

Day 7 ~ Sunday 27 July. Wild Life Refuge & Portage Glacier.

Today is classified as a day of leisure or personal choice. The optional whitewater raft trip is through class III and class IV rapids. A swim test is required wearing a dry suit. **Although we are both good swimmers, I don't relish risking this. One couple tried out, he passed the swim test she flunked. "Lets take the coach ride instead."**

Descending from the Alyeska Resort, we pass lots of elaborate log cabins and turn left on the Seward Highway into the Chugach National Forest. Skirting Turnagain Arm, it is another grey day with clouds at eye level. Turnagain Arm was named by William Bligh of HMS Bounty fame. Bligh served as Cook's Sailing Master on his 3rd and final voyage, with the aim to discover the Northwest Passage. Frustrated, this being only a river, they were forced to *turn again*.



Turnagain Arm.



There are several different types of glacier depending on their position on a mountain. Byron is a hanging glacier. The Portage Glacier empties into a lake and is retreating. The Begich, Boggs Visitor Center is built on the remains of a terminal moraine deposited between 1890 and 1914 when it began its retreat. A film explains more about glaciers.



Byron Glacier.



Expensive trinkets.



Portage Glacier.



Our steed.

Across the parking lot is a small café and gift shop.

The Big Game Alaska Wildlife Center protects injured or orphaned animals and is home to moose, deer, black and grizzly bears, owls, bison musk ox and a variety of game birds. For one reason or another, these animals can not be returned to the wild. It is the only breeding center for Wood Bison.

The town of Girdwood was on the shore of Turnagain Arm. The 1964 quake devastated it. The town was rebuilt in its present location on higher ground.

The tide is out. Why is no one is looking for shell fish? **"Don't think of walking on the mud. It is like wet cement. You sink and can not get out."**



Magpie.



Dearly beloved...



Muskox.



Bison.



Wilderness.



Baby.



Red Fox.



Caribou.



Touchdown.

People have drowned when the tidal bore comes in."

As we return to the Alyeska Resort, a bear rears on hind legs beside the road to get a better look at us, then disappears. Two paragliders float down from the mountain and land in a field.

It is warm now so we stroll around the hotel grounds. Behind the hotel is the tramway to the Seven Glaciers Restaurant and viewing platform (2,300ft) on Mt. Alyeska; the peak is just over 3,900ft.



Lower Tram Station.

[In Europe this would be a cable car or gondola, but here a tram? Trams run on rails!]

The ride is just seven minutes and smooth. The peaks are snow streaked but the view is cloudy with rain. We meet another couple for dinner and wait at the bar for a table. The table is near the window with a superb view. "Oh, you are out of Elk fillet? I settle for beef!"

As always it is still daylight. I walk around the viewing platform. "Don't look down...."



Upper Station.



The Hotel Alyeska has a greeting:

Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me,
Starlight and dewdrop are waiting
for thee,

Steven Collins Foster.