NEWSLETTER

ICELAND

SIGGY AND HEATHER | EUROPE 2015 | MONDAY, 6 JULY 2015

SEYDISFJORDUR - ICELAND'S PRETTIEST VILLAGE

Icelandic Horse

We were told some interesting facts about the Icelandic horse. They range in size from about 12.2 to 14.2 hands. It is illegal to import any other type of horses into Iceland. The powers that be don't want the breed infiltrated by "foreign" blood. Theses little horses have one more natural gait than most other breeds. It is called the tolt. It is a kind of a running walk where one foot is on the ground at all times. This ensures that the horse is much more secure and agile in soft and slushing or rocky conditions.

Icelandic

There are strange characters in the Icelandic language. There were difficulties when we first tried to type our destination into the GPS. A frustrating experience I can tell you - seeing a name on the map yet no such name exists in the GPS. The owner of our overnight stop explained one of the characters - a lower case P and B stuck together that looks like a P but its sound is TH. So Pingvellir was actually Thingvellir. There are lots of others. Hire car companies need to include a leaflet explaining such things to customers.

The Road East

When we opened our blinds this morning we were greeted by fog obscuring the fjord. The weather was more closed in than last evening. Our hosts urged us to go see the puffins and kittiwake gulls so we donned our coats and braved the elements to walk to the cliffs. Great advice. The walk was a quite bracing but we did spy lots of eider ducks on the water's edge and gulls roosting up high on the cliff face. The solitary puffin we saw watched us closely before plummeting down into the water to catch its meal. Amazing experience.

We said farewell to the staff, the students who were by now very engrossed in their research projects, and the American family. Loaded up with our bags we commenced the one hour walk out of the area and back to our car. It was cold and damp but we really enjoyed it. What a wonderful relaxing and friendly place. The car's "hot" seats were again turned on as we travelled the rough track back to pretty little Seydisfjordur village.

We then retraced our route over the mountainous peninsular, still with its thick fog, and eventually on to Egilsstadir before

OUCH The water and mud are extremely hot - too hot to dip your toe in. This did not stop some people from dipping their fingers in!

EIDER DUCKLING This one, along with about 20 others, were incubated by the Wilderness Lodge after the eggs were abandoned. So cute in their eider down :-)

HOW COLD? Iceland has excellent road warning signs - 4 degrees expected on the road ahead. When we got to the highlands it was well and truly below

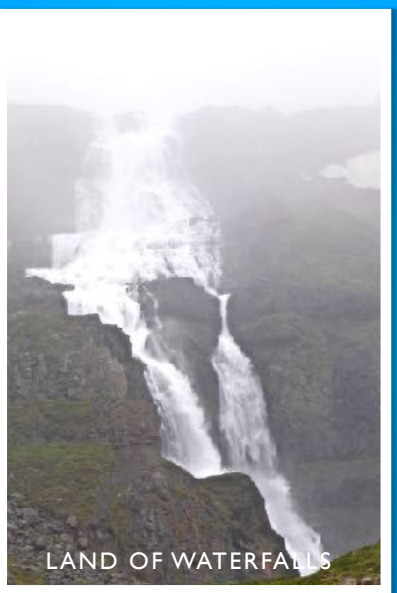
The North

After crossing back over the peninsula we continued up a long valley. It was some of the best farming country we have seen. Ploughed fields and drainage ditches were in view. We climbed out of this area up onto a plateau shrouded in mist. We think we were actually in the cloud base. The terrain changes very quickly here and we then saw very steep sided mountains covered in what looked like loose scree. We were both tired so decided to stop for a quick bite to eat and then have a snooze. After the snooze we continued on until we reached the Myvatn region. This area sits squarely on the Mid Atlantic Ridge (volcanic plate) and is currently a very active volcanic area. A large lake now occupies the depression and is surrounded by hot mud pools and vents puffing out steam. We stopped at one to admire the formations and to put a peg on our noses against the rotten egg gas smell. We arrived at our accommodation at about 5pm and intended to go out later. However we have been a little lazy and are still here

WILDERNESS LODGE

MUD POOL

BIRDS EYE VIEW

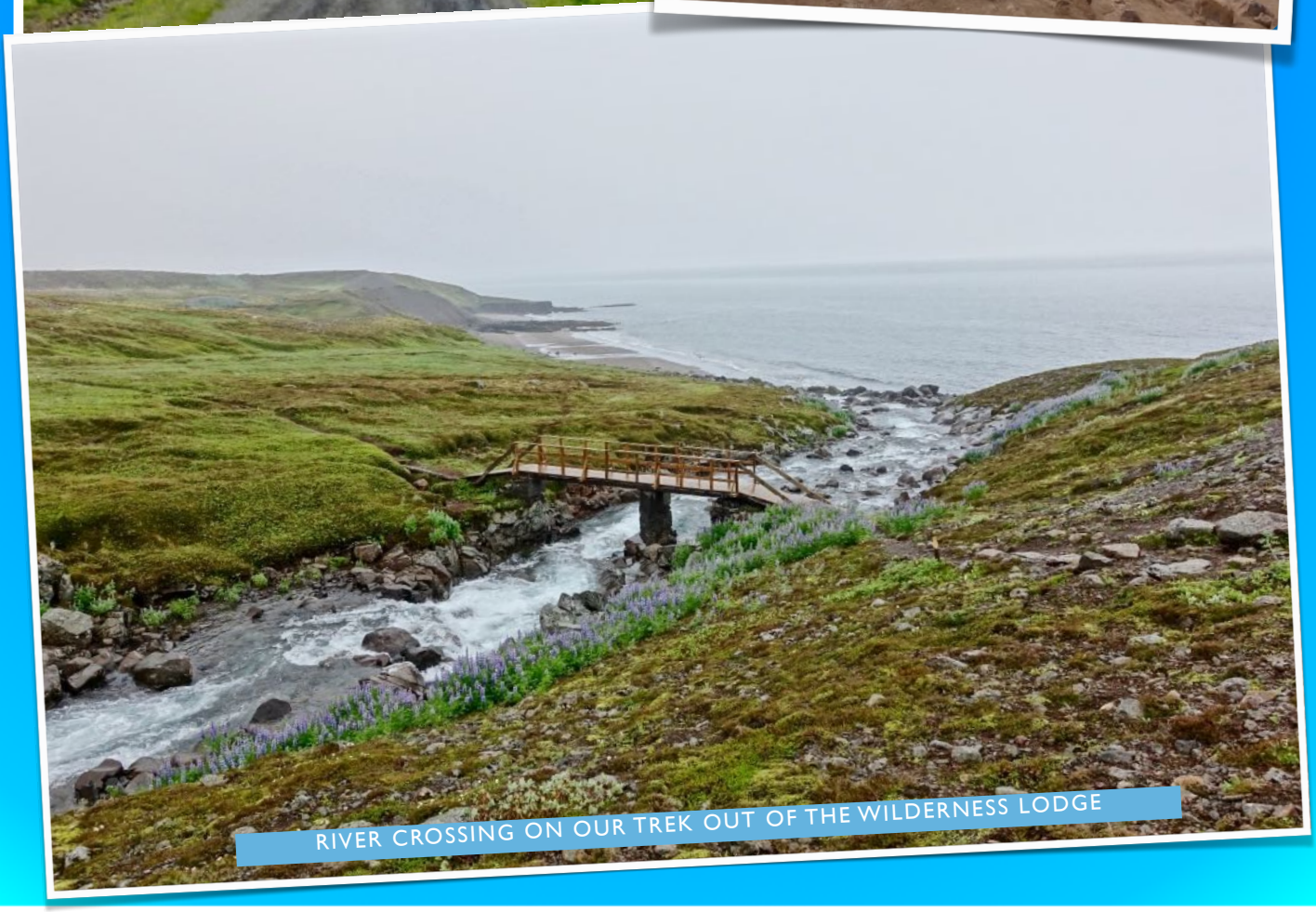


LAND OF WATERFALLS

PUFFIN ON CLIFF FACE

PHOTOS

HOT STUFF



RIVER CROSSING ON OUR TREK OUT OF THE WILDERNESS LODGE