

Biking Iceland, Netherlands, Belgium and France 2016

The majority of this bike trip was organized by Bike and Barge Holland Tours, LLC – The description provided by Bike and Barge Holland Tours, LLC of the tour can be found by pressing the following itinerary link on book page (same page that led you here)

Day 0, Friday, May 6, 2016

I solved 2 software issues and had to work until almost 6:00PM. Then I cycled an extra 14 miles to get home, finished packing, cleaned dishes, did laundry, thought about going to a bar and cleaned house (moved stuff around).

Day 1, Saturday, May 7, 2016

I cycled to McDonalds for breakfast and then most of the way to Kelly point, pulled weeds, straighten up yard, hung ropes for my hops, and prepared my house for vacation, left for max at 10:30 AM with bike in suit case and second bag with trip stuff. I arrived at PDX around noon. Once at the airport I walked down all the hallways of airport. Then I started reading about Iceland so I could make some plans for next day. I boarded my first flight from Portland to Seattle at around 2:00 PM. Once in Seattle I did not have much time before my flight to Iceland, so I immediately went from one flight to the next flight. It was about a 7-hour flight to Reykjavik, Iceland, I did some more reading about Iceland and slept for about 6 hours on the plane. (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 0 miles) (Bike start odometer 5002.2 total miles; GPS start 8241.65 miles)

Day 2, Sunday, May 8, 2016

I arrived at the Reykjavik airport (KEF) at around 6:30 AM, I waited for my luggage until after 7:00 AM, most other people were gone. My luggage did not show up, no bike, no stuff. What a bummer. Iceland air was not nice to me and not at all accommodating, they gave me no room or blanket or travel kit. I did not have stuff for sleeping (was planning on car camping) or my bathroom stuff (tooth brush etc.) or any extra clothes. I then went to get my rental car. The line was very long and slow. It took about an hour to get the car. I paid for the extra insurance and a GPS. I was very glade I got the GPS. It had a loaded Iceland guided tour in it and I was able to get narration on where I was going based on the GPS coordinates from the Garmin car GPS that I had rented. I ended up following the Golden circle route the first day. My first stop was Thingvellir National Park, neat hiking trails and ok water falls. Then I continued to the Geysir Hot springs (Haukadalur valley), not quite as nice a thermal area as Yellowstone National Park in the USA, but the main geyser went off

frequently and quickly. Then I went to Gullfoss waterfalls. It was neat falls, then I started driving towards Jokulsalon, but did not want to do that much driving, so I stayed in Vic. I also kept thinking I wanted to bike more the next day. The hotel was expensive and I would have slept in my rental car if I had my luggage would have arrived with me in Iceland and I would have definitely drove all the way to Jokulsalon . I was very upset that I did not have my luggage and I felt Iceland air was not very helpful. They would have delivered my luggage, but I had no place to stay and explained that my sleeping bag and camping gear was in my luggage, they did not even give me a blanket, motel or any help. They said if I had to come back to get my stuff they would pay for parking. Well, the next day when I returned to get my bags they were very unhelpful and it was a time consuming process to get my bags, they also would not pay my airport parking fee and said I could mail them with my receipt and I might be able to get refunded. I probably still should have gone for the ice burgs and skipped the motel, but I might not have slept that night due to the lack of warm clothes and sleeping bag. I probably should have continued. I can bike anytime and did not sleep much that night anyways. I may not be in Iceland, again and ice burgs seem like something I should see. (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 0 miles)

Day 3, Monday, May 9, 2016

I could not sleep, I was up until midnight watching on deadly ground with Steven Segal. I then slept really good for about 4 hours and could not get back to sleep. I decided to leave the hotel early and drive to Jokulsalon so I could see the ice burgs. I wanted to drive there the previous night, but decided it was too far. Then I kept thinking ice burgs are what people think about with respect to Iceland. But the drive seemed way too far, it took me almost 3 additional hours from Vik to get to Jokulsalon (where the ice burgs are) and then about 6 hours to get back to the Reykjavik airport. On the way back I only stopped at the cliffs near Dyrholac (cliffs where puffins nest, did not see puffins, but still a very nice spot) and Eyjafjallajökull volcano that had erupted on April 4th, 2010. I also did a few other small stops. Mostly I just drove for over 5 hours to get back to Reykjavik airport (REF). I was able to get my gear, but Iceland Air would not validate my parking ticket. It seemed to make me mad the way they forgot my bags and did not provide me with any help. After getting my bike in the suitcase I parked at a picnic table stop and assembled my bike. Then I drove to Reykjavik and cycled a long distance. I was worried about my car parking at a mall for such a long (thought it might get towed), but when I returned to the mall the car was still there. I then drove towards blue lagoon, but decided not to go into the lagoon (since I was by myself, I probably should have gone anyways – to check it out). I drove the long way back towards the airport. I stopped at an information sign and put my bike in its suit case. Then I finished my drive to Reykjanesbaer and got a hotel room in the hotel (Guesthouse). At that point I was very tired; I had only slept about 8 hours in the past 3 days. Since I had to get up early, I had my iPad clock on

and I slept monitoring the time. I did not have a solid night of sleep, but felt rested enough the next day. (Daily Bike miles 22.32 miles; total bike miles 22.32 miles) (Total bike odometer miles 5024.5; Total GPS miles 8263.93)

Day 4, Tuesday, May 10, 2016

I woke up around 4:45 AM and ate my rooms included breakfast. Then I went to return the rental car, like when I rented the car it took forever. The process of checking my bags was also a little confusing. Between the rental car return, checking in my baggage and passing security it took over an hour. The flight was quick and smooth. I easily caught the train to Amsterdam Central. I followed the instructions for the house boat from Nancy. I could not find it, the instructions said next to the yellow house boat. At this point I am very irritated and tired. I was thinking Nancy should not have wanted the house boat, but I did agree that it was acceptable. Maybe I should have said no, I realize people want to be on the water and I figure that was the appeal to Nancy. I guess for me I have slept in enough boats to feel that a hotel would have been my choice. After all the traveling I was tired and grumpy at this point and wanted to put my bike together. However, I still had to wait for Nancy and I was not sure where we were staying. I walked back to the train station with my 2 suit cases and waited until Nancy showed up. I think I was a little harsh on Nancy about the boat when I saw here. It was a good location and probably not a bad price (although it seemed expensive to me, however she paid for the room, so I should not have said anything). It was a unique experience; I think that is what traveling is about. When Nancy showed up, we easily found the boat, Fredrick was waiting for Nancy. The houseboat next to his was not yellow to me, like in the instructions. It seemed more like beige. I was in the right spot when I could not find the locations, then when we found it, I notice the address of 3, I was right on target, but did not know it. We walked around a little and got dinner. When we returned to the boat I assembled my bike, but did not ride it, just locked it to the deck of the boat to use the next day. (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 22.32 miles)

Day 5, Wednesday, May 11, 2016

The previous night we went to sleep about 10:00 PM, I woke at a little after midnight, took sleeping pill and slept until 8:00 AM. This was my first good full night of sleep since I left Portland. By the time we were ready and rented Nancy a bike it was already about 10:00 AM. We cycled east for about 5 miles then went back towards town. Then we cycled to the Westport dock and found the location of the dock where our Holland bike and barge boat (the Angelia) would be docked on Friday. Next, we decided to follow the hop on and off bus tour route. We checked out all the bus tour stops from the outside along the way. The cycling was challenging, bike and people come from every direction, you need to be alert. It was fun. My favorite stop was going through the Rijks Museum tunnel. The tunnel goes through the middle of the

building and ends up in a large park area. In the park there is a large cut out with Amsterdam spelled out. I had Nancy take my photo sitting on the e with just the terd (terd in Amsterdam) showing in the photo. I put the photo on Facebook with the caption, look there is an e in the middle of ted. After cycling that bus route Nancy returned her bike and went back to boat and I continued cycling. I found a grocery store and then used my GPS to find an ATM. I had to use my GPS a couple of times on this day to find my way back to the boat. Then I biked back to the grocery store. By the time I got back to the boat, Nancy was writing me a note saying she was going to find a restaurant to eat dinner, she was tired of waiting for me. We went to the nearby restaurant and ate dinner there. We then went back to the boat to relax and watch TV. (Daily Bike miles 33.2 miles; total bike miles 55.52 miles) (Total 5057.7; GPS 5224.73)

Day 6, Thursday, May 12, 2016

I started the day around 9:00 AM and cycled towards the train station. Then I took the free ferry to the other side of the main canal, to north Amsterdam. Then I cycled north, at first, I accidentally ended up on a car only road for a very short distance. I man in a car cursed at me and pointed to the trail. It was a mistake without a warning. I thought the guy in the car was a jerk. I then found the bike trails and cycled a long distance on the trails. At one point, I was feeling tired and took a rest on a bench. A lady asked me if I was OK and I said I was fine, just a little tired. She asked me if I needed coffee, I said no. She was surprising friendly, maybe because I was about 20 miles from the city and she may have wanted to make sure I went get back to the city. I then cycled back to the ferry, first I stopped to get groceries and then took the ferry back to the central train stationary area. I then cycled east until I got close to a college looking area. At one point, I was on a bike trail and everything one was giving me a small amount of room. One lady got mad at me and pointed at the other side of the road. I looked over there and noticed all the bikes on that side of the road was going my direction, I believe at that part of the road the bikes even had a sidewalk side of the road and I was on the wrong side of the road. I then crossed over the road and continued cycling. Then I decided to head back to the boat, I was supposed to be back by 2:30 PM to get Nancy. I got a little lost on the way back, I was going the opposite direction and used my GPS to get back to the boat. I arrived back to Nancy at about exactly 2:30 PM. Then we had lunch and walked to the Westport dock (where out Holland bike and Barge trip would start). We ended up taking the Lovers Canal tour. Then we went to the Madame Tussauds wax museum. Next, we went to the ice bar and then walked back to the boat. We looked for dinner, but ended up eating bread and cheese back at the boat for dinner. Then we watched TV and went to sleep around midnight. (Daily Bike miles 38.5 miles; total bike miles 94.02 miles) (Bike miles 94.02, total 5096.2; GPS miles 5263.09)

Day 7, Friday, May 13, 2016

I left our boat around 8:00 AM and cycled to the free ferry. Then I took the ferry to north Amsterdam and cycled 5 miles north and then headed back towards our boat. When on the south side of canal, I decided to bike east for a while and got a little lost, I used my GPS to find my way back to the boat. Nancy was already packed. She did not go biking with me. Then we pushed our suit cases to the Angelia (the boat we were taking for the bike and barge Holland trip). After that we walked to the flea market and then to the bike shop so Nancy could get a rain coat and helmet. Then Nancy went to do laundry and I bought some micro-Sims for my CoolCam. When I read up on the CoolCam I found the Micro SIMs needed to be formatted on a PC. The first Micro SIMS seemed to work without formatting, the second was not recording on my CoolCam, might have gotten wet the day I tried using it without the cap on. Then I walked around and met up with the group at the boat a little after 5:00 PM. We walked through Amsterdam with bike guide from the Holland barge and I noticed a couple of times people on bikes stopped to listen to our tour guide. The town was quieter than normal at that time, only a few people on bikes and a couple people walking. Then we walked to eat for Dutch food at this restaurant. Then I bought some alcohol and then went back to the boat. We went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily Bike miles 13.93 miles; total bike miles 107.95 miles) (GPS miles 8277.26; Bike odometer 107.95, total 5110.1)

Day 8, Saturday, May 14, 2016

I started the day by walking to train station with Nancy at around 8:30 AM, I lost her at the Train station, she thought I ditched her. I thought she was behind me. I then walked to the Jordaan neighborhood, I found a great outside market, lots of fruit, plants and fish. Then I found a park with statues and a sky play walk for kids and then I started back to the boat, Angelia. This was our bike and barge Holland tour boat, the time to arrive was noon and the latest departure time was 1:00 PM. I figured this meant I had until 1:00 PM to get to the boat. I arrived back at the boat around 12:30 PM and I was the last one to arrive. I guess for what Nancy said people wondered where I was, I thought I was early. I had also stopped to buy souvenirs. The barge left Amsterdam a little before 1:00 PM. I guess they were waiting for me, if I would have arrived earlier, they may have left earlier. Then the boat went a short distance and we went for a 17 km bike ride. The leader had a problem with her bike, the brakes started rubbing. I ended up riding her bike for most of the ride that day. Back at the boat we floated away and ate dinner on the boat around 6:50 PM. (Daily Bike miles 10.34 miles; total bike miles 118.29 miles) (GPS miles 8288.87 - 8278.53 = 10.34 miles)

Day 9, Sunday, May 15, 2016

We did not get off the boat until about 10:00 AM, they had to move the boat before we could get off. It was parked on a dock with a long drop from the boat and it would

have been too hard to get the bikes off the boat. The day started with some rain, we hid in some trees for about 10 minutes and then took off riding. The rest of the day was not wet and we had tail winds most of the day. The country side was very nice. At one town every one stopped for a coffee break. I did not want to sit in the coffee shop so I went for a walk. I found a windmill that was open for tours, so I did the tour. It took about 15 minutes. They used meat fat to lubricate the bearings on the windmill. Then I returned to where everyone was eating and they were preparing to leave so I told them that the windmill was open. A couple people went over there, but decided it was too close to time to leave for the tour. The group left the town, I was the only one that went inside the windmill. I assumed the windmill tour was going to be for everyone after coffee, but it was not. I guess I lucked out that I did not stop for coffee. Then we went to another town where glass blowing was a big attraction. I did not really want to see the tour, but did anyways. Then I walked around town, the other Nancy was telling me she had lived in Alaska and her husband ran a king crab boat. Now her son is running the crab boat. As we cycled at one point we saw a stork in a nest on a tall pole, cool! Once in the town with the boat our guide had a tough time finding our boat. Good thing for cell phones, she was able to call the people on the boat and get directions to where they had parked for the boat for the night. After we found the boat, I continued cycling and saw some neat baby birds and a cool school. Then I returned for dinner. After dinner several people in the group went for a town walk. We returned and I worked on my journal until about midnight. (Daily Bike miles 40.6 miles; total bike miles 158.89 miles) (GPS miles 8329.47 - 8288.87 = 40.60)

Day 10, Monday, May 16, 2016

We started the day at 8:45 AM, first did a short ride to a ferry the ride was easy. In the small fortifies city of Woudrichem I walked the loop trail on the fortress top. When we arrived at the boat in Den Bosch a group of us went walking around town. There was a big jazz festival in the city of Den Bosch (the town we stayed in on the boat), we walked into town hoping to get the opportunity to climb the church, but the organized tour was sold out for the day, probably due to the jazz festival. Then I walked around town with Dayle and then back to the boat. We had a great Gourmet dinner and then we went on an under the city water tour. After that we continued walking around town. Then back to the boat around 10:00 PM. I went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily Bike miles 29.15 miles; total bike miles 188.04 miles) (GPS miles 8358.62 - 8329.47 = 29.15 miles)

Day 11, Tuesday, May 17, 2016

We had breakfast at 8:00 AM and took off biking around 9:00 AM. First stop was to check out the outside of a concentration camp (camp vught), I do not like those places and am glad we did not tour the facility. There was also a maximum-security prison

nearby. We cycled through some nice forest for most of the day. We also passed several asparagus farms and visited one. They mostly have white asparagus farms in the Netherlands, they keep them covered in black plastic to make them white. Ninety five percent of the asparagus in the Netherlands is white asparagus. In the world only 40% of the asparagus is white. We got back to the boat around 5:15 PM, we ended up short on our cycling miles for the day again. We stayed near a small town. I think it was near Geertruidenberg. I got off the boat and walked around, I found a neat trail through the woods, but only walked a short distance. Then I walked back to the very small town and found the boat crew guy on his mountain bike. I told him about the trail in the woods and he said he might check it out. The next day he told me he cycled that trail for a little over an hour and he thought it was a great trail. (Daily Bike miles 31.2 miles; total bike miles 219.24 miles) ($8389.82 - 5358.62 = 31.2$)

Day 12, Wednesday, May 18, 2016

it was an easy day of biking, the most exciting part of this day's ride was visiting Saint Peter's cathedral in Oudenbosch. It is a replica of the one in Rome and was built in 1880 and is one quarter the scale of the authentic Saint Peter's cathedral in Rome. We also cycled by lots of interesting people. At one place it was a group of school kids headed to school. They seemed to line up and March to class or another location. We also crossed an interesting draw bridge for bikes and saw lots of wind turbine at one location. The country side is really set up for biking everywhere in the Netherlands. It is flat with trails designed for bikes all over. A lot of the bike paths are shared with a frequent car, but mostly the road is used by bikes. You often see a bike group of people in matching bike jersey with racing bikes which pass you on the trails. They seem to be in a hurry and want us out of there way when they bike past us. Lots of neat wilderness areas, but the area is so flat and not as interesting at the Pacific North West in the USA (where I live). However, the wilderness areas get you away from all the farm lands. There are lots of farms, mostly vegetable. Also saw neat cathedrals. That evening after dinner we went for an informational walk in the town of Bergen Op Zoom. (Daily Bike miles 42 miles; total bike miles 261.24 miles) ($8431.82 - 8389.82 = 42$)

Day 13, Thursday, May 19, 2016

Today the ride was easy and mostly uneventful. We crossed over the boarder to Belgium on this day. I was monitoring the boarder on my GPS, Janneke stopped and said there was something special about the place we stopped on the road and I said it was the Belgium boarder. She told me to be quit, then she showed the group a cement pole that the group was about 20 feet past, it was the official boarder between Netherland and Belgium. I would not have noticed the pole. The entire group actually passed the pole without knowing we were entering Belgium. We visited a few WW1 war monuments (one had a US tank), another one had an electric fence example. The

electric fence was used to separate Belgium from the Netherland in WW1, since Netherland was not really involved in WW1 and Germany wanted to make sure people did not escape from Belgium to Netherlands. The original electric fence was supposedly over 250 kilometers long. At our coffee stop I went hiking on the trails while everyone else spent time and money drinking coffee. The trails were not as nice as the ones in the USA, but very private and nice for getting away from all the people. They were setting up a circus near the coffee stop and there was an abbey that was tuned into a motel (or something) near the coffee stop. We also stopped at a neat castle with a motel. After dinner I fell asleep for a few minutes then we went over to go to the top of the MAS (Museum aan De Stroom) museum building. It was supposed to cost 1 euro, but no one was there to take our money so we went to the roof of the building without paying. Great view, then we went to the bottom of the building and went looking for a liquor store. The third liquor store we found had Captain Morgan spice rum. I bought the rum and then we took a different route back to the boat. We ended up right in the middle of the red-light district, much more extensive than what we saw in Amsterdam. This time we did not look for it, in Amsterdam it took us a long time to find the red-light district. We got back to the boat a little after 10:00 PM and did stuff before going to sleep around 11:15 PM. (Daily Bike miles 38.19 miles; total bike miles 299.43 miles) (Miles 8470.01 - 8431.82 = 38.19)

Day 14, Friday, May 20, 2016

We started the day with a great breakfast. Then we went for a city walking tour. I was in my shorts with only a light rain coat. It was sprinkling and I was getting slightly wet and cold. The guide (Eddie – a man that came to our boat and picked us up) showed us churches, castles and cathedrals. He told us history, but he was hard to understand so I just walked around and took photos. I followed the group and then they took us into the main cathedral. After the tour Nancy and I went back to the boat and I got on some more clothes, long pants and a sweat shirt. Then we walked to the train station, the rain had stopped and now I was over dressed. I should have at least stayed in my shorts. I probably could have also done without the sweatshirt. We checked out the train station, Nancy was going to see about getting her train out of Bruges, but the line was long and she decided to wait until she gets into Bruges. Then we walked down the shopping road and Nancy went into the Ruben house museum, I was not interested so I continued walking. I wanted to see about getting a souvenir shirt, but could not find one I liked. I then decided to go back to the train station area, I wanted to get another photo of the diamond sales stores (I had gotten one earlier without me in it). When I went back, I found the area where they sell and cut new diamond. I went to take a photo and the lady said no photos. She wanted to see if I took a photo, I showed her the last photo in my camera was not taken there. The area had a lot of Arab and Indian men walking the streets in business suits. The place I

tried to take a photo of had a security screen door and metal detectors and I am not sure what was inside the building. But I was sure they did not want me getting any closer to the main entrance. The road had several police cars and armored trucks lining the road. I did not see armed Guards, but I am sure if anything happened, they would come out of the buildings. There was lots of surveillance camera on the road side buildings. I tried looking at that area on Google maps later and the area did not have street level views in that area on google maps. I then made my way back to the boat and drank a couple of the Belgium beers that I had bought that day. (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 299.43 miles)

Day 15, Saturday, May 21, 2016

We started the day with breakfast and the cycling started at 9:00 AM. We cycled a short distance along the Scheldt River to a big elevator. It took 2 groups of us to get all into the elevator, the elevator takes you down about 100 ft to a long tunnel that goes under the river. It was a very neat tunnel for bikes and pedestrians only. Then the riding was a lot easier, not so much traffic. We stopped for coffee at a neat town with a castle that was having a wedding. While everyone was having coffee, I walked around the castle grounds and got a great photo of it with its reflection in a stream. I was told I needed to be back to the coffee shop by noon, so I ran back to the coffee shop and no one was ready, I should have taken my time. The castle trail was cool, I should not have hurried back. We did not leave the coffee stop until about 12:15 PM. We went to a neat sculpture of a naked lady, supposedly it was moved from a city where it had to be removed since it caused traffic problems. I checked out the front of the sculpture, everyone else only checked it out from the side on the bike trail. I volunteered to be the sweep on this day. At one point I only counted 16 people, we started out with 17. So, I stopped everyone and they said Bruce went ahead. But it had been a while, so we wanted to make sure Bruce did not go down one of the side trails. Ilse (our guide) took one trail and I went back until I found Janneke (our other guide). Then I rode back to where we first noticed Bruce was not there. Bruce was back, he said they told him he could go 2.5 kilometers ahead to where the trail splits and that was what he did. It would have been fine if we would have continued, he would have been there. He ended up going back to the group when we were looking for him. When we started crossing a bridge, I stopped to take a photo and the group got ahead of me, then a group of racing bikes passed me. I ended up tailing the racers until I caught up with the group, I continued tailing the racers as we passed the group. They were waiting for me. Everyone got a good laugh as I passed them as I was riding with the racers. We stopped for lunch at a brew pub, they made some great beer there. So, I bought a bottle of it, they bottled it in a wine bottle. They had a cool basket museum at the brewery we checked it out for free. After lunch we continued our ride. At one point we stopped at the house of a friend of the captains. The house had a car parked vertical and was made of scrap material. Inside there was a lot of rock art work for

sale. Bruce liked one of the rock birds, but when he found out it would cost about 7000 euros, he changed his mind. The house had some very fancy polished rocks with fossils and some cheaper fossils and geos. A couple people in our group bought stuff, ear rings/necklace and a rock. We finished the ride and had another great dinner. Then we went for a city walk with Ilse. We stopped at a bar in Dendermonde and had Belgium beers. We ended up buying 4 beers and splitting them 8 ways. That way we could try all the different beers. (Daily Bike miles 38.65 miles; total bike miles 338.08 miles) (Miles 8508.66 - 8470.01 = 38.65)

Day 16, Sunday, May 22, 2016

It was supposed to be a rainy day. The day was only slightly wet, there was only 5 people that went riding on this day - me, Nancy Chase, Nancy Ferry, Susan Whistler and our guide Ilse. We started with a very light rain around 9 AM, by about 10:00 AM the rain had stopped. I told Nancy Ferry we would get rain at 1:30 PM (I made up the time). We saw some very cute miniature horses on this day and also a horse that looked shaggy and needed a haircut. At one point we stopped for coffee, like the other times I walked around while everyone else had coffee. I walked around and found some very nice trails and then went back to the coffee shop. I arrived when everyone was getting done and then we continued cycling. At one point we stopped and a person gave our guide directions, this happened normally a few times each day. It is amazing how our guides navigate us through the Netherland and Belgium countryside. They also routed us to places with nice tourist attractions and most of our travel is on bike trails that are lightly shared with cars and often the trails are only for pedestrians and bicycles. At the stop where we received direction, we watched a pig try to eat a deer and then the pig tried mounting another pig. We continued and visited a very small chapel, not much to see on this day's bike ride. We also stopped at a castle with a mote. At around 1:00 PM we stopped for lunch and it started lightly raining around 1:00 PM. Like I told Nancy the heaviest rain of the day was at about 1:30 PM. It was not real heavy rain and lasted for about 30 minutes. The rain tapered off until we reached Gent, then it mostly stopped raining. We met up with the boat in Gent around 2:30 PM, most of the people on the tour had taken the boat on this day due to the predicted heavy rain (which was lighter than expected). At about 3:00 PM everyone on the tour headed to the town of Gent. We had our guides give us a town tour until about 4:30 PM. Then they let us free until 5:30 PM. Most people went to get beers, I walked around. I was not positive on the awning where we would meet at 5:30 PM to walk back to the boat as a group. I went to the wrong awning and no one was there I thought we were supposed to meet there. I knew I could find my way back to the boat with my GPS if required. I walked around and saw JJ go into a store. I was waiting for him to leave the store and saw our guides (Ilse and Janneke). They took me to the correct awning and everyone was waiting. We then walked back to the boat as a group. We had a great dinner. While we were eating the rain started and it seemed to

rain pretty hard. Good thing it was not during the bike ride or our city tour hike. I think I had too many rums and cokes this night, I did not feel great in the morning or during the night. However, I returned to normal in time for the next day's bike ride. (Daily Bike miles 28.48 miles; total bike miles 366.56 miles) (Miles 8537.14 - 8508.66 = 28.48)

Day 17, Monday, May 23, 2016

It was a pretty easy day of cycling. At one point we took a small paddle boat across a lock, it was interesting and took 2 trips to get 16 people across the canal. We stopped for coffee break and I walked around, not much to see in this town. We also stopped at the very cool Ooidonk castle and we got a guided tour of the inside of the castle. No pictures allowed inside the castle, sort of a bummer. It was interesting, but it reminded me of a museum and I am not that fond of museums. Once back on the boat we started moving again. It was nice sitting on the boat watching as we traveled along the barge, at one point they opened a draw bridge for our boat and then we docked. It was a slow day, not much to see. After dinner I walked around in the wilderness trails, some neat trails and birds. One part of the trail had a boardwalk over a marsh with broken and rotting boards. I was nervous about breaking through a board and falling in the marsh, but I made it on that part of the trail without any issues. Several others in our group also walked on that trail without any issues. (Daily Bike miles 31.17 miles; total bike miles 397.73 miles) (Miles 8569.39 - 8538.22 = 31.17miles)

Day 18, Tuesday, May 24, 2016

After breakfast we broke up into groups, I was the sweep for the long group again. John was taking photos and we got behind, it was easy to see them the first time. Then he stopped to take a photo of a train track, he could hear a train and wanted to get a photo of the train. We waited for the train on the wrong side of the bridge and did not get great photos of the train. Then we tried catching up with the rest of the group and barely saw them turn two times before they finally waited for us. We would have caught them and they would not have had to wait for us. We all continued biking and came to a castle with a nice garden and historic trailers and farm equipment. When we got ready to leave Janneke left quickly without making sure everyone was ready. JJ was still getting ready while Bruce and Ginny left a little after Janneke and did not see which way Janneke and the rest of the group went. I saw which way the group went and JJ was going in the directions that Bruce and Ginny went. I yelled at JJ and he continued towards Bruce and Ginny whom had gone in the wrong direction. Once we caught Bruce and Ginny, we realized they had gone in the wrong direction and then we all went back to where I saw the rest of the group turn. Once on the route again I could barely see the group ahead, then I could not see them. Once I got to the place, I last saw them I stopped and then saw them a long distance on a side road. Then Ginny figured she should go ahead since I was the sweep. She was a little slower than me

and by the time we got to where I last saw them Ginny was getting too far ahead. Then we heard Janneke yelling to us on a side trail. It was a little dirt trail, we had to get Ginny's attention and Ginny turned back. We finally all got back in a group. I don't think Janneke ever knew how much trouble we had catching them, she thought it was just that last turn. It was actually 2 turns that the 4 of us missed. Good thing I noticed the first mistake, if not we would have had to wait at the castle until Janneke found us. Then we stopped at a cafeteria near an abbey and had a lunch break. I ended up getting a 10% alcohol beer. It got me a little loosened up before we continued biking. The rest of the ride to Bruges was uneventful. We got back to the boat around 2:15 PM and Nancy was getting ready to walk to Bruges, I had her wait and we both walked into town, after a while Nancy wanted to go back to the boat. I told her to wait and then I decided to continue on my own. Nancy was back on the boat by 5:45 PM, she wanted to get back in case dinner was early. Both Nancy and Chuck told me dinner was at 6:30 PM, so I got back to the boat at 6:15 PM. I was back with plenty of time to get dinner. We had dinner from 6:30 PM to about 7:30 PM. After dinner Janneke gave our group a tour of Bruges, it was nice and we got back to the boat at around 9:00 PM. I worked on this journal until about 11:30 PM. (Daily Bike miles 32.43 miles; total bike miles 430.15 miles) (Miles 8601.82 - 8569.39 = 32.43)

Day 19, Wednesday, May 25, 2016

We cycled to the train station and took the train to Oostende. When we arrived in Oostende it was lightly raining, from there we cycled along the coast and had to take a short free ferry to another beach and cycled along the beach near WW1 war bunkers. We all stopped at a beach and walked out to the North Sea. We continued to another beach town and had lunch and coffee. While everyone else was having coffee I walked to the beach and found sea shells. We then started biking back to Bruges, in one field I was able to get a photo of a wild pheasant. At a farm we saw a bunch of horses one of the horses was a Belgium horse (looks like a Clydesdale). Then when we got close to Bruges, we saw several long paddle boats racing down the ditch. Once on the Bruges loop trail, we saw 4 wind mills. When we arrived back at the boat, we took a break and then went to the Henry Maes brewery for a tour. It was a historic brewery which is still in business in an old building. They take you to the roof which overlooks Bruges. After the tour we went to a store and then back to the boat for our leader's farewell dinner. It was a long good bye night. I assembled my bike Friday that evening and took it for a test ride. (Daily Bike miles 30.07 miles; total bike miles 460.23 miles) (Miles 8631.89 - 8601.82 = 30.07)

Day 20, Thursday, May 26, 2016

I cycled to the hertz office, no one arrived until 8:30 AM. The Hertz office is at a car dealer ship in Bruges, not very reliable location. Since breakfast was supposed to start at 8:30 AM I had to immediately cycle back to boat for breakfast before hertz opened.

Then Nancy and I went for a walk after breakfast, we first visited cathedral onze lie vrouwewerk, I paid senior rates and they did not check my ID. Then we took a river tour, while on the boat tour we saw 2 other boats with people from our barge group. Then we went to a chocolate shop named after Nancy's daughter Kate middle name (Elizabeth's). Nancy bought a few mixed chocolates. Then we went up the bell tower and there was a sign that said all seniors needed proper ID, so I did not attempt to go as a senior. Nancy had her ID and is old enough for the senior rate, so she got a slight discount on the entry fee. We climbed to the top of the tower and listed and watched the bells from inside for 2 cycles (one Cycle every 15 minutes). Then we went down a level and watched the mechanics for another bell cycle. We had about an hour in the bell tower. Then we went through a chocolate factory tour, some other people from our boat were also at the chocolate factory. It was like a 3-story museum. At about 2:30 PM I went back to boat for my bike Friday, so I could get to the Hertz office before they closed. Then I cycled to hertz, I got there at about 6:20 PM. The hertz person left at 6:00 PM. They told me he would be there at 8:30 AM the next day, so I returned the next day to pick up my rental car (Never was able to confirm the car would be there). Then I went back to boat to get Nancy and we went to a late expensive dinner in town. We went to an expensive restaurant that was recommended by someone headed back to the boat. Not a place I would have chosen, too fancy. The man from the boat took us there and introduced us to the server. Some other people from our boat went to the same restaurant by recommendation from the same person. Then we returned to the boat and drank a couple of beer. (Daily Bike miles 19.78 miles; total bike miles 480.01 miles) (Miles 8651.38 - 8631.89 = 19.29 GPS was off for a short time) (Bike miles 127.73 - 107.95 = 19.78 - total 5129.9)

Day 21, Friday, May 27, 2016

I woke up around 7:30 AM and ate breakfast, I had packed everything the previous night. Nancy was still packing. Breakfast was ready early on the boat, I ate at 7:40 AM. Then I cycled to hertz to get my rental car. The previous day I cycled to hertz at 8:00 AM and found that the door said hertz opened at 8:30 AM. That was the same time as breakfast, so I figure I would go back and have breakfast the previous day, then return before they closed at 6:30 PM. So yesterday I returned at 6:20 PM and the hertz office was already closed. That day I was told they would open at 8:30 AM. Now that I was there by 8:30 AM, they said hertz opened at 9:00 AM. The guy finally showed up and I was ready to go at about 9:20 AM. Nancy was waiting and expecting me back around 9:00 AM. It was not easy getting back to the boat. I kept ending up on dead end road (roads with construction work). I finally got to the boat at about 10:00 AM. When we started driving, we decided we had plenty of time and did not think we needed 2 full days in Brussels so we decided to take a detour and spent the night in Lille, France. We stayed at the IBIS hotel, once in the room we walked all around town. Then back at the room, I took out my bike and cycled around. I spent most of

my time at Camp de Mar Park. It had a neat historic park with a fort wall that was once a military fortress. I biked around and through the 2-mile park for about 10 miles. Then I cycled back to hotel. I was back by 7:00 PM and we ate the groceries we bought earlier for dinner. (Daily Bike miles 20.39 miles; total bike miles 500.4 miles) (End bike odometer 148.12 (total 5150.3)) (GPS end 8689.68 Bike odometer miles estimate $5150.3 - 5129.9 = 20.4$; $148.12 - 127.73 = 20.39$)

Day 22, Saturday, May 28, 2016

We left France around 11:00 AM. We decided to check out Ath, Belgium. Not so great, then we continued to Brussels, it was tough getting into town. I tried to find the train station. It was not so easy to find. We found a place to park near the Sheraton and walked around looking for Hotel. The Sheraton was expensive, but seemed much nicer than the other choices. I figured since it was my last night and I did not want to deal with figuring things out, why not stay at the Sheraton. After checking into the hotel, we walked around Brussels, once we found the grand palace, I had Nancy take a couple of photos of me with the army soldier, she took great photos. Then I put my phone in my pocket and somehow the photos got deleted. It must be a bug in the cell phone software. We then checked out the peeing boy (Manneken Pis), not so cool. It is one of the main attractions in Brussel, but is a very small statue on a road corner. We ended up getting a beer at the Cafe next to Manneken Pis. It was very small with a lot of people checking it out. Then we went to the cathedral and then to the train station. We figured out how to get from the train station to the Sheraton walking, it was less than a half mile between the train station and our hotel. When back at the Sheraton we went out to eat at a restaurant next to the hotel. Then we packed up our gear, me for my flight home and Nancy for her train ride to Germany. We did not go to sleep until about midnight. (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 500.4 miles)

Day 23, Sunday, May 29, 2016

I have been bummed out about my deleted photos, tried several times since I have returned to recover the photos. So far, no luck, I do not think they were never stored properly in memory, I should have tried taking a photo of them. I have never known a photo to get deleted before on my cell phone, I wish the lesson could have been with a less important photo. At about 9:00 AM in the morning I walked Nancy to the train station and bought her a coffee at Starbucks, before saying goodbye. Then I walked back to the Sheraton Hotel and finished packing up and left the Hotel around 10:00 AM. I had asked the guy at the hotel for directions to the airport, he showed me on Google and gave me a tourist map with directions. I knew the park he pointed out on the map and using the map it was not detailed enough to find it like he drew on the map, lots of missing small roads. I finally found the road that I thought would go directly to the airport. There was a running race and the traffic out on the road was a crunch. At that point I thought I had done everything right, but it was not a straight

shot like indicted on the directions from the guy at the Sheraton. I had to stop the car and find it with my hand-held GPS, using the hand-held GPS does not give the best directions and was hard to follow. After about 1.5 hours after leaving the Sheraton, I was on the Ring Road and could find the Airport. For some dumb reason I then decided I wanted to check out the Expo, when I started going that direction, I realized I did not have time, so I tried turning around, that took a while to find the correct highway exit. I did not see a gas station until I reached the airport, I tried to go back to the gas station and went on a road that the only choice was the paid parking (there was a turn around to the gas station after the parking lot security location that I missed). I got stuck behind people picking up and dropping off people at the airport and struggled to get out of the parking lot. When leaving the parking lot, I put in my ticket and it did not charge me for parking. Then I made it to the gas station and had trouble figuring out how to operate the self-service gas pump (no attendant to ask). It turned out I had the pump handle in the car gas slot and it would not let me pay for the gas until I removed the pump handle and placed it back on the gas meter. I finally got the rental car filled up with gas. It was hard to find a way to return to the airport, got off on the wrong exit and had to use my GPS to get back to the gas station. I drove back and was able to find the parking lot to return the car. Then I went through 2 more security checks (The airport had a terrorist attach a few weeks back and was on high security) and found the place to check my bags and made it to the airport gate area with about 40 minutes to spare, overall, it took me about 3.5 hours from downtown Brussels to the airport, worst ever. I walked around the airport trying to find stuff to buy, not enough time to spend my Euros, should have given some of the extra Euros to Nancy. I walked around the Iceland airport and did not find anything to buy there either. Once back in Portland I took the max home and was home by around 9:00 PM, this was about 20 hours after leaving the Brussels airport (9 hours of time change and time difference 11 hours (10:00 AM to 9:00 PM)). I went to sleep around 11:00 PM. (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 500.4 miles)

Post trip- Day 24, Monday, May 30, 2016

Monday I woke up around 8:00 AM and felt totally recovered from the time change. I then cycled to the store and then to the Selwood bridge. Then I visited JJ and Len. From there I cycled across the Tillicum, Hawthorn, steel, Broadway and St. Johns bridges. Next stop was the Wal-Mart to get stuff for Buffy's party. Then I biked home and went to Buffy's party. I was at her party from about 4:00 PM until it ended. I went home and watched a movie and started unpacking. I still had a lot of unpacking and stuff to do. (Go through mail, etc.) (Daily Bike miles 0 miles; total bike miles 500.4 miles)

Post trip- Day 25, Tuesday, May 31, 2016

I woke up around 6:30 AM and got ready for work. I cycled to work at around 7:37

AM. I started work at about 8:00 AM. I felt fine, just wished I did not have to go back to work!