

# *Mrs Dog Travels 2016*

*Journeys to Asia, Europe and Africa..... and America*

by Robert and Molly Hillery







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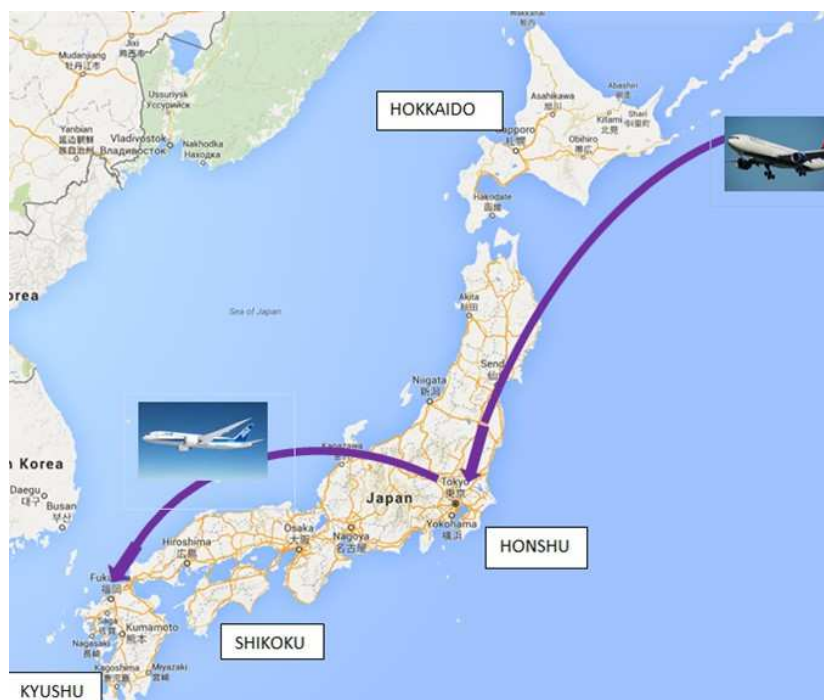


*2016 was another busy year of traveling for Mrs Dog as she visited many countries on four different continents throughout the year with Grandma and Granddad.*

*Five of the countries visited were new to Grandma and Granddad but almost all were first time visits for Mrs Dog. Some had been visited by Peter Rabbit in earlier travels - so perhaps you can pick out new and old countries as the journey continues.*

*As in previous years, over 50,000 thousand miles were traveled by airplane, the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans were crossed a number of times (each) and several thousand miles were covered by car, bus and train. In addition, this year's travels included a ten day journey on a river boat.*

*So, lots of traveling to lots of beautiful places all over the world. Are you ready to begin? Perhaps you can find all these places on your world globe.*



*Japan was the first new country visited in 2016 and we were there in April at the famous Cherry Blossom time when the whole country seemed to be covered with pink and white trees.*

*Japan is an island country in East Asia. It is located in the Pacific Ocean and lies to the east of the Sea of Japan, the East China Sea, China, North Korea, South Korea and Russia, stretching from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea and Taiwan in the south. The country comprises 6,852 islands, the four largest of which are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku, which make up about ninety-seven percent of Japan's land area. We visited three of these islands - all but the northernmost Hokkaido. The population of 126 million is the world's tenth largest but the whole country is slightly smaller than the State of California. Approximately 9 million people live in the core city of Tokyo. With the several surrounding areas, Tokyo is the world's largest metropolitan area with over 35 million residents. That's about three times as big as Los Angeles.*



*With all of those people living in such a relatively small space, we expected Japan to be very crowded and to have very little open countryside. How wrong we were! Obviously, Tokyo and a couple of other big cities were very busy and crowded but the rest of the country was beautiful; lots of farm land, ocean views, rivers and mountains. In fact, there is a whole region of Shikoku Island that is called the Japanese Alps and is just as mountainous and beautiful as the Alps in Europe.*

*The people, too, are very nice. At this time of the year, many locals dress up in traditional costume which includes colorful kimonos for the ladies and children. And everyone seemed happy to have their photographs taken in their beautiful clothes as they strolled along the streets surrounded by blossom trees.*

*The food, too, is very interesting. Traditional Japanese meals usually consist of lots of small dishes of food which are arranged neatly on the table. Also, chopsticks are used instead of forks or spoons. The tables are often very low and you sit on the floor to eat. Difficult - but fun!*





*One of the first places we visited was the city of Hiroshima. This was the site of the explosion of the world's first atomic bomb, which was dropped on this Japanese city in an effort to end World War II in 1945. As it happened, another bomb dropped on the city of Nagasaki a few days later was the one that brought the war to an end.*

*The building behind Grandma (above) is the remaining shell of the city hall and has been left standing as a permanent memorial to the event.*



*Both Nagasaki and Hiroshima have now been rebuilt and both cities have developed Peace Parks dedicated to those killed and to promote a better understanding of the terrible destruction that these bombs can cause. The park in Hiroshima is especially beautiful (particularly at cherry blossom time) and the A-Bomb Museum there is very informative.*

*It was sad to see just how much suffering wars can cause but the parks provide hope that atomic bombs are never used again.*



Well before the events of World War II, Japan's history goes back thousands of years and includes a number of different architectures and cultures. Many of the places we visited were buildings, and even whole cities, in which the history has been maintained so that visitors can enjoy it today.

There were many castles (usually built of wood but surrounded by high stone walls), ornamental gardens and homes that at one time belonged to the rulers of the country. You perhaps have heard of the Samurai warriors and the Shogun rulers who were often quite ruthless but who also built many fine structures that we can see today.

As we said earlier, the Japanese people today are very proud of their history and culture and want tourists to enjoy it with them. We saw many ladies and children in particular who were dressed in their traditional costumes and they were happy to show them off for the camera.

You may also have heard of (perhaps even seen) traditional Japanese dancing and we were lucky enough to see a performance that has been given in the same theater for over two hundred years.

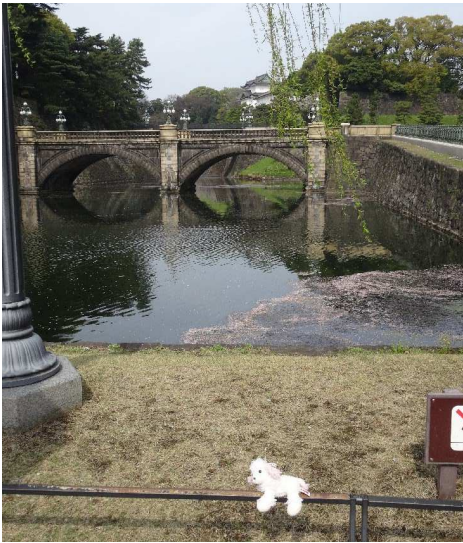
Tea ceremonies are also very popular and we went to several where we could sample the traditional green teas - and in one case, we had to make it ourselves!

Perhaps less cultural, but interesting, was a visit we made to a monkey park where about 1400 Japanese monkeys live in a park specifically for them.

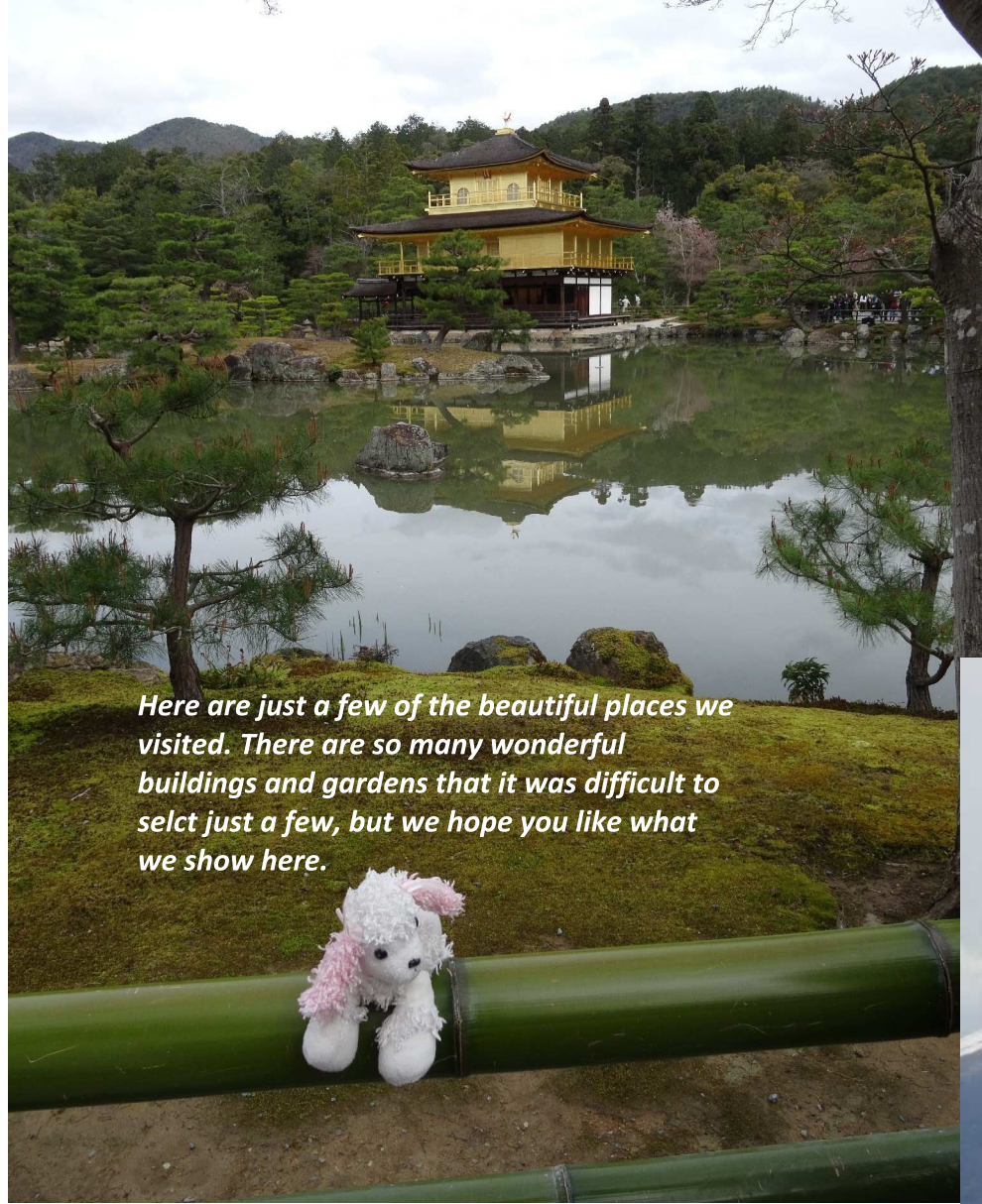


*I hope  
they  
don't  
jump on  
my fence*









*Here are just a few of the beautiful places we visited. There are so many wonderful buildings and gardens that it was difficult to select just a few, but we hope you like what we show here.*



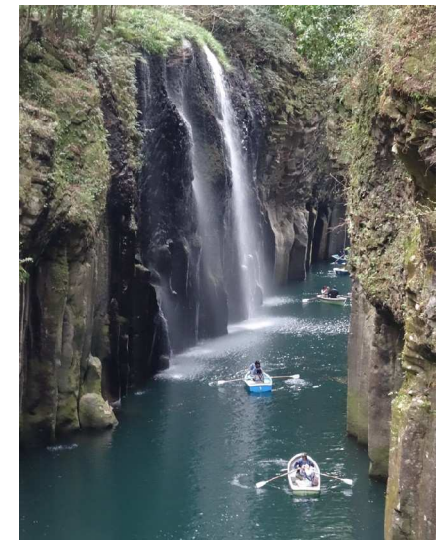


*We will conclude this visit to Japan with a few more photographs that cover the diversity of scenery, traditions and technology that are so much a part of this wonderful country.*

*You have perhaps heard of the "Bullet Train" - a very fast train that runs between major cities in Japan. We took a short ride on the one shown here and reached speeds of 200 miles per hour! Our hotel room is also shown - with low tables and chairs and no sign of a bed. We slept on the floor.*

*In addition to wearing traditional dress, all Japanese school children wear uniforms, as you can see below. It's not unlike Brookfield, is it?*

*Finally, as we said at the beginning, Japan has a lot of beautiful scenery and we were lucky to see much of it. It was a wonderful trip and we would love to return someday.*





## On to Europe

*Our next big trip was in July when we went on a river boat cruise on the Danube River in Eastern Europe. After flying to Bucharest, the capital of Romania, we followed the Danube, passing through several countries where we made one day stops for sightseeing.*

*In all we visited six different countries which had been under the control of the Soviet Union for the last half of the 20th century and which have only recently seen a lot of tourism by Americans and other Europeans. In addition, several of the countries had been involved in wars against each other as recently as the 1990s so we wondered how that might affect how we were received. It turned out that all the people we met were very nice to us and were happy to talk about their lives and their country. They were interested in how we lived in America but were also proud of their history and culture.*



*The six countries that we visited are all on the map above and the red line is the route followed by the River Danube (Europe's second longest) - and by our boat! Can you find all six countries? And can you also see where the red line stops, marking the end of our cruise? We went to Prague in the Czech Republic by train, after leaving the boat in Budapest, Hungary.*

*We traveled about 600 miles on the boat, sailing mostly at night and sightseeing during the day, although we had one full day of sailing just to admire the views from the river.*

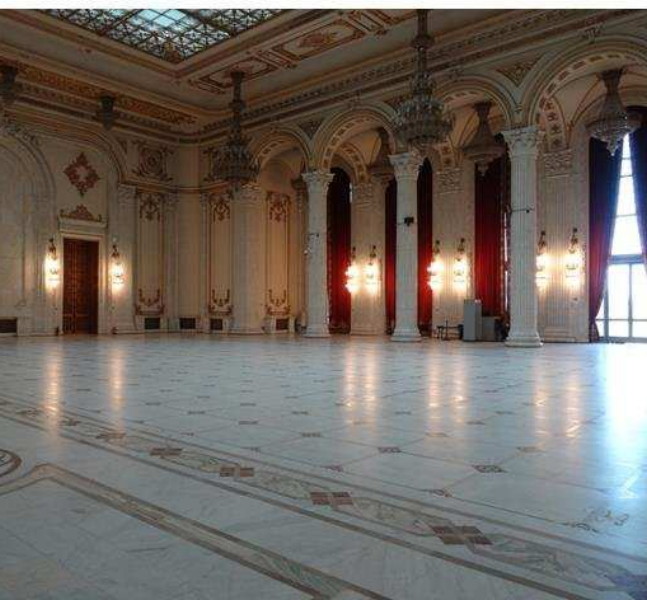
*We like traveling by boat because your hotel room travels with you and you don't have to pack and unpack every day. This is a picture of the river boat that we were on for about ten days and, as you can see, Grandma and Mrs Dog enjoyed it - and Mrs Dog made a number of new friends as she does on every trip.*

*Now, let's see some of the places we visited.*





## Bucharest



***The capital of Romania has some very fine buildings, including the Presidential Palace (shown on the outside and inside on the left), which is the second largest building in the world. Any guesses as to which is the largest? Clue: It's in Washington DC.***

***In addition to the palace and other huge stone buildings, Romania had a lot of smaller homes and buildings made of wood and thatch. A number of these, including the one shown above, have been collected in a park area in the center of Bucharest.***

## ROMANIA

*Romania is a republic in Southeastern Europe which borders Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and Bulgaria as well as the Black Sea. It is just about half the size of California and has almost 20 million residents, making it the seventh largest in Europe.*

*The Danube, Europe's second longest river, rises in Germany and flows southeastwards for a distance of almost 1800 miles, coursing through ten countries before emptying in Romania's delta near Bucharest.*

*The Carpathian Mountains, with their tallest peak at 8400 feet, cross Romania from the north to the southwest. A part of this mountainous region is Transylvania, which you may have heard of as the home of Count Dracula and the Vampires. Maybe you have seen the movie - or read the book? Romania is also famous for Gypsies, a nomadic ("wandering") tribe who have traveled all over Europe in their very colorful horse-drawn caravans.*

*Until the end of the last century, Romania was strongly under the influence of the Russian government but managed to maintain its independence. This was largely due to its leader who was very helpful to his people at first but eventually became quite ruthless and cruel. In the end, the Romanian citizens rebelled and he was forcibly taken from power. Since then, the country has been relatively prosperous and is now gaining importance as a manufacturing center in Eastern Europe. It certainly is more prosperous than its neighbor, Bulgaria, which was our next stop.*



***Bulgaria is across the River Danube from Romania and is where we first visited after boarding our boat. It is quite a bit smaller than Romania and most of the people live near its capital city, Sofia, which we did not visit.***

***The countryside that we saw in two days in Bulgaria is mostly farm land - with lots of beautiful bright yellow sunflower fields. To the south are the mountains and we went to two very old towns there during our visit.***

***Bulgaria is a very old country and many different peoples have lived there in its long history that dates back to the Ancient Greeks. For a long time it was part of the Ottoman Empire and still has a lot of Turkish influence in its culture and its buildings.***

***One day we visited a 300 year old Christian church that had been built when the country was ruled by Moslems. So, in order to be less obvious, and not compete with the tall mosques, the church was built mostly under-ground. Inside, however, it is just like many much larger churches and has many beautiful paintings and statues.***

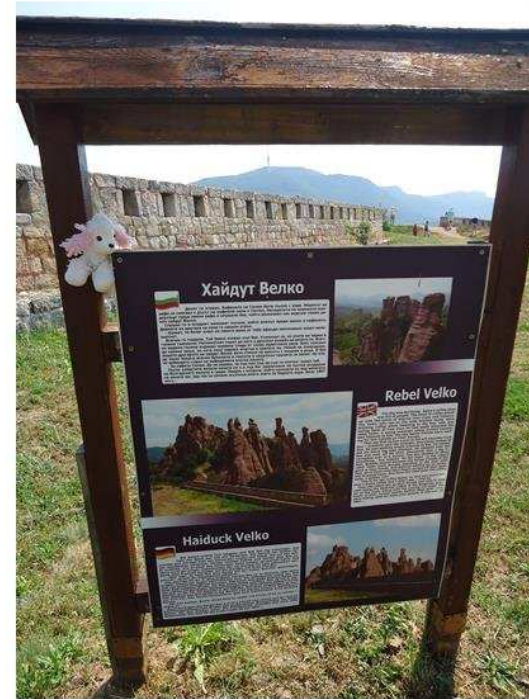
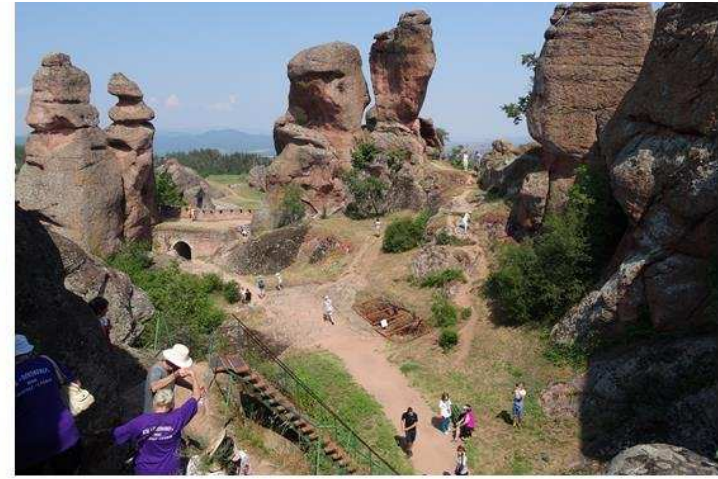
***In another town we saw another lovely small church that had been built on top of a very steep hill. It was too far for most of the tourists but can you guess one person who actually made it?***

***At a restaurant where we had lunch one day, we were entertained by a small group who performed traditional dances in their very colorful costumes. We didn't think they danced as well as Sammy but the dresses were nice.***



***Sunflowers, stork nests, local dancers and the two churches we saw.***





***Belogradchik Fortress with its unusual rock formations. Can you see the “lady with the backpack”?***

***Of course, Mrs Dog climbed on everything in sight!***

***Finally in Bulgaria we visited a very old fortress, also built on a mountain. The fortress itself was interesting but was made even more attractive but the surrounding rock formations. You could imagine all kinds of faces, people and other scenes in the rocks that had been worn by the wind and rain.***

***So, in our short visit to Bulgaria we saw a number of points of interest and some beautiful countryside and hills and we would like to visit again someday.***



*After our two days in Bulgaria, we had one complete day of sailing on the River Danube with no trips on land. Actually, we didn't leave Bulgaria immediately as it was on the left side of the boat as we cruised. Romania was on the right side. After a while, however, the country of Serbia was on the left - but Romania was still on the right side for a few more days.*

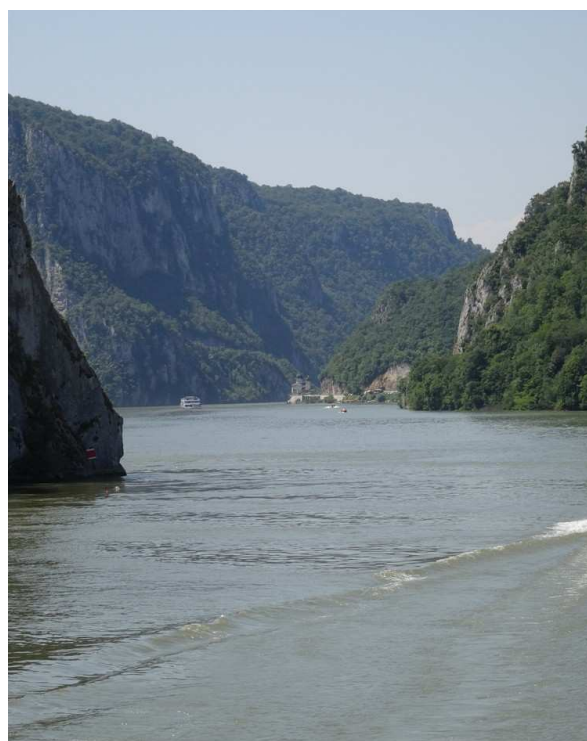
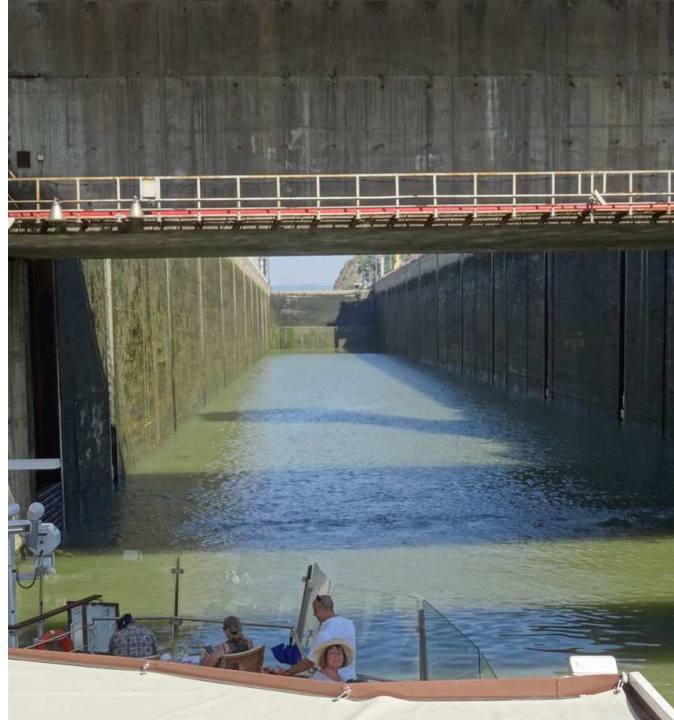
*First thing in the morning the boat was lifted over 200 feet through an enormous lock. We had been through a similar lock in the middle of the night so we were now much higher than we had been yesterday. We entered a long stretch of river called the Iron Gate and were able to see a number of points of interest on both sides. Sometimes we went out on deck but at other times we sat on the balcony of our room.*

*There were several pretty areas that we passed during the day, especially when we went through narrower stretches of river with steep hills on both sides. In addition, there were two main points of interest on this lovely day of sailing.*

*First was a small monastery that had been built right at the edge of the river. It is said that it was built by a monk who was given safe passage across the river at this point six or seven hundred years ago. There seems to be some confusion as to the exact date! It is a very pretty little church, however old it is. Actually, this particular building is less than 100 years old because the monastery had to be "lifted" and rebuilt when the river level was increased after the locks were built.*

*Perhaps the main attraction on this stretch was a huge face carved into the rock which had been commissioned and presented to the world in the 1950s. It was the face of a Roman era god and we were told that it was larger than those on Mount Rushmore (although, we thought, not as well carved) and only slightly smaller in overall height than the Statue of Liberty.*

*So, it was a relaxing way to spend one of our days on the River Danube and we saw some beautiful and interesting sights.*



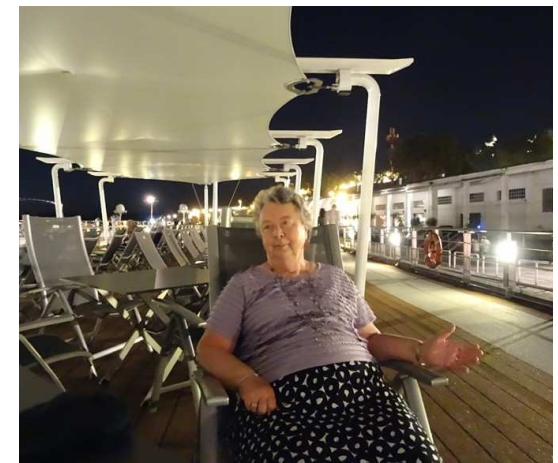
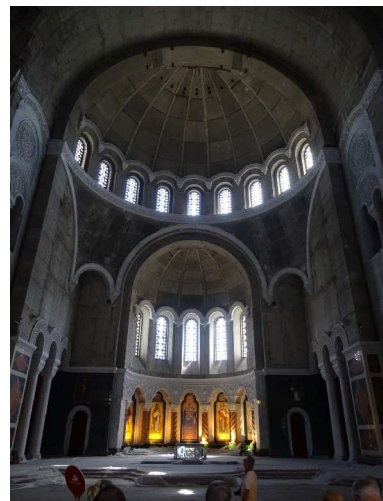
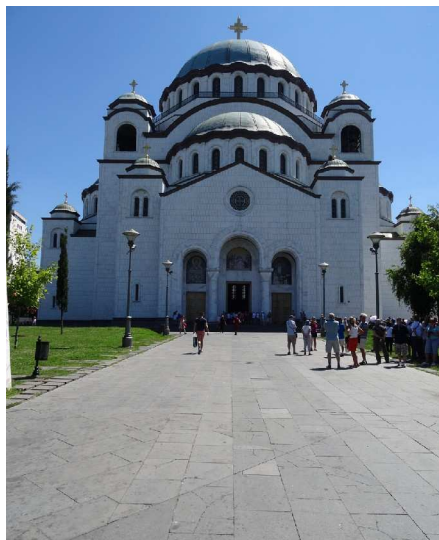


*The next country that we visited was Serbia. We saw only one town, Belgrade, but it is the capital city and we had a full day to see a lot. The first stop was a very old fortress that was built on a hill overlooking the River Danube and one of its tributaries. It certainly is a great place to build a castle as anyone approaching the city from the rivers or the low ground could be seen, making the city difficult to capture.*

*We also visited a large cathedral that has been under construction for 100 years - and it still isn't finished. As you can see, the outside is done but the floor and walls still need finishing on the inside. It should look very beautiful when it's finished; maybe we need to return someday.*

*In the center of Belgrade there are a lot of very fine buildings, including the Opera House in the picture below. The main streets are lined with very expensive shops and everywhere looks to be prosperous. It was a warm and sunny day when we were there so it was very pleasant to stroll along the streets and enjoy a coffee in a sidewalk cafe. Do you know the name of a world-famous tennis player who lives in Belgrade?*

*When we sailed from Belgrade it was late in the evening so the entire city was floodlit as we left and continued our journey up the Danube. After dinner, we went on the top deck so that we could see the lights and enjoy the warm evening.*

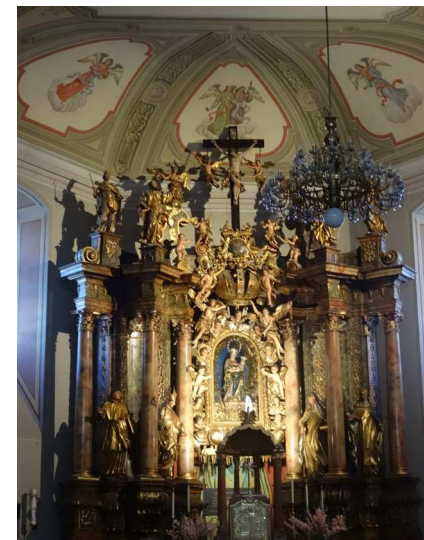
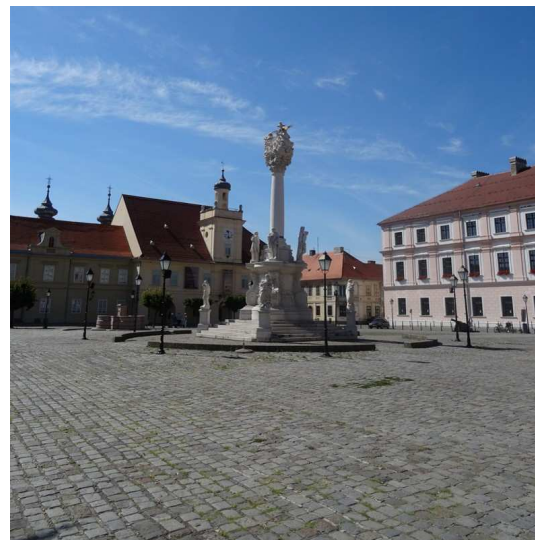
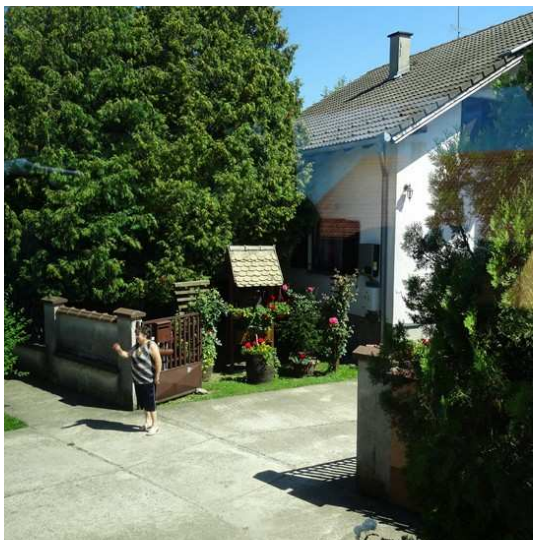




*The next country that we visited was Croatia, which is right next to Serbia. These two countries, together with four others, had been one big country called Yugoslavia until a civil war occurred in the 1990s and the smaller countries resulted. It is not obvious to us as outsiders to see why this area felt a need to break up - and to endure ten years of war before it was all over. Although it has now been almost 20 years since the war ended there is still a good deal of mistrust between the new countries and some people are still trying to get back to a normal life. The first thing we saw as we docked in Croatia was a water tower on top of which a young boy had placed the country's flag as the first Serbian troops entered the city at the beginning of the war. It has been left there as a memorial to those who died.*

*During the war a number of people were forced from their homes and not everyone was able to return. One lady who did get her old house back after eight years away was kind enough to invite our tour group to see her home and to sample some of her home made cakes and drinks. She was very nice and spoke to us about the war and how difficult it was to have to move to another country (Hungary) with her family. Now that she is home again, she doesn't appear bitter but it was obviously a very tough time.*

*After visiting the house, we went to a nearby town where there was a very nice town square (which again had been a fortress at one point) and a lovely church. The inside of the church was lavishly decorated and we were given a special treat while we inside. A young lady who was a student at the town's university sang a few songs and accompanied herself on the piano. She had a lovely voice and played very well so it was a nice way to end our brief visit to Croatia.*







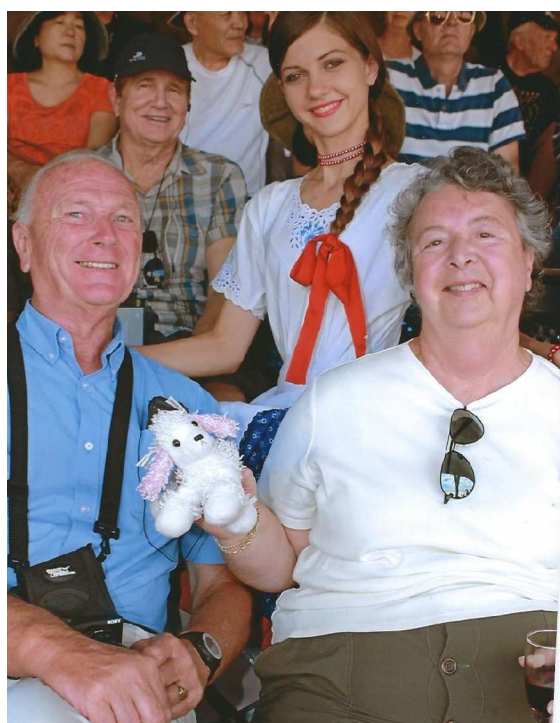
*Our next stop was in another new country, Hungary.*

*The boat docked in the river town of Kalocsa which is the center of the paprika growing area of the country and one of the oldest towns in Hungary. We drove first through the edge of town to the old part where we walked a short distance to the cathedral – another dedicated to St Joseph, as was the one in Croatia yesterday. The church was quite spectacular in its own right but the highlight of the visit was a short organ recital, which was excellent.*



*We were then driven another 20 minutes or so to see the Horsemen of Pusztá where we saw a very interesting show of horsemanship in a large arena and which was very reminiscent of Cossack horse shows we have seen in the past. This is perhaps not surprising as many of the Hungarians (called Magyars) originally came from the east and specifically in this case from Mongolia.*

*The show lasted about 45 minutes during which the riders did some fantastic tricks on their horses and the horses themselves did some unusual things as well. There were also teams of horses pulling carts at very high speeds (sometimes with the rider standing on two horses!) and creating a lot of dust in the arena.*



*Perhaps the most interesting part was when the horses all laid down with their riders still sitting on them. Mrs Dog really enjoyed the whole show and did everything she could to get a good view.*



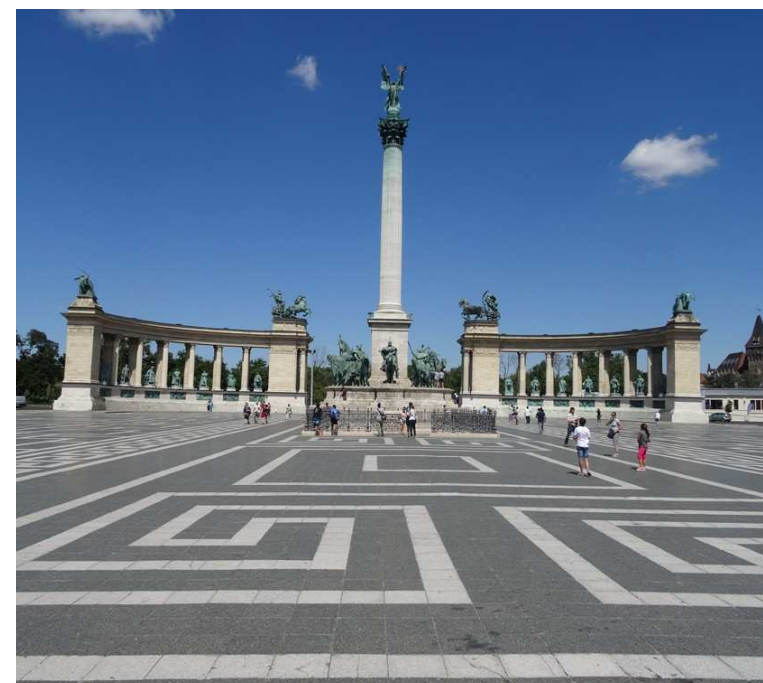
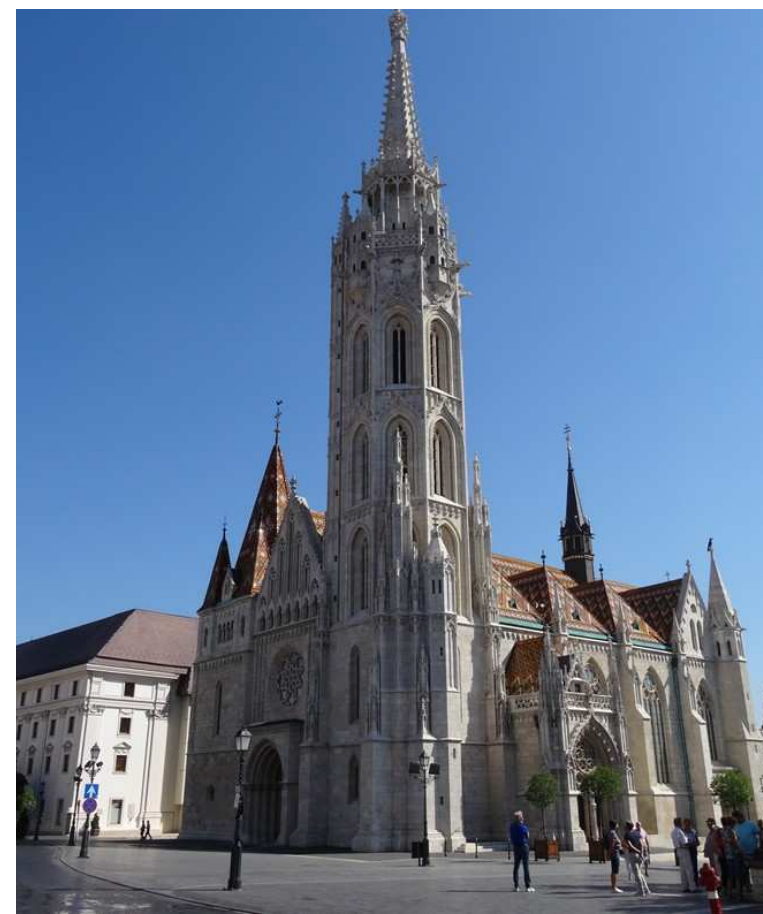
*The next day we were still in Hungary but now in the capital city of Budapest. Actually Budapest is two cities together; the older, hilly section (Buda) and the relatively new flat area of Pest on the other side of the river.*

*Budapest was also where we said goodbye to our river boat and we would stay in a hotel in Buda for the next three days. The hotel was at the highest point in the city so we had some fantastic views of the river and the whole city.*

*Perhaps the nicest building is actually in Pest and right alongside the river. It looks very much like a cathedral but is the House of Parliament and is recognized as the symbol of Budapest.*

*Right next to our hotel was the very big St Matthias Cathedral with a very ornate colored tile roof. Also in the area of the cathedral was the Fishermens' Bastion, a building dedicated to local fishermen who defended their city in the Middle Ages. We thought that it looked like something that belonged in Disneyland; what do you think?*

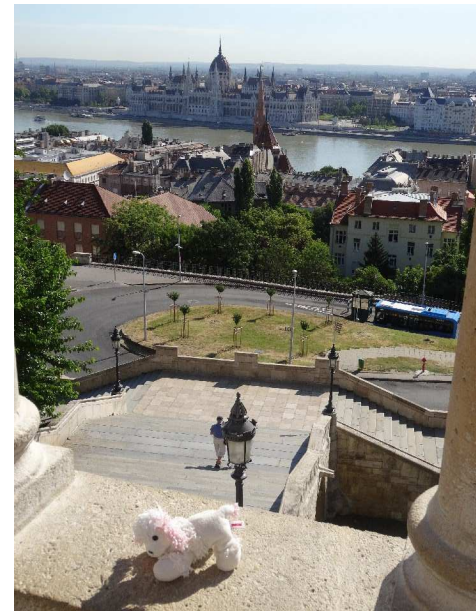
*In Pest is a very big square called Heroes Square which honors the seven Magyar Chieftains who led the Hungarian people to this part of Europe. At the top of the tall column is a statue of the Angel Gabriel and several statues on either side of the column commemorate heroes of the country. This square has also been the site of many large gatherings in more recent years, especially when the Soviet Union collapsed and Hungary became independent again.*



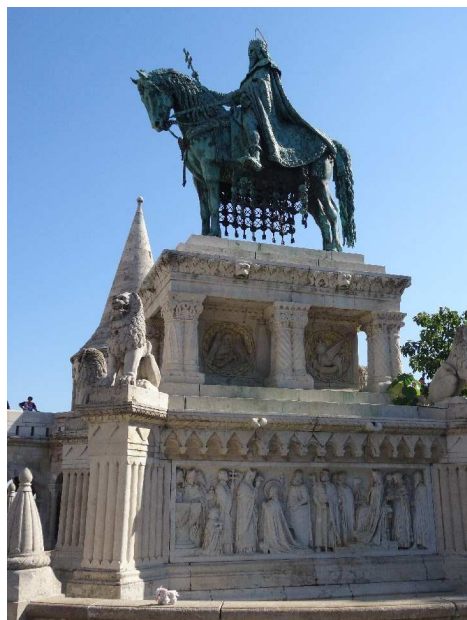




*Of course Mrs Dog wanted to have her picture taken with every one of the buildings that we saw. Here she is on a bench near the cathedral.*



*Now she is on the wall of the Fishermens' Bastion with the River Danube and the House of Parliament in the background.*



*Now can you find her near the statue of King Matthias?*



*Finally she found somewhere we she really stood out. This is a model of the cathedral and the bastion and the walls at the top of the hill in Buda. Mrs Dog felt VERY BIG!*

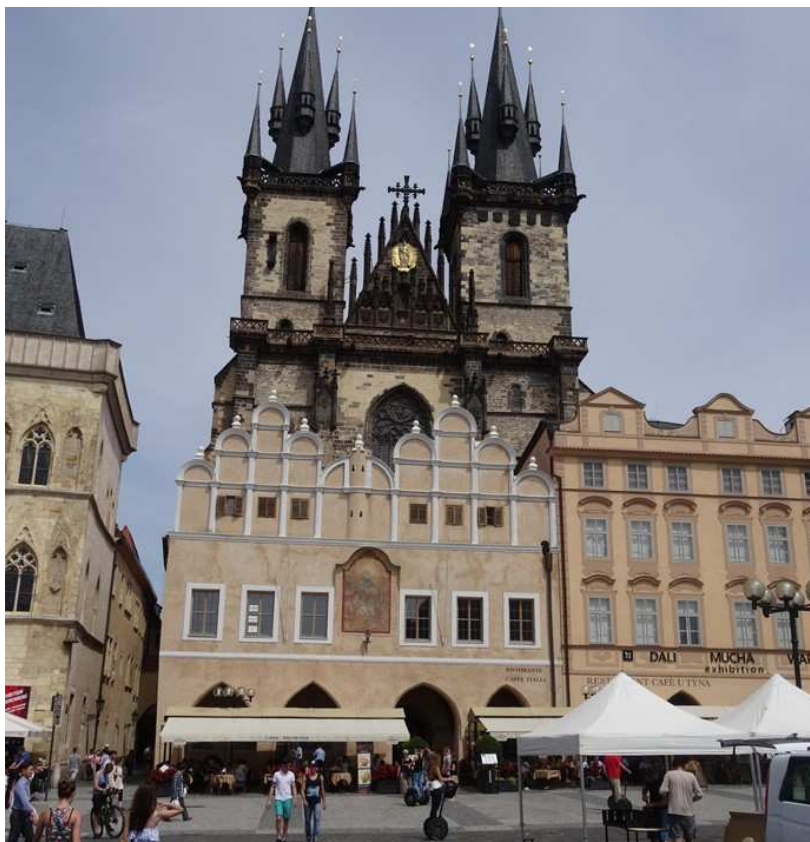


*After our three days in Budapest we left Hungary by train and traveled about eight hours to the city of Prague in the Czech Republic. It was a long journey but we saw a lot of pretty countryside and even had a meal on the train as we approached the last stop on this trip.*

*The Czech Republic is another very old country but has only had this name and its current size since it split from the larger Czechoslovakia in 1993, after many years of Russian occupation and influence.*

*Prague is the capital city of the country and is perhaps one of the most beautiful in all of Europe. It has hundreds of very fine buildings, many of which are over 500 years old, and has an enormous castle overlooking the River Moldau.*

*We spent two full days exploring the city and soon learned how to use its underground railroad to get from one part of town to another. We also used a hop on/hop off bus and took a boat ride on the river.*



*This is just one of many beautiful buildings in Prague and sits on one side of a huge square which is a major gathering place for locals and tourists alike.*

*On many days local traders will set up stalls in the square and sell souvenirs or, in many cases, local produce such as fruits and vegetables for the residents to buy.*

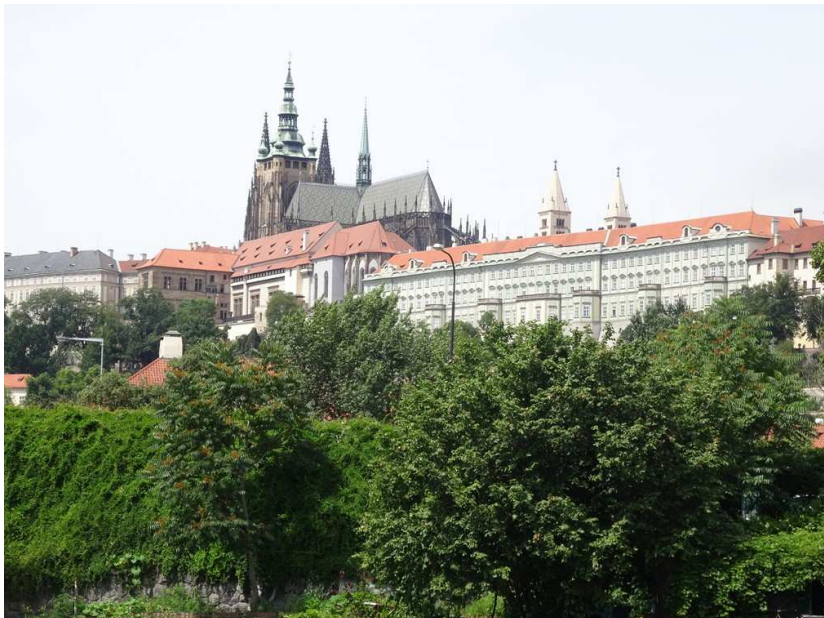
*One of the squares is named after King Wenceslas. Where have you heard that name before?*



*It was a very hot and sunny day when we took our boat ride on the river. The boat passes under many very old bridges, including this stone bridge which has many souvenir stalls where you can buy almost everything as you walk across.*

*Today, Grandma was happy to just sit on the upper deck of the boat and take in the sights and the sun.*

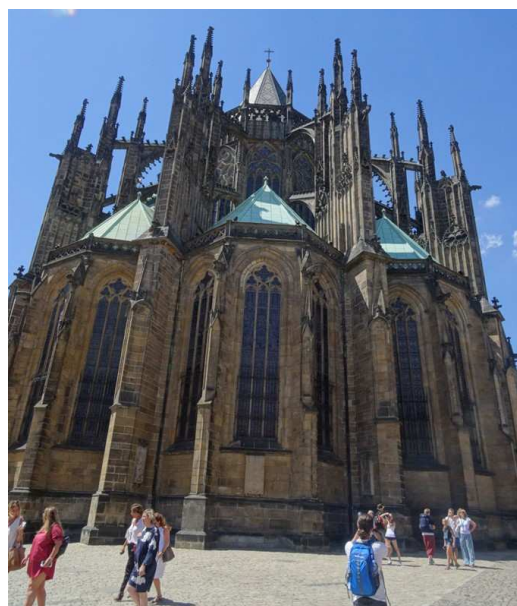




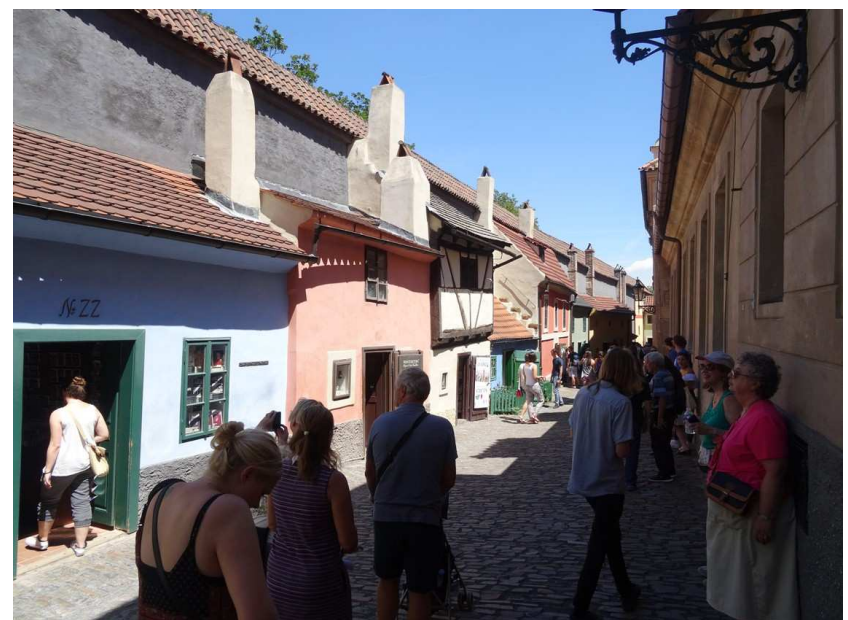
*Prague Castle sits high above the river and is almost a city itself . There are very high walls all around it - so it is well protected - and has been the home for kings and queens of the country for hundreds of years.*



*This is just one of several palace buildings where royalty have lived. The Czech Republic doesn't have a royal family anymore but the buildings have been preserved as museums or places to hold state functions.*

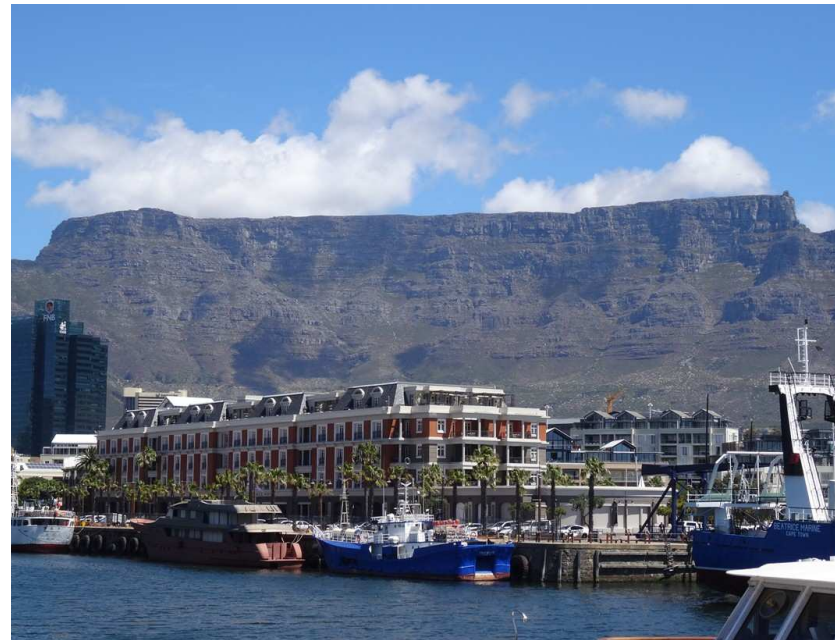


*There are several churches inside the castle and the St Vitas Cathedral is by far the biggest. It has lots of beautiful paintings, statues and stained glass windows. At the right above, Grandma is looking at some shops built into the castle walls!*



*With our two days in Prague completed we came to the end of this very interesting tour through six countries of Eastern Europe. Can you remember their names?*





## South Africa

*The last big trip of 2016 took us to South Africa. South Africa is a country at the southwestern tip of the continent of Africa and is about three times the size of California and has a population about one quarter bigger. There are several large cities (especially Cape Town and Johannesburg) but there are vast areas where only a few people live in small towns and villages. Interestingly, South Africa has THREE capital cities - Cape Town, Pretoria and Bloemfontein - one each for the three branches of government. That would be like the United States having Congress in Washington, the President in Dallas and the Supreme Court in San Francisco! It seems a little strange but apparently it works in South Africa.*

*We did not visit any of the major cities except Cape Town where we spent about ten days in all. Cape Town is famous for Table Mountain, a flat-topped 3000 feet high mountain which rises straight up from the center of the town. Often, mist from the sea will creep over Table Mountain and spill down towards the city, much like the marine layer seen in California. When the local people see the cloud covering the mountain, they say that it has a table cloth. Can you see it coming in the picture above?*





*While we were in Cape Town, we stayed at a beautiful house that belonged to a nephew of Grandma and Granddad. It overlooked the Atlantic Ocean and had a lovely terrace where we ate our meals.*

*Also in Cape Town, we met some friends from America who were spending a few days there before exploring other parts of Africa. Mrs Dog soon made friends with Jay and Gordon.*

*South Africa has had four Nobel Prize Winners (for their work on civil rights for everyone) and there is a statue of all of them near the waterfront in Cape Town. Can you spot the two imposters?*

*On day trips from Cape Town we visited some nearby towns which had been settled by the Dutch over 450 years ago. Almost every house, church and other kind of building here is painted white, so they almost shine in the bright sun. Many people in South Africa still speak a form of Dutch that is called Afrikaans. However, English is also spoken by most people and there are a number of other languages of the native African tribes. The country has eleven official languages!*

*The area around Cape Town is also famous for its vineyards and its wineries. We visited several during our stay and Mrs Dog always enjoyed sampling the different wines - as did Grandma and Granddad!*







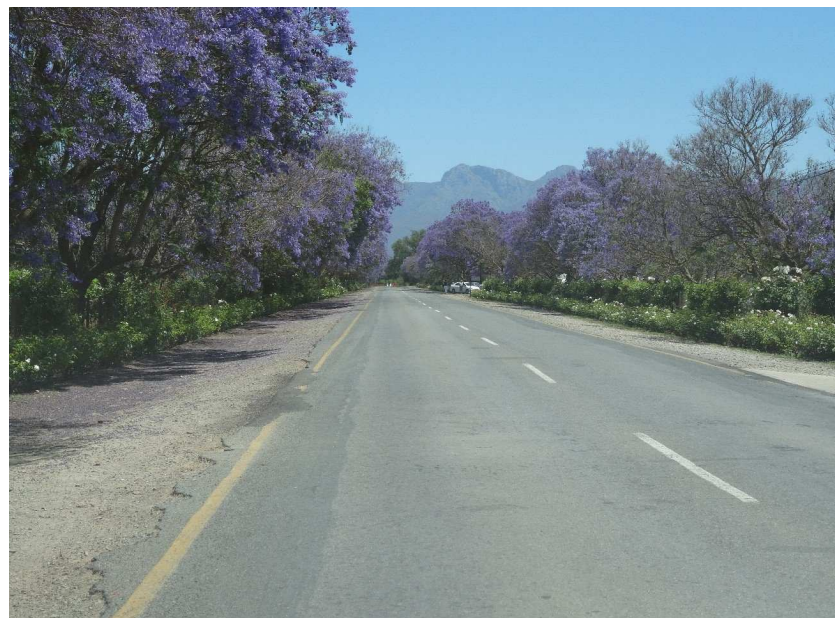
*This is just one of the many white painted buildings in the area around Cape Town that was first settled by the Dutch. Can you guess which people from another European country settled in South Africa?*



*In one small town that we visited we went for a walk away from the houses and other buildings. We got lost! And the only way we could get back to the town was to walk across a wooden "bridge" over a stream. Quite an adventure.*



*South Africa has lots of wild animals, including lions, elephants, buffalo and giraffe. We had seen all of these on previous visits to the country. This time, however, we saw ostrich, flamingo, donkeys and baboons.*



*While traveling along an area called the Garden Route, we saw lots of different types of flowers and trees. Perhaps the prettiest of all was the Jacaranda tree which seemed to be almost everywhere, especially near vineyards.*

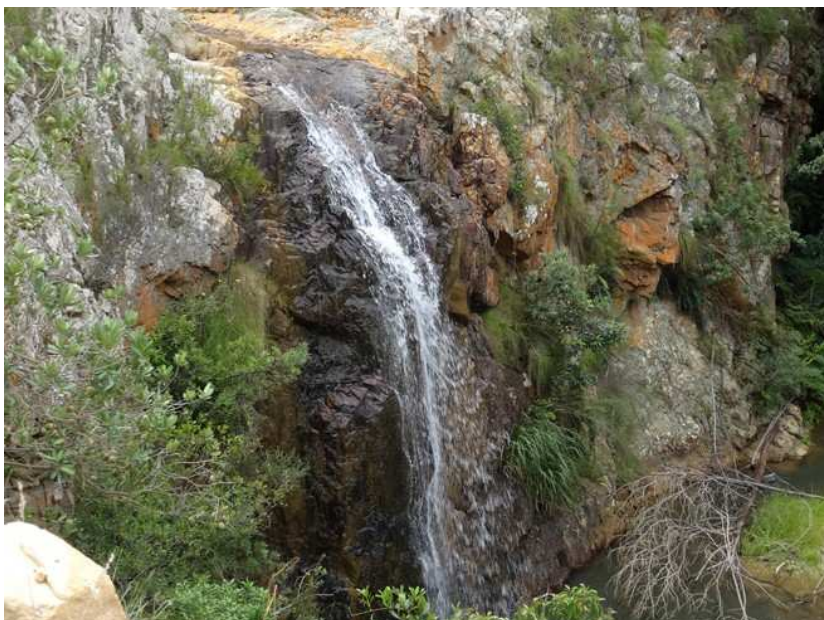




*South Africa has lots of vineyards, just like California. In many places it seemed that we could see grapes growing from the road on which we were traveling all the way to the distant mountains.*



*There are very few expressways in South Africa (outside the major cities) but there are some spectacular roadways like this one built high above the valley.*



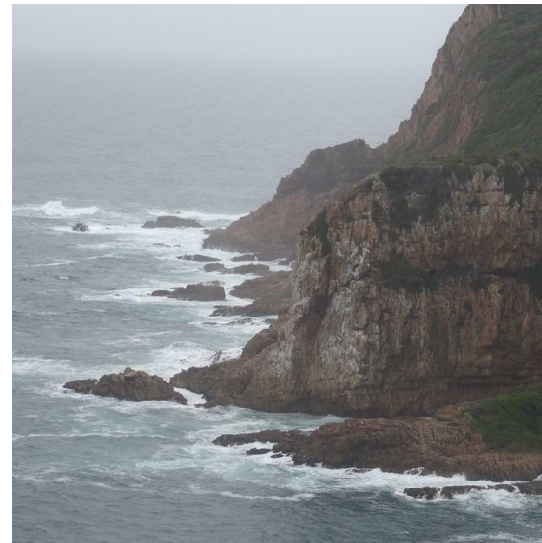
*There are many waterfalls.....*



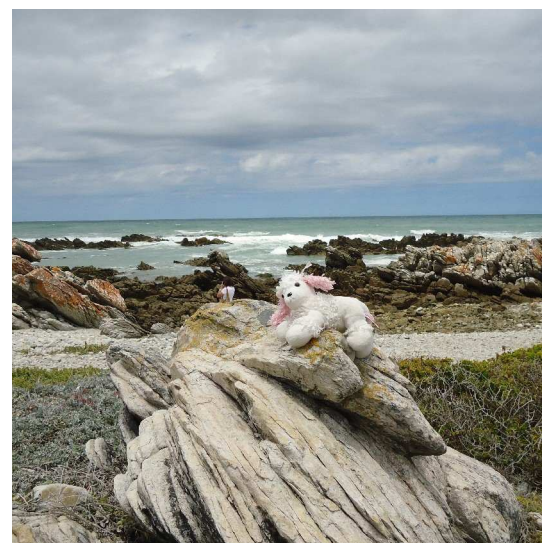
*..... and some very lonely dirt roads!*



*South Africa also has many miles of beautiful coastline with sandy beaches, high cliffs and rough seas. Mrs Dog sometimes ventured close to the water but often preferred to sit on a balcony and just look out.*



*South Africa actually touches two oceans and we visited the place where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet at the most southerly point on the whole continent.*







*Relaxing.....*



*Beautiful scenery*



*Wine*



*.....and (Grandma's favorite) afternoon tea!*

***That's South Africa.***



## ***And let's not forget America.***

*To complete the review of travels in 2016, we must not forget that we also took three driving trips in the United States and Canada. In the spring we went to Ontario and Quebec in Canada and Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New York in the northeast United States.*

*We met friends in several places along the route; first Bill and Monica who we have known since our days at university together; Jay and Gordon (remember them from the South Africa trip?) who we met a few years ago; and Cathy who lived across the street when we lived in our first house in America.*

*So, this trip was mainly to see friends but of course we saw some beautiful places also.*

## ***Canada and the Northeast United States***



*The picture above shows all the friends we met on this trip as well as two of the many places we visited. The lake is in Ontario, Canada, quite close to the home of Bill and Monica who are standing on the bridge with Grandma. The waterfall is one of a number we saw during our drive through the beautiful state of Vermont.*

*Do you know what the nickname of Vermont is? Do you know California's nickname? Didn't we all play a game about state nicknames once? And who was the winner?*

*In the picture above right, Jay is reading about the place we were visiting called America's Stonehenge. It is thought that the area, with its chambers and stone tables, might be as much as 4000 years old. It has been very difficult to date it accurately as many people have used the stones for their own buildings over the years, even as recently as 150 years ago. Do you know where the more famous Stonehenge is and how old it is?*

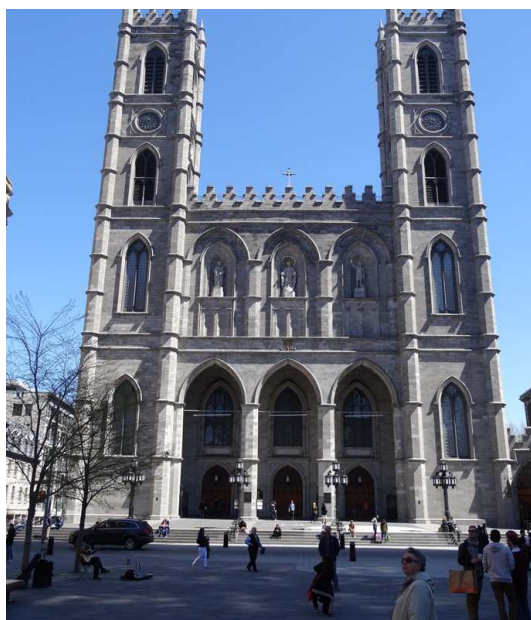




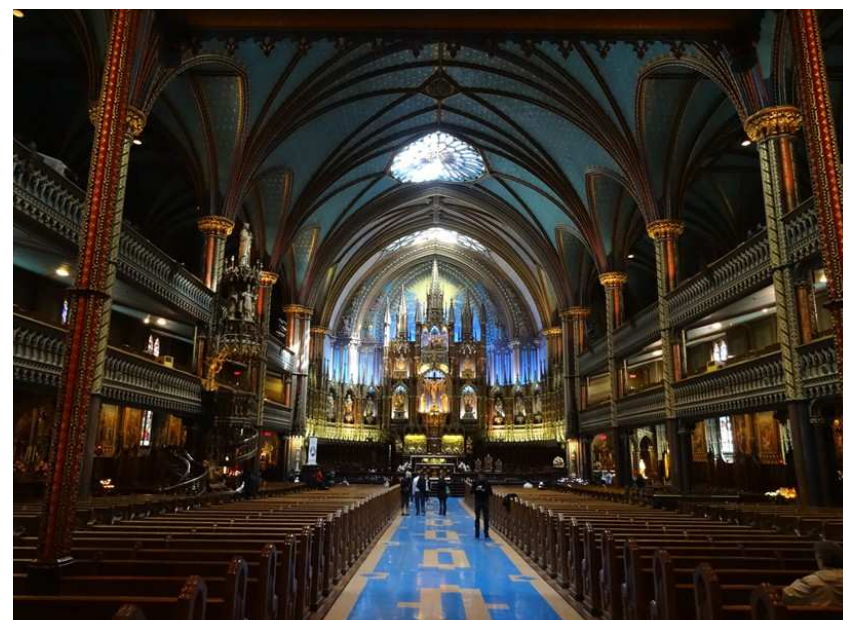
*In Montreal, which is the largest city in Canada and where most people speak French rather than English, we visited the Olympic Stadium. The Summer Olympics were held there in 1976 - forty years ago!*



*Some of the Olympic sites are still there and used for sporting events today, but others have been converted for other uses. We visited a huge indoor tropical forest where there were many birds and animals including these pretty parakeets.*



*Finally, still in Montreal, we visited an enormous cathedral called the Basilica of Notre Dame. It is beautiful on the outside but exceptionally so inside as you can see.*



So, that's just a short review of our visit to Canada and the Northeastern United States in the spring of 2016. We still have two more driving trips to cover, so we are not quite finished yet.





*In the fall we took two driving trips, the first of which was a big loop from Salt Lake City through Utah, Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon, California and Nevada - and back to Salt Lake City.*



*In Salt Lake City we saw the beautiful Mormon Temple. The Mormons believe that Jesus visited America after his resurrection. By contrast, but equally beautiful, were the hills and rivers of Montana.*



*Here Grandma is standing at the "Headwaters of the Missouri". When Lewis and Clark traveled across western America in 1803 they sailed (sometimes pushed or pulled) their boat from St Louis to this point where the Missouri River is formed.*



*Helena, Montana was the site of a gold rush, much like the one in California but about 15 years later. In fact, many of the men who had worked in the California mines went to Montana to find more gold.*





*On this trip we also visited Spokane, Washington. It is at the eastern end of the state where there is a lot of farmland but the city also had a "gold rush" at the end of the 19th century. Now it is a big manufacturing and transportation center.*



*Perhaps one of the most beautiful parts of the northwestern United States is the Columbia River Gorge, on the border between the states of Washington and Oregon. It was also the final stretch of river sailed by Lewis and Clark as they neared the Pacific Ocean.*



*Then we went to Sacramento!  
Three points for guessing the name of the restaurant and five more points for the food that Sammy ate in a HUGE dish.*



*On the way back to Salt Lake City from Sacramento, we stopped at the Bonneville Salt Flats at the western end of Utah. It is on these very flat and hard salt flats that race car drivers have set many world speed records.*



***Shortly after completing the western driving trip, we started out on a smaller loop through the Midwestern States to see the beautiful fall colors. We traveled from Ohio through Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky before returning to Ohio. In northern Michigan, in addition to the colorful trees, there are many magnificent homes, often built next to a lake with great views. Many were built originally as summer homes for the very rich people of the industrial southern Michigan but now they often seem to be used year round.***

***In Minneapolis, we visited a very interesting area that was originally the center of the grain industry in America. In fact, you may have heard of two of the biggest grain companies - General Mills and Pillsbury. The mills are now gone, but the area has been preserved to show the many underground channels built to carry water from the Mississippi River to provide power to the factories. There is also a very old stone arch train bridge over the river which was built in 1883. It is now used as a recreation pathway. In Illinois we visited another Mormon Temple in Nauvoo. Actually, this temple has been re-built quite recently to commemorate the death here of one of the early leaders of the Church, eventually forcing the trek to Salt lake City and the temple we saw earlier.***

***Our final stop was in Louisville, Kentucky where Mrs Dog had breakfast with someone you might recognize.***







***One thing more about these two fall driving trips. We saw four state Capitols on our journeys and we know that Sammy likes to visit Capitols on her vacations. We'll give you the city, you provide the State Name. First, Salt Lake City.***

***Helena***



***St Paul***

***and.....Des Moines***

***That's the end of Mrs Dog's Travels for 2016.  
We hope that you have enjoyed reading.***











