

## Scotland, Ireland, Wales & England

May 24 – June 8, 1994

### Tuesday May 24, 1994

Arrived Glasgow right on time (10:00 am GMT, 4:00 am CST). Caught #2 Bus (£2.00) to Queen Street Station, where we validated our Brit Rail passes (the ticket agents seemed to be quite interested – I'm not sure they had ever seen one before) & caught the 11:30 train to Edinburgh. We could have taken a bus for (£6).

Flew over in a 676. AA provides free drinks to everyone & descent food. Not a bad choice for economy.

It was 48 degrees on arrival – mostly sunny skies. Immigration was a breeze (they stamped by passport!) & had nobody even in the room to search our baggage. I managed to sleep fairly well – Kathleen is a bit fuzzy. She tried to buy a bus ticket all the way to Edinburgh, then led us onto the wrong train. We caught the error in time & are now on our first British train ride (departs Glasgow Queen station 11:30, arrives Edinburgh Wavely 12:20 (“Arriving a bit late” if I understood the Scottish brogue at all).

Walked a LONG WAY to our B&B on arrival in Edinburgh. The map we had looked at when booking the place was deceiving. It is a bit away from the city center, which explains the low rate, but it is clean and nice.

We arrived there about 1:00 pm & decided to nap awhile, so we set the alarm for 4pm and slept.

Went out about 5pm & walked around a great deal. Had a delicious dinner (pork & cheese in a pastry shell for me, salmon for Kathleen) & several beers for £24. Beer is quite reasonable here (less than £1 for a ½ pint of Guinness most places).

Walked up towards the castle & got chased off the grounds by several guards, as by this time it was getting late.

Stopped off at a bar near the B&B to have a last drink. They were having a trivia contest run by someone using a PA system and tape player from ~1960 – loud and distorted. Was loud, smoky & expensive – guess we won't be back!

Interesting to note that it was still quite light out even though it was nearly 10pm! Dragged ourselves back to the B&B and went to bed by 10:30.

### Wednesday May 25, 1994 – In Edinburgh

Got up around 7am – my calves were sore from all the walking I did yesterday! Had a descent breakfast (eggs, bacon, sausage, corn flakes, toast, juice & coffee) & hit the road.

Caught the #14 bus (55p each) downtown & spent all day walking the Royal Mile.

As we suspected (after seeing a motorcycle led procession last night) the royal family is apparently in residence, so Holyrood House is closed to tourists.

It was cloudy & cold this morning – I put on my wool sweater, raincoat, head band and cloves and was still a little cool until the sun broke out about noon.

Walked the entire length of High Street & went on the tour of Edinburgh Castle (admission: £5.00). It is well worth the price of admission, if for no other reason than the humor of the tour guide. The castle itself is amazingly OLD (the chapel was built in 10xx, and the castle had been around for hundreds of

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years by then). Saw the crown jewels too. The view of the city was magnificent – so beautiful that I didn't want to waste film capturing it because it seemed futile – but I tried anyway. There were several bus loads of oriental tourists (quote of the day, after I'd waited 10+ minutes for Kathleen to emerge from the bathroom: "They're so small that more of them fit in there than you'd ever believe!").

Had a few Guinness at the Mitre (1/2 pint – 90p), then went next door to the Royal Mile Tavern (127 High Street, 031 556 8274) for Oyster Mushroom appetizer, Salmon (Kathleen), beef stew (me), French wine & carrot cake for £28. Delicious!

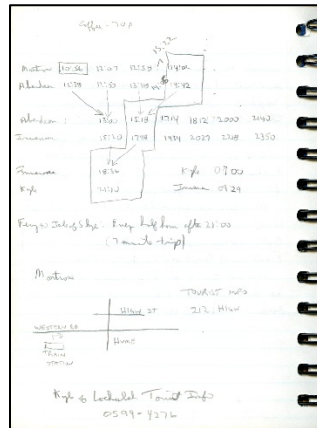
Walked back to the B&B, arrived at 9:30 – it is still daylight! Decided not to go explore the docks & crashed for the night.

### Thursday May 26, 1994 – North by Train

Our room in the B&B was on the third floor, next to the bathroom. Some of the guests returned around 1:30 am, and there was a Monty Python-like stream of people in & out of rooms for next hour or so. We both woke up and had trouble falling back asleep.

Breakfast both mornings started with a bowl of corn flakes and a glass of juice, followed by eggs, bacon, sausage & toast. All this for £30 per night (double occupancy).

Walked to the train station, a 25-minute walk. Bought coffee & a paper and caught the 9:10 train to Aberdeen.



As can be seen from the page to the left [above], we have just altered our plans a bit (the true beauty of traveling by rail pass!). The route from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh is reported to be one of the most beautiful rail journeys in Great Brittan, so we are going there tonight.

Write to mom, Phil, Jeff

This part of Scotland looks a lot like Northern Wisconsin. They grow vast fields of something that is now in brilliant yellow bloom.

Stopped off in Montrose. While there, we booked a room in Kyle of Lochalsh through the Tourist Information booth. The woman there (Hazel Hamilton) is traveling through Dallas (via Amtrak!). Geve her our address and phone number.

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There were no lockers but left the packs with an obliging ticket agent at the tram station.

Had lunch at the Corner House Hotel (2 fish & chips, soup and 2 Belhaven Ale's – quite good beer – for £11.90).

Found the Murray Guest House (took Kathleen's picture there). The Murray's are numerous in this town.

Caught the train to Inverness. Had a 50-minute layover there so bought some bread & cheese to hold us over till dinner. Also got a free pamphlet on Inverness-Kyle of Lockalsh leg of our journey.

Got into Kyle late. Found the B&B near the train station (the Waverly - £26 for both), dropped off our packs & went in search of dinner. However, everything was closed. Took the ferry over to the Island of Skye, but found only a bar, so settled for beer & peanuts.

The sun sets very late up here – it was still light at 10:30.

### Friday May 27, 1994

Woke up shortly after 5am to a brilliant sun – very short nights here! Our hostess fixed breakfast & we were on our way – caught the 07:00 train back to Inverness.

This section of the journey has been described as the most scenic rail leg in all of Great Brittan, and I admit it is hard to tear my eyes away from the beauty that is streaming past my window to write these words.

We took this quick out & back leg on a whim. I was reading the Brit Rail book yesterday and came across the write-up and decided it couldn't be missed – I haven't regretted it!

It passes thru some of the oldest mountains on earth (no fossils!). Mountains, trees, streams, and animals of all types. We've seen hundreds of deer & countless sheep. We have magnificent sunshine with which to enjoy (and photograph) the view.

Arrived back in Inverness where we checked our bags (£1 for a medium locker at the station) and set out to discover the city. Walked up to the Tourist Info center & got info on the bus to the Culloden battlefield (regular bus route 12). Had some time to wait so we walked up to the castle/sheriff's office & went through the nearby museum.

Caught the bus (£1.80 round trip) to the battlefield. Walked around & saw the markers (carved stones & wooden signs), had lunch & saw the slide show of the battle. Interesting bit of history.

Took the bus back into town, reclaimed our bags & caught the train to Pitlochry. This is a beautiful little town that appears to be turning into a tourist center. Stayed in a guest house (£52 for 2) that was a 10-minute walk up hill from the train station. Has a bathroom in the room & was blissfully quiet & restful.

Had a dinner of roast beef, roasted potatoes, vegetables & dessert at a Scottish equivalent of a smorgasbord (quite good). Walked around the town – saw the nearby damn, power plant and fish ladders. Had several drinks before dinner at a pub.

This was a lovely town – we both wished we were spending more time here. There is a festival going on this weekend which we regretfully missed.

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### Saturday May 28, 1994

Got up at 6:30 so we could catch the 8:22 train to Glasgow. Skipped breakfast which didn't start until 8:00 so we could get to the station only to find out that the 8:22 had been cancelled! Left our bags at the station & had breakfast at a nearby restaurant (nearly £7) because we couldn't face the walk back up the hill to our hotel.

The next train arrived at 9:30 and is very crowded. We are in the smoking car, but it is only 1 hour to Sterling where we change trains for Glasgow. We have a very long and complicated journey ahead of us to Belfast, with numerous train & station changes to contend with.

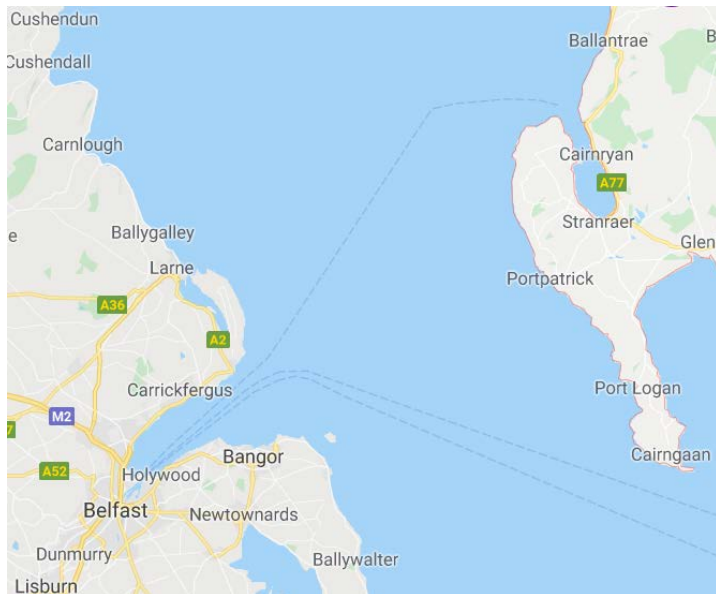
Changed trains at Sterling & got onto a very crowded train headed into Glasgow (Queen Street). Kathleen got us seats, but I gave mine up to some woman. Kathleen fell into a good conversation with the woman across from her. We also met a nice old couple on the train into Sterling – Guess it was our day to meet people.

The accents are getting more pronounced – the train announcements sound like a foreign language!

Caught a local train to Ayr, where we had a brief (~45 minute) wait for the train to Stranraer. We sat on a bench in the sun & ate leftover bagels & cheese before catching the 12:32 train to Stranraer.

The train pulled into a station right on the docks. It was a short walk over to the ship. We had to send all our bags through their X-Ray, and they checked our packs for us.

It was windy and cool, but brilliantly sunny – a beautiful day to be on the water. The boat was not crowded at all. It had an entire deck labeled "For motorists only", and a lounge for commercial drivers too. Being able to check the bags was nice – freed us up to roam about the ship unencumbered.



Had fish & chips for an early dinner. Had a beer later. The trip, which lasted 2 ½ hours, went by quickly, and we soon found ourselves in Larne.

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Walked off the ship into the terminal and in a miraculously short time claimed our bags. A short walk brought us to the train, which took off almost immediately.

Security personnel were everywhere in the station, although no guns were evident.

The train ride was brief (~30 minutes) and we fell into conversation with an Irish woman who was part of a group returning from a week hiking in the Lake District of England. She was very friendly & helpful. After arriving at the station, which is on the outskirts of the city, we re-joined her on the rail service provided bus to the central train station. She & Kathleen fell into a spirited discussion on Belfast for the ride.

Central station was kind of dead. Had to be buzzed into the tourist info office which was not very helpful. They had no maps & were very uninformed about cheap lodging for the two young travelers that arrived with us.

Got a taxi for the ride to Camera House Guesthouse (£3.60) to complete a journey of 5 trains, 1 ship, 1 bus and 2 cabs. Whew!

Checked in & got directions to places to get food & something to drink. Nothing looked or sounded good & we ended up walking around a bit before settling on pizza in a popular place that was unlicensed, but which allowed customers to bring in their own beer or wine. Unfortunately, by the time we realized that it was too late to buy anything.

### **Sunday May 29, 1994**

We arrived without much information on Belfast and didn't really know what to expect. We've discovered a multi-faceted city. A military helicopter hovered overhead most of the day. Armored cars patrolled the streets. Groups of soldiers set up random roadblocks. The City Center has fixed check points, and all vehicles (even our bus yesterday). We saw a parade of veterans commemorating D-Day being led by an armored car and led & followed by armed guards.

The tourist inf center was closed, as was most everything else. We spend the day walking around the city. Had coffee at the McDonalds, a beautiful 3-story building that was nearly the only restaurant open.

We did manage to have a beer (hand drawn Bass Ale – delicious!) at the Royal Crown Saloon, a beautifully ornate bar. The bar keeper told us about a food festival going on in the Botanical Park. We walked down there and ate Chinese food and listened to a rock band and enjoyed the beautiful sunny day.

There were families in abundance – a great many children. It was the first signs of normal life that we encountered. Everyone appears to be trying to ignore the presence of the troops & the regimentation that they impose.

The city itself has beautiful architecture. It is a jewel in the rough – if and when the troubles get settled, they should be able to attract a huge tourist industry. There are signs that things are beginning to settle down – the abundance of children (young – less than 5 years old), the food festival (this was its 4th year), the construction of a river-front convention center that is just being constructed, a rail connection between the Central and Yorkgate train stations.

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We walked back to our room & napped a bit before setting out for dinner. We had to wait for an hour, but the bar was open, and the dinner was fabulous & well worth it.

While we were walking through the nearly deserted city center earlier in the morning, we were passed by two young men who, like many others in Belfast, stared at us as we walked by. After we passed, one exclaimed to the other: "Tourists!". There weren't many of us, that's for sure.

### **Monday May 30, 1994**

Decided to catch the local train from the Botanic Station to Portadown where we could catch the express for Central Station to Dublin. Mis-judged the time a bit & left ourselves only 20 minutes to walk to the station. We made it, but only by 1 minute!

We did this to avoid having to go back to the Central Station, which is quite a way from our guesthouse. Most of the hotels and B&B's are clustered South of the Central city area.

Portadown is where we changed trains. It is a little station, and the surrounding commercial area appears somewhat rough.

The border crossing was a non-event. We did not even slow down. If I hadn't seen the automobile check point I wouldn't have even known we crossed the border.

The train was a bit crowded. We sat across from an old (72 years) woman who had worked as a secretary for the Marine commandant of the American forces that occupied Belfast. She even met Eisenhower.

Got into Dublin & walked to the B&B. Dublin is infinitely more crowded and livelier than Belfast was. Our B&B is in a lower-class area, a bit North of the downtown area. The room is small, and again has a double bed as well as a single, with a sink. There appears to be one toilet and a separate shower. It is definitely not fancy but appears clean.

It was a beautifully sunny day, and we headed down O'Connell street to the tourist info where we got maps & info on what to see. Walked South of the River Liffey, which is where much of what there is to appears to be concentrated. Had a lunch of beef stew with brown bread at a pub called Davy Byrnes on Duke street just south of Trinity College – great place.

Shopped and wandered around a lot. St. Stephens Green was alive with people laying on the grass and enjoying the fabulous weather. Walked back to our room & had a short rest before setting back out around 8:00 for dinner. This turned out to be a most unsatisfactory meal at a new restaurant. The food was marginal, overpriced and service was indifferent. Finished up the evening at the Grisham Hotel on O'Connell Street (a few blocks from our B&B) in the bar where we had a pint or two. This is a nice but expensive (£110 double) hotel.

### **Tuesday May 31, 1994**

Slept in a bit, had the usual breakfast. This place has attracted Irish travelers and us – guess it must scare most foreign tourists off. It is a bargain, but it looks a bit questionable and is North of the action. Oh well, we enjoy walking, which we did in abundance today.

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Started out at the Trinity College, where for £5.00 each we saw a 40-minute slide show (not real well done) and got to see the Book of Kell, a document written in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (crowded and not well displayed). The library (the Long Room) is filled with OLD books and was worth the price of admission by itself.

Walked over to the Guinness brewery & took the tour (£5.00) which was no A-B [Anheuser-Bush], but it was interesting.

Came back by St. Patrick's Cathedral, which cost £1.00 but is fascinating – quite old & filled with tombs & memorials. Did a quick tour of the National Museum, but only had 15 minutes. I could go back there.

Along the way we had lunch at Mother Red Caps

Had drinks at the Shelbourne Hotel, which is even more expensive (at £150 double). Makes our B&B almost free at £30 double.

Did a long walk back along the canal on the Eastern edge of the city & ended up back at the Gresham Hotel for drinks again.

We did better on dinner tonight: Chicken Kiev at a nice restaurant by Merrion Square.

It stays light so late here: it is hard to get really sleepy until 11:00 or later.

### Wednesday June 1, 1994

Got up, ate & took a cab down to the Hertz car rental place – a good decision as it would have been a long walk. Traffic was bad too, and it cost ~ £7.00.

I drove & didn't have much trouble with this left-side business, until I hit a rock or a pothole (I never did see what) and ruined the left-front tire. At least the spare was a real tire & not one of those temporary things.

Stopped for lunch along the way and visited an old rune from 1000 or so years ago. It was out in the middle of some farmers field. And who do we run into besides a couple from St. Louis! He was interesting, she was plain & the kids were obnoxious. Tom & Carol Grady, 3 Arundel, St. Louis. He was a Circuit Judge for the city of St. Louis).

The ruins were neat – remains of several old churches. We walked to the shop across the street to get the keys! Very quaint.

Decided to skip Gallway & headed for Doolin. Stopped off at the Burren display center & saw a video overview, picked up a map & headed for Doolin.

There was a good idea. I was not real happy in Dublin, and am happy to be in the country. Doolin is a small (small!) coastal town that is something special. Our B&B hostess is from Boston & is very friendly. The coast is breath-taking. We had a delightful & delicious dinner at Ilsa's Kitchen (also known as Ivy Cottage) before heading to the ferry dock to admire the ocean & take copious pictures. Ended the evening O'Conner's pub.

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### Thursday June 2, 1994

Slept late (due to breakfast not being served until 9:00). Felt real good.

Left about 10:00 & got the tire replaced – had to put a tube inside the new tire due to the ding in the rim. Cost - £34.00.

Drove towards Galway – took one of the “Green” roads (very old road – kind of like a farm road – gravel, very narrow) and got thoroughly lost.

Kept trying to find some of the ruins shown on the map, but couldn't. It was frustrating to know we were so close, but couldn't find them from the road – mainly because they seemed to be out somewhere in the middle of a farmers field. Had lunch at the Hyland Hotel in Ballyvaughan & ran into the wife and children of the St. Louis couple. Her husband is in Limerick looking up relatives. Her son is hyper-active & nearly drove me nuts. I had the BBQ ribs – a BIG mistake – salty, stringy and tasteless.

Drove back to Doolin on a road that had observable ruins, and managed to hit another rock. Only dented the rim this time – although the tire did go flat shortly after I pulled over to check it out. Very glad we had the other one fixed. Stopped back at the same gas station (different person, thank god) and got the rim straightened out for £1.00.

Met a couple checking into the B&B as we got back. Ran into them later at O'Conner's pub & invited them to share our table – talked all night & enjoyed the music immensely (had a primo table right next to where they were playing).

The music was much better than the Irish stew we had, which was made from lamb – neither of us much cared for the taste.

The couple were fun – He is English & she is from Dublin. They just got married last week & we talked about their wedding & a great many other things until midnight.

Cathy Kelly & Cliff Jones: 31 King Edward Road, Gillingham, Kent ME2 7RE

0634-579897, Married May 28, 1994.

### Friday June 3, 1994

One of things I am not very crazy about is the number of Americans over here. There were 3 staying at our B&B – it just makes this trip seem so common or something. On the other hand, this area is fascinating because of the diversity of people here. It amazes me how an area that is so small & rural can attract people from so many countries: Austria, Australia, US, England, Germany and much more.

Paid up (£52) and left – drove South towards Dingle. Drove through Lahinch and liked it very much – had a great golf course – would like to spend more time there. Stopped in Trallee & did the laundry (cost £6 for 2 loads). Called ahead to the Granville hotel to let them know we'd be a bit late only to find out that the husband had died & that we'd been booked at the Dun An Oir, which ended up being great – it has a fantastic view of the bay & golf too!

It feels like we are very much off-season (the dining room is closed & we couldn't get details on dinner until after 6) but the room has a toilet & shower and costs only £40 (double).



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The weather today has been winter-like – not just cold (11 – 14 degrees C), but intermittent rain squalls mixed with brief, brilliant sunshine. We sat in the bar and admired the view of the waves in the distant bay breaking on the shore, producing a hazy mist that blew inland over the fields.

The scenery was too much to resist – I left Kathleen in the bar & went across the road & across the field to bay we had been admiring. I climbed around the rocks & took some pictures before returning for dinner.

We decided to try the dining room, which had a set menu meal for £16, and it was delicious – smoked salmon, soup, salmon & desert. Had a nice bottle of the house red wine, a French Code de Rhone for £9.50

### **Saturday June 4, 1994**

After breakfast we set out by car and drove around the coast. The weather was sunshine interspaced with infrequent isolated rain squalls that quickly passed.

The coast here is ruggedly beautiful. The Blasket Islands stand majestically offshore, surrounded by ocean and framed by the waves breaking on the shoreline on which we drove.

Found, after much difficulty, the place where you can take the boat out to the islands. It is off of a narrow road, and the dock itself is reached by means of a steep, winding concrete wall built into the cliff. The boat was much smaller than we'd envisioned (a small outboard boat), and appeared to be full anyway, so we decided to skip the trip. Watched them motor out of the bay: the boat, and its occupants, were immediately dwarfed by the sea.

Found & went into the Blasket Island interpretive center. A great deal of information is available about a surprisingly small number of residents who in turn have produced an astonishing number of books about themselves & their way of life.

Found a beautiful isolated (from the wind) beach & lounged in the sun on the rocks like a couple of lizards. There were quite a few families playing in the sand and in the surf. I took a few pictures of waves breaking over the rocks, which was quite a spectacular sight.

Drove around quite a bit trying to find a beach that Kathleen remembered from her previous trips. We never did find it.

Had dinner at a pub in town (salmon again – very good). They were having music later, but we didn't feel like waiting & went back to the hotel. Much to our surprise, there were having live music in the bar.

We went for a bit of a walk first – followed a cow down the road and watched it touch noses with what surely must have been its calf who was in another field with a dozen or so calves.

Sat the golf course – it looks difficult by American standards.

Went back to the hotel bar & enjoyed some good Irish music. The crowd kept growing larger & louder and seemed mostly oblivious to the music. About 9:00 the traditional music ended, and a number of guitars appeared & what I would call folk music began.

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We began talking to the folks around us and found that we were in the midst of an Irish holiday bar party. Most of these people don't live here but come back frequently. It was quite a special evening (we stayed until 2:00 am!).

### **Sunday June 5, 1994**

Slept late and left around 10:00. Decided to look one last time for Kathleen's beach and found it! It was a rainy, windy, grey day, and the wind kicked up great breaking waves. It was a stunning sight which we left only reluctantly.

Spend nearly 12 hours taking the "scenic" route back towards Dublin – couldn't see much because of the rain. It was just a long drive.

Had dinner at Shelby's on Patrick Street near where we stayed in Dun Laoghaire. The food was as near to American bar food as we've found – I stuffed myself with potato skins and chicken wings (curried!).

### **Monday June 6, 1994**

Dropped the car off & boarded ship for the ride across the Irish sea. Was a grey and windy day – we spent the entire trip inside. There was a bit of motion to the ship, although the sea appeared quite calm.

Found some nice vases at the duty free for Kathleen's birthday (thank god – I was beginning to think I'd have no gift!).

The train ride to the Llan Dudno was pretty, but we had just missed the connection from Llan Dudno Junction up to Llan Didno. The station master told us he had just sent a couple up to the cab stand (it is a short ride) and ran out to ask them if they'd mind sharing the cab with us – not the last display of incredible friendliness that we would witness in Wales.

The tourist info office said they were prohibited from recommending a place to stay – we had to leaf through a notebook full of descriptions & pick one ourselves. It was a bit of a walk from the center of the city, but it was quite close to the train station, which wasn't.

Checked in & set off to see the great Orme Tramway – an incredible cable car ride to the top of one of the neighboring hills, the site of an old mine. The view was incredible, although it was windy & cold, and a storm front was moving in.

Had eaten lunch before the tram ride, so we wandered about the city. There is a beautiful pier built out into the water where we played a seemingly endless game of pinball (we kept winning).

Went back to change for dinner – we had gotten a couple of recommendations from tourist info (they were willing to do that!) but the first was closed & the second was full. Went to a bistro we had seen, and although they were full, they said a table would be free in about 15 minutes. So we went to a nearby hotel bar, had wine and gave Kathleen her birthday gifts, including the scarf & card I had brought for Mary.

Had a marvelous dinner & quite a chat with the chef, who brought out proofs of his recent pictures & his pocket camera used to take them. Had two bottles of wine & a great deal of fun.

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### Tuesday June 7, 1994

Tot the day off to a bad start – mis-read the schedule for the train we wanted, due to confusion over the Llan Dudno – Llan Dudno Junction business. As it turned out, we got to the station just in time to watch the train we needed to catch leave. Catching the PM train would have meant killing 3+ hours in Llan Dudno Junction, so we decided to skip it and head to Salisbury.

As it turned out, this was a long trip even by the more direct route, so it was 5:30 by the time we finally got there (a train ahead of us had broken down & we were delayed).

Our B&B was quite a hike away. We later found several quite close to the train station for nearly the same price. Apparently, there is quite a recession in the travel business here.

Had dinner, saw the St. Mary's Salisbury Cathedral, had a few beers & went to bed.

Saw a swan & two babies on the Avon river – quite beautiful & peaceful – took several pictures. Hope they turn out.

### Wednesday June 8, 1994

Stored our bags at the train station & took a bus tour of Stonehenge (£10.50 each). Had lunch & caught the 1:30 train for London.

[Apparently, I did not record anything about our time in London]