyone with two songs, "Hello to Scotland" (sung to the tune of McNamara's Band) and "It's Grand Old Game" (sung to the tune of It's a Grand Old Flag, as if you didn't know that already).

Sunday, November 6, 2016 Cont..

Also attending the banquet were several members of the 1991 USA Tour. What an interesting group of ladies! We were so pleased that they could be with us as they also enjoyed their reunion.

Tomorrow we check out of the Glynhill and curl at both Braehill and Greenacres! Let the SERIOUS curling begin!

The USWCA Scot Tour Team

November 7, 2016



Monday, November 7, 2016

POST CARD.



Today we curled our first official game at Braehead where we had our practice game yesterday. After that, we enjoyed a lovely lunch with the Braehead ladies at House for an Art Lover with a beautiful view of the countryside. This was the first time we tasted tablet--a tasty dessert served with coffee or tea. We must admit that a few of us are now addicted to it.

We then had a fun curling game at Greenacres Curling Club that was a barn converted to a curling rink. Dinner was fish and chips or mince and peas with a cheese plate or trifle for dessert. And once again we had tablet.

Entertainment included very talented, young Highland dancers. We then entertained the group with three of our songs. We were then off to our home hosts for a night cap and a good night's rest.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 8, 2016



Tuesday, November 8, 2016

POST CARD.



By the Sea!

Home hosts were wonderful! We had interesting, funny, intriguing, thought-inspiring conversations--and a short, but good night's sleep. Nothing like being welcomed in people's home to make our tour even more special. Thank you all for your generous hospitality.

Then off we went through the beautiful countryside to the town of Largs where we stopped at Nardini's Ice Cream Shop. The highlight of the trip was a stop at Lyle Hill overlook and Free French Monument. In case you were wondering--the Free French Monument surrounded by French soil is shaped like a cross and is dedicated to the French Naval forces that sailed from the Clyde during the Battle of the Atlantic during WWII.

After a yummy lunch of soup and sammies at the Beacon, we went to the Waterfront Curling Rink with a view from the ice out to the Inverclyde where we could see the ferries passing by.

Tuesday, November 8, 2016 Cont..

It's time to report the score so far (based on total points scores. After three games the USA is leading the Scots 108 to 79. Yeah us!

We wrapped up the day with dinner hosted by the Waterfront ladies at the Royal Gourock Yacht Club. Thank you for another fun evening.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 9, 2016



Wednesday, November 9, 2016

POST CARD.



Southward Bound!

Today we headed south along the coast to Stranraer to stay two nights at the North West Castle Hotel (more about that later). Along the way we saw pheasants, seals, sheep, Highland Coos, banded cows, beautiful snow topped hills, and even a double rainbow!

As we passed Preswick Airport we sang the Hawaiian Wedding Song in honor of Elvis Presley who, as legend has it, stepped foot on Scottish soil at this airport on his way to Germany to serve in the army.

We also passed by Ailse Craig where the granite for curling stones comes from. What a treat! Next stop on our route was the Robert Burns Cottage in Alloway where Scotland's favorite son and national bard was born. This is where he lived until he was seven years old. Our tour included the cottage, the monument, the Burns Museum, and a guided walk along the Poet's Path. As the guide took us down the path he narrated select passages from Burns' most famous work, Tan o'Shanter.

Wednesday, November 9, 2016 Cont..

We arrived at the North West Castle Hotel, a traditional and friendly hotel run by the McMillan family. Surprisingly it includes a four sheet curling rink! It was built by Hamilton ("Hammie") Coats McMillan, an avid curler and builder/architect of houses and hotels. (Ask to read our book about the McMillans). The staff's warm welcome was accompanied by the statement that we didn't need to handle our luggage. They would bring it three stories up to our room!

Tomorrow we have three draws. Better get some sleep!

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 10, 2016



Thursday, November 10, 2016

POST CARD.



Curling, Curling and MORE Curling

After an early breakfast we took to the ice to curl two games with the Stranraer ladies. The competition was tough, but we are pleased to say that the USA is still ahead of the Scots 175-157. We are aware that the gap is closing and know we have to be on top of our game tomorrow.

Throughout the day we once again experienced the warmth and generous hospitality of the host club and the staff at this wonderful family-owned hotel (North West Castle Hotel). The weather today was far from pleasant, so we were lucky that we never had to go outside to get from our rooms to the curling rink--a truly unique setup.

Before the final draw we were treated to coffee and scones in the viewing area, complete with assorted pasties and clotted cream. It was a great occasion to relax and get to know our Scottish friends, including several members of the McMillan family--owners of the hotel, several of whom also curled with us.

We wrapped up the day with another fabulous dinner. Thank you to the Stranraer ladies for a lovely evening. Tomorrow we head to Ayr.

The 2016 Scot. Tour Team

November 11, 2016



Ailsa Craig and Culzean Castle



Friday, November 11, 2016

POST CARD.



Armistice Day

We bid a fond farewell to our new friends at the North West Castle Hotel. Thanks for everything! Your hospitality is beyond compare. We will always remember the brief time we were together.

Once again we headed up the coast and had spectacular views of Ailsa Craig (the source of the granite from which curling stones have been made for years) unlike the other day when it was shrouded in fog. The granite from Ailsa Craig is shipped to the mainland and then shaped and polished in the town of Mauchline, which has the only factory for that purpose in the British Isles.

We then were treated to a private tour of Culzean Castle, where President Eisenhower had a flat during World War II. We had coffee in the Eisenhower suite where we observed two minutes of silence for Armistice Day. (For more details about the castle, ask to read today's entry in our tour journal.)

Off to Ayr for lunch and curling. Again the games were highly competitive, but we are pleased to report that the USA still leads the Scots by a score of 214 to 195.

We enjoyed a delicious dinner--braised Ayrshire ham with parsley sauce (the most tender ham we have ever tasted) along with roasted potatoes and root vegetables, and bramble and pear crumble with ice cream we asked for the recipe). As a special treat they served us truffles shaped like curling rocks. Following dinner we were entertained by Caroline Lambie, a fiddler and curler at Ayr whose love of the fiddle shone through in her rousing performance of Scottish and Irish folk songs accompanied by her friend who played the accordion.

Off we went with our home hosts to enjoy good conversation and a nightcap. Thank you to all the Ayr ladies for your warm welcome and generous hospitality.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 12, 2016



Saturday, November 12, 2016

POST CARD.



Coming Together

Today we were off to Lockerbie, a location well known for the terrible tragedy that occurred there on December 21, 1988--the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 that killed 239 passengers and crew and 11 people on the ground. The ladies of the Lockerbie Curling Club arranged for us to visit the Lockerbie Air Disaster and Garden of Remembrance and the Dryfesdale Lodge Visitor's Center. We were moved by the way in which the community near and far has come together to honor and commemorate those who lost their lives during this tragedy.

Curling at the Lockerbie Curling Club was a treat! Their spirit of community was evident in the way they welcomed us and interacted with us throughout the day. We thank them for all they did to make this day special--one we will fondly remember. We made friends and enjoyed spirited competitions. We are again pleased to report we extended our lead 263 for the U.S. to 228 for Scotland.

After a delicious buffet dinner topped off by a choice of lemon sylabub (a dessert new to us) or chocolate cheesecake, we entertained our hosts with three of our songs--Hello Scotland, 16 Stones, and It's a Grand Old Game! We then left with our home hosts to get some rest (and some laundry done) to get ready for curling two games at Dumfries tomorrow.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 13, 2016



Sunday, November 13, 2016

POST CARD.



Party On!

Hey, Everyone!

Imagine doing the hokey pokey along with the piper...that's exactly what we did tonight at the fabulous dinner party at the lovely home of Fiona and David Hardie. We had such a good time. It was a fitting wrap up to a wonderful day in Dumfries.

We curled two games at Dumfries Curling Club at the Ice Bowl with the lovely ladies of the Dumfries Curling Club. Their hospitality was top notch. We were honored to receive a special welcome from the Provost of Dumfries. Thanks to all for another wonderful day.

Once again the U.S. Team was dominant on the ice, and we are pleased to say the score is now USA 346 and Scotland 276.

Another highlight of today was our tour of Dumfries that included a visit to The Dumfries Museum where we had lunch and experienced the stunning views from the camera obscura. Even on a rainy day the views were intriguing. We had the privilege of having Mr. Ogilvie as our guide. He was quite informative and delightful as he led us on our tour.

After a good night's sleep we are off to Kelso tomorrow. Goodnight and pleasant dreams.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 14, 2016

Time is Flying By!



Monday, November 14, 2016

POST CARD.



Time Is Flying By!

Hard to believe that today was our 10th day in Scotland. We are jamming as much into each day as we can. After all, we can rest when we get home, right?

In spite of the Dreich day (Scottish for overcast, drizzly), we had a beautiful ride through the countryside as we went from the Galloway Region to the Borders on narrow winding roads on our way from Dumfries to Kelso. The fields and hillside were sprinkled with grazing lambs and cows and the occasional pheasant. The hedgerows and stone wall fences outlined the fields.

On our way we stopped at Abbotsford, the home of poet and novelist Sir Walter Scott. We enjoyed lunch with the ladies from the Border's Ice Rink (Kelso) and toured the home that was filled with items and furnishings that were original to the home. Of note was the massive library filled with his collection of books he used for his research that were meticulously catalogued for easy retrieval. Sir Walter Scott was quite a collector of things which are artistically displayed throughout the house.

At the Border Ice Rink in Kelso we were once again greeted by the piper and a broom arch formed by the Border Ladies. Four teams curled, and at the end of today's competition we tied. The cumulative score has increased, but the gap between them remains the same--the USA 374 and Scotland 304.

We had a fun-filled evening with dinner including Roast Scottish Gammon (ham) carved at each table, minted new potatoes, and vegetables capped off with Border tart and ice cream. We were entertained by comedian Davy Scott and musicians Kenny Brodie and Robert Bell who played guitars and sang songs we could sing along and dance to. We wrapped up the evening with a rip-roaring rendition of Auld Lang Syne. Thank you to the Border Section for a great day.

Tomorrow we are off to Edinburgh. Goodnight from the Borders.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 15, 2016

The Busiest Curling Rink in Europe



Tuesday, November 15, 2016

POST CARD.



The Busiest Curling Rink in Europe

We had a short jaunt from Kelso to Edinburgh today, again through the countryside but this time in partly sunny weather. Our destination was Edinburgh and the Murrayfield Curling Club, the busiest curling club in Europe. Amazingly, around 90 clubs use this facility! On the way we stopped at the House of Soutra Coffee Shop for tea or coffee and pastry and a beautiful panoramic view of the countryside.

We were once again greeted at Murrayfield by the piper and the broom arch by the ladies--it never gets old! We had lunch, and then all teams curled and the USA was victorious on all of the sheets. After coffee and tea (and a few beverages from the bar) we headed home with our home hosts for dinner and a relaxing evening.

On a side note, Isobel Edwards, President of Edinburgh Centre of Ladies Curling Clubs, explained that the trophy we are playing for is the Marguerite Roberts Trophy. Marguerite Roberts was a prominent Scottish curler who acted as the tour coordinator for the 1976 USA Ladies Tour of Scotland. On her death the USA Ladies donated a trophy in her honor because of the high esteem in which they held her. This is the trophy which is still played for and which is currently held by the Scottish ladies. Marguerite's daughter Gillean curled with us today and was the Scottish flag bearer. What an honor for us!

Tomorrow is our day off of curling, and we will be touring Edinburgh.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 16, 2016



Touring and Toasting



Wednesday, November 16, 2016

POST CARD.



Touring and Toasting

In the spirit of Mel Gibson who played William Wallace in Braveheart, the word for today was "Freedom! Freedom!" After a very informative guided bus tour of Edinburgh, we had several hours on our own to shop, explore, have lunch, and shop some more--and maybe enjoy a wee dram. Yes, we happily did our part to contribute to the Scottish economy.

Afterward we dressed in our formal wear and participated in a civic reception and a special tour of the City Chambers. We were welcomed in the Provost Suite by Baillie (civic officer) Elaine Aitken who was standing in for Lord Provost Donald Wilson who was in Abu Dhabi on official business. We visited the various chambers and learned about the fascinating history of Scotland as depicted in the paintings on the wall.

We then joined our home hosts and others from the Murrayfield Centre Ladies Curling Clubs for a Buffet Supper at the beautiful Grange Club --home to cricket, squash, field hockey and tennis competitions. We were honored to be toasted by Jim Ramsey, President of the Edinburgh Curling Club and entertained by Alex Hodgson, who had us singing along and twisting the night away. We sang a few songs from our repertoire. It was a wonderful fun-filled evening. Thanks so much to Isobel Edwards and her committee for making it a night to remember.

We returned to our host homes for a good night's sleep and an early departure to Kirkcaldy.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 17, 2016

Welcome to Kirkcaldy



Thursday, November 17, 2016

POST CARD.



Fans in the Stands!

Kirkcaldy in the Kingdom of Fife is right across the Forth of Firth from Edinburgh, so we didn't have far to go to our next location. Kirkcaldy is a coastal town where the production of linoleum was once its most successful business. We had the pleasure of curling at the Art Deco Fife Ice Rink which is the oldest surviving ice rink in Scotland. The current score is 465 USA to Scotland 365.

This was the first location on our tour where we had fans in the stands. The warmth and enthusiasm of this club was evident in all the events they planned for us. What great ladies--and, of course, Harry, the official for our games.

After enjoying lunch, we split up--some went shopping or to the hotel for R & R, while others went to the Kirkcaldy Galleries. (One of our esteemed members, who shall remain nameless, went to a cobbler shop to have her curling shoes repaired.)

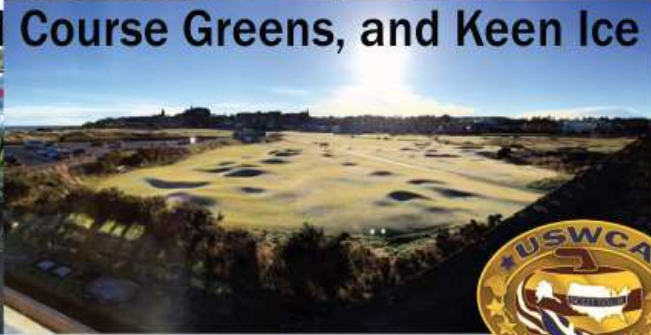
The Kirkcaldy Galleries houses a library where we were shown a book about the history of curling--imagine that! It also has an art gallery with one of the finest collections of art in Scotland--truly a hidden gem! Another room traces the history of Kirkcaldy from the start in the famed linoleum industry to the typhoid outbreak in 1896.

We had a great time at the informal dinner at the Dean Park Hotel. What a fun group! After we sang our songs, they treated us to an impromptu, unrehearsed song--For These Are My Mountains, a song about keeping the curling tradition alive. We ended the evening with Auld Lang Syne.

Tomorrow we tour Fife with a visit to St. Andrews followed by curling at Kinross. More amazing times ahead!

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 18, 2016



Sunshine, Old Course Greens, and Keen Ice

Friday, November 18, 2016

POST CARD.



Sunshine, Old Course Greens, and Keen Ice

The sun shone brightly for our departure from the Dean Park Hotel in Kirkcaldy. What beautiful weather we had today for our tour to St. Andrews on our way to curl at Kinross. En route we had beautiful views of rolling farms of the Lomond Hills (affectionately described as the beggar's mantle fringed in gold), the Firth of Fife and Firth of Tay as we circumnavigated the narrow roads. We even passed a few sights where Outlander was filmed.

We had stunning views of St. Andrews as we approached the town and arrived at the Links where we enjoyed tea/coffee and shortbread cookies in the cafe upon our arrival. We then walked around to see the golf course and even strolled over to the beach where the famous scene in Chariots of Fire of people running on the beach was filmed. The gift shop was a popular stop as again we contributed to the Scottish economy as we purchased numerous golf related apparel and items for ourselves and for Christmas presents.

Arriving at the Kinross Curling Rink, we were once again welcomed by the piper and the broom arch by the ladies of the Kinross and District Ladies Branch. Their enthusiastic greeting made us feel welcome and created excitement among our team. Curling has been played at this rink for over 300 years. After we enjoyed lunch including a gourmet cheese platter, crackers, a variety of chutneys and jams, and fruit, we got ready to be piped out onto the ice.

Boy did we have a surprise during the piper ceremony. We were lined up on the walkway and David McGregor led us in a very amusing warm up of dance moves. To get the full impart of this, check out the video posted on social media today. It's a hoot!

Four teams curled today, and we LOVED the ice. The competition was tough--the USA barely outscored the highly skilled Kinross curlers. The score is now USA 491 and Scotland 388.

Tonight we had a scrumptious dinner at the Kirklands Hotel. We had great fun talking, laughing, dining, and singing. Thank you to the Kinross and District Ladies Branch for a fun-filled evening. Keep in touch! We would love to hear from you.

We went home with our home hosts and will be heading to Forfar tomorrow.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 19, 2016



Castle, Food, Drinks, and Curling!



Saturday, November 19, 2016

POST CARD.



Castle, Food, Drinks, and Curling!

This morning on our way to Forfar, we had a wonderful visit and private tour of Glamis Castle, the childhood home of HM Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. We began our visit in what used to be the kitchen with coffee/tea and shortbread. We then visited 10 rooms that were ornately and authentically decorated and very fitting for the home of royalty. Pauline, our tour guide, was absolutely delightful as she told us stories about ghosts and other intriguing details about the castle. At the end of the tour we had an Ogilvy Vodka tasting, again in the castle.

Today many of us tried several Scottish dishes for the first time. At lunch at Forfar Curling Centre we enjoyed Forfar Bridies that we would call meat pies. We also had pudding which we would call fruit or raisin bread. Then tonight at the Burns Dinner we had Cock A Leekie Soup; Haggis, Neep and Tatties; and Tayside Berry Shortcake--and of course the ever popular tablet with our tea/coffee.

And, oh by the way, we also curled in the beautiful Forfar Ice Centre. The Forfar ladies gave us good games, but once again the USA came out ahead. The current score is 532 to 407.

We should also mention that after the fourth end, we broom stacked on the ice and had either Irn Bru Scottish Soda or Drambuie! That was a first for many of us. (If it sounds like we have been doing a lot of eating and beverages, you're absolutely right!)

For dinner the ladies organized a Traditional Burns dinner complete with the piper, Curler's Grace, the address to the Haggis, adorable and talented Highland dancers, and an amazing recitation of Robert Burns' Tom O'Shanter. We ended the evening once again with an enthusiastic singing of Auld Lang Syne.

Thank you to all the Forfar ladies for an absolutely wonderful day! Thank you also to all of our home hosts. We had a great time.

Tomorrow we are heading north to Aberdeen. Cheers, and good night.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 20, 2016



Curl Aberdeen



Sunday, November 20, 2016

POST CARD.



Aberdeen Amusement

What a great day we have had! It was past 11:00 p.m. by the time we returned to our home hosts, so this note will be short.

Once we arrived in Aberdeen after a lovely drive with breathtaking scenery, some of us attended church at St. Marcher Cathedral which is older than the USA--built in 1400-1440 AD) while others did a walking tour of the University.

At Curl Aberdeen we enjoyed lunch and then all teams curled. Once again the USA team squeaked out a combined win, making the total cumulative points USA 572 to Scotland 435. It was great fun curling with Curl Aberdeen. The facility is spectacular as is the ice.

We then returned to host homes for a "refresh" (read: a change of clothes and a wee dram) and then returned to the club for dinner and entertainment. After we were welcomed by George Rogerson, Chairman of Curl Aberdeen, we enjoyed a delicious dinner of spit roasted pork, potatoes and vegetables, and sticky toffee pudding.

(This is getting to be a habit!) Then after dinner we were entertained by a very amusing group from the Inverurie Rotary Glee Club. They had us belly laughing and singing along. Check out some of their songs on our social media posts. You'll laugh too.

Thank you to everyone at Curl Aberdeen for making us feel like family (or perhaps even better). We appreciate your hard work and all you did to make our stay in Aberdeen wonderful.

Tomorrow we head to Inverness where we will stay two days. No curling tomorrow. G'night all!

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 21, 2016



On the Road Again



Monday, November 21, 2016

POST CARD.



Shopping Our Way to Inverness

"The wheels on the bus go round and round..." pretty much sums up our day today. We had a lovely ride through the beautiful rolling hills with views of the snow capped bends (mountains) as we traveled from Aberdeen to Inverness along parts of the Whisky Trail.

We grabbed a chance to snooze on the bus as this was the longest bus ride so far. We also stopped to shop along the way. The first stop was at Baxters which had several small shops for whisky, wine, clothing, Christmas items, Baxter jams and condiments, and home decor--and more whisky! There we also were treated to a casual lunch with just our tour mates, our driver (Kevin) and the couriers.

The next shopping stop was at Brodie Country Fare, a huge shop for Scottish gifts, clothing, children's toys, and kitchen goods. The most popular purchases were socks and shopping bags we can use to hold all the miscellaneous gifts we have received and purchases we have made--much needed to help keep things organized.

A quick stop at the shopping plaza was required so we could stock up on supplies for our morning trolley dollies.

We then met our home hosts at Findor Farms just outside of Inverness who then took us to the lovely Scottish farm home of Brenda and Alastair Macintyre for a delicious potluck supper prepared and served by the Inverness Ladies Branch. Brenda is Past President and the Captain of the 2011 USA Tour. Thank you to everyone for a wonderful relaxing evening.

Tomorrow we hope to go on a boat ride on Loch Ness prior to curling at the Inverness Ice Rink. All for now. Good night!

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 22, 2016

INVERNESS



Tuesday, November 22, 2016

POST CARD.



Looking for Nessie!

Today we had several Nessie (Loch Ness Monster) sighting. First, Nessie was all over the place at the gift shop where we boarded the boat for our scenic Loch Ness boat ride. Then she was spotted on Rink E cheering Team 1 on to victory. Later tonight she participated in a skit by the Northern Counties Ladies Curlers during which we had our photos taken. Well done, Ladies. Nessie looked so real! She had a busy day!

Earlier this morning we toured Inverness by bus--what a beautiful city! Inverness is the capital of the Highlands and one of the fastest growing cities in Scotland. We briefly drove through the city and saw local sights, including the Inverness Castle. Then we headed along the Caledonia Canal and the River Ness to Loch Ness where (after shopping at the gift shop) we took a boat ride round trip on Loch Ness from Clansman Harbour to Urquhart Castle. Much to our surprise, the air temperature was bearable, and we had opportunity to watch the scenery both inside and outside of the boat.

We then boarded the bus and headed to the Inverness Ice Centre for lunch and curling. We truly enjoyed the Inverness Ladies and thank them for all they did to make the day special. Once again the USA ladies prevailed.

After a "refresh," we gathered at the beautiful Craigmore Hotel for cocktails, dinner, and entertainment. Thank you to Ann Gibb, President of Northern Counties Ladies Curlers, and the Northern Counties Ladies for all your hard work that made this an unforgettable evening. It was a wonderful, fun-filled party.

Tomorrow we pack our bags and travel to Perth. We hear that we may just do a little shopping along the way! Better get some sleep. Good night.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 23, 2016



PERTH



Wednesday, November 23, 2016

POST CARD.



Perth

We woke in the Highlands to bright sunshine and frost. Headed to retail park to catch the tour bus saying farewell to Inverness and headed south to Perth on the banks of the river Tay.

We are driving through breathtaking woods and snow covered mountains. After picking up a couple of the girls who were at Aviemore, a homestay far away, we are heading to the House of Bruar for shopping. The Trolley Dollies served the morning Choo Choo to get our mid morning vitamin C "cheers" ladies!! The shopping and lunch at the House of Bruar, was very nice especially on the cashmere, nice sales.

Now on to Perth for curling at the Dewers Center which has 8 sheets with the Perth ladies. This is also the home rink of Eve Muirhead, who is representing Scotland at the European Curling Championships which we will be attending on Saturday. We were welcomed to the club by a piper and all the Perth ladies with their brooms in the air. We then were Piped on to the ice for five great games. The five sheets had very keen ice and the games were well played bringing the score to 48 USA for total of 677 and 24 Perth for total of 486 for Scotland. Well done ladies!!

We had the dinner banquet at the Curling club and The Perth ladies presented us with lovely Heathergems necklaces handcrafted from natural Heather and our team photo. After a delicious dinner of Chili Con Carney honey mustard chicken and all the fixings we enjoyed Nana Betsy's pastries tea coffee and of course tablet ...yummy!! We then were entertained by 62 members of the Perth Choir and ended the night with a group Auld Lang Syne and off to our wonderful hosts home.

What a lovely way to end a wonderful day! Tomorrow we will give thanks to our family, friends and the country for Thanksgiving.

Thank you everyone for your wonderful support...night night!

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 24, 2016

Stirling



Thursday, November 24, 2016

POST CARD.



Thanksgiving in Stirling

We had an early morning departure from Perth and a quick ride to Stirling. We had a good view of the Wallace Monument and the Stirling Castle perched high on a spectacular outcrop of rock that dominates the surrounding countryside. The Castle was home to the Stuart Monarchs and the location of many historic events--Sir William Wallace defeating the British in 1297 and King Robert the Bruce defeating the British in 1314.

We were greeted at the Peak, the curling center in Stirling where many of the elite curlers train, and quickly prepared to curl at 10:00. Once again we were piped onto the ice and proudly marched with the piper and the Scottish and American flag bearers. The ice was fabulous--very keen, and the facility was amazing. We highly recommend to all of the curlers out there to put curling at The Peak on your bucket list.

We enjoyed a lovely lunch with a variety of yummy foods to choose from. One of the most unusual dishes was bakarra, Indian curry balls that looked like hush puppies. Our colorful tour guide Anna then narrated our tour to see the Kelpies, the world's largest equine sculptures (100 feet tall) that tower over the Forth and Clyde canals. Kelpies are mythical creature that change shapes and have ten times the strength of a horse. Large horses were used to pull boats along the canals. The weather was beautiful--clear blue skies and mild temperature for November. Thank you, Anna, for an interesting tour.

After a "refresh" at our host homes, we attended a beautiful, fun evening at Hotel Colessio, starting with a Civic Reception and Welcome from Provost Mike Robbins and distinguished guest Lord Lieutenant Marjory McLachlan, Queen Representative for Stirling and Falkirk. We were then treated to a delicious Thanksgiving dinner, Scottish style--pumpkin soup, turkey and all the trimmings, and an assortment of mini desserts. One of the home hosts commented that sharing Thanksgiving with us made him feel like he was in America. The delightful Janet Graham played the accordion for the evening's entertainment followed by us singing a few of our songs. Once again we ended the evening by all joining hands to sing Auld Lang Syne.

Thank you, Stirling ladies, for providing us such a memorable Thanksgiving celebration. It was amazing.

Tomorrow we head to Hamilton to curl our last two games. Now to get some rest...Goodnight.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 25, 2016



Hamilton



Friday, November 25, 2016

POST CARD.



Hamilton Lanarkshire Ice Rink

Today we had our earliest start yet. Special thanks to our home hosts for getting up at the crack of dawn to get us to the bus on time. It was so dark we could still see the Stirling castle lit up on the hill.

After about a hour drive we arrived in Hamilton at the Lanarkshire Ice Rink where we were once again welcomed by the piper and the ladies forming the broom arch. The configuration of the club was a little different. It is a split level club--you go down to get to the changing rooms and up to go to the ice. Another level up were the bar, viewing area and food service area. Fiona Motion, Ladies President, welcomed us along with Provost Eileen Logan. We then gathered on the ice for the piping ceremony. Team USA again had a solid performance on the ice.

We had one last lunch of soup and sammies and then had our last piping ceremony followed by our playing our last game in Scotland. Emotions were evident as we threw our final rocks. We are proud to say that the USA won the Marguerite Roberts Quaich.

We then road the bus to the Radstone Hotel where we started the monumental task of unloading all of our many, many bags we have accumulated. We checked into our rooms and started sorting stuff to figure out how in the world we were going to get all of this stuff home.

We then enjoyed the closing dinner with many of our Scottish friends. What a fun, wonderful way to draw the official part of our tour to a close. Of special note was our captain Kathy Hyslop's presentation expressing her thoughts and thanks to everyone for making our tour such a memorable experience. The other touching moment was when Gillian Hoehnke presented us with the Marguerite Roberts Quaich which was established by a previous tour in honor of her mother.

One final time we sang our songs for the guests and ended with an enthusiastic rendition of Auld Lang Syne.

Thank you to the Lanarkshire ladies for a memorable day. What a wonderful way to wrap up our tour.

Tomorrow we head to the European Championships. Very excited to see the high level competition.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 26, 2016



Saturday, November 26, 2016

POST CARD.



European Curling Championships!

We had another early departure as we checked out of the Radstone Hotel and headed to Braehead to attend the Women's and Men's finals in the European Curling Championships.

At 10:00 we watched the women's game from front row seats at the beautiful Braehead Ice Arena. Sweden and Russia played a tight game that came down to the last rock. The skip for Sweden needed to draw to the house to win, but unfortunately the rock went wide and ticked off of a guard. It was a heartbreaking defeat for Sweden but a thrilling victory for Russia. Congratulations to Russia for winning gold and Sweden for winning silver.

We then were on our own for lunch and shopping at the huge mall that was attached to the arena to return for the men's game at 3:00. Sweden played Norway in the all Scandinavia final. Again it was an exciting game, this time going into an extra end. Sweden won by one with a draw to the four foot to take the gold and Norway silver. As you look at the photos we took during this game, it will be quite obvious why this game was so pleasant to watch!

Kevin, our darling bus driver who we all wanted to take home with us, transported us to the Hilton Hotel near the Edinburgh Airport. Sadly, it was time to bid farewell to Kevin. We thanked him for his expert driving, but most importantly for making all our travels so pleasant. He was the best, and we wish him well as he retires after many years of service.

We gathered for a buffet dinner at the hotel and had a wonderful time to reflect on our tour and to thank our couriers for their hard work and our teammates for their various contributions throughout our journey. We have all acquired 19 new sisters with whom we have shared this amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience.

For those of you who like statistics, the final score was USA 807, Scotland 568. We curled 91 eight-end games and 5 six-end games. We threw 6,064 stones for a total of 260,752 pounds of granite. We spent approximately 192 hours on the ice and traveled 1,659 miles on our bus. We had 37 uniform changes and sang 58 songs.

Tomorrow we leave very early to take the shuttle to the airport. It will be sad to bid farewell to Scotland.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team

November 27, 2016

Goodbye, my dears, goodbye.
Goodbye, our curling friends.
We raise a cup.
We bid farewell.
Until we meet again.



Homeward Bound



Sunday, November 27, 2016

POST CARD.



Fond Farewell

Today is a bittersweet day. We are looking forward to going home, but sad that our tour is drawing to an end. We headed to the Edinburgh Airport early this morning and checked in for our flight after schlepping all of our luggage onto the shuttle and into the airport.

It was time to say goodbye to our fabulous couriers before we went through security. Thank you, Jan and Mary Anne, for your hard work and for supporting us in whatever way you could during our 24 days together. We were lucky to have you, and want you to keep in touch. We will miss you and hope you can get some much-needed rest.

On the plane we got some sleep, watched movies and had casual conversations with teammates. Our thoughts began to move toward what it will be like to be home. Our lives are forever changed. We have tons of memories from our dream trip that we are looking forward to sharing with families and friends.

Arriving in Newark, we gathered our luggage and some of us were teary-eyed as we gave our teammates final hugs and waved goodbye. We either headed to our connecting flights, met family members who were picking us up in Newark, or headed to a hotel for an overnight stay and then to head home tomorrow.

We end our final postcard with an excerpt from our goodbye song:

Goodbye, my dears, goodbye.
Goodbye, our curling friends.
We raise a cup.
We bid farewell.
Until we meet again.

The 2016 Scot Tour Team