

From Whitbread to the weinstube: The European pubs

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

Do you want to see Europe through its tourist sites or through its people?
If you like tourist sites, take a three-hour bus tour of London.
If you prefer people, go to a pub. Pubs are where the people are.
It may not be a pub, it may be a weinstube or a beerhall or a cafe, but it will be an eating-and-drinking place where ordinary people go in the ordinary course of their lives.

In London it was a pub near Victoria station where we crowded into a corner to eat flaky meat pie and drink warm English stout on a September afternoon. We had planned to take the bus tour — everyone does.

The pub had English businessmen crowded into each corner — men who came from the office for a quick lunch of shepherd's pie, meat pie, meat balls or sausages with side servings of good old British tomato sauce.

The tables in a British pub are tiny, but an unbelievable number of people crowd around them. There was a conservative-looking businessman sitting at the corner table when we asked if we could join him.

"The secretaries and the young kids who don't drink beer go to other places," he said. "The businessmen and the working people like to come to a pub for lunch, because the service is fast, you can talk if you want to or not, you can have a pint and move on."

When he moved on, five British railway officials moved in, all of them wearing dark suits, white shirts and ties, all of them eager to involve us in their conversation.

They had come for a fast lunch, but they stayed for two hours while we swapped stories about North American and English peoples and places. We wrote down the names of their relatives in our home state, and they gave me names in Stratford-on-Avon and Paris.

"Be sure to look them up," they said, and we did.

It may be that you really don't have time to spend an afternoon in a pub, but you must eat and sleep something, so choose your eating and sleeping places well.

The British government puts out a small booklet about the Historic Inns of

Britain. These are often the kinds of warm, friendly places where Englishmen gather for the evening.

A typical example is the Booth Hall Hotel in Hereford. The Booth Hall Hotel is a tiny historic inn preserved in the heart of the town.

The rooms are simple and clean, with double or twin beds and a bathroom down the hall, but in the corner near the courtyard is a tiny bar.

The people we met there were a motley crew of friendly — if slightly inebriated — Englishmen, a couple of Welshmen and an Irishman who was ready to fight the Irish revolution on the spot.

The English pubs are supposed to close at 11 p.m., so we were surprised that the dozen people around the bar were still buying us drinks at 2 in the morning, in spite of the friendly admonitions of a grey-haired woman behind the bar who owned the pub and had a 6 a.m. date with a new chef.

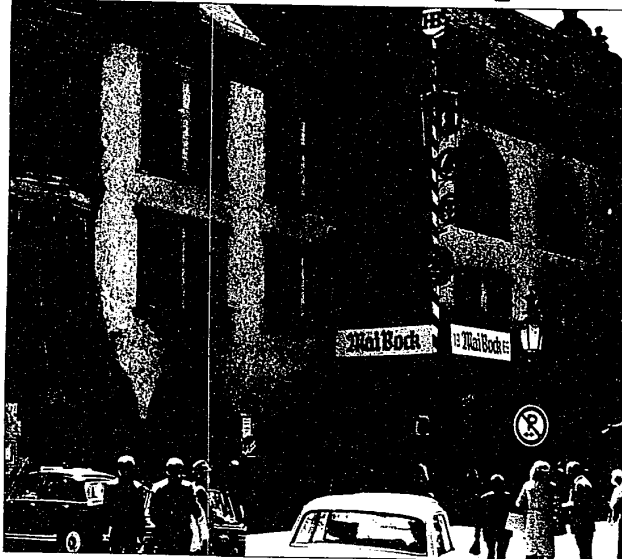
"Why don't they close the pub if that's the law?" we asked.

"Ah, but you're guests here in this here hotel, mate, and the bar has to stay open for guests as long as they want to drink. This is your home tonight."

"Nobody can kick you out of your home, can they? We're not supposed to be here, of course, but if the police come in, just tell them we're all your guests, alright? Have another drink."

The language in Hereford is not a problem, even with a few Welsh and Irish words thrown in, but it could be a problem on the continent, as it was the night we found the weinstube in Mittenwald.

MITTENWALD IS a picturesque postcard town high in the German Alps near the Austrian border. We had chosen to stay that night in a land house, a private home that rents rooms. We had walked into town for dinner.



Or the inquisitive tourist, while visiting the Continent, might seek refuge and camaraderie in Munich's Hofbrauhaus, one of the world's largest taverns. It can accommodate 7,000 customers at one time. "Ein bier, bitte."

When we walked into the weinstube, we walked from one end to the other, looking for an empty table. It is a typically North American approach to a public place. We were about to leave when a voice from the side of the room shouted, "Setzen Sie Hier." You don't need to speak German to understand that.

Adi was a tall, smiling rogue with a shock of dark hair, a turtle neck sweater and two missing front teeth. His face was as red as the wine that sat on the table in front of him.

As he waved us to the booth, he introduced us to another man and two women, all of whom smiled at us in welcome. They spoke no English and we spoke a little German, but it was a night that stands out above all the tourist sites we saw in Germany.

As the small compa band played, we hooked arms and swayed back and forth in the German fashion. They sang the words and we hummed the music.

We talked with our hands and our feet, and when the conversation lagged, we drank toasts to one another in good German beer and wine. Adi yodelled, and we could hear him singing the words "America" and "Detroit," so we knew that he sang about us.

We exchanged addresses, as tourists always do, and when we got home we sent postcards to all our new buddies in

London and Hereford and Mittenwald. Do we regret that we did not take the bus tour of London, stay in the fanciest hotel in Hereford, or choose the recommended tourist attraction in Mittenwald?

The answer is in our scrap book: a well-thumbed postcard from Adi which came in the mail a long time after our return. "Many greetings from us all. We have been together," he wrote, in the "wine room again, and we think of you."

We have much snow and sun. Ad."

It's nice to see Europe through its tourist sites and its people, but if you don't have time for both, you'll meet a little bit of Germany in a weinstube, or a little bit of England in a pub.



The Old Thatch Tavern in Stratford-on-Avon, England, is one of the places American tourists might visit if they decide to forego the standard bus tour and set out to meet the natives. "A pint o' biter, mate."

TRAVEL LOG of Iris Jones



The 'park barrel bill' and Alaska's future

We've heard a lot about the Alaskan wilderness this year, but little about a bill that will change the national viewpoint on camping and wilderness travel for 50 years to come.

During the final weeks of the 95th Congress last fall, the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 was passed without any boggles blowing. It authorized \$1.2 billion for 100 new park and preservation areas in 44 states.

It began to be called the "park barrel bill" because there was something in it for everybody, in the spirit of the pork barrel bills of the past.

It is fascinating to see how politics achieved what conservationists could not achieve alone. Representative Phillip Burton, D-Calif., was interested in adding extensive tracts of land to Sequoia National Park, but he didn't know how he could do it. . . . Somewhere along the way he decided to attach it to another bill that was popular in the House. Nobody objected, so he decided to go whole hog and ask for the moon. He probably didn't expect to get it.

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This is where the pork barrel principle comes in. Nobody is really against national parks or a clean environment unless it threatens something dear to them, so Burton made sure that every possible state was represented.

There were so many states covered that Republican Senator Robert Dole of Kansas brought the house down with his jokes during the debate. "Is there any state other than Kansas that didn't end up with a park?" he asked.

"Did we leave you out, Bob?" asked Sen. James B. Abourezk, D-S.D., chairman of the Energy Subcommittee on Parks.

"I have two more years in my term," Dole said.

The bill, which insiders call the omnibus bill, won lots of political battles for nature lovers.

It added to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and stopped construction on the controversial Tocks Island Dam. Urban parks got a fistful of money. And the wilderness areas of the national park system nearly tripled.

ADD ALL this to 11 new parks, seashores, historic sites and recreation areas, then add five national trails and eight new portions of wild and scenic rivers, and you begin to see what the park lovers are crowing about.

As if that wasn't enough, President Carter used other purely political means to put icing on the cake. He pulled out a 1906 law that authorized a president to proclaim land for public monuments and promptly claimed 50 million acres of Alaskan wilderness as a national monument.

If you are a camper, hiker, canoeer or just a nature lover, you'll get lots of mileage out of this bill. And if you like to see how politics can get the job done without much fanfare, you will find the politics of it just as interesting.

One of the primary places that various government departments are looking at for possible park sites is the shoreline of the Great Lakes.

From The Mailbag

THE CHICAGO FOUR Downtown Holiday Inn hotels are taking care to cater to the summer traveler. Personnel at each of the Chicago Four hotels are prepared to aid guests with brochures, maps and information about where to go and what to do each day. The hotels can arrange a Gray Lines Tour of the city, and there are ample buses and taxis available. A Holiday Inn courtesy bus will transport hotel guests throughout the Loop. The Fantasy Weekend package is available to families for \$79.95 for the first night and includes several amenities. The second night costs an additional \$20. Subsequent nights are available at reduced rates according to the hotel policy and booking schedule. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance — subject to package availability, and credit must be established at check-in. For further information and reservations, the number in Chicago is 312-440-4100.

MORE THAN 1.3 million visitors are expected this year at Sea World of Ohio. The 75-acre marine life park opened its 10th anniversary season Saturday. The season runs daily through September 9. Facilities are open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Sea World is on Route 43 in Aurora, Ohio, 20 miles southeast of Cleveland, near Ohio Turnpike Exit 13.

THE MIAMI BEACH Architectural District in Miami Beach is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. More than 800 architecturally significant buildings have been identified in the district, most of which were built from 1920-1945, when Miami Beach was undergoing rapid development. The National Register of Historic Places presently includes over 19,000 buildings, sites, districts, structures or objects that are considered worthy of preservation. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (phone: 202-343-5726) has more information.



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