

Dear Students, Friends & Colleagues,

In May, I was fortunate enough to go traipsing about the British Isles, Guernsey and France. The people were wonderful. The sheep and Highland Cattle I wished to learn more about offered a view into northern heritage breeds I'd never experienced. The food was excellent (even haggis!) and the history and landscapes were breathtaking. (Never will I watch "This Old House" with the same perspective again!)

Although I'll now go back for a backpacking trip to get entirely "up close and personal" with the land, the flora and fauna, this experience yielded a number of sustainability "Aha" moments and enough recurring thoughts-by-observation that I felt compelled to share them with you.

### **Epiphanies from across the pond:**

- U.S. cities have little room to complain about aging infrastructure and challenges in digging it up when Europeans have to clarify B.C. or A.D. when discussing the age of infrastructure and the buildings on top of it.
- Wind power is workable. It's efficient. It's affordable. It's used prolifically on other parts of the globe. It can be done at a lower environmental cost than coal or oil - and last longer. It's not a silver bullet but we're not using it enough in the U.S.. Period.
- Our "bigger is better" mindset is debunked the minute one walks in to a pub (short for "public house" where community members met and had much fine fellowship in addition to food and libations!) Small can be beautiful too!
- Cities don't have to settle for sprawl. European cities have greater density (not just building, but overall) - which is visually lovely and efficient on multiple levels as well. They then have a clear line of demarcation to the beautiful countryside where they have more efficiently located fresh local food sourcing.
- Flying over Labrador and Newfoundland with their tens of thousands of square miles of wilderness made me appreciate vast spaces untrammled by humans all over again. It made me think about the wisdom of letting us live in our civilized places - but treasuring large landscapes for their own sakes - and for us to simply know they are there!
- Our land in the U.S. is so much more vast than most European countries which has formed much of our mindset and ways of developing our cities, towns and countryside. With that land and waters that flow across it, we have even greater opportunities for sustainability success stories - should we choose to create them.

Here's to creating a more sustainable world!

Cheerio!

Margo

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*Give good people good information and they'll do good things.*

(If you've just received this single newsletter, it may be because I thought you'd be interested in this particular subject. You may or may not get others. If you want on my list regularly, e-mail me. If you want off my list, e-mail me. Thanks!)