

A Brit in Iceland



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Author:	Graeme Davis
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This book is a series of impressions of Iceland drawn from a ten week visit to Iceland in the summer of 2003 (and also a little time in the Faroe Islands, Shetland, and onboard boats on the North Atlantic).

As all travel books, it is written in the conviction that the visitor knows something more about the places described than those who live there. What follows is Iceland through British eyes. The British Academy are responsible for this book, though they don't know it.

It is the British Academy who sent me, a lecturer at Britain's Northumbria University, to the University of Iceland, to write a book - though not this one. The book they wanted written and which was written is *A Comparative Syntax of Old English and Old Icelandic* (published Peter Lang, 2004). You don't want to read that one. But you do want to read this book.

Sane folk fly to Iceland. It's not all that far by air, whether from Britain, or from anywhere in Europe, or from North America. Icelandair have a good network, plus connections with SAS and some other major operators, and there is now a budget airline, Iceland Express, flying from London and Copenhagen. It is easy to fly to Iceland. So I took my car on the ferry. And the car proves to be the star of much of this account, and the car journey Britain to Iceland a fascinating experience of the never to be repeated variety. By plane the trip Britain to Reykjavik takes less than three hours. By car the trip from Britain to Reykjavik takes about five days, including three nights on ferries and a mighty long drive across Iceland. The vehicle that braved 10 weeks of the worst roads in Europe is a 1997 Mercedes Benz C180 - a polar white one, which seems appropriate. This car proved to be indestructible. My thanks to Mercedes for making their cars Iceland-proof. My thanks to my summer visitors from Britain to Iceland, who in various ways have contributed to this account.

My thanks to many Icelanders, who may well be horrified at their contribution herein. This is Iceland as a Brit sees it. Enjoy!