

as many as we could. Some went even tho' it meant eating a second dinner. If only we had know ahead. It was mad confusion and a real shame. What an unusual experience it would have been to visit in these German homes.

In every camp there was some type of entertainment furnished by local talent. Will always remember that great day when the local Policeman's Band arrived. It was loud and enthusiastic music and had all of us stamping our feet in the camp center. Lots of brass and drums. Beautiful uniforms. Well, our Caravanner Darral Jenson could hardly contain himself and soon brought out his Tuba (which he must have carried on our entire trip) and joined the group with great gusto. The program ended with Darral and the Band Leader exchanging hats: Darral getting the blue cap with red stripes and lots of braid.....the leader getting a Blue Beret. I thought it was GREAT! Bob Smith did not! Afterall, only Bob was to give out Blue Berets.

By now, Fall was definitely showing up. We moved on to Hamburg where we spent three days. Sept 15 to 18. On our entire trip there were only fourteen scheduled mail pickup points. The excitement always built up as everyone was always anxious to hear from home. Hamburg was our next to last such point. A quiet settled over camp as we all settled down to read to see how things were going back home. Family news was so important. We had all pretty much given up on world news. There were very few TV sets and they were worthless in Europe. All radio was in other than English. Now and then we could catch an English broadcast but it then always seemed to be a sport event or a Church Sermon, and neither were of any interest to us.

From Hamburg we moved to Groningen, Holland for three days, then on to Amsterdam for four days. On Sept 25 we moved over to The Hague for three days. On this last day in The Hague, Joe & Agnes McCorry flew in from the Airstream home office in California. It was Sunday, with very heavy auto traffic. And, the last organized tour of Caravan 80. There were three completely filled busses, one guide was missing, and they put Ruth in charge of the whole deal. All staff, including the Maitlands, stayed in camp to be ready for the coming of the "Top Brass", the McCorry's. Even I could not help Ruth as I was needed to make the run to the Airport to pick up the McCorry's. Of course John drove, but I was needed to retrieve the Airstream Signs while he double parked. And, to duck into the airport to find our visitors. etc. The traffic was beyond belief.....a mad house! John would try to stop, with everyone tooting at him, and I would try dodging the traffic to snatch up our signs. Almost run over a dozen times. It was something.

Do want to report on this last Bus tour of the Caravan. Remember that Ruth was in full charge of the busses, as the Staff was in the process of closing down paper work, and I was helping John in picking up the "Brass" at the airport, and retrieving our Airstream signs. As reported elsewhere, over the months Ruth had been cataloguing everyone to help remember their names. "Yellow Teeth", - "Laughing Boy", - "Texas", - etc. Then there was "the Witch"! Do what you liked, but on EVERY tour....there sat "the Witch" in the choice front seat of the bus. Month after month, there she sat! But on this very last tour, way in the back of one of the Busses, there sat the Witch! Certainly made Ruth's day.

On September 28 we arrived in Antwerp ready to deliver our rigs on the docks we had first seen back on April 7th. Again we were faced with the problem of making delivery to the ship with empty propane tanks. One of the "engineers" in our group had decided that we should make up pipe torches and burn off the remaining supply. No more of this dumping propane as we had done back in York, Pa.

The problem was that only a dozen of these torches were made up, and it took a long, long time to burn off the two or three gallons still in each tank. Long lines formed waiting a turn at the torch. Lots of standing around. We then learned that you could fire up the torch and rest it through the wire mesh of a fence that lined our camp, and return to your trailer. As it burned out the next person would get the torch. It was a dark, moonless night with coastal fog and these torches looked like flame throwers. Took all night to finish the job. And a night to long remember.

So, our rigs where driven onto the docks the next morning. We were all to meet in London in nine days, spend one night there, fly home to Elizabeth, NJ, and our rigs would be there waiting for us. And, our big final farewell banquet would be that night in London, as there would be no further reason for gatherings or meetings. Almost all had "booked" nine day tours out of Antwerp to use up the time the rigs were on the high seas and our Banquet in London.

From the many choices offered us, Ruth & I, with two other couples, chose a trip down to Majorca, the great Holiday Island belonging to Spain. It was GREAT! I rented a car so we had "wheels". It was a day to long remember when we took the Nimmers and drove to one of the far beaches. Stopped at a little grocery store and bought wine, cheese, french bread, - - made up big sandwiches for lunch. Another

good visit was to a leather factory. The area is famous for their fine leather work. They measured Ruth, and promised to have a full length red coat made to order within four days. The rest of our stay was spent exploring the Island and we returned to the leather factory before leaving for London. Now, twenty two years later, she still has the coat, altho' must admit it has lost some of it's luster. Well, so have I.

Our plane, Majorca to London, was late. We sweat it out, and rushed to the banquet hall, tongues hanging out and breathless, the minute we reached London. There sat all 300 of our group, ready to start the feast. I was then told that I was to make the presentation speach, and give the farewell present to John & Elsa Maitland. As I scrambled for paper to make notes, and to sort out what to say, I lost interest in the very fancy Prime Roast Beef Dinner set before me.

Let me back up to report a thing or two. Our trailer was a 1969 - 25' Tradewind Airstream. The '69 was the first of the completely new design model. The windows were frameless hard glass type. As we drove onto the Antwerp Dock, anxious to get the rig safely aboard ship for the trip home, the glass in one window gave-out.....flew into a million tiny pieces. Not hit by anything, just exploded. A real worry as could not go aboard open to sea air, dishonest dock hands, etc. But, when the Service truck arrived, Bob jumped out and quickly covered the opening with heavy plastic sheeting and miles of silver tape. And we drove all the way home before being able to get the needed replacement window.

And, when we first arrived at the very nice hotel in Majorca, it was 5:00PM and we were tired from a long and delayed flight. Called Room Service and asked for ice & Soda Water. "Si Senior". Waited 30 minutes, called again. In broken English "no ice on Saturday". Hung up and then asked Ruth what day it was. Wednesday! What-the-Hell! Gave up.

The elevators had a sign - "Capacity 6 persons" in Spanish. At ground floor buttons the sign had been crossed out and the 6 changed to 4. A day or two after getting there, Ruth, Lou, and another couple got in, but the man was VERY LARGE, in fact HUGE. The elevator would not move. He stepped off, and the elevator took off. Perhaps a day or two later the sign would be again changed from 4 to 3 persons.

The car I rented was a SEAT 1500. Could hardly steer the thing - like the front tires were flat. Could not open the trunk the entire first day. On the second day it would not shift into low or 2nd gear. Finally pulled up clutch pedal by hand, and it worked

One or two other things about Europe: the cutting and hauling of grass was seen everywhere. Not a blade of grass went to waste. In the fields and along side the roads, the grass was cut and carried on men's backs, on women's backs, by children, on donkeys, on simple man drawn carts, on horse drawn carts, etc. Men, women, and children.....everyone worked. In larger fields where hay was cut by machine, it was stacked in a wide variety of shapes, bales, stacks, rolls, heaps, bundles,..... with each method the custom of that area.

The other thing: how could they make hamburgers taste so terrible.

Sunday, October 10, we were transferred from the London Hotel to the Airport for the flight to New York City. The entire caravan flew in the one plane, and were then transferred to our Hotel. Here we learned that the Dock Strike had occurred while our ship at sea, and it was re-routed to Nova Scotia. So, we would not be going to Elizabeth, N.J. The Staff then chartered a plane to transfer us to Nova Scotia, but two round trips would be needed to take us all. Straws were drawn to establish if you would be on the first or second flight.

Ruth & I were on the first flight. Bags in the hall at 2:30 AM (that's night), board the busses at 3:00AM, checked in at Airport at 3:30AM, and arrived at Halifax at 6:15AM. Were lined up and issued forms covering car & trailer license, etc. Who remembers all this, so used our Airstream 17330 as our trailer license number. Told to guard forms and carry to dock. Dock fenced and a guard at gate. Told to wait outside until you see the car & trailer, then go, hook-up, and wait until released by Custom Official. But, not to enter yard until car & trailer in sight. As hour after hour passed, one after another Caravanner "slipped" thru the gate. At 5:00PM (remember we had started in NYC Hotel at 2:00AM, we had been pacing about at the Halifax Docks since 6:15 that morning) we had our vehicle & trailer hooked up & ready for clearance by Customs. Was OK'd, so drove happily to exit gate. NO! Need a yellow tag to get out. Another Department! Ruth rushed one way and I the other. Arrived back & each one had the needed yellow tag, made out in Quad. Hid one set, gave the other to Gate-man, and drove out to freedom. Don't know what hidden set will do to their bookkeeping system. Perhaps still looking for it!

Our final victory over Officialdom was our entry into the United States at Detroit. We have learned to only answer questions.....don't volunteer any information. We had carefully prepared a long list of our purchases during the seven months in Europe.....had the back of truck full. And the list on the front seat ready. The Official asked... "how long have you been in Canada?" ...Two days, we replied. "What did you buy?"One bottle of Canadian Club Liquor, that's all. "Lets see it!" We got out and opened the trailer and both went in where he inspected the Canadian size bottle, partly used. That's an illegal size bottle, he claimed. As there was less than the legal amount of liquor, I asked humbly if we could pour it into a Kerr Mason jar, or something, to save the booze, and he could have the bottle. He said he would let it go this time, and we drove off, with no mention of the long list of things to declare.

Mostly, the drive home from Halifax was uneventful. As well into october the Fall colors were in full display. Across Canada and down into Detroit was nothing but color. We did hit one storm on the Continental Divide which sure slowed us down. The trailer did slide about on the ice. After seeing two 18 wheelers turned over in the ditch, we "holed up" in a Service Station yard for the night. Only drove 195 miles that day. The other seven days we averaged over 500 miles a day. We were anxious to get home!

In driving East in early March, we drove 3,332 miles. Returning home from Nova Scotia in late October, we drove 3,883 miles. Our total out of pocket expenses, EVERYTHING, was only \$10,745.00. This covered freight charges to ship the rig both ways, our air fare both ways, every Hotel stop, every restaurant meal, trailer parking, every guided tour,.....EVERYTHING, for the seven month trip. We charged nothing....we wrote no checks.

And it was truly the trip of a lifetime. We saw every tourist attraction, yet were exposed to the everyday life of the Natives. We lived & shopped with them, we cooked & ate their simple foods. We were invited into their homes, and we saw them at work. We are thankful to Airstream for making such a trip possible.