

From there we traveled around Land's End, Britain's most southerly tip and into the Irish Sea. Cobh (Cork) was our first port in Ireland with an array of excursions the likes of Blarney Castle, the woolen factory, Waterford....well, you get the idea. Then it was on to Dublin for the Book of Kells in Trinity College, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the Guinness Brewery. We did have an overnight in Dublin so had ample time to use the Hop On Hop Off buses and to take a trip to Malahide Castle outside Dublin with the most adorable Irish guide. He took the picture of us outside the castle that you see above. Irish eyes are *smiling!*



Last stop on the Emerald Isle, Belfast. Again, many choices, but we had our mind set on a visit to the Giant's Causeway. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is considered the Eighth Wonder of the World. Awesome. It was a 6 hour jaunt, but along the way we were often on coastal roads with beautiful scenery and glimpses of romantic castles. Highly recommended.

Now it was time for the Scottish Highlands to scan a loch for a monster named Nessie and to check out sites made popular by the Outlander books. Our ports in Scotland were Greenock (Glasgow), Invergordon (Inverness) and Queensferry (Edinburgh). Invergordon gave us the opportunity to head out to Culloden Moor for the exhibition center and battle field where the British troops defeated Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Highland clans. Once again, the getting there and back was as interesting as the place itself.



From Edinburgh it was south through the North Sea, spotting oil rigs and platforms along the way, to our final port of call, LeHavre, France. Paris and all it has to offer is in reach from LeHavre. But we opted to do a full day tour to Normandy to see the D-Day beaches and the American Cemetery that honors the soldiers that lost their lives in WWII on those beaches. By chance a group of French school children were there doing a small memorial service remembering the sacrifices. They spoke in English and French and when taps was played at the end, it was beyond words to describe.

Back across the English Channel, we disembarked in Southampton where the trip began. We said goodbye to this sceptered isle, paraphrasing again but the Bard this time. A transfer to London Heathrow and the flight home marked the end of a wonderful trip!