

VACATIONS – CHAPTER TEN

as of 9/23/2011

1999 – ENGLAND – Isabel and Bill May 13- 27, 1999

May 13 - Philadelphia British Airways 6:20 pm Flight # 68V to Heathrow, London, arrive 6:25 am May 14.

May 14, 1999 - British Airways 8:am Flight #1434 to Edinburgh, Scotland, arrive 9:15 am.

May 27 - Depart London British Airways 4:00 pm Flight 67V to Philadelphia, arrive 6:55 pm.

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Leaving our home in Wayne, John took us to Wallingford to connect with Bev who had made hoagies for us and took us to the Philly Airport. We boarded our British Airways 757 at 6:25 pm for our six hours flight, seated with three on each side and four between the two aisles. On the back of the seat in front of us is a 4"x5' television screen set with several channels. The one we liked best showed a map covering our trip from the USA to London. Once we were in the air, the picture changed every few moments to show our present location, speed, outside temperature, altitude, tail-wind speed, estimated time of arrival, and time remaining for the flight. Amazing that we would be shown the information typically available to the pilot alone.

Supper on the plane was a choice of either chicken or salmon, rice, vegetables, cheese cake and beverages. It is amazing that such a meal can be prepared far in advance for more than a hundred people sitting in comfort five or six miles above the earth, who can eat it while it is still piping hot, while moving at speeds exceeding 600 miles an hour. Then too, there is the comfort of the lavatories - though so strange to be using the facility in "total privacy" while knowing that there are all those people just outside the door.

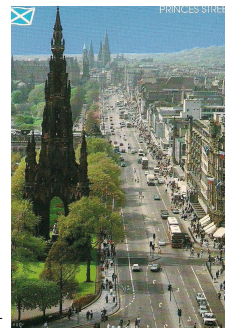
Friday, May 14, 1999

Here we are in England. Trying to sleep through the night on the plane in such cramped quarters in "Economy seating" was difficult, but we can make that up when we get there. After an on-board ham and eggs breakfast, we arrived in London about 6:30 am, transferred to another terminal by bus, and then flew on another plane to Edinburgh, Scotland. This smaller plane had a center aisle with three seats on each side.

I used my credit card at the airport in order to get British money at a cash machine being amazed that it will be charged instantly to my bank account back home in US dollars and cents. What a world! We then got a bus from the airport in Edinburgh to the center of the city just a half block to our hotel - British Royal.



British Royal Hotel - Princes Street



Our small room is on the fourth floor front overlooking the center square of the city at the edge of a ravine that separates one half of the downtown area from the other. Long bridges span the ravine through which the railroad also runs. The main train and transportation station is just in front of us. Buses, buses, buses galore come and go.

In this hotel, the reception desk located on the second floor is approached from street level by a narrow stairway, obviously dating from many years ago. Everything here appears as "old country." The ground floor at street level has many shops.

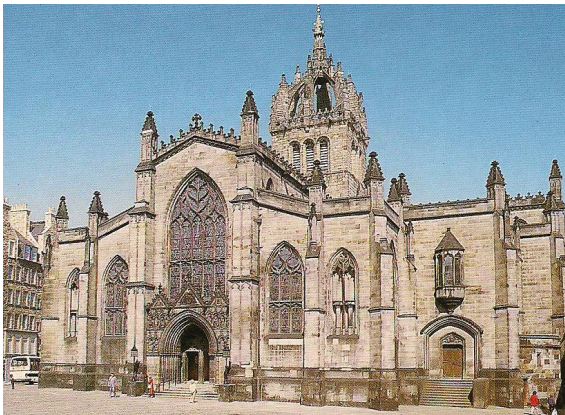
We boarded a double-decker bus for a tour of the city and sat on the open top-level listening to the tour guide point out the Sir Walter Scott memorial, John Knox's house, St. Giles' Church, and talk of Robert Burns. In order to learn the most, we stayed on the bus for a second round.

Having a snack at Waverly Square Railroad Station we walked the "Royal Mile" consisting of many stores and shops and entered the John Knox house to learn more of this Scottish Protestant Reformer and preacher.

Saturday, May 15, 1999

Here at the Royal British Hotel we ate breakfast in the second floor dining room, very "Old England" style. Going outside to the square, we listened to a bag-piper who was attracting tourists like us. Of course, he had a "tip" suitcase on the sidewalk. Walking Prince's Street, we visited the National Gallery of Art, a fantastic place with many art galleries with some of the world's finest paintings. I was impressed with the French artist Nicolai Poussin and his seven large paintings of the Seven Sacraments, the number taught by the Roman Catholic Church - though we Protestants observe just two - Baptism and Communion. The other five added by tradition - Confirmation, Penance (confession), Ordination (holy orders), Absolution (anointing of the sick, - previously known as Extreme Unction), and Marriage. Though we Protestants observe and practice all these, we don't refer to them as "Sacraments" - a matter of semantics, I guess.

Walking on, we went to St. Giles Church to hear a choir from Dayton University in Ohio. John Knox, the Protestant Reformer preached here and stood against the Roman Catholic Church and Mary, Queen of Scots whom he called "a whore" because of her several marriages. He also strongly objected to any religious icons or artifacts being displayed inside the church, even to the point of removing stain-glassed windows depicting saints or symbols. He felt that they all distracted from the worship of God, and were a sign of idol-worship which the Scriptures warned against.



St Giles' Church - John Knox

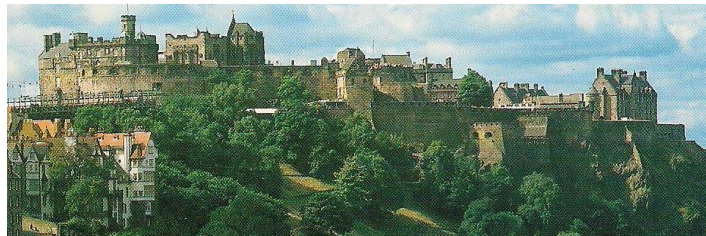
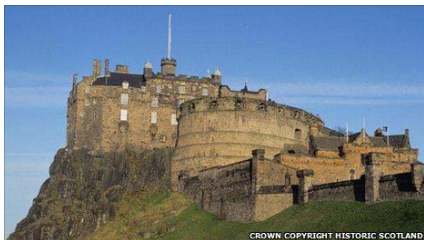
Very interesting, however, to note that a statue of Knox - larger than life-size - has been placed inside the church, seen as one enters the sanctuary. There was also a literature table nearby and an attendant or receptionist. When I commented about the irony of his statue inside the church, the attendant said that it originally was outside on the plaza before entering, but that vandals had desecrated it so often that a decision was made to move it inside!!

St. Giles was a Greek Christian hermit monk who supposedly lived in isolation sustained by the milk of a deer he had rescued. He became known as the patron saint of the crippled and lepers.

Still on the Royal Mile we had lunch in the old Deacon Brodies Restaurant.



We then went shopping and climbed the hill to the ancient Edinburg Castle in which many rooms have been preserved, and interesting exhibits on display. Upon entering we were given an "Audio-Guide" tape player that was synchronized to each numbered area.



Just by selecting a given number, a narration was given on earphones provided at the entrance. The view from many places on the Castle grounds was fantastic looking out over the city and beyond to the Firth (a bay or inlet) of Forth.

Sunday, May 16, 1999

Here at the British Royal Hotel in Edinburgh, Scotland for another day, we had a large breakfast in the second floor dining room and went to St. Giles Church for the communion service. There was a surprisingly small congregation in the large church, and the communion was served as we stood in a circle at the front of the church. We drank from a common cup, which was surprising in this day when we realize what diseases can be passed in such a manner. The sermon was very good on this Ascension Sunday with the minister quoting Martin Luther, "I have a Brother in Heaven."

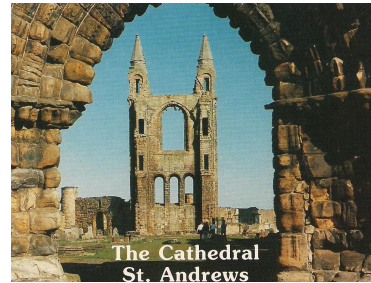
After lunch and a walk through Waverly Railroad Station we went to the Modern Art Museum which we didn't care for. Heading on to Hertz auto, we rented a car and drove to Dundee in order to hear our friend Dr. Tony Campolo who was scheduled to

speak at "the Gate Church" to help promote the Franklin Graham Festival in Pert Stadium the following week.

We checked into a Travel Inn set on the side of the country road with a Beefeater Restaurant next door, had supper and retired for the day.

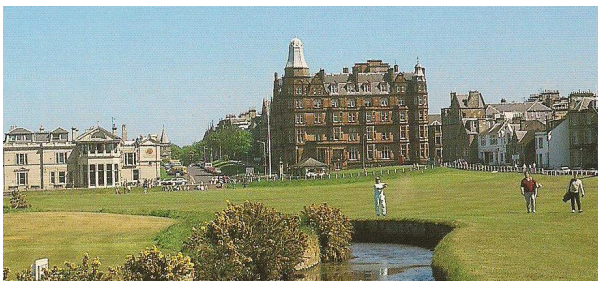
Monday, May 17, 1999

After breakfast we drove to The Gate Church, met Pastor Henderson and confirmed the time for Tony's service in the evening at 7:30. We decided then to drive to St. Andrews to see the Cathedral ruins.



We crossed the Tay River Bridge, had a snack at an outdoor cafe, and walked around the ruins of this castle built high overlooking the North Sea coastline of Scotland. Built in the 12th century, only a small portion of the ruins remain. It is surprising that safety concerns for tourists are not the same in Europe as in the United States. We walked under high stone structures that could possibly fall at any time. Quite an experience to think of what the cathedral must have been like at one time.

We then went to the famous St. Andrew's Golf Course where golfing was reportedly begun. Being located as it is on the shoreline, sand-traps (bunkers) common on all golf-courses, are natural here, but have been replicated elsewhere. Walking around, I found a golf ball inscribed with the name St. Andrews, and brought it back as a gift for my grandson Jim who enjoys the game so much. It was interesting and memorable to walk across the first-hole fairway and to see the famous club house.



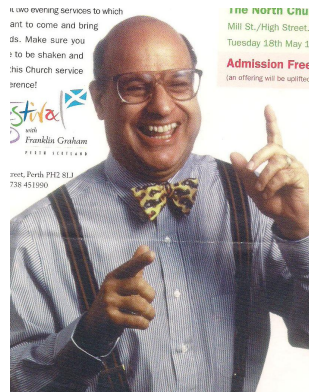
St. Andrew's Golf Course



Bill at St. Andrew's Golf Course

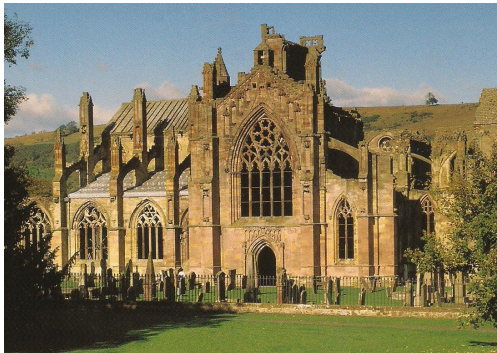
After supper we returned to the Gate Church in Dundee. It is a very large "Independent" church in a former Church of Scotland church building. The pulpit has been transformed into a very large platform extending out into the congregation or nave area. There was an unusual combination of modern electronic equipment and TV screens at the front of the church - strange and a different look. Tony was highly publicized as a part of the Franklin Graham Festival, and was joined by an American country-western singer Dennis Agajanian playing his guitar (wearing his levi's and a big black hat).

Tony was his usual self in proclaiming the Gospel in clear-cut terms, and we saw many respond to his invitation to accept Christ. Following the service we went to the pulpit where Tony was greeting people, when suddenly he glimpsed us and immediately called out to his wife Peggy to come see Bill and Isabel. We had a good laugh about traveling across the Atlantic just to hear him speak.

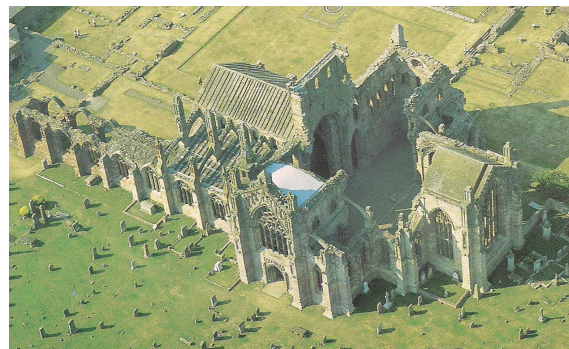


Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Leaving the Travel Inn here at Dundee, we traveled back through Edinburgh on our way to see the ruins of Melrose Abbey and the grave of Sir David Brewster, Scientist and inventor of the Brewster Stereoscope, and the kaleidoscope. I had first become interested in stereoscopy in 1974 and soon learned about him. In 1980 I had given an illustrated lecture at the National Stereoscopic Association Convention in St. Louis on his life, titled "David Brewster: Man of Science, Man of Faith." How thrilling it was then on this day to visit his grave and small mausoleum upon which is the inscription: "The Lord is my Light." Psalm 27:1. (see my web page williamzulker.com for the article).



Melrose Abbey ruins



Brewster's Gravestone between pillars five and six to left

The Abbey is in total ruin, with the cemetery surrounding it. One wonders who pays to maintain the site which has such historical significance. I was glad they do.

We then moved on to Jedburgh, and the ruins of another Abbey right on the banks overlooking the Jed River. We stopped to have a coffee and pastry snack at one of the little cafes in town. Below is another view.

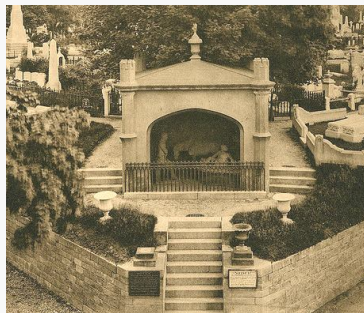


Our next stop was Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, the famous Scottish poet, playwright and novelist (*Ivanhoe*). What a fabulous place. We should have spent more time here.

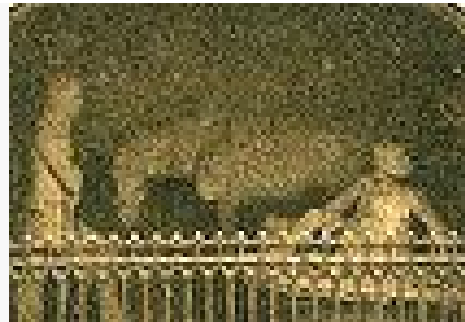


Sir Walter Scott Memorial on Princes Street

His library, two-tiered, was beautiful. I was disappointed, however, in not finding any reference to *Old Mortality*, one of his novels that was the basis for the Old Mortality statue at the entrance to Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia.



Laurel Hill Cemetery



(Old Mortality was the name given to a man in Scotland who traveled from cemetery to cemetery to chisel out the names and inscriptions fading away.)

In Scots' mansion, a private entrance from the second level of the library led to his bedroom. In an adjoining room there were a thousand more books, all leather bound.

Leaving there, we went to the Travel Inn in Newcastle upon Avon, having made reservations in this nice chain of motels while in Dundee.

Wednesday, May 19, 1999

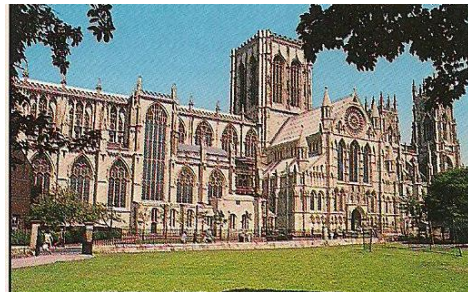
The Travel Inn here at Newcastle upon Avon is next to the airport, but there is very little noise. We ate breakfast here and headed toward the Travel Inn - Millfield in the business part in York.

When we rented this car while in Edinburg it was my first experience driving the British way on the left side of the road while sitting on the right side of the car. At seventy three years of age, it is not the best time of life to learn - but I did it!

I was glad when we found that we could leave the car at the Inn and take a bus into York where we went to see York Minster, the enormous church cathedral. While there, we attended a worship service to hear the Boys' and Men's Choir as well the reading of Scripture for Evensong. We also met the organist, John Scott Whiteley. After a bite to eat at an Italian Restaurant we returned to the Inn.



YorkMinster Cathedral



Thursday, May 20, 1999

Here at the Travel Inn in York, we were awakened at 5:50 am by the fire alarm in the Inn. Looking out the window we saw nothing but in checking the hall, we found that people were exiting. So still in our pajamas, we grabbed our valuables and dashed down the hall, through the lobby and joined many others out the front to the driveway. There we were, a strange-looking motley crowd of sleepy-eyed tourists oddly dressed wondering what was happening. After a few minutes, the manager appeared and announced the all clear, and apologized for the inconvenience. Fortunately, nothing had happened except that the fire alarm had sounded and it was a false alarm.

Leaving the Travel Inn here at York, we drove on to the Travel Inn at Coventry and then visited Stratford on Avon, Shakespeare's town. Having a snack at Cos's Corner restaurant, we sat at the River's edge watching the swans and geese, and marveled that we were there. Going to the nearby Royal Shakespeare Theater we found that the afternoon performance had already begun but after the intermission we were permitted to enter and see the second half of Mid-Summer's Night Dream."



Shakespeare's Birthplace



Anne Hathaway's Cottage

We then took an hour's bus tour of the area, sitting on the open-top area listening to the tour guide show us Anne Hathaway's House and other interesting sites. Having dinner again at the river's edge, we saw the low-slung tour boats, quite unlike anything we had seen before. We wish that we had allowed time to take the river tour.



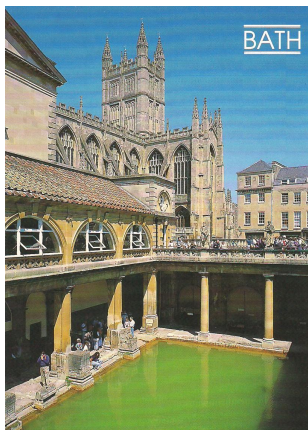
Shakespeare Theater - Stratford



Canal Tour Boats

Friday, May 21, 1999

We had breakfast here at the Travel Inn in their "Thank God Its Friday" restaurant and then drove directly to the Travel Inn in Swinden and then to the town of Bath to see the Roman Baths of antiquity. Being too late for regular admission, one of the tour guides took compassion on us and gave us special treatment. He personally toured us through the facility, showed us the baths (not too inviting - green and slimy), took us into the fabulous "Pump Room" dining room, allowed us to take photos and answered all our questions in a most pleasant manner. We also went into the large Bath Cathedral nearby.



Roman Baths - Bath Cathedral



After walking about the area for a while, we drove away and came across a street fair. We can never pass up these fairs that seem to be most everywhere in our European travels. Another interesting and informative day came to an end.

Saturday, May 22, 1999

Leaving Swinden Travel Inn, we arrived at Stonehenge way out in the countryside. This is a remarkable accomplishment by those living two or three thousand years before Christ. Just how they transported the large "Stones" to this location and erected them standing up is still a matter of conjecture. The religious significance seems obvious but has yet to be documented. Here in 1999 we were able to get quite close to the "Stones" though in later years the area has been protected by a wire fence.



Stonehenge

As we drove away, we saw a sign leading to "Old Sarum" near Salisbury and decided to check it out. Turning off the road onto a smaller road, I was confronted by a car exiting it. In the urgency of the moment I subconsciously veered to the right side of the road when I should have kept left. The Britisher driving the other car gave me no slack - wouldn't give me the benefit of being an American, and convinced me that I was wrong. Moving over to the left side of the road I then proceeded to the ruins of "Old Sarum." What an interesting site. It is a massive hill-fort constructed about 3,000 before Christ. Parking the car and walking into the former community surrounded and protected by two large bunkers or earth-mounds, we were amazed to stand in the midst of what was once a thriving city with its homes, stores, and church. No buildings remain, but foundations easily decipher their use. Just outside the circular mounds that protected the residences is the well-defined foundation of the cathedral that once stood there.



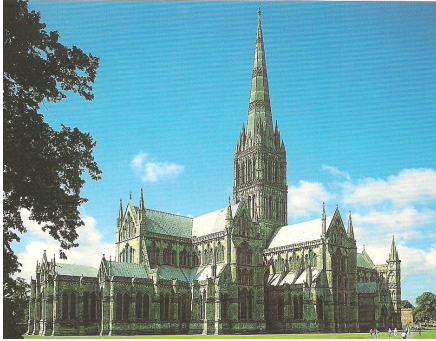
Old Sarum ruins



Cathedral foundation ruins

We were surprised that this site gets very little publicity compared to Stonehenge, but to us was much more interesting as it really shows how civilization has developed. To us, this is a "must see" site for anyone touring Southern England.

Just a few miles away from "Old Sarum" is the city of Salisbury with its magnificent cathedral. Its spire (404') is the highest in England; the length of the building is 449'; and in the museum is a copy of "The Magna Carta" - the basis for individual freedom, law and justice in the land. This South-Western area of England is almost as beautiful as the highlands of Scotland. It is more rural than we thought, with small towns separated by five or ten miles of narrow roads. To us, it seemed quite similar to many of the areas of Bavaria before getting into the mountains.



Salisbury Cathedral



Sunday, May 23, 1999

We spent our second night here at the Travel Inn at Swinden before leaving for Heathrow Airport. Arriving at noon we turned in our Hertz automobile, glad that we had been successful in driving without an accident and glad it was over. The Hertz garage and parking lot was just a half-mile or so from the airport runway. While there, one of the huge British Concorde planes took off as we held our heads to deafen the sound.



We rode the Underground (Subway) into London and went to the President Hotel on Russell Square where we had a fourth-floor suite located on a noisy corner.

Taking a bus to Westminster Abbey we were fortunate to be present for an afternoon Organ Concert by Paul Ayres followed by Evening Worship at 6:30 pm. What a wonderful experience to be there on Whit Sunday-Pentecost, and to hear an excellent though brief sermon on choosing our highest and best desire - not riches, satisfaction, success, or happiness - But God Himself. "Restless until we find our Rest in Christ." (A St. Augustine prayer.) We then went to Trafalgar Square and had a bite to eat before calling it a day.

Monday, May 24, 1999

We had breakfast in the hotel dining room and realized that this place had seen its best days some time ago. Because I hadn't slept well with all the noise of the street below we requested a change, which was not easy to accomplish. We ended up in the adjoining hotel - The Imperial Hotel - connected by an indoor hallway.

After Isabel had her hair done at the Hotel salon, we rode back to Trafalgar Square and found a shop selling theater tickets. Inquiring as to what we might see we

were thrilled to get two tickets for "The Phantom of the Opera" at "Her Majesty's Theater" on Haymarket Street - where it was first produced. What a find!

Going back to the hotel to change, and then having dinner at the Black Angus Steak House on Haymarket Street, we attended a most memorable performance of this great musical play. The stage settings were unbelievably magnificent, and we will never forget the crashing of the chandelier, as well as the performers who simply vanished at that moment.

While leaving the theater, Isabel and I were surrounded by two young men who tried to push up against Isabel on the side where she had her pocketbook - apparently pickpockets. I rushed Isabel off to the side and called for a taxi to get away from them. A bit alarming at first, but nothing serious went wrong, and we arrived safely at the hotel.

Tuesday, May 25, 1999

We got a very good night's sleep in our new room here in the Imperial Hotel in London room 705. Breakfast was in the hotel dining room on the First Floor - which in England is the second floor, counting the ground floor as one - get it? Great breakfast. We bought a *USA Today* newspaper - "Stock market down 174 points to 10,7??, 76'ers lost, Phillies a bit above 500 in third place, Tiger Woods won again."

Still on our four-day transportation pass we rode the bus to Trafalgar Square and walked to Buckingham Palace to see the "Changing of the Guard" ceremony. We were surprised to hear the Guard's Band play several show-tunes - not military music as we would expect here in America - except when they arrived and departed. I asked, "Why go to Buckingham Palace to hear 'Don't Cry for Me, Argentina' and 'It's Only Just Begun'."

Getting the U-Tube, we went to John Wesley's House, Church and Museum. Just as in my first visit there in 1990, I found it to be most inspiring. What a thrill to stand at John Wesley's Pulpit and then to see his "Praying Bench" which was like a one-person altar upon which he placed his Bible as he knelt, read and prayer. We also saw the small organ where his brother Charles Wesley composed many of his hymns, so familiar to us.



John Wesley's Prayer Bench / Charles Wesley's Organ



Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Up early, having coffee in our room and then breakfast in the Hotel dining room with baked beans, haddock fish and something like oatmeal.

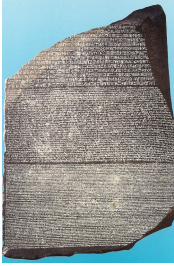
Getting the U-tube we went to Royal Albert Hall and the Museum foyer. not wanting to take the time for a tour, we walked on. A very strange event followed. A full-size American-made car stopped at the curb. A very well-mannered and well-dressed man exited and asked for directions. We responded that we were American tourists and didn't know the area. In very good English, he said that he was from Milan, Italy and had been in Philadelphia the previous week - at Mario's Pizza, visiting his wife's brother. He was extremely pleasant, shook hands with us and wished us well. He said that when he returned to Philadelphia again he would like for us to be his guests for dinner at one of the hotels or restaurants.

He was a clothing designer, owned a clothing manufacturing plant of quality clothing. He mentioned Armani, and other prestige names as well. He reached into the back of the car for a quality-type shopping bag and showed us two beautiful suede coats that had been made in his factory and that he had been showing to retailers. One was for a man and the other for a woman. He then put them back. We told him about the Clothing Company owned by our nephew Richard, and that one of our sons-in-law was Italian. We had an interesting conversation with him.

He then said that he had been to Milan, lost two million at the Casino, but not to worry about him for he had plenty more. "And when you meet me in Philadelphia don't say anything to my wife for she doesn't know." We were "hooked" and were impressed with him. Before driving away he reached into the back of the car for the bag with the two suede coats and handed them to Isabel. We both refused saying that they were worth hundreds; he said "thousands", but he kept insisting until we took it. More favorable comments were exchanged. We were impressed with his appearance, his clothing, his car and his gentle/cordial manner. I asked for his business card, which he said was in the bag.

He reached out from the car, shook my hand and then pointed to the gas gauge indicating it was almost empty. He asked if he could borrow some "gas" money which he would repay when he returned to Philadelphia. When I gave him a 20 pound bill, he asked if I could give him more. That should have alerted me, but it didn't, and I gave him another one. When he thanked us and drove off, we couldn't believe that we had been scammed. We opened the bag, had the beautiful coats, very costly, but they weren't our style or size, and there was no business card. WOW! Now what could we do with them to recoup our "loan?" (Sequel - We gave them to Goodwill and hoped that we were his only victims. Maybe he was wealthy, serious, and in need. Maybe we really were a help to him. Who knows?)

Getting back to the Imperial, we decided to walk to the British Museum just a couple of blocks away. What a fantastic place. Among the many things we saw were the Rosetta Stone, found in 1799 and providing the key to deciphering Egyptian Hieroglyphics; a large Egyptian Sphinx; various statues; a sarcophagus; and large portions of the Grecian Athenian Parthenon.



The Rosetta Stone - Parthenon Friezes



We had lunch in the cafeteria here and moved on to the British Library where we saw the Gutenberg Bible and original musical scores of the works of Bach, Beethoven, Ralph Vaughn Williams, Mozart, and an autographed score of *The Messiah* by Handel, with the words "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"; and some etchings by Leonardo Da Vinci." Marvelous experience.

When the Library closed for the day we took the U-tube to Knightsbridge and Harrods famous department store. Inquiring about a place to eat, we were told that we had the choice of twenty restaurants within the store. We sat at a marble counter for a quick sandwich and then purchased a bread-toast holder, something common here in England.

Thursday, May 27, 1999

On this our final day in England, we ate breakfast in the Imperial Dining Room and headed out from Russell Square to Heathrow Airport for our 4:00 pm departure to Philadelphia. Enroute with our baggage in hand on the escalator leading up and out of the subway, Isabel lost control of her suitcase and fell backwards onto me. We both were down as the escalator continued upward. Fortunately, two security men at the bottom saw what was happening, hit the emergency stop button, and ran up to keep us from tumbling the rest of the way down. Both of us were bleeding - Isabel from her hand and arm, I from my knee and hand. At the top, three other security people rushed to help us, brought a chair for Isabel to sit on, and called First Aid assistance. Two other men helped, and in fifteen minutes we were on our way again. Another memorable experience.

By 4:15 we boarded our British Airways plane, flew over Southwestern England, Wales, Ireland, near Iceland, and then arrived at Philly just five minutes later than scheduled. We were flying at 39,000feet altitude, 552 mph, with outside temperature at minus 54 degrees. Here again, the small television screen on the back of the seat in front us showed the route we were flying, with a small airplane icon indicating our then present location. Watching this, made the flying-time pass quickly.

Places visited on this trip –

- London - Edinburgh, Scotland - Dundee, Scotland - Melrose
- Newcastle - York - Coventry - Swindon - Stratford on Avon
- Salisbury - Bath - Stonehenge - Old Sarum
- British Museum

THE END