

BARNEY'S VISIT TO LAPLAND

December 2009

I was very excited when I was told that I was going to Lapland with some friends. My two young friends did not know that they were going until they arrived at Guernsey airport.

We had to stay a night at Gatwick before flying to Rovaniemi in Finland. On our flight the cabin crew were all dressed with Santa hats and there were competitions for the children. During the flight I had my photograph taken with the senior steward and we told him that this would be going on my new website.

When we arrived at Rovaniemi we were taken by coach to our accommodation at Phya. On our way we stopped at a large store where my friends were provided with warm over garments and boots. Our accommodation was very warm and cosy and because there were seven of us we had four bedrooms and a sauna. We looked out over the slope with the ski-lift and could see people going up to the top. It was magical as there was so much snow and it looked beautiful.

The next day we started our search for Santa Claus. During our search we met some of Santa's elves, Tricky Dicky, Speedy Sam, Noisy Nod and Snowy Bowy. Some of them were helpful with our search but the others tried to mislead us with our quest.

We made several stops during our search and at each place there were activities waiting for us. These included tobogganing, horse-drawn sleigh rides, reindeer sleigh rides, husky dog sleigh rides and snowmobiles both for adults and children. We were not lucky enough to find Santa on this day so had to continue searching the next day.

After several stops which did not prove successful we eventually stopped in the middle of a wood where several snowmobiles with sleighs attached were waiting for us. We were taken deep into the wood where we found a beautiful house and some more of Santa's elves. Each family group were taken separately into the house where we saw Santa's workshop and met Mrs Claus. We had a talk to her and then were taken into another room where Santa was waiting for us. He knew we were coming and had already received letters from the two young people in our party. They were each given a present which they had requested in their letter. He was very interested to know that we had come all the way from Guernsey to see him and asked whether there had been any problems with the electricity recently as he needed the lights to see his way. We assured him that they were working well and told him that one of our party worked for Guernsey Electricity and would make sure that they were OK for his visit.

After the young ladies had finished with Santa Claus, my friend from The Pink Ladies asked if I could have my photograph taken with him so that it could be put on my website. My friend explained about The Pink Ladies and Santa said that it was a worthwhile organisation. After this we left his beautiful house which was all wooden and continued our coach tour of Lapland.

As this was our last day we had to return our over garments and boots and then made our way to the airport to return home.

It was a lovely trip to the Arctic Circle and something which we will all remember for a long time. The scenery was beautiful and I have never seen so much snow.