

## EUROPE TRIP 1987

Holiday in England July 1-23  
Botanical Congress in West Berlin July 24 to August 1  
Holiday in Holland August 2 -6

Bill and Dixie and Elaine Vanden Born

1 July

Dixie, Elaine and I left Edmonton at 8 p.m. on AC 850. Contrary to expectations, we flew to Calgary first to pick up more passengers, then on to London. It took an extra two hours this way, and we were not thrilled, though we probably could have known.

On the plane I met Jan Kwrzykowski (approx. spelling) who served in the Polish section of the allied armies in 1940-45, married a Scottish woman and stayed in Scotland until 1952, when they moved to Canada. He taught Social Studies, Math, and German in Barrhead High School for about ten years, until he retired in 1977. He knew many of the same Neerlandia people we also know.

2 July

We arrived in London tired and dozy, and then had to wait two hours for our rental car. Finally, after three telephone calls, the driver showed up. Apparently he had run out of petrol on the motorway in the brand new car. He was friendly and apologetic so we did not complain too much. The car, a white 1987 Ford Sierra, was very nice, with all the comforts we might want. Driving it, sitting on the right hand side, shifting gears with the left hand, was awkward and uncertain at first, but got better with time. I had to get used to how far away the left side of the car was, and where I was in the driving lane. This was especially important on narrow roads, with a hedge or a wall on the left, and a truck or bus meeting us on the right.

After a bit of scouting we found our first B&B about a mile north of Avebury, and we stayed at Des and Mary Jackson's (The Druidstone). It was a very nice place, if not a bit expensive (&12.00 each). We heard about and went to look at the Avebury Stones, famous but unknown to us until then, had supper in a local pub, and had an opportunity to meet the other guests, a German 'herbalist' and his wife.

3 July

After a good breakfast except for the soggy scrambled eggs we left for Bristol. I had called George Cussans the night before, and he would be expecting us about 10:15. The driving was getting better but we still did not get to Long Ashton until about 10:45, partly because of a wrong turn somewhere, and partly because driving through Bristol took longer than expected. We ran into Nick Peters right away (I could not think of his name, unfortunately), and I then had visits with assorted people while Dixie and Elaine took the bus into Bristol.

At the end of the day Nick found us the Royal Pier Hotel in Clevedon to stay and took us to dinner at The Place. The dinner was nice, though we were still suffering from jet lag, which did not help the conversation any. The hotel, on the Bristol Channel, was old but quite nice, though our room was terribly hot, even with the window open, and had a not so private shower, with a door that opened directly into the room.

4 July

We drove into Weston-super-Mare, a beach resort, and then through Cheddar and Cheddar Gorge, along various back roads, to Hewish where we found a nice place to stay (Kara) via a full-up farm B&B, Brinsea Green Farm. The farm place looked very attractive but, unfortunately, there was no space for us. After we settled in, we went to dinner at the Cussans' (George and Gwen, David, and Elizabeth) at Backwell. Son John

was away. We had a nice time, and also saw a bit of their huge barn-to-house conversion.

5 July

We caught the last ten minutes of the morning service at St. Andrew's at Blagdon (Church of England), on a beautiful day and in a beautiful setting. Afterwards we drove into Bath, found a parking spot, and promptly became separated as a result of a misunderstanding. The place was jammed with tourists, and we did the touristy things. On a bus tour we heard all about Robert Allen and John Wood who wanted to make Bath a Roman city. After a tour of the excavated Roman baths we found a pleasant place to stay, Box Road Gardens, at Box.

6 July

Since the weather was beautiful and the forecast for the next week was good, we decided to head for Scotland and to skip the Royal Agricultural Show. Accordingly, we hit the motorway north, first the M5, then the M6. Traffic was heavy and the driving was tiring. South of Lancaster we went looking for a farmhouse B&B but couldn't find the one we were looking for. Instead, a retired Scot we met showed some interest, and his wife volunteered to phone around for us. She got us a place right away in Garstang. After supper we took a walk along the Lancaster canal, examined some of the small boats in which people were travelling the canals, and read the 'dog shit alley' local name for the path along the canal.

7 July

More motorway travel, up as far as Girvan, where we found a fine place to stay (Deanston), right on the ocean front. Along the way, we wandered about in the Sweetheart Abbey ruins, at New Abbey, and crossed a range of forested hills.

8 July

We spent three hours at Culzean Castle (pronounced 'Culane'), then drove to Ayr and phoned George Marshall, who immediately came to meet us at the Railway Station, found us a B&B near the Ayr Church on Bellevue Crescent, and then went to dinner with us, with his wife Ann and their sons John and William. We had a nice visit at their small house also, and they helped us map out a route north.

9 July

We spent an hour with George Marshall at the West of Scotland Agricultural College at Auchincruive (about 400 students), then headed for Glasgow and 'the north'. We toured along Loch Lomond, via Crianlarich, to Pitlochry. Earlier, at Killin, we had booked a B&B at Pitlochry (for a &1.50 fee), at a farm. Faskally, owned and run by Mrs. Hay, turned out to be a very old place, built solid, with low doors and ceilings and not much of a heating system, but we slept well.

10 July

Breakfast was quite late, at 8:45, but it was good. For the first time this trip, the sun is gone, the clouds are low, and it rains a bit. It seemed a good time to do laundry. At the local place it cost &1 for a load of washing, 20 p for 7.5 minutes drying. It is not cheap but at least we got it done. We looked at several wool shops but, except for some



bargain items, sweaters were about the same price as in Edmonton.

We left Pitlochry about noon, and stopped to tour the Edradour distillery, the smallest in Scotland, with a production of about 4800 bottles a week. Included in the tour was a small sample of their malt whisky - I could actually drink it straight, the way it was served. Along the way we saw several heather areas that looked very unproductive. Once we were down from the highlands, we saw much very productive and beautiful farmland, including also small-fruit such as raspberries and strawberries. In Glamis we had a tour of the Glamis Castle where Queen-Mother Elizabeth and Princess Margaret were born (not Queen Elizabeth). We heard a lot about all the interesting connections with royalty, but there really was far too much detail to remember it all. It was a big place, with many fancy rooms.

Except for a short period, it remained overcast but warm, and it did not rain until about 9 pm, and then only just a bit. We saw no nice B&B places until we were just inside Dundee at 7 pm, and then went hunting for a restaurant at Broughty Ferry. After some looking, we found a good place, not a pub and not cheap but we were able to get some reasonable meals for a total of £12.35.

11 July

From Dundee we headed for St. Andrews on the east coast where we had a look at the famous Old Course. We really wanted to use the toilets there (and did so), but also had a look in the pro shop at the expensive sweaters (£60 and up) and other golfing paraphernalia. We had a good time looking at the St. Andrew's Cathedral ruins, climbed Rule's tower (158 steps), and then headed west to Perth via back roads.

For lunch we bought some strawberries and some scones as well as a warm Scotch pie and some macaroni and cheese 'things'. We arrived at Perth at noon, and looked around St. John's Kirk where John Knox preached his reformation sermon in 1559. Then we visited Caithgate Glass where we saw beautiful paperweights, glasses, and vases but could not take a tour, unfortunately. We ate dinner at The Granary, a reasonable place with some class.

12 July

We attended church at St. John's Kirk at 9:30, with about 20 other people in total. The service was good (though short, at 45 minutes), with spirited singing, and a good sermon, by a retired minister, on "Cast your anxieties upon him, for you are his personal concern". Afterwards we had some coffee at the Kirk House with half a dozen members of the congregation. We had awakened to blue sky again this morning. Later it had clouded over but then it cleared up again, and the weather was excellent for driving and walking. On the way to Edinburgh via the motorway and some backroads we stopped to check out the Sunday market at Kinross - "the biggest indoor market in Scotland". People were streaming towards it, and it looked interesting. It turned out to be unimpressive, however, except for its size - like a big warehouse with stands loaded with clothing and household items. We left again very soon.

We reached Edinburgh early, found a place to stay right away, and headed downtown. Traffic was light, with lots of room to park. We went to the Castle, including the Scottish National Monument, and then to St. Giles Cathedral where, at 'St. Giles at 6', we listened to a recital of songs by Purcell (1659-95) and Chausson (1855-99). The acoustics were very good, and the singing was nice.



In Perth, we had learned that the thistle is Scotland's national flower, the story being that a Norse invader gave away his position to the defending Scots when he stepped on a thistle and screamed in pain. Scotland has the Order of the Thistle, similar to England's Order of the Garter. One minister/professor in Edinburg (St. Giles) is Dean of the Thistle. John Knox was the first protestant minister at St. Giles. We learned a bit more about Scottish history, had 'Priazzo Milano' at the Pizza Hut (a bit greasy but very tasty), cruised the Royal Mile, called Andy and Joan, and called it a day at 9 o'clock.

13 July

It was overcast this morning, but at least it did not rain, and by 10:30 or so the sun came out again. We went to see some more of Edinburg, and found that the traffic was much heavier than yesterday. We knew our way around a bit now, though, and had no problems. We found a parking lot, at &1.80 for all day, and walked to the Museum of Childhood (very enjoyable), and the Huntly Museum (local history), also good, and much larger than the door and sign suggested. We skipped John Knox House (did he really live there?), looked at some expensive clothes at Forsyth's, had lunch and headed south.

We made a stop at Edinburg Crystal where we saw crystal being made, cut (with some guidelines but mostly freehand), acid-washed, and polished. It was a nice tour. The designs on the crystal were nice but quite busy, and all the items were very expensive. We ate some leftover pizza, some fudge, and drank some water (it was 4 o'clock by this time), and drove south to Moffat. It seems to be the center of sheep country, with a ram's monument on the main street. The place was full of tourists. In the old cemetery, I met a 'railway man' who, with a group of others, was going to walk the railway bridge across the Forth at Edinburg. The bridge is 1.5 miles long, quite old, and cannot be walked in rain or high wind. The prospect did not seem very exciting to me but it was to him.

We found a very nice B&B (Hidden Corner, run by Jean McKenzie, about a quarter of a mile south of Moffat), probably the nicest place we have stayed at. In the evening we had a spirited discussion with a retired farm manager and his wife (Jack and Pat Atkinson) from Bridge-on-?? near Stratford, and an Irish 'joiner' and his wife. The subjects covered ranged from chemicals (nitrates in water) to medicare to politics (English and Irish), etc. etc.

14 July

We stopped at the Moffat Mill, quite a tourist trap, along with people from nine coach tours. We bought a sweater for me and then went to Pitlochry Knitwear to buy the sweater that Elaine had her eyes on. Today the sun deserted us and as we approached the Lake District a drizzly rain took over. The scenery in the area was very nice but because of the low clouds and rain we didn't see it at its best. At Grasmere we visited the Wordsworth Museum and Dove Cottage (&2.50 x 2 + &1.00) - fairly pricey. The Cottage tour was very interesting.

At lunch time we stopped and wandered around Keswick a bit - the town was loaded with tourists and it was not very enjoyable. That's what happens in the Lake District apparently. It is a great area for walks/hikes. We checked out a few B&B places but none looked appealing. By 7 o'clock we were at Lancaster and found a place, not the nicest, but fair. In the meantime we had turned down the Vegetarian Country Guest House (&40) - too much for us.

15 July

We headed south to Chester on the motorway. It seems quite comfortable now to travel 75 mph in fairly steady traffic. Chester is one of the three old Roman cities (Chester from *castra*=camp). The others are Bath and York. It appears that the Romans were in Chester about 350 years, starting around 70 AD. The amphitheatre was discovered only in 1929, however. The town was jammed with people, mostly tourists, no doubt, and we had to park in a parkade. We signed up for a two-hour guided walking tour that turned out to be very informative. The guide was a history buff who seemed to know her material very well and could put it across in an interesting manner.

We saw the amphitheatre (capacity 5000-7000), the wall and gates, the Cathedral and Abbey Square, the Cross, the Rows, the second-storey sidewalks and shops, Bishop Lloyd's house, and the black-and-white-structured houses (Tudor, Victorian, Georgian, whatever all those terms really mean). Some almost look partly fake to me. At 3 o'clock we listened to the town crier for a while, and soon thereafter we left town to head for Wales. The weather was beautiful all day, with only an occasional cloud that later dropped some rain.

Into Wales we got sunshine and clouds that made the landscape beautiful. We stopped early today, at 5, in Llangollen, one of those difficult Welsh names. We wandered about town for a while and heard about male choir practices in the area. We drove to Corven, 10 miles west on A5, ate a not so great supper in a small cafe, and then went to the town hall to listen to the local male choir - 40 men with a young woman as director. They sang mostly unaccompanied, and had beautiful harmony. Many of their songs are sad songs, apparently, and they were practicing one of those for a regional competition. They also sang a rousing Roman war song, partly for our benefit. Most of the songs and the conversation was in Welsh, unintelligible to us. We did talk to several of the men, however, and to the director, and did not get back to our abode until about 10:30. It had been a very enjoyable evening.

16 July

We spent most of the day driving through Wales, southwest to Bala and Dolgellau. Dolgellau had very narrow streets, and neither town was very crowded. We looked briefly for the trail we took up Cader Idris in 1970 but did not find it - it probably was on a different road. We then decided to head toward Tewkesbury. The day's trip involved lots of driving on winding roads, while we had both sun and rain on beautiful valleys, especially the Wye valley. We tried to call the place in Cheltenham that we got from Marian Piekema but there was no answer. However, we soon found a large mansion, 'Woodside', just outside Ledbury, after checking out a farm that looked unattractive. The room was about 15 by 17 feet, with a huge bed, and there was a separate room for Elaine. A nice place to stay. We drove to Tewkesbury (12 miles) for supper and a look about town. On the way back, at Eastnor, we saw what looked like a deer farm, and listened to someone playing bells in the local church.

17 July

Breakfast was excellent, with breakfast fruit and with silver cutlery. The lady had started her B&B about two years ago. Across the road from our B&B there was a so-called antique shop, consisting of a farm with three or four buildings, each filled with every kind of furniture or garage-sale type junk imaginable. In the biggest building it was a maze with narrow aisles, and chairs hanging from the rafters. We looked a bit but bought nothing. The sun came out again as we headed for Stratford. We visited the old



abbey (built about 1100 AD) at Tewkesbury, built as an old Norman church. Along the way we got a few glimpses of a Cotswold village with thatched roof houses.

In Stratford, we found a place to stay via the tourist bureau. It was fairly pricey (&12.50 each), with small and poor beds, but 'private facilities', including an un-needed hair drier. Stratford was very crowded with tourists. The Anne Hathaway Cottage was disappointing without a guided tour. We lined up for theatre tickets and, two hours and some Macdonalds' dinners later, we did get tickets to The Merchant of Venice. Two seats were excellent, front row circle at &17.50, the other was on the last row of the upper balcony (&7.00). The latter was quite far away but the sound was fine. I sat on the balcony the first half and Dixie took the second half. The play was excellent, and we all enjoyed it immensely, much more than we had anticipated.

18 July

We visited the Shakespeare Centre where there was special display on The Merchant of Venice and its surrounding history, including newspaper clippings about supposed antisemitism. We also saw Shakespeare's birthplace - a better show than Anne Hathaway's Cottage. In Coventry we saw the modern St. Michael's Cathedral, started in 1954 next to the ruins of the old cathedral, bombed in World War II. We saw some nice stained glass at the back but did not have a chance to walk around and see the whole church because a wedding service was about to start.

We had a good lunch at a pub in Ettington, and then drove to Oxford. The city was crowded and dirty and mostly full-up. After some searching and chasing around we found a place to stay at Eynsham (Wayside Guesthouse). In the meantime it had started to rain a bit. The room we had was small and bare but the beds were good. At breakfast we met some Australian visitors who had just come from the US where they had visited New Orleans. They felt largely ripped off by desperate cab drivers during the off season.

19 July

After breakfast we found the village Church of England at 10:50 (the morning service had started at 10:45), so we went in and joined the congregation. We heard a sermon on Abel, witnessed two baptisms, and took part in communion. It was a good service, well attended, with lots of children, young and old. Except for some polite hello-welcomes, people did not talk much after the service, and we set out for Kidlington and Hampton Poyle.

We found the Kidlington Baptist church on High Street enlarged, and found one school but were unsure if it was one that our children had attended. The house in Hampton Poyle looked quite different, mostly because the trees in front had become much larger. We did not go in but we did drive to the old church, past the farm. The church was locked up so we could not see the inside. In the village itself quite a few new houses had been built since we were there last. We drove to Hampton Gay also but because of the rain did not walk to the old ruins. On Yarnton Road we found the ghost town-like Weed Research Station, totally abandoned.

We wandered about Oxford a bit, up and down Broad Street, peeked in the Trinity College garden, had an expensive 3 pm lunch in the Scholars' Coffeeshop in the Randolph Hotel, and tried to call Edmonton. Ann was not back yet, Mark and Debbie were not home, and Grandma did not answer the phone. We set out towards Salisbury and found the Parkhouse guesthouse at Cholderton. At 9 pm we had a light but good supper (cheap at &4.95 total plus 1.50 for drinks) at the Boot Inn nearby.



20 July

We had a good breakfast except for Elaine who did not feel well. We decided to stay put for a day, so Elaine stayed and Dixie and I went to Salisbury, via Stonehenge, to do laundry and to see a travel agent. We did both and did not make it back until 2:30. Then the three of us went off for some lunch and visited Stonehenge. It looks small from a distance but at close range it is still impressive, more so than the Avebury stones.

Then on to Stourhead House and Garden. We were too late for the House, because of some wrong turns, but we had a very nice 2-mile walk through the Gardens. There were very few flowers but lots of nice trees, a grotto or two, and a temple or two. We had nice late supper at The Old Inn at Allinton, and then tried to call Grandma again from a pay phone but there was no answer.

21 July

Susan Scott, the landlady (husband was Ron) made a reservation for us at the Coburg Hotel in London, next to Hyde Park, at £65 (including breakfast), and we set out on the 80-mile trip. Once off the M3 motorway, traffic became quite hectic, especially when we got right into central London.

There was a sale on at Harrod's and the place was jammed with tourists. the area was dirty, it was rainy, and there were wall-to-wall people. Parking rates at Cadogan Place NCP car park were £2.50 for the first 2 hours, £15 for 24 hours. We almost decided we did not like being there but, nevertheless, wandered about a bit, checked at the East German Embassy for visa regulations for our train trip to Berlin, and then made our way to the hotel. The room did not look bad, with bath and toilet down the hall. We faced Hyde Park, across Bayswater Road at Queensway. Rates in the car park nearby were £5.50 for 24 hours.

After a brief rest we went downtown, found something to eat, and at Victoria Station and the American Express Travel Office we checked out train possibilities. There were discouragingly long queues everywhere, and we went back to the hotel to settle in a bit. About 7 or so, we decided to drive downtown, and we cruised around Buckingham Palace, Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square. We had no problem parking here and there, traffic was light, and we had a very pleasant tour.

22 July

We called British Midland for plane tickets to Amsterdam, found that we could get 'latesaver' tickets for £39, and booked seats for 2:15 next day. It was little more than train and ferry fares and certainly quicker and more convenient, and it represented one thing settled for the next leg of our travels. We also decided to stay at the same place one more day.

We walked through Hyde Park, then took a one and a half hour sightseeing tour (£5 each) which was fair but not nearly as interesting as the tours we had at Bath and Chester. We walked some more, down Oxford Street, had lunch at the C&A cafeteria, and took a taxi to Drury Lane, the theatre area near Trafalgar Square. The taxi ride was slow because of heavy traffic, and turned out to be expensive. We bought two tickets to 'Melon' £8.50, and took the big red bus back to the hotel. In the meantime we had also spent some time at Canada House at Trafalgar Square. We bought some more cheese and bananas and orange juice, and left Elaine to entertain herself at the hotel while Dixie and I went to see the play. It took about 30 minutes by subway to get to the Theatre Royal

on Haymarket, built about 1720 - quite a nice old theatre. The play was fair but not in the same class as the Merchant of Venice at all. We were back at the hotel at 11. There were still lots of people on the tube but the stores near the hotel had just closed.

23 July

We packed up all our things, cleaned out the car, paid ~~£~~<sup>f</sup>11 for two days' parking, and headed out to Heathrow. Traffic was slow for a while, and it took almost an hour to get there. We found the NCP car park at the Excelsior Hotel without problem, deposited the car, and were bused to the airport.

The trip to Amsterdam was nice and smooth, about an hour, and included a fine lunch. Schiphol was much less crowded than Heathrow, and was generally very pleasant. We heard about the Hotel Ibis and through the KLM counter got a triple room at the 'special' rate of 120 guilders. Next, to the train station adjacent to the airport for tickets to Berlin. A very helpful and friendly young woman got us the tickets, at f278 for Dixie and me, and f206 for Elaine. For an extra f12 each she was able to get us seat reservations, even though we could only get them in the smoking section. As it turned out, the reservations were very necessary. The KLM bus took us to the Ibis, about 10 minutes away. It seems to be used mainly by tour groups. The room was large but fairly plain otherwise. The private bath and shower were nice, for a change. After supper Dixie and I had a nice walk up and down the road though there was not a lot to see other than farm fields, with the hotel almost in the middle of nowhere.

24 July

We were up at 5 am (4 am England time) for a quick continental breakfast, to catch the 6 o'clock bus to the train station at Schiphol. Our train from Centraal Station was to leave at 7:32 for Amersfoort, where we had to transfer to the Berlin train from Hoek van Holland. We quickly met up with a young Dutch student from Utrecht, Andre van Aptroot, also going to Berlin, who helped us find our way with the train system a bit, such as car and seat numbers. In Amersfoort the train was 25 minutes late and we got transferred and settled in without problem. The German train was crowded and dirty, and we were glad we had reserved seats, even if they were in the smoking section. One Dutch fellow traveler, Cees Berg, recently moved from Utrecht to Bergen, Norway, was a pipe smoker but, very considerately, he did most of it in the corridor.

We talked to a German nurse who wanted to move to London, and to a London woman who had left Bulgaria 15 years ago. Her father, dead since 1962, had been a non-communist economist. I also tried to talk, unsuccessfully, to a cigarette-smoking silent German (I could not really understand his German and he spoke no English), and we listened for a short while to a chattering and smelly German woman who, fortunately, soon got off the train. The train ride was long, with some long stops in East Germany, and some unexplained very slow stretches.

On crossing into East Germany, some GDR officials came on board, and eventually came to our compartment also. They checked passports and pictures, and wrote out transit visas in duplicate for each passenger. No smiles, though. Outside, the fields looked the same as in west Germany, although I saw some very weedy fields. The villages looked drab, and mostly poorly maintained. There were fewer cars and they were all small and bare, and by the railway stations there usually was barbed wire. By the time we reached Berlin it was about 5:30 pm, and we were tired of the trip. We took a taxi to the hotel, had dinner, took a short walk and went to bed.



25 July

Getting to the conference by bus was easy but not particularly cheap (DM2.30). There were a lot of people, about 4300 registered, and I met only a few people I knew. One of these was Don Durzan, now at Davis, and we talked a bit of old and current happenings. I checked on the higher than expected hotel rate for us three - apparently the congress organizers made an error in quoting the rate. Breakfast at the hotel was expensive - DM7.50 for coffee, rolls and jam. Fortunately, a store nearby could supply quite a few things. The International Congress Centrum (ICC) was an excellent facility, elaborate and complicated, and the congress organization seemed to be very good.

26 July

We went to church in the Kapelle of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedachtnis Kirche, for an English service sponsored by several American churches in Berlin. It was a good service, with a good sermon. Well over half of the people present were in Berlin for the Botanical Congress. After lunch I went back to the sessions.

27 July

I attended sessions all day while Dixie and Elaine went on the Berlin West tour which was said to be very good. I talked briefly to Edwin Cossins, and also met Carol Solberg, John Hoddinott's wife.

28 July

We got up early to be at ICC by 6:30 for the bus to Dresden. We decided on a taxi which turned out to be quick but hardly cheap (DM10). The bus left at 7:30, stood at the GDR border from 8:30 to 10:30, and arrived in Dresden, on the Elbe, 200 km away, at 1 pm. The Autobahn was fair, and traffic was very light and slow. The roads looked like they were built pre-World War II and not changed since. They were mostly in fair shape, but narrow, with some very abrupt approaches and exits. Cars we saw were all strikingly similar, small, bare, and mostly grey, with an occasional slightly brighter-looking one. Maximum speed was 120 kph for cars, 80 for the bus, and the driver was careful not to exceed it.

Just inside the border, we picked up a DDR tour guide who introduced herself and then told us nothing during the trip. We saw little else during the bus trip - trees, some farm land, some good crops, and some weedy ones, some farms from a distance (all are collective), and some power stations. Apparently quite a lot of DDR electric energy is generated from brown coal deposits in the area between Dresden and Berlin.

I talked quite a bit to Neil Turner (CSIRO, Perth, Australia). Dixie and Elaine met Jack and Nancy Van't Hoff, both Calvin graduates, from Long Island, New York. Dresden was fire-bombed in 1944 ("by Anglo-American forces"), and large parts of the city were destroyed. Some ruins still stand as ruins but much has been restored also. We saw a porcelain collection, an art gallery with an excellent tape commentary, and the Green Vault, with mostly gold and jewels and precious stones from August

der Starken and others, from earlier centuries. The collections were very impressive. In paintings, the museum was said to have the largest collection of Italian works outside Italy. The 17th century must have been one of great prosperity for Saxony, at least for its nobility/royalty. Our AMA tour book has no information at all about East Germany - I wonder why not?



At lunch, I met two Italian plant breeders (forage grasses, legumes) who work at Perugia, about 200 km north of Rome. Lunch was fair but the kohlrabi was bitter and not appreciated much by anyone at our table. Food quality generally seems to be poor. Our supper in Dresden was very poor, at least by our standards and taste preferences. At 7:30 we started out for Berlin again, and spent another hour at the border - we were quite happy to leave again. All passports were checked again, then collected and taken away, and after a time returned to us. Buses and trucks were checked from top to bottom (for illegal passengers?), including looking underneath with mirrors. By the time we reached the hotel, it was 12:30 am. It had been a long day, and we were tired.

29 July

There were no interesting papers in the morning so I took the West Berlin tour - very good I saw a lot of things, took a few pictures, and heard a continuous commentary on Berlin for 3 hours, from an excellent tour guide who seemed to be a native Englishman. On the tour I met Sandy Vitt, spouse of Dale Vitt, bryologist in Botany, and a weaving acquaintance of Nell Vande Guchte. In the afternoon the three of us went to the zoo. It was great, with lots of interesting animals including a giant panda bear. We had a nice supper at Wienerwald.

30 July

There were no papers in the morning, so we took the train/bus to the Botanical Gardens. I left from there to go to ICC at about 11:15, and Dixie and Elaine stayed and enjoyed the gardens. I returned to the hotel about 10 pm. It seemed a nice idea to take the subway and bus back to the wall for a look at night, so we tried, and got on the bus close to it by about midnight. However, the bus driver warned against walking around in the area at this time of night in no uncertain terms (in German, but the message was clear), so we decided to return to the hotel and skip the risk.

31 July

The last day of the sessions already - they ended at 5. In the late morning I took a ride to the top of the 126-m Funkturm (Radio Tower) built in 1924 for a radio exhibition. The ride up was a bit scary but there was a fine view, if not a bit windy, from the top. Too bad it was quite cloudy. At night we had a good supper at an Italian restaurant, and spent some time packing for Saturday's train trip back to Amsterdam. It took quite a while but it was necessary and important for next morning. Earlier in the week we had made seat reservations for the train trip back - it had to be done at two different places for the leg from Berlin to Hannover and the leg from there to Amsterdam. It also meant paying for the reservation process twice. Oh, well!

1 August

We got up early and took a taxi to the station for the 8 o'clock train. We almost took the train to Hamburg because we were a bit early but Dixie had read the signs and saved us from error. The train was not so crowded this time, and much cleaner than the one we were on a week ago. Also, we had non-smoking seats reserved from which we had to gently evict a few people. The ride was still slow across east Germany, but it speeded up once we crossed the border. In Holland, the train slowed down again, with quite a few stops. The sun was in and out, and on the whole this trip was quite good but it was still long. At Amsterdam there were long lines at the VVV, and we were hustled a bit by unofficial room peddlers outside the station, but we managed to get a hotel. Not cheap, though, at f150. We watched the crowds and dragged our luggage onto a tram

with a friendly and helpful driver - no doubt, my ability to speak Dutch helped. By the time we reached the hotel it was almost 9 o'clock and we still needed supper, so off to a fairly classy restaurant near the Concertgebouw for some food. The main dishes were very expensive so we had something fairly simple. The quality and taste were good, though.

## 2 August

We did not get up early enough to find an English church service, and we went looking around Amsterdam on a tram/bus 'dagkaart' F8.65 each. We saw some contemporary 'naive' paintings of Amsterdam in the Nieuwekerk (no longer used as church), saw the Dam, visited the Van Gogh Museum, had supper at a pancake restaurant (very good) at Leidseplein, and did a bit of joyriding on the tram and bus to see some non-tourist parts of the city. It looks like almost everyone lives in an apartment. We returned to the hotel, near the Museumplein, at 10:30.

## 3 August

I went to Braitman and Woudenberg to see about renting a car, and found that they don't rent cars. They were very cooperative and helpful, however, and Mr. Kluwer phoned the ANSA, the Amsterdam Hilton on the Apollolaan for a Ford Escort, available at 'local' rates. I took the tram over, rented the car, heard about the tornado that had struck Edmonton a few days earlier, and found my way back to the Hotel Janson, very close by. We loaded our luggage, carefully out of sight, parked the car, and took the tram over to the Anne Frank House museum. We had pancakes for lunch, looked for a flag T-shirt (but found none), walked around in the Bijenkorf where we bought a small bag, and phoned home from the Telehouse on Raadhuisstraat. Thankfully, everyone we knew was OK. The tornado had struck on July 31, at 3:30 pm. Relieved, we made our way back to the car and left for Barneveld.

The traffic was fairly heavy out of Amsterdam, but it thinned out later. It was no faster than in England but a bit more complicated, particularly with all the bike paths. We found a nice hotel in Amersfoort (De Witte), not cheap, but very comfortable. At 6:50 we left for Barneveld, with some crackers and cheese for supper. We found Nijboer's quickly and had a fine visit with them, until about 10. I probably should visit them again in September 1988 when I go to Wageningen. We made our way back to the hotel without difficulty and were in bed by 11:30. On the way from Amsterdam we had some rain but in Barneveld it was dry.

## 4 August

We woke up to mostly blue sky and sunshine that bode well for our tentative plans for the day. Dixie and I took a walk into the shopping area across the street. We saw lots of 'opruiming' signs, and not too many people yet (at 8:15). After a good breakfast, including corn flakes (), we did some shopping and Elaine and I climbed partway up the Lange Jan tower (officially called the Onze Lieve Vrouwe Toren). Meanwhile the clouds began to move in and it rained every once in a while. About 12:30 we went off to Rhenen, via Ede and Wageningen.

In Wageningen we found the IAC (Internat. Agrarisch Centrum) - it looked like a good place to stay, at F75 for two, plus f45 for 1, better than the f115 + 75 we had to pay in Amersfoort. We booked in, deposited our luggage, and went to Achterberg where we drove around a bit and visited with the Berends'. Mrs. B. was a daughter of Gijs van Esseveld. We had a pleasant visit and talked a bit about old times. Koster, the baker, has



moved, a lot of Achterberg is built up, and our old house is totally changed, to the point where I did not really recognize it. We drove past the old grain business, the Christian School in Rhenen, and also the Gereformeerde Kerk and the Cuneratoren, and then drove to Arnhem for a look around. As a result of a wrong turn by the bridge we crossed over the Rhine and drove back along the dyk on the south side of the river as far as Heteren where we could cross on the new bridge that was part of the freeway. On our return we had a late supper at a pizzeria in Wageningen and headed for bed.

#### 5 August

We spent a few hours shopping in Wageningen, then an hour in Arnhem, had Macdonalds milkshakes for lunch, and then spent 3 hours at the Openluchtmuseum. The weather was cool, and 50% sunny, i.e., the sun would shine 20-30 minutes, then a cloud would move in and it would rain hard for 10-15 minutes, and the cycle would start again. Supper at IAC was not bad, as institutional food goes. We played a bit of ping pong, watched Dutch commercials and news on TV and packed up to go home tomorrow. It has been hectic at times but, on the whole, a very good five weeks.

#### 6 August

We had an early breakfast (7 am) and were on our way by 7:45. A wrong turn delayed our getting on the 'snelweg' a bit but we still arrived at Schiphol by 9. The airport was empty, checked in and put our carry-on bags in a locker, and drove to the Hilton to deliver the car (10:20). We rode the tram to the Bijenkorf (got on at 10:55) to buy two more bags, and rode back to Station Amsterdam-Zuid. We arrived there at 11:42, caught the 11:45 train, and reached Schiphol again at 11:50. A bit of duty-free shopping still (some flowers, two T-shirts, a bottle of whiskey and a bottle of kahlua), and we were on our way.

The layover of just over two hours in London seemed long, and the flight home to Edmonton also seemed long, even though we arrived 10 minutes early. Our reception committee was becoming a bit concerned because we were the very last ones out of the customs holding area, all because Elaine's suitcase did not turn up. It had been stranded in London because of a baggage tag that had come off. However, it was delivered to our house two days later, none too soon as far as we were concerned. We were happy to see Karen, Ann, and Grandma at the airport, and were happy to be home again.