

LAND OF FIRE & ICE

XXXXXXX
Words by xxxxxxxx

WE WOKE at 5.30 am to a hive of activity both in the ship and above decks. Sleepily making our way to the foredeck, luggage in tow, we could see the Icelandic coast line peeping through the sea mist with its menacing snow-capped cliffs and mountains. Slowing down the ship quietly slipped into Seydisfjordur fjord towards its berth and our starting point.

After stopping at Egilsstadir to get provisions we headed to Europe's largest waterfall, Dettifoss. After leaving the tarmac of the One, Iceland's main road, we negotiated some 9 miles of rough track which led to the eastern side of the waterfall. Set in a rocky canyon the waterfall drops some 45 metres sending spray over one hundred metres into the air, a truly amazing sight. Incidentally, the opening scenes from the film Prometheus (2012) were filmed at Dettifoss.

The rest of the day was equally amazing, continuing our trip along the One we drove through miles of Lava fields with their twisted black rock stretching as far as the eye could see; a sobering reminder of a more violent past. Just before our campsite at Myvatn we visited the geothermal site of Namafjall in the shadow of Krafla; a volcano with a deep blue water filled crater. Here

several steam vents sounding like pressure washers and resembling over grown ant hills, spewing steam 10 or so metres into the air surrounded by pools of boiling water and mud bubbling away to themselves.

The first day had been incredible not only had the scenery been stunning but the weather had been excellent to, 24c, sunny with a warm breeze.

Day two dawned and after visiting a few local sights we headed to the F88 and our route into the interior. The F88, which is an official road, resembled an off road route which twisted and turned through a dark grey desert landscape void of vegetation with the only landmark being the dominant plateau of Herdubreid some 40 miles away. Our first river crossing was probably one of the deepest we were to encounter on the trip and appeared with very little warning; we turned a corner and there 50 metres away was a tributary to the Jokulsa a' Fjollum lined by lush green vegetation scattered with small brightly coloured flowers. The crossing was fairly straight forward, some 500mm deep and 40 metres wide, with a gentle current right to left, selecting low box, second gear and drove through creating a bow

