

## 24.7.2015, Hellnar, Djupalonssandur, HólaHólar

For breakfast we went to the café Fjörhusid in Hellnar to try out their waffles with rhubarb jam we had read about. The café has a great terrace and is located at a very special bay. Luckily the weather was nice so we could sit outside.



From the café in Hellnar you can hike to Arnarstapi – or you can end your walk depends from where you start... We did the walk after our breakfast and enjoyed the nice view along the coast. This stretch is very popular hence it was also very busy.



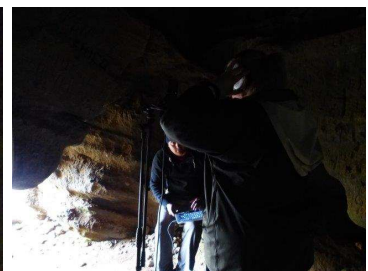
The village Arnarstapi actually only consists of holiday houses and cottages with a big stone figure standing amongst them. This monument is supposed to be showing the first settler on this peninsula, Bardur Snafellsas. He was half a human being and half a troll. After seeing the Bardur we turned around and walked back.





After such a hike we had to have a proper lunch, as the waffle was actually rather small. The first fresh cod fish from yesterday was due to be eaten...

Our plan was to continue our way along the 570 up to the Snæfellsjökull glacier and out again at the North end of the peninsula. At the beginning of the road is the Sönghellir Cave, which has a very good echo and sound. Inside the cave two Icelanders were indeed doing a voice recording. Luckily, otherwise we would have missed the tiny entrance to the cave where you almost have to crawl in.



We reach an altitude of about 800m, still a lot of snow everywhere. But all of the sudden, the snow is also in and on our way. At the entrance to street 570 a sign said „open, impassable“. But this sign we had also passed at other streets, where the challenge was a lot of big rocks, which you could still manage driving over them slowly and carefully.



But here „impassable“ were big patches of snow covering the street. We could still drive a little detour, following other car tracks, but then it was definitely the end of reach. From here we had a good view of the glacier and saw a few hikers taking the glacier challenge. We even saw two skiers who were walking up the mountain. This would mean at least two hours of hard labour walking up on skis for only 5 minutes down hill fun...

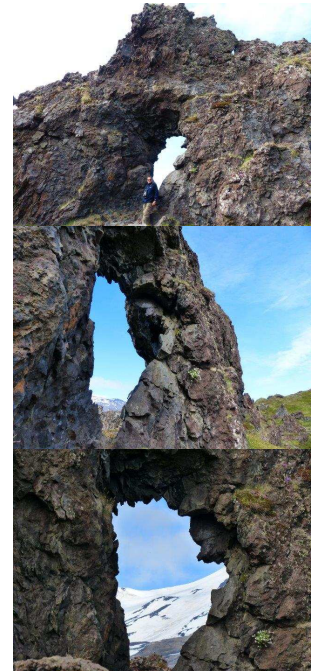


We had to turn around and continued our way around the peninsula. In Svalpufa-Pufubjarg we stopped to see the cliffs of Londrangar and the birds nesting and living at the bird cliff. Amazing how they are able to cling to the naked steep walls.

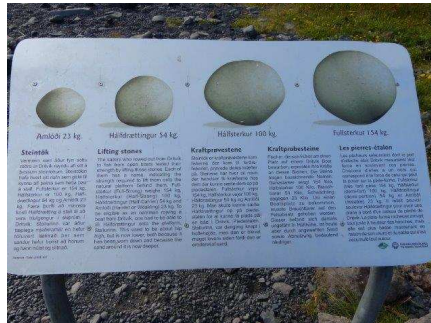


Afterwards we went to the beach of Djupalonssandur. You reach the beach passing by some interesting lava formation.





Located at the beginning of the beach are four stones. These stones served to measure the strength of fishermen looking for a potential job. The choice was: 154kg „Full Strong“, 100kg „Half Strong“, 54kg „Half Carrier“ or 23kg „Weakling“. In order to qualify for a job on the fishing boat each applicant had to be able to lift a Half Carrier on a hip high cliff. Of course, Werner would have gotten a job on board, Dewi maybe would have had to fix the nets on land...



A lot of corroded ship parts are also lying around. These parts are from the English trawler *Epine GY7* which stranded here in 1948. No one ever cared to collect the remains of the ship and meanwhile they became a tourist attraction. At that time, five of the 19 crew members could be saved.

Last sight seeing of the day was the crater HolaHolar. It is possible to drive directly into the ring wall crater Berudalur, so we declared this crater immediately to our private camp site.





Our running gang is „tomorrow we will have a BBQ outside“ because the weather allows nothing close to an outside BBQ. But today is the day of the BBQ days, another premier! We were safely shielded from the wind in the crater, started the fire and had a really good steak from a local butcher. What a nice change from all the fish...



As we were camping inside the crater the sun disappeared faster behind the crater walls and minute by minute it got colder. We decided to do an evening walk climbing the crater wall which was still in the sun.



## 25.7.2015, Öndverdarnes, Grundarfjörður

We continued driving around the Snaefellsnes peninsula. First we did a detour on to the headland Öndverdarnes.

At the beach Skardsvik we could see perfectly rounded stones just next to the original lava pieces. At the bird cliff of Öndverdarnes 'Brünnichs Guillemot' are hanging on to the vertical cliffs. For these birds, the Icelandic nesting areas are their Southernmost breeding grounds. They just lay their eggs without a nest or any other nesting material on the bare rocks.





At the bright orange coloured light house of Öndverdarnes we found the ruins and the fresh water well of Falki. The entrance to the well is hidden below the surface and no-one remembers who dug the well and build the stone walls. This well was and still is the only fresh water source in the area.

A Saga tells us that this well has 3 sources: one with fresh water, one with healthy holy water and one with beer... No question which source of the three we tried to locate!





After Öndverðarnes we reached the Northern side of the Snaefellsnes peninsula, this is where most of the people live. One picturesque village followed the next. In Hellisandur it was time for lunch with a beautiful glacier view. A little further in the village called Rif we visited the harbour with its fishing vessels.



We did a short stroll through the village of Olafsvik and checked out the modern church. Its shape is supposed to resemble a fish. Can you see the fish?

Next we drove along a high pass with fantastic views of the ocean. We kept on looking out for whales, but had no luck. Finally we arrived at the famous mountain called Kirkjufell, which is THE mountain of Grundarfjörður and comes of course with a waterfall. This is supposedly the most photographed mountain in Iceland.





After an extension of the harbour pier the town of Grundarfjörður can accommodate large cruise liners. Tourists from cruise liners are making up quite a considerable percentage of all tourists in Iceland.

In Reykjavik we saw the National Geographic Explorer anchoring in the harbour.

As we drove into the city, we immediately noticed the colourful decorations. Almost all streets and houses were decorated in a single specific colour, first red later green and then blue. We thought that it may be a private party or local festival but did not give this any further thoughts.



As we strolled along the harbour a local lady started talking to us and asked us if we would stay in town for the night. We did not plan so, but she told us that we had to stay for the festival tonight, it would be worth it. She was visiting town just for this festival and explained to us that every year for the festival the town is divided into four sections and each section gets a colour.

The entire town is on its feet and at 9pm there is a parade which we should not miss. We were quickly convinced and started looking for the local campsite. When we saw a few campers on a paddock we joined them. It turned out that we were camping on the designated paddock of the green section which they provided free of charge. Luckily we did not find the official campsite.



As we now belonged to the Greens we wanted to show our solidarity and wore all our green clothes we could gather. As nothing much happened, we decided to have a hearty meal in anticipation of a long night's party. We could even cook on our



outside gas stove and were able to sit outside as well, yeeeah! But we did not take a nap as our neighbours did!



Finally it was time to walk to the city centre all dressed in green of course, looking forward to what would happen. Walking through the streets and around the blocks we got a sneak preview of what to expect.....



Slowly more and more people were gathering at the town centre and finally we hear noise coming from all directions. The four colours were marching from four different directions to the city centre, what an impressive sight.





Some did a great job and put a lot of efforts into their costumes while others just picked anything to wear matching the colour.



After all colours met in the middle of town they continued to the harbour where all festivities took place. We never saw so many people in one place since we are in Iceland – the entire town was here!

On the stage they had different dancing performances, even belly dancing, all very child friendly and with a 'country style' feel. As alcohol is only allowed to be sold in licensed bars and restaurants and all liquer stores are state controlled there was no alcohol sold anywhere. One could only buy cotton candy and other sweets and people brought their own beer from home. Imagine a German Volksfest without any beer sold - there would be a revolution.





In Iceland the evenings out are usually short. Latest when the sun goes down the temperature is dropping so fast it usually gets just too cold to stay outside. Also, the party was quite tame for our standards.

Back at our camping paddock, there was actually more happening than at the official festival site. Teenagers were sitting together in groups warmly wrapped and were singing(!). We felt a bit like back in the old times. It was a real experience to see such an Icelandic town festival, very "innocent".

