

She said...

Letters from the United Kingdom

I have recently returned from a nine-day tour of Ireland, Wales and England. What follows are excerpts from my emails to my husband, Brian, in South Dakota about my travels...

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Hi Brian,

Most of our tour group did not sleep on the seven-hour overnight flight from Chicago.

We are in Dublin today through Thursday morning. Tomorrow we will tour the Irish countryside. You would love the architecture here - it is very ornate and somewhat exotic.

Ireland is very small and the Dublin urban area has only about 1.75 million people. The total population of Ireland is right around 3.8 million.

Even with all these people, there's not as much traffic as there is in Los Angeles, Chicago or San Diego. That's because there are strict rules on carbon emissions and use of fossil fuels. High taxes are placed on driving larger vehicles and it's just plain easier getting around on mass transit, bicycles or on foot. Consequently, everyone appears fit.

Trinity College is amazing and ancient with cobblestone courtyards. We visited one of the university's four libraries called the Long Room, which literally is a very long room with at least 50-foot ceilings and 200,000 books.

We are staying in a quaint hotel outside of Dublin proper. The countryside in this part of Ireland reminds me a lot of Southern California. In town, there are many flowering chestnut trees. Everyone is very nice and helpful.

On Thursday morning, we will depart Ireland and travel across the Irish Sea on the Ulysses, which is the largest seafaring ferry boat in the world. We will be in Wales for a day or so and then will make our way by tour bus, or "coach" as buses are called here, down to London for the rest of our stay.

Hope you are having a good week. If everything goes well and the flights are not canceled due to volcanic ash, I will be home on May 26. I love and miss you very much.

XOXOX,

Paula

Saturday, May 22, 2010

Hi Brian!

I am on an Internet timer here at the hotel, so I'll have to make this quick. Pardon any typos — this keyboard is weird. We arrived in London early Friday evening and have spent the last 24 hours touring the city. The first part of today, Saturday, was a motor tour. London is a very big city with very crowded sidewalks and streets. However, it is strangely peaceful here. I have not heard any yelling, seen any fights or tussles, like I experienced in big cities in the U.S.

Saw Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, the British Museum, the Charles Dickens Museum, Piccadilly Circus, the Thames River and many beautiful parks. At Buckingham Palace we saw the changing of the guards marching in procession with a band. I have video and photos of it.

On Sunday, we will tour the Tower of London and see

Shakespeare's play Macbeth at the Globe Theater. Monday we will tour Oxford University in Oxford, England. Tuesday is a free day

and we may catch another play that evening. Wednesday we leave London for Chicago and then back to Omaha.

While in London, we have traveled on the light rail system and then on foot to get to Hyde Park, Buckingham Palace, the British Museum, Charles Dickens's Museum, Picadilly Circus, Harrod's and so many other sites.

Our tour guide is excellent. We have learned so much about the history, government, culture and topography of our travels from him. The people here are very friendly and polite.

Every day, I have to pinch myself. I just can't believe that I have visited Ireland, Wales and now England!

My love to you!

Paula

Sunday, May 23, 2010

My Dear Sweet Brian,

Glad to hear the puppies are doing well. Please give each one an extra long hug for me. I miss you very much.

London has a population of about seven million. There are people everywhere! Riding the above ground light rail and the subway in here takes some getting used to!

Did you know that health care is totally free in the U.K. and so is



LETTERS continued on page 6

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