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This file I converted from MS Word 6 to MS Word 97 then to OpenOffice.Org 1.1 then PDF from OO.Org. Please forgive me as there are a few small changes that have taken place with all the translations from the different formats.

JCED 3 March 2004.

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Commence Album # 9

Stockton

We bypassed Middlesbrough to get onto the A177 to Stockton which is the town that Marie's greatgrandfather on her mother's side was born and lived. This is the Harrison's side of Marie's family. We went straight to the town library after parking Olivier in a big carpark. We found the address of James Harrison on the records at the library. Then we went to The Castle & Anchor Hotel for a typical English pub lunch.

Then we walked and found S. Mary's Chapel Church where James Harrison was married to his wife, Hannah. We took photos of Bishop street and Bishopton Lane where they lived. Then photos of Mill street where James's parents lived. All the homes in all three streets have been demolished.

At 2.30pm we drove onto Sedgfield and at 3.45pm checked into the Travelodge Sedgfield as a big storm was approaching. This was another accommodation more like what we would call a motel, similar to the French hotels. This cost us A\$90 (£43) with Olivier parked outside our window.

The last room they had was our room which was a special disabled person's room so there was the usual fittings in the bathroom for wheel chairs. At 5.30pm we had dinner at the restaurant next door called "Little Chef" which is a chain similar to McDonalds but better. Definitely no siesta period here! Marie chose fish & chips, I three potato skins with cheese and a chocolate pancake. Back home at 6.45pm to a strong smell of cigarette smoke in our room so I got a nice deodorant spray from the woman in reception which killed it.

We were back to the Doonah with no sheets so we figured they must be the "in thing" for a lot of Europe. Bed at 9.15pm.

Saturday 5th July

Travelled today ~ 70mls

Travelled so far ~ 300mls

Today was Grace's birthday, she turned seven.

Up at 7am to depart at 8.30am driving on the big M1/A1 highway northwards to Newcastle where we drove along a few streets then onwards stopping at Durham long enough to 'phone Maria using £1 coins. We left the M1 and headed to the coast road of A1068 but near Ainwick we joined the A1 again. Onwards to Berwick-upon -Tweed where we

stopped for lunch at another English pub called The Elizabethan.

It was restful driving on this coast road even though it was the A1, plenty of coastal views for us and Olivier to enjoy.

Scotland

We crossed the border into Scotland where we collected our Scottish Passports. There were three men pipers so we stopped to find out what was happening and as we were getting our passports and buying some fudge, a man with a camera asked would we allow him to take our photograph. "What for?" we asked. He was from the local newspaper doing an article of the people who were raising funds for a kindergarten, hence the fudge and passport sales. We said it was OK then the man asked us for our address so the newspaper article could be sent to us. Great we thought. More about this in album ten.

By this time the three pipers had driven off so we were so very lucky to arrive when we did into Scotland. From here the countryside is rather flat and dull because it's devoid of trees. Still on A1/E15 we reached Haddington which is about 45km east of Edinburgh and after checking one hotel which was full then found another B&B owned by Mr and Mrs Brodie for £30 with parking for Olivier. We were their first customers as they had just opened their place last week. so they were very keen to do their best for us. They were lovely people who were forced to become a B&B because the man had an illness and couldn't work.

Today we continued to see heather, lupins, briar roses, white poppies and; you guessed it, red poppies. At 5.30pm we drove into the village for dinner and had a ham and cheese omelette each served with potato chips, tomato and lettuce. Back home at 7pm and watched Colombo on CTV. Bed at 10pm.

Sunday 6th July

Travelled today ~ 43mls

Travelled so far ~ 510mls

Temperature ~ 12c

Up at 7am then on the road at 9am arriving at Edinburgh at about 10am.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh was easy to drive into, "life was becoming like a dream" as the song goes. We parked Olivier in the Hollyrood Palace carpark, walked around to the entrance only to find that it was closed because they were preparing for the Queen's visit. Drats!

So back to get Olivier then we drove up the Royal Mile to the Castle and half way back down and parked Olivier in a street. We walked up to the Castle and collected a CD player to use on our self guided walking tour. These were free if you produced an entry ticket. They are very good as you can select which part you want to see and rewind to hear it again if desired. As we had purchased a British Heritage Pass in Australia we did not have to pay the £5.50 each for the tour as we showed it at the entrance. The end of the Royal Mile street becomes a forecourt before entering into the Castle proper and this is where the Edinburgh Military Tattoo is held each year. Construction crews were building the temporary seating areas so there was lots of activity.

By the way, this area is not level but slopes away from the Castle, maybe 10degrees.

The Castle is the best we saw on Our Journey, very touristy of course and would be a nightmare to visit in the popular season with hordes of people. We had lunch at a restaurant back down the street called The Filling Station where I had my first taste of Haggis which I thought was OK. Then we had a tour of Edinburgh on a City Tour Bus for £13.50 each which is valid for all the day of purchase. We left Edinburgh at 3pm driving on A90 northward and over the Forth Bridge to stop for the night at a lovely old B&B in Aberdour called "Whitehall" run by Mr and Mrs McCrea for £36 and a park for Olivier.

It seems people in the UK do not like fresh air as the windows could not be opened here either. We bought more petrol for Olivier costing £20. Scottish motorists are good drivers, patient and calm. Bed at 9.15pm.

Monday 7th July

Travelled today ~ 118mls

This was Maria's birthday anniversary, cumpleaños feliz Maria.

After another big B&B breakfast we departed at 8am and went down to the beach about 100mts away where we saw Edinburgh across Firth of Forth then onto the main road A915 to St. Andrews on the

coast. On the way we saw a lot of sedums (succulents) on the hillside near the coast and roses beside the roads. Also canola fields and heather on the slopes.

From here over the Firth of Tay bridge to Dundee then on to Glamis Castle on the A94 highway. We did a tour of it given by a young woman who told us about the Castle's ghost. Please see the booklet in the album. We used our Heritage Pass again for entry otherwise it would have cost us £5 each. We had lunch in the grounds then on through Dunblane, where that terrible school massacre took place. It's just a quiet little village in the country.

We checked into a B&B in Stirling owned by Mr and Mrs Morrison called "Sunnyview Guest House" at £32 and a park for Olivier at 3.30pm. We had a long talk to a young New Zealand couple comparing notes, very interesting.

At 5.30pm we drove into the town and went to an information centre. Across the street we saw a statue of Robert Burns then dinner at a kebab cafe where Marie enjoyed donar kebab and I baked potato and curry. Then up to the Castle which was closed by then so we went home at 7.15pm. In our room was an electric jug and the makings for tea and coffee, milk and sugar. This we had in some previous B&Bs. Very good. Bed at 9.45pm.

Tuesday 8th July

Travelled today ~ 80mls

Up at 7am as usual with nice cool sunny weather. The sky in Scotland was the clearest we had seen in our entire journey. We drove onto Loch Lomond continuing on A811 but was disappointed as it is just another lake with no outstanding features or that's our opinion. There are camping facilities there which is great for people who need some sunny rest time. Onto Glasgow on A809 where we parked Olivier in a big parking station then walked to the nearest city tour bus stop. Our seniors tickets cost £4.50 each. We saw many sights and in George Park Marie spotted gardens decorated with echeverias. We bought our picnic sandwiches in a big store called Mark and Spencers. One section of the store is just for lunchtime takeaway food. The sandwich section was the biggest amount and selection of sandwiches we have ever seen. They were all packed in triangular plastic packets. There were probably a hundred different types. There were about fifteen checkouts operating and there was a queue at each one. Amazing.

We drove on southwards on the A77 highway and about 10km past Kilmarnoch we checked into a

B&B in Mauchline. We followed the little B&B sign on the roadside but the woman said she had no vacancies but we could try her daughter's place next door. Unfortunately she also had no vacancies so we continued until we soon came upon another B&B sign. We drove through fields and found this one was the home of Mrs Linda Smith which was a farm B&B because they appeared to own or run perhaps 100 hectares. It cost only £20 including breakfast and a park for Olivier below our window. Mrs Smith made us a cup of tea and provided some cream biscuits and small chocolates. Well that was service. We kept saying and thinking of how difficult it was for us in southern Europe where the people are so poor.

I went out the back and had a chat to an old man who was fixing a piece of farm machinery and he told me about the rolled and plastic wrapped hay. Mr Smith was using a tractor to bring one roll of the hay at a time from the far end of the field, about 100mts away, to the back of the B&B. He did this for many hours, by now the sun was setting at about 9pm so there was plenty of daylight for him to work in.

Later another couple from New Zealand checked in so we had a long chat comparing our journeys. We made our own dinner as the nearest restaurant was many km away. Bed at 8.30pm.

Wednesday 9th July

Travelled today ~ 107mls

Travelled so far ~ 891mls (1,425km)

We made our breakfast then departed at 9am continuing southward on A76 which is rather narrow in places, so narrow that we crossed over several single lane bridges through Dumfries to arrive at Gretna. We bought two meat pies and thought we could have been in Australia. Also some nice nectarines which we enjoyed while parked in a side street. By the way I have not mentioned toilets lately because there was no problem finding them in the UK. Very similar to Australia, in little parks or near shops and so on.

Then a couple of kilometres to Gretna Green which is on the Scottish side of the border to England. This is where people many years ago went to be married. So this place is a favourite tourist one. A man was playing the bagpipes as we left Scotland so we arrived in and departed Scotland to that very different music. A nice touch.

England

The next site was Hadrian's Wall so we cut across on A6071 to Brampton where we passed a few accommodations so we continued on the little single lane road to the wall. The wall was built on an order of the Emperor Hadrian by the Romans about 122 AD. It is 80 Roman miles long (117km) across the UK from sea to sea, river actually. We passed the first site which is called "Banks" but is not much. We continued to Birdoswald about 10km from Brampton. Now this is worth visiting. We parked Olivier in the little car park and walked 50mts to the museum. I did not understand that Hadrian's Wall was so well preserved and so long, certainly an eye opener for me and was so glad that Marie put it in our itinerary.

Back along the little road to Brampton to the first B&B owned by Mr and Mrs Bowman and called "The Nook" costing A\$64 and parking for Olivier. We had dinner in the town at a typical English pub called "The White Lion" but again dinner not served until 6.30pm. What a meal, see the photo in the album, notice Marie's face, food food wonderful food. (We still loved southern Europe though). The meals were far too much for us but we found room for a big beer shandy each as it was hot. The weather was quite hot as some young men were sitting outside the pub wearing trousers only, definitely tee-shirt weather even for us.

Thursday 10th July

Travelled today ~ 188mls

Temperature ~ 17c

Up at 7am for Wales today. We got onto the big M6/A6 highway southwards and put Olivier into Cruise Control for most of the way. We passed Penrith, Lancaster, Preston and Manchester where we changed to the E22/M56 westward bypassing Chester and crossing the border into Wales.

Wales

Immediately the highway signs are firstly printed in Welsh then English so we felt we were in another strange country. Then on A55 to Conwy where the grass was very green and lots of white daisies which were very thick but no red poppies. We arrived at a B&B but there was no one home. The woman next door told us the owner would be back soon so we talked to her for 30 minutes or so then we waited no longer so we drove on and found a B&B at the Hotel

Llanfairfechan for £40 and parking for Olivier. As with the B&Bs now there were tea/coffee making items with an electric jug. We walked to the beach which has no sand just little stones and along the promenade and sea wall. There were some posts that had a lifebelt fixed to it so we assumed they could be used in emergencies.

Back home then to dinner in the hotels restaurant of roast pork and vegetables for Marie while I decided to only have starters as the main meals were just too big. But we did find room for a banana split each. Bed at 9pm.

Friday 11th July

Travelled today ~ 63mls

We both had a bad night because the room heater next to my bed came on during the night although the hotel woman owner said it would not. I pushed my bed away from it and managed to get back to sleep. A few accommodation places had the room heater which were hot water units in the on position so they could be heated during the day or night. I switched them off where possible but some could not so we had to put up with the heat. Europeans are pampered people .

Up at 6.30am but a fog had descended on the area so we couldn't see the water of Conwy Bay which is part of the Irish Sea. Ireland, here we come!

We continued on A55 then over a bridge to Anglesey on A5 then another bridge to Holy Island. We went straight to the Ferry terminal and purchased our tickets to Dublin, Ireland. These cost us £294 (A\$735) total for us and Olivier return. We were lucky really as at first one woman at the counter of Stena Line said there were no vacancies then her colleague checked on her computer and said there was a cancellation, so we were on our way.

The facility and traffic arrangements here were first class, not like in Brindisi (Italy) or Patrai (Greece) with proper waiting areas, duty free shop, marked lanes and so on. We drove on and parked Olivier in an area like a parking station then locked her and walked up to the passenger area which is fully covered in. This is the full length and width of the ferry. About 60mts by 30mts. It had plenty of seats with tables, a McDonalds, a couple of other restaurants, a duty free shop and play areas for children. Very well set up. We departed at 1.45pm and arrived in Dun Laoghaire, 11km from Dublin at 3.45pm, a ninety minute journey. This ferry is what they called the fast one as it's a hydro-foil but there are the slower type which take 3 hours.



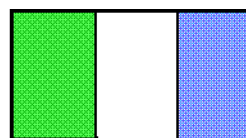
Ireland

Population ~ 3,550,000

Petrol ~ A\$1.60p/l

The facilities here were similar to the Welsh ones but I will comment on these when we depart Ireland.

Because it was approaching peak time it took us two hours to get out of Dublin's outskirts then onto the N4 highway.



Now we saw plenty of green buses and trains, and road signs in Irish, this is Ireland.

We bought Olivier's first Irish petrol at a little petrol station where the girl checked the note with a special electronic pen, £32 worth at A\$1.60 per litre. I had to put 10p coin in the air machine to check Olivier's tyres, the first time we had to buy air on Our Journey.

At 6pm we found a B&B in Maynooth 20km west. This was the home of Mrs Hilda O'Neil which she called Park Lodge. We drove off the E20 and within a couple of minutes saw her sign, no problem, not like in southern Europe. She charged us £32 with ensuite and parking for Olivier. She was a lovely and friendly old woman who just wanted to talk. We drove 1km into the town and saw the ruins of Maynooth Castle which is small and only a skeleton ruins then had dinner at the Maynooth Pub. I saw a few minutes of the French Tour de France bicycle race on a CTV in the bar, the famous race only started a few days ago that Marie and I have previously watched in Australia which we enjoy very much.

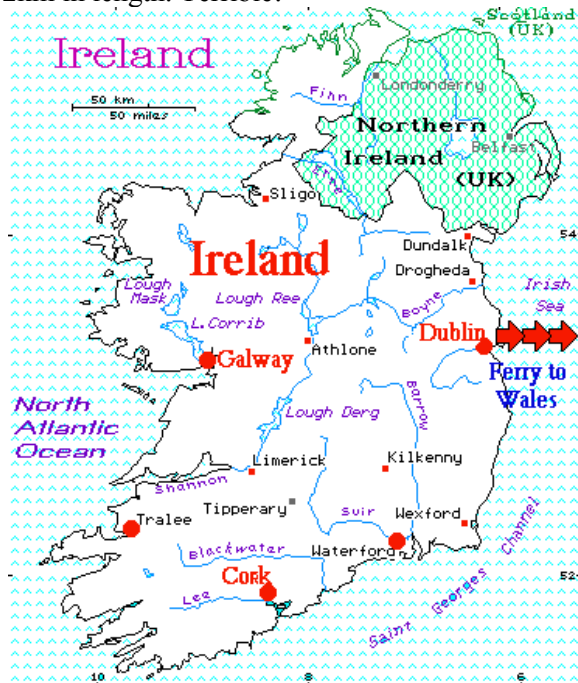
I had curry and rice and a big glass of stout, Marie had chicken Kiev and a scotch. See the picture in the album of another big meal. Back home and bed at 9pm.

Saturday 12th July

Travelled today ~ 160mls

Up at 7am after another big cooked breakfast and departed at 8.45am

Still travelling on the N4 which is only a two lane highway. We saw about thirty roadside crosses and more ornate expensive little monuments where there had been traffic crashes and people had been killed or injured. See the photo in the album of one that was on this stretch of flat and fairly straight highway about 2km in length. Terrible!



Heading westward past Althone on N6 highway we had lunch in the car as it was raining, the first time we had to do that. Then after we bypassed Galway city we saw Galway Bay. It was a pity that it was raining but this is Ireland, not Spain.

Then on the N18 highway to arrive in Ennis in County Clare at about 2pm where we checked into a B&B, (where else) called "Teach-Ui-Cheallaigh", how cute. This cost us £32 and parking for Olivier at the back. It was an ensuite unit and of course the usual well furnished breakfast and CTV lounge. We drove down to the town and walked the shops, bought some little leprechauns and postcards. We drove back home then later walked to the town again where we had dinner at a pub but as Ennis is a bit touristy the service and food was not very good.

I had ham and cheese plus Earl Grey tea while Marie had chicken Kiev and mint tea. Back home at 8pm then bed at 9.15pm.

Sunday 13th July

Travelled today ~ 108mls
Travelled so far ~ 1,410mls (2,256km)

Up at 7am and cooler now so we were back to wearing long sleeved shirts. We arrived at Bunratty Castle before it opened at about 9am. Entry in each was £4.85 but we got a pension discount which was £4.50 each. This castle is not lived in but functions are held in it. There are many buildings built in the medieval style so is a very interesting place to visit. We recommend it.

Still on N18 we arrived in Limerick on the River Shannon and saw Johns Castle ruins. Then onto a lovely town called Adare with lots of thatched roofed homes. This town is famous for its old homes and also because an IRA man lives in one of them.

Ring Of Kerry

On the N20 highway then the N21 we were on the Ring Of Kerry which is supposed to be the best scenery in Ireland.

After passing through Tralee we had lunch at a McDonalds. Because I was so tired at 2pm we checked into another B&B at Killorglin which was the home of a garda (policeman) and his family costing us £30 with the use of their bathroom/toilet. I found a CTV in a cupboard but had to use a coathanger for the antenna but the programmes weren't much anyway.

Olivier was parked in their driveway. We walked to the town and had dinner at a little restaurant, Marie enjoyed fish and chips and I lasagne. Marie said that all these potato chips she was eating was making her gain weight. Not like in southern Europe where we both lost weight. The sunset at about 9.45pm, yes I repeat 9.45pm which is the latest sunset Marie and I have ever experienced.

Monday 14th July

Travelled today ~ 141mls
Temperature ~ 16c

Overcast so we expected more rain. Continuing southwestward on N70 which is a very windy road, sometimes only one car width where we could just get a glimpse of Dingle Bay, along the banks of the Kenmore River we saw plenty of heather, peat bogs, blackberries, green fields and some rose gardens. At this point we were the furthest distance away from home. London was the most westward and eastward from home because it is at 0 (zero) degrees.

Here we were at about 10 degrees west.

Also long hedges of fuchsias, one stretch was about 200mts long, beautiful. At Ladies View restaurant we had lunch while it was still raining, both enjoying hot mushroom soup. The toilet door

was marked "Telephone" so if you didn't ask where the toilet was you would have to go somewhere else. That's Ireland.

At Killarney we had a problem getting onto the N22 to continue around The Ring Of Kerry. The signs didn't seem to make sense, at one intersection we asked a man for directions where he sent us in the correct direction. We arrived in Cork and booked into a B&B for £30 which was the home of Ms B Keelan that she called "Tara".

Cork

Population ~ 174.000

I mentioned the Tour de France and she insisted we could watch it so she switched to the channel it was on. Great! She made a cup of tea and cup cakes

I should have mentioned before this that many people commented on our car, Olivier being a Mercedes-Benz. We had to tell them that it was not our own car but a rental vehicle because people wondered why we stayed at B&Bs.

Later we walked to the town and had dinner at a Chinese restaurant of a Chinese meal which again was far too much for us so Marie decided in future to join me and have only starters. Marie had sweet and sour chilli and I banana fritters.

Back home with sunset at about 9.30pm which is when we went to bed.

Tuesday 15th July

Travelled today ~ 104mls

Temperature ~ 17c

After having the B&B breakfast we were on the road again at 9am and went to visit Blarney Castle which is about 3km northwest of Cork. There's nothing special about this castle other than the kissing of the Blarney Stone if you want to which is on the roof of it so you have to walk up the 100 or so winding small steps. Marie did not as she thought it would have been similar to the Arc de Triomphe, which it was, albeit not as many steps.

Then onto Cork where I was hoping to go to an Internet place as advertised in Cork Today little booklet, but stumped again. We found the street easily enough but a few of the buildings had been and were still being demolished. Drats again!

So onward on N25/E30 to Waterford. More petrol for Olivier costing £10 at 61p p/l. The petrol quantity was always measured in metric litres, what a mixture the people have to endure. Most of the road signs are now in metric but occasionally we saw the really old milestone signs, see a photo I took.

We did the guided tour of the factory and saw many aspects of how Waterford Crystal is made. The tour cost £7 for us both. This finished at 3.30pm so we drove on 2km east of the town and checked into a B&B called "Villa Maria" being the home of Mrs Nancy Lyons for £26 and Olivier parked in her driveway.

We had a wash basin in our room but we used the family bathroom/ toilet. Actually we were booked in by her son who was very talkative and friendly. Later we met his mother who was just the same. Her husband had passed away some years ago and her family had moved out so she turned her home into a B&B to keep her active. We suspect that many B&Bs are commenced because of similar circumstances. We saw more of the Tour de France which was also good. For dinner we drove into Waterford town but most places had closed but did find one little Chinese restaurant where we both chose only starters.

By the way the starters here consisted of BBQ ribs, fried rice and chicken on skewers. Plus other things but that was ample for us. Back home at 7.30pm and watched some TV in the lounge. Bed at 9pm.

Wednesday 16th July

Travelled today ~ 141mls

Temperature ~ 17c

After the B&B we moved onto the N24 northwestward and visited another crystal factory which priced their items as high as Waterford Crystal, it all looked the same to me. Then onto Clonmel, and Tipperary. We passed our first fruit trees in Ireland although it was hard to see anything as on most small roads there were 3mtr high hedges. Also in view were red poppies, white daisies and on the way to Killenaule there were sedums growing on the rock walls in full flower, beautiful. We bought another £20 worth of petrol for Olivier. It was easy to drive although she did feel a bit heavy.

Then to Cashel where we visited the Rock of Cashel. The cathedral has no roof but there is a small museum, these castles in Ireland are not as good as the ones in southern Europe. WE had our picnic lunch in the car park where I noticed about ten vehicles from Europe, lefthand drive of course mostly from France. Here in Ireland and the UK there are many campervans which is alright here but not in southern Europe or parts of northern Europe.

As I have just said we had lunch in the car park, well the sun was out between misty periods but because the sun is not as brilliant in Europe, UK and

Ireland as in Australia, we didn't mind not having any shady tree to stand or stop under.

We drove onto Kilkenny and at 3pm booked into a B&B for £36 and a park for Olivier outside our window. This was the big stone home of Mrs Bernadette Egan which she called "Knockavon House". Ensuite, double and single bed and CTV. Mrs Egan called me "young man". We walked the 100mts to the pretty little busy town where I bought a computer magazine at a used book shop. Then we bought takeaway chicken and chips. We also bought fresh cream from a tobacconists shop which we had with strawberries in our room for dinner as there were no restaurants open.

The temperatures during our time in Ireland so far have been in the range of 16c to 22c with light misty rain most of the time which has not affected us seeing things and we have enjoyed the coolness.

Bed at 8.30pm.

Thursday 17th July

Travelled today ~ 83mls

Up at 7am with overcast weather still with us. We drove on the N10 then the N9 highway northwards to Dublin. Near Kifcullen the highway became bigger so is then the E20. We passed a lot of industrial places which reminded us of the Springwood area. We drove right through Dublin at 12 noon and looked for accommodation on the eastern side. I called into one B&B where the man told me that we probably wouldn't get anywhere to stay because Michael Jackson (whacko Jacko) was going to perform (crazy) in Dublin this weekend. Pity the people of Dublin.

So we continued towards Dun Laoghaire, the ferry terminal, and didn't see any accommodation so at the terminal we parked and I went to the information desk. Well it was very busy so I asked a security guard and he gladly told me about a B&B run by Mrs D'Alton which was only 1km away. Great!

We drove to the place but there were no vacancies. We started to worry a bit. The street is about 100mts long and there were possibly ten B&Bs in it as they all displayed the Irish green cloverleaf official tourist B&B sign at the front. I checked at another and the woman said we would have trouble finding a vacancy because there was a big French wedding going to be held in the town this weekend. Things looked grim, after weeks of easy going.

This woman rang another down the street and told me there was a possibility there. So I walked to

it and spoke to the owner, Mrs Hellen Callanan where she looked me up and down and said "yes, I have a vacancy". How ironic because her place was the first house in the street opposite the D'Altons B&B. I paid for two nights at £40 p/n. But Olivier had to be content with being parked in the narrow street outside the B&B.

We walked up the street and had lunch in a little cafe then bought some fruit and yoghurt for dinner in our room tonight. From our room we saw the Irish Sea with many yachts and small boats in the bay.

I checked the 'phone book and there were sixteen D'Altons listed in it. Bed at 9.30pm.

Dublin

Friday 18th July

Travelled today ~ 0km

After breakfast at 8.30am in the dinning room which was late for us but Mrs Callanan told us that Australians get up early and ask for earlier breakfast but 8.30am is her time. We just had to wait. Then we walked 80mts to the DART (Dublin Area Rapid Transit) railway station. We paid £2.10 each for a day ticket. The very clean electric trains were about every 30minutes and took about 20 mins to travel the 11km to Dublin city.

We walked and walked then had lunch in a cafe where we enjoyed lasagne and salad. I found an Internet cafe after much searching and asking people and Marie sat and waited, (isn't she a darling?) while I sent some E-mail and edited my Home Page. This cost £5 which is the normal charge everywhere. We wanted to go to a pub to hear traditional Irish music so I asked a street vendor of newspapers and he told me where one was but not until 8 or 9pm for music. Then as we walked a bit further we found a pub that would have music in about thirty minutes time, great.

So we went upstairs and enjoyed a beer and scotch and waited in the old furnished pub. We enjoyed the music for a hour or so, see photo in the album. We had dinner at a Mexican restaurant of starters only, beef nachos and chicken nachos. We caught a 6.30pm DART back home and were surprised to see men playing cricket on a ground near the tracks. Two people sitting next to me were speaking Español which reminded me of Spain. This city is like many others with a lot of different cultures present.

Bed at 9pm and a friendly goodbye to Ireland.

Saturday 19th July

Travelled today ~ 86km

Today was our oldest grandson's birthday anniversary, Joshua turned nine years old.

Breakfast at the late time of 8.30am again then we departed for the ferry terminal at 9.30am.

We tried 'phoning John and Maria from outside the DART but without success, neither answering.

We drove onto the ferryboat at 10am in the very organised manner.

After about fifteen minutes I took a photo from the stern which shows the wake and lovely Ireland in the distance. Goodbye again to Ireland.

Notes for Ireland

What a green country and very friendly people. There are B&Bs everywhere. We could see the results of money from the EEU being put to good use as there was plenty of roadworks in progress.

End of Album # 9

England 2

Commence Album # 10

We arrived back in Wales retracing our steps on A5 then after crossing onto the Welsh mainland we went to Beaumaris Castle ruins but didn't go inside. This little town is a quaint fishing village. From here we headed southward on A499 to Caernarfon to visit the Caernarfon Castle. Much of it has no roof but interesting nevertheless. There was a tour group of Australians so it was strange hearing the "gooday" language again. We went to a little street market closeby where we bought two skirts. Then onward on A4086 eastward in the area called "Snowdon". This is a weird area that reminded us of the glacial part in Southern New Zealand where the land is very rocky. It is very popular with mountain and rock climbers. The road is only one lane width at most places but people still find a little nook to park their cars.

Then northward on A548 to arrive back in Conwy. I checked at one B&B but it was full so the man suggested we try back along the road a couple of kilometres. At 5pm we checked in at another B&B being the home of Mr and Mrs Peter Dyer for £26, breakfast included as usual and a park for Olivier.

Mr Dyer suggested a little pub we could go to for dinner which caused us problems finding it. It was at the end of a little single lane road where it ended at a little village. Little is the word. A place we Australians would not expect a pub or a restaurant. Marie had chicken Kiev, I had chicken pudding and both of us a potato in its jacket. Back home at 8.30pm and bed at 9.30pm.

Sunday 20th July

Travelled today ~ 172mls

Temperature ~ 20c

Ten days left for us in the UK.

We drove to the Bognant Gardens but we had to wait until 10am for it to open. Entry cost is normally £2.50 each so used our British Heritage Pass. These gardens are different because they are on the side of a hill so there is a little creek running naturally down through it. There are plenty of trees so it is nice and shady. See the photo of the tree, Sequoia Gigantea which was planted in 1879.

From here we continued back on A55 and into England then bypassed Chester and on the A483 highway we were back in Wales through Wrexham then on A525 back into England. Only in a couple of places there are signs informing the motorist which country he is in.

From Whitchurch, in England, (are you following me?) on A49 through Shrewsbury then onto the M54 big highway, back in the rat-race. We bypassed Birmingham, crossed over the M5 then on the A429 to arrive in Warwick at 3.15pm. The highways and traffic in this part was as big and busy as the Essen area of Germany but still no one pushing or hassling us. The drivers are absolutely so much better than Australian drivers that's for certain. I keep on saying this all the way through Our Journey notes/book, so that people who will only read sections will get the message.

We found an old pub B&B within minutes called the "Wheatsheaf Hotel" that cost us £40 and a park for Olivier at the rear. This old quaint pub is over four hundred years old and certainly looked it. The walls were crooked and the doors were short. We walked to the castle and used our British Heritage Pass again otherwise the normal adult entry fee is £9.95 each or A\$40 for us both, quite a saving.

We took a guided tour of the main rooms which are quite outstanding. Another tour where there was a long queue was to the dungeon/s where there are torture implements on view, how terrible. Back home at 6pm and had to wait until 7pm for dinner in the pub lounge so we watched CTV until then. We both had sausages cooked in a ring, new potatoes, peas, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli covered in gravy. All for £3.25 including a big beer shandy each.

Back in our room by 8pm and it was still hot, back to T-shirts for us tomorrow. Bed at 9.30pm.

Monday 21st July

Travelled today ~ 73mls

Travelled so far ~ 2303mls

Temperature ~ 17c

Up at 7am to depart then 'phone Peter Gray, (Lyn's brother) in Reading about seeing him. We did this from a public 'phone box down the street. As he was leaving on business we would have to make it tomorrow around lunchtime. I tried John also but no answer but we did connect to Maria and speak to Grace, (Angel).

We drove onto A429 and arrived at Stratford-upon-Avon which is only 20km from Warwick. We

took a guided tour of Shakespears Birthplace then to Anne Hathaways Cottage for another guided tour. We used our British Heritage Pass for both places, the first would have cost us £7 (A\$14) each and the second £5 (A\$10) so we were saving a little. Our picnic lunch this day was a salad roll each in Anne Hathaways Cottage car park. We drove through this pretty area but didn't stop and arrived at Woodstock but went straight to Blenheim Palace.

Blenheim Palace

We did a guided tour here also which would have cost us £15.60 (A\$32) each. Another fine lived in Palace with big lawns and parks designed by Capability Brown. There was scaffolding in place due to the fact that a film was being shot here, Sean Connery is in the film called "The Avengers". Onto Woodstock centre and booked into a B&B called "Plane Tree House" the home of Jane Drewett costing us £38 but Olivier parked in the street under our window. We had dinner at a pub up the street, Marie had a steak sandwich and I had chilli beef nacho and rice plus a beer.

Back home and sorted more paperwork to prepare for our departure from the UK. We watched a movie called "My Father, My Hero" then bed at 10pm.

Tuesday 22nd July

Travelled today ~ 93mls

Two weeks time we will be home. After breakfast in the dining room downstairs we drove on southward to Reading to see Peter Gray. We travelled on A34 past Oxford then eastward on the big E30/M4. We stopped at a big petrol and food stop called "Granada". This is one of four big companies that operate this type of complex on the big highways. Believe it or not motorists are advised to stop at such places to have a rest or break to limit driver fatigue even though the distances are small compared to what Australian's drive in Australia, hundreds of kilometres compared with tens of kilometres. They have toilets, 'phones, restaurants, petrol, mechanical service, play areas for children and of course plenty of vehicle parking space for vehicles of all sizes. Marie counted thirty cubicles in the women's toilets, that's a lot.

Reading

We arrived at Reading at 11am and managed to find the railway station straight away and 'phoned Peter from there. He met us there then guided us to

his home. He was proud of his little garden. We had a cuppa then he took us to a pub about 100mts away where we had lunch outside. Remember that I have mentioned a few times in Our Journey that because the sun is not bright in Europe and the UK that we were comfortable outside.

He guided us to his workplace then we said our farewells and followed his directions to Windsor. We drove past Windsor Castle where Marie took a photo of it then wandered around roads until we found accommodation in Addlestone at the Croach Oak Hotel for £49.50 including a parking spot for Olivier but without breakfast. Rather expensive because we were close to Windsor Castle and London.

On our way we stopped at a Y intersection on a highway to map read and a man on a bicycle stopped to help us. Within minutes a police car stopped on the other side and yelled out to us to get moving. The police didn't help us in any way so we were disappointed because this was the first and only time during Our Journey that this happened. Also we did not see any B&Bs or other accommodations since leaving Peter which seemed strange.

We shopped at a supermarket across the street for our dinner which we had in our room while watching the black and white TV. The temperature was 24c in our room so summer was on its way. Bed at 9pm.

Wednesday 23rd July

Travelled today ~ 41mls

Up at 7am to drive on A31 across the top of a ridge to arrive at Alton at 9.30am.

Alton

Yes, a town called Alton without "D" which John (our son) had found some information about on the Internet. When he was attending the Toowong Highschool he made a sign above our model railway calling the station "Alton", how ironical.

Marie had potato with cheese and onion while I had the same with curry for lunch at a pub called "The Swan Hotel" where we talked a little to a Kiwi bar attendant. At the information office we were booked into a B&B so we did more sightseeing in this cute little town. We just missed out on taking a ride on a special train to the next town. Twice a year ordinary steam locomotives are decorated with faces that makes them into Thomas the Tank Engines. Then to the B&B at 3.45pm being the home of Mr and Mrs Gibbard about 500mts from the centre for £33 and Olivier parked in the dead end street. I had a sleep as I was still very tired and was looking

forward to no driving soon while Marie had a friendly talk with them both.

They were lovely people who insisted we join them for dinner. Mr Gibbard drove me to the local fish and chip take away shop for us to buy dinner.

Alton is a saxon name "Eawalthon" which is corrupted in the Domesday Book.

Thursday 24th July

Travelled today ~ 60mls

Temperature ~ 20c

Up at 7am to have breakfast with both of them then departed at 9.15am driving on little roads past Reading on the big E30/M4 then onto the big M25 Ring highway, northward around London. We went into Heathrow airport to do a dummy run to where we would have to leave Olivier in a few days time. This was successful then we stopped at another big Granada highway stop. I rang a B&B and the man gave me directions. We found it OK, called "Elliot Private Hotel", which is in a suburb called "Chiswick". It would have been a hotel many years ago probably two or three centuries old in a little street but only 100mts to the Chiswick railway station. But the big problem to park Olivier in the crowded street.

This cost us £36 p/n so we booked for two nights for £72. He also charged us a key deposit of £10 which we got back when we left.

We walked around the busy suburb for three hours then home where I had a sleep. Later we had dinner at a Lebanese restaurant near the railway station.

The railway here consisted of four tracks and because it is so close to London, about 20km, there were trains about every two minutes from sunrise to late at night, very busy. So it was also very noisy. It gave us a good idea that a big city must have a good public transport system so there are less vehicles clogging the city. As it is there still are too many cars on the streets, it has to be seen to be believed.

But as I have said before, the drivers are so much better than Australian drivers, more patient and courteous.

Bed at 9pm.

Friday 25th July

Travelled today ~ 0km

We were awake at 6.15am although the constant rail traffic woke us at times during the night then up at 7.15am to have breakfast at 8am in the little, about 3mts X 4mts breakfast room being the smallest on Our Journey.

We then caught a train to Kew Gardens which was only two stations away so we were probably only 5km from it. We were too early so we waited for opening time at the entrance which was 9.30am. We used our British Heritage Pass again saving more although we have no record of what the entry cost was. These gardens are also big but most of the plants are in separate glass houses. We visited the Princess of Wales Conservatory and saw many small succulents, the Alpine House, the Fern House and others. We had our picnic lunch out in the garden at the main restaurant under a trellis frame over the tables which were covered in grape vine leaves. We had seen these same type of constructions in southern Europe in the camping grounds and elsewhere but of course they were devoid of greenery because it was still winter.

On our way to leave the gardens we sat on a park bench and watched aircraft arriving from the north to land at Heathrow. I counted about fifty, yes fifty seconds between each plane. As we looked northward while one plane was overhead we could see another one making a turn in the distance. So I am trying to get you to understand that Heathrow Airport in one of the busiest airports in the world. The frequency of the planes flying overhead us at the gardens was much the same from when we arrived at 9am to when we departed at about 4pm, so that is a lot of people arriving. I can't say about departing aircraft because their flight path must be southward which means multiply the people arriving by two and that would be the amount of people moving at Heathrow, I suppose every day. Can you, the reader grasp what I am saying?

At home then out again at 6.30pm for us to have dinner at an American type restaurant near the railway station. We both had BBQ spare ribs on rice and fries platter. Home and bed at 9pm.

Saturday 26th July

Up at 7.45am but breakfast not served until 9am today. By the way, the old people who own/run this place are Spanish so I got to say a few things in Español.

We booked and paid £36 for one night when we would be returning from Oakham so that we would have a quick and familiar route to Heathrow.

We departed at 10am and after going the way the Spanish hotel man said we did not find the highway entry. This is similar to what we faced in southern Europe. We turned back and went the way we had arrived in Chiswick and got onto the big M25 ring highway then about 10km on we entered the big

E13/M1. When I have been saying “big” I mean big in size, at least four lanes each way, the amount of traffic being horrendous but, the drivers know how to drive, being courteous and patient, not like Australians I’m sorry to say.

Where the M25 and the M1 cross, the entry point at one part is very wide, I think with about ten lanes wide all going in the same direction so you have to be very diligent and calm otherwise you could have a heart attack. We in Australia will never have these sorts of highways, they are immense and very smooth and flat.

Near Coventry we intended to exit and go eastward on the A14 but we had to go westward towards Coventry for about 3km until we could do an exit and entry back then under the M1 to get onto the A14. Get my drift? We were still experiencing problems negotiating our way. Just like southern Europe.

We had our picnic lunch in the car at a little village which we have no record of then arrived in Oakham and the resort called “Barnsdale Country Club” at 2pm. It is a Great Western Four Star Hotel also with separate units. Our unit #9 was on two floors, three bedrooms, two toilets, ensuite with jacusi, big lounge and a full kitchen. Olivier had her own place out the side.

Marie was fascinated by hundreds of rabbits that were everywhere. On the golf course and even within metres of our unit. This was more luxurious than the Spanish one. Marie cooked a full meal then CTV to see the Tour de France and bed at 10pm.

Sunday 27th July

Travelled today ~ 0k

Temperature ~ 17c

Today John, our son turned thirty seven.

Up at 8am and this would be a rest day. I had never recuperated fully from all the driving, not until I returned home, but it had all been worthwhile. We saw on CTV that there were floods along the Elbe River which is the border of Germany and Poland and we had been within 50km of the area.

We did more preparing for our flight home. I weighed the paperwork which was 10kg.

I hired a video tape of “Homeward Bound” which was a movie about two children, two dogs and a cat which we enjoyed. We saw the Tour de France which today was the final day. That is when the Telecom team rider Ulrick of Germany won this famous race. The days route was from Disney Land to Paris and the final few laps were from the Arc De Trompe to the Louvre. We had walked along the

Champ Eleeses which is about 4km in length and the riders have to endure the rough cobble stoned streets. If you have a chance to watch a future Tour de France you should pay attention to the men’s hands as they are shaken by the cobblestones. It was great to see on the CTV places that we had been ourselves.

Bed at 10pm.

Monday 28th July

Travelled today ~ 170mls

Temperature ~ 17c

We rose at 7.30 and watched rabbits outside our bedroom window. At 8.45am we departed to visit Sandringham Castle, our Queens summer castle. We drove on various roads and small highways through King’s Lynn then on A148 and A149 to the castle which is tucked in amongst a small forest. We arrived at 11.15am but again we missed out visiting it as the Queen was in residence at the time. It can not be seen from anywhere, other than from the air so we just purchased a few souvenirs then continued onto a little beach town called “Hunstanton” and as it was now summer the place was packed. We couldn’t find a parking place for Olivier so we turned back. We went through Wisbeck, a town that we had driven through a couple of weeks ago when we were on our way to Scotland. We recognised the road and knew that we would be passing the first B&B that we stayed in the UK. This was at Thornley so we stopped and I went in and said hello to the woman owner. She was so surprised and pleased that we did this. I told her that it was appropriate that we should do this as she set a good standard for us. On the way today we passed many wheat fields, potatoes, sugarbeat, cabbage, onions, apples, raspberries, strawberries, some piggeries and more red poppies.

We noticed that fresh milk was still being delivered in bottles. We drove through cute little villages, Rockingham and Cottingham where we walked around a little. We arrived back home at 4pm so that we could attend the Welcome Night at the resorts restaurant which included a free drink each. Then back home to listen to some jazz on the radio and bed at 9.15pm.

Tuesday 29th July

Travelled today ~ 10mls

This was our last full day in Oakham. We drove to Oakham which is only about 4km away and walked the little streets. We visited The Castle which is more like a small church. They still hold meetings and a court at times. At the Butter Cross I put my hands through the holes where people centuries ago

would have been chained up, see the photo in the album. We enjoyed jam and cream on fruit bun for morning tea in a little cafe, plus tea and coffee.

I checked at the post office about sending our papers and bookwork back to Australia by sea/air and it would have cost us only about 60% less than what we expected we might have to pay as “excess baggage weight” by the airline. We decided it wasn’t worth the risk of it not arriving home so we wouldn’t use the post method. We arrived back home for lunch and finish packing. My suitcase weighed 36kg, yes thirty six kilograms, that’s 16kg overweight. Wow.

Maries was 25kg or 5kg overweight.

I will be happy to return Olivier to Hertz soon as I was growing more wearier by the hour.

Bed at 8.45pm.

Wednesday 30th July

Travelled today ~ 140mls

We said goodbye to the resort and departed at 9.15am and drove to Leichester via A47 then back on the Big E13/M1, back in the organised rat-race. Back past Luton onto the M25 ring highway and back to Chiswick. We arrived at the hotel that we booked a few days before at 2pm.

The street had no vacant parking places so I sat in the car until 2.30pm when a man drove off and so I parked Olivier there. The last time for me to park Olivier before Hertz at Heathrow. For dinner we went to a pub near the railway station in the Thai restaurant. We both had BBQ ribs on rice, fries platter and a beer each. Yummy.

Back home for our last sleep in Europe/UK at 9pm.

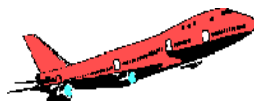
Thursday 31st July

Travelled today ~ 11mls

Late breakfast in the breakfast room then we departed at 9am driving up onto the M25 ring highway exiting soon to Heathrow Airport at about 10am. Because we upgraded to G class and had extra insurance for Ireland we paid £319.13 (A\$797.80) extra.

Goodbye to Olivier

We got the Hertz bus to the terminal then as we suspected we had to pay Air France for our excess baggage weight of £112 (A\$280) so we hoped we wouldn’t have to pay this again at Singapore with Qantas. The Air France flight AF813 departed at 2pm.



Goodbye UK

Notes for the U.K.

Very similar to France in many ways, the red poppies, buildings and countryside. Very friendly people as in all the other countries on Our Journey. Except for Scotland the weather and constant haze was so much that the sun was not brilliant which made it good for travelling. Naturally many things similar to what we have in Australia.

We arrived in Paris CDG airport at 4.05pm but as we were in correspondence (transfer) we didn’t have to collect our baggage but I did ask at the departure lounge for our flight if our two suitcases were on the plane and I was told “yes”.

We got rid of most of our English money and waited. Our Air France AF256 take-off time was 7.10pm . We saw some rabbits munching on the grass beside the runway then a few minutes later I took a photo looking down on France, a little sad to see it gradually become smaller and disappeared under clouds.

Goodbye Europe

We had dinner and breakfast on the flight and arrived in Singapore at 2.20pm in the usual hot and humid weather.

Singapore 2

In London we had packed our suitcases so that we would not need to open them until we arrived home in Australia so we put them in a baggage holding area which cost us A\$18. I rang the Bencoolen hotel to find if they had any vacancies and there were so we caught the Air Bus for A\$10 and arrived at the hotel soon after. We walked around a little including the old Bugis street and had dinner in a eating place in a street where Marie had sweet and sour pork and I pork ribs.

Home and bed at 9pm.

Saturday 2nd August

Temperature in our airconditioned room at 8am was 21c. We watched a garden show on CTV which

was called “Selamat Pagi Malaysia” which means “good morning Malaysia. Then up to the breakfast room to have our free sparse breakfast. Then we walked along Orchid Road and caught a bus to Sentosa Island which cost A\$7 each including entry to Sentosa but at least it was airconditioned.

I had never been here before so Marie was my tour guide. We had lunch there of pieces of chicken. We visited the Signing of the Treaty building which was most interesting costing us A\$5 each. We saw many other things, as much as one can in the stifling heat and humidity and finally caught the monorail train and did two circuits on it. We departed at 5pm and had a cold meal of rice and meat in a little cafe then home to a bit of coolness at 6.30pm. I rang Qantas to confirm our flight home which was OK.

Bed at 9pm.

Sunday 3rd August

Temperature ~ 21c

Up at 9am on the last day of Our Journey.

Breakfast upstairs then we walked around to Arab Street but most of the shops have gone as there is a lot of building being carried out. Back home to collect our things and checked out at 12noon and walked to the next street where we caught the Air Bus to the airport. After lunch in one of the restaurants we collected our two suitcases then checked in for the last time and were pleasantly surprised that Qantas did not charge us for being overweight. Great!

Waiting in the departure lounge was Ian Cairns who was one of the cabin crew so we chatted for awhile. We caught Qantas QF52 which departed at 8pm. Our seats were on the top floor (deck) at the front of the aircraft which was an experience. We arrived at the Brisbane International Airport at 5.05am. We passed through Customs quickly and waited outside for the airport bus. We did not look very hard at the people waiting as we told our family not to meet us because our arrival was so early in the day.

We departed the bus at the Transit Centre and caught a taxi to home where we arrived at 6.30am.

Australia

Home in Brisbane

We were home about 30 minutes when Maria ran in to say that John was at the airport and where were

we. OH dear, we did not see him and he did not see us. And he got out of bed so early.

He arrived at our place awhile later to welcome us back. Maria, Grace and Christian had done a lovely job in putting in place various welcome home things and flowers, how nice.

Well we are home after five months away. What a fantastic time we had. Just the two of us.



End of Album # 10

The two final sections, Statistics and Driving are to follow.

JCED 14.12'97.