

JULY 27, 2009 F.A.H.P. NEWS

A Fall Night in Scotland: As a travel agent many years ago, I made four trips to the British Isles between 1951 and 1962. Each time I was planning for or conducting a large group from America on tours of Western Europe. In 1960, I had an interesting night and early morning in Scotland, although it was not planned quite the way it turned out.

I had reservations to fly trans-Atlantic from Idlewild Airport (JFK) to Prestwick, Scotland, a major airport in the days before jet travel. My flight was on Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), one of the top trans-Atlantic carriers in those days. Eastbound flights usually stopped at Prestwick (also the airport for Glasgow) to re-fuel before going on to Copenhagen, Oslo, or Stockholm, their final destinations. The flight was to leave New York in late afternoon and arrive at Prestwick in mid-morning the next day, taking considerably longer than the jets of today. Rental cars were not easily available, and those performing such services were in the cities, not at airports. I had arranged to rent a small car and have it delivered from Glasgow to Prestwick for my arrival.

I arrived at Idlewild on time, only to find the SAS flight was delayed, and the airline put us up at a hotel near the airport, from which we did not take off until late morning, about 18 hours late. I told them of my rental car, and they said they would wire ahead and cancel it. We landed at Prestwick about 3:30 A.M. local time. Inside the terminal, I heard my name being paged, and who was paging but the agent from the car rental company, saying he had my car waiting? The poor fellow had not gotten the word, and had waited over 18 hours for my arrival. I didn't want the car at 4 A.M., and didn't know where to go with it at that hour, but I didn't have the heart to tell him I wouldn't take it, so take it I did, and started out in the dark over unfamiliar Scottish roads, hopefully heading in the direction of Glasgow. I remember going through an underpass and hearing a "swish" overhead in the darkness, which was a local steam passenger train- NICE, I thought, as steam was gone from the railroads in the U.S.

As dawn broke, I crossed the River Clyde on the west side of Glasgow and soon saw multitudes of ship workers with their lunch pails walking along the road to work. Most worked at the John Brown Shipyard at Clydebank, where the first two "Queens" had been built for the Cunard Line. After 6 A.M. on a damp early October morning I was traveling north along the shore of Loch Lomond, and observed several new British trucks (lories) with two front axles. They must have had power steering, but I never quite understood how this worked on a curve without excessive tire wear. I stopped for a good English breakfast at a small inn along the Lake.

Having placed my order and while awaiting my cooked breakfast, the kitchen at the inn caught fire and all of us were evacuated. From that time on, the day got better, however. I saw Lake Katrine (scene of Sir Walter Scott's "The Lady of the Lake"), and went up the steep incline to Stirling Castle, high above the city of the same name, the scene of fierce battles where the Scots repelled the English. By late afternoon, I was in Edinburgh, and finally had a good meal, although it was not breakfast. A day or two later, I must have driven to Glasgow and turned the car in before going to the railway station to take a steam train to London.

A lot happened last week and the activity will continue. At our work sessions, Jim Personti repaired Norman Schaut's superheater, Jerry Lucas, Steve Bryce and others got the rear apart on the Model EX so we can insert the proper adjusting shims (the heavy shims in there did not have an open side), and Lou Mandich and I got the clutch unstuck on the '37 Packard. Jeff Pollock, Steve Bryce and others threaded the new cast iron bases and vertical stanchions, and when these are painted, we will have eight additional posts for supporting the protective ropes in the museum. The new heavy-duty railroad car is essentially finished and ready to be put on the train. Last Tuesday night, four Stanleys (the CX, the 76, the 78, and the 735) plus the '32 Packard made the run to Woodside Farm for ice cream. On Saturday, the Models 87, 725, and 735, plus the '32 Packard, made the 70-mile round-trip to the Strasburg Railroad where a grand time was had by all. In addition to our cars at least 25 other pre-war cars were in attendance, the Strasburg people rolled out the red carpet for us, and the weather cooperated to make it a nearly perfect day. Highlights were parking in the picnic grove where a steam train stops every 20 minutes, chasing the train on a parallel private dirt road, and visiting the Pennsylvania R.R. Museum across the road.

On Sunday, July 26, Anne Cleary and Bill Schwoebel ran a railroad training class for would-be volunteers on the Auburn Valley. About eight or ten took part in this operation, and we are pleased to have some interest among new people to us.

Tomorrow, July 28, a filming and interviewing crew from *Tracks Ahead* will be at Auburn Heights to do an in-depth story and photo shoot including the railroad, the popcorn machine, and our steam cars, and several FAHP volunteers are to be interviewed. We will run one steam train and two Stanley cars including the Mountain Wagon, as well as the steam popper. Several have been invited to come in the afternoon to simulate a "good crowd" such as on our "Steamin' Sundays".

Richard Bernard, chairperson for the August 2 "Steamin' Sunday", still has a few slots to be filled for next Sunday's public event. He needs an engineer and a conductor for the trains, and additional volunteers for the parking lot. If you can help and have not yet signed up, please get in touch with Richard a.s.a.p.

We are working out arrangements with Mr. and Mrs. Irene duPont for an evening run to their beautiful home *Granogue* in early August. A tentative date is Thursday, August 6. More on this will be forthcoming, either in next week's "News" or in a special memo.

Tom