

I find a note I made upon
arriving at Shannon Airport
that our flying time was of
5 hours 5 minutes duration

Thursday, July 11, 1985

Driving to Donegal

Last night's flight did not lift off until 8:15^{PM} Chicago time (9:15^{PM} EST) with some 300 of us. Pat & I had seats in Row 7 near front; I, next to window. I slept some after eating the chicken dinner. Pat watched the movie The Mean Season; at 1AM CST, I note it is dawn outside. At 1:34 AM CST by my wristwatch, we touch ground at Shannon International Airport, so I change my watch to Ireland time. It is 7:34 AM, Thurs. July 11th.

First, we change our money. I get \$547 for my £600 of American Travelers Checks. Then, after phoning Paid's office in Dublin we pick up our rental car, a nice red Ford Orion and proceed to leave Limerick in the rain for breakfast at Evanis, Co. Clare, stopping at the Joyce family pub.

For lunch we stopped in Galway at a family pub, Monroe's run by a Joyce family. I enjoyed my first Smithwick beer on tap. Drove on in the rain national route N1 to Charlestown; stopped, walked briefly in the

drizzle to wake ourselves up, had a snack at a restaurant — and move on. I'm glad Pat is driving as my reflexes & reactions would be way too slow after loss of sleep & the last irregular & unexpected turn of our trip. But Pat does remarkably well and soon we are in Sligo — Yeats' town; we park, walk in rain to a pharmacy, where a nice woman recommends an art exhibit in the old building where the annual Yeats' summer institutes are meeting. A brief look! Then we leave town for Donegal town and Pat is willing to pass through and "make for" Ballybofey where we arrive at 7 PM, check in and have good poached salmon dinners.

Outside our window, Pat calls my attention to a small white building with a sign — MC MENAMIN SHOE REPAIR. It is the shop of a Willie McMenamin. We retire about 9 PM. — and understandably — both of us sleep well. (Hugh Breslin had called in to see us before we ate dinner.)

Our First Donegal Day

July 12th, 1985, Friday

The Orangemen are celebrating! Hugh had wisely decided we should concentrate on Donegal today, since the holiday climate in Tyrone might be less hospitable. It rained most of our time out — but we had a great time, no less. After our good breakfast Hugh & 10-year old son Aiden took us in their car so Pat was relieved of driving. Before this (we left at 11AM) Pat & I had taken a brief ride out of Ballybofey to Navanry — admiring St. Joseph's Church, rectory and cemetery there.

We arrived in Donegal town about noon, hurrying thru the rain to Magee's department store where after buying me a cap at 2.50£ and raincoat for 4.50£, we had a free lunch upstairs ("farmer's broth" from biscuits & tea) and watched a 50 year old man weave a piece of Donegal wool fabric on

his home-made boom, having the
easy opportunity to visit with him.
Next, we drove to Ardara, not stopping
to get out, (this is Hugh's ancestral
town) and then on to Glenties where
we found that Hugh's left rear tire was
flat as we parked. After a quick change
we walked through the main section
of town and I learned by asking a
woman walking by us that I need
not look further for Sean Ban MacMenamin
& the McDevitt Institute (from which he
corresponded in 1948) that he was dead
and the institution too, I guess. It was
now occupied by a hotel she said.

About 2 PM. we visit a small local
pub; Pat has bought young Aidan a
couple of model cars. Hugh - a Pioneer
and a loyal one - does not partake of
alcoholic drinks - but had a coke - and
is never wanting for good conversation.
Finally, we head back to Ballybofey
but by a more northern route than the
one leaving it, passing thro' Finnstown
the native place of Sean Ban Mac M., as well

as, Father McClinchey, the old priest
Mary & I visited at Aghyaran back
in 1965 - who had just had one eye
removed & who told us the
anecdote about the baptism of
Dr. Michael McManus of Letterkenny.

Height his son dropped us off at
Jackson's Hotel about 4 PM... I napped
till 5:30 PM, wrote some & noted the
sunshine, walked out & visited Willie
McM. - the shoe repair man whose shop &
sign we see from our room window. After,
I enjoyed a $\frac{1}{2}$ pint (glass) of Smithwick
in the lounge at 6:30 PM... and was
writing back in our room when Pat returned.
Whereupon, we took ourselves down to
the lounge pub and had a drink while
awaiting our call to the dinnerroom.

For dinner I had tasty codfish &
Pat had beef. Our appetizer was a lovely
plate of small mussels - beautiful to behold
as well as swallow. (Pat ordered a second
plate of them.) - Strawberries & whip cream
for dessert - real whip cream! Back in our
room at 10 PM admiring the sunset. It's
getting dark now at 10:50 PM. !!

The Full Circle Day

July 13, 1965 - Saturday

The above is what Pat called to-day when we came back to Room 52 in Jackson's Hotel in Ballybofey. He wavered to see sunshine and fluffy cumulus clouds that promised great shadow patterns on the Donegal & Tyrone landscapes we were soon to see.... After finishing breakfast late we left at 10:30 AM. for Castlefin where Hugh & Aidan met us to escort us across the border into Northern Ireland and Tyrone. Because of anticipated trouble the usual Lifford route was blocked. (We were able to return that way, however, upon leaving Breslin's home at 11 PM tonight.)