

# the HERALD

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## Travelling in Britain a Weenie experience

If you want to remind yourself of what a weenie you're truly capable of being, there's nothing quite like renting a car and driving the length and breadth of Britain.

Trust me, I'm an expert. I did it last week.

As you'll have gathered, I've just returned from a trip abroad. It's too bad you couldn't drop over some evening and I could spend a few hours telling you all about it.

I could describe the marvellous week the three of us - the Love of My Life and I and our Great and Good Friend - spent in London.

We went to the British Museum, the Wellington pub, the National Gallery, the Wellington pub, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Wellington pub, nine plays and the Wellington pub.

I could show you some photographs. There's a nice photo of the Love of My Life at Tintern Abbey and a splendid shot of my jaw striking the reception desk at a hotel in Monmouth upon discovering that the laundry service had just cost me 17 pounds.

But for the moment, let's just stick with the driving tour.

If you've ever done this sort of thing, you'll know there are two questions you must ask yourself when you decide to rent a car in London.

You ask: how on earth do I get OUT of London, considering that this is a city of four trillion cars all driving at break-neck speed on the wrong side of the road? And you ask: why don't I abandon the whole idea and just stay in the Wellington pub.

I toyed briefly with the notion of renting a car from a nice establishment in central London whose brochures promised they'd provide a navigator to guide you out of the city.

This was a comforting thought - except the plan had one fatal flaw. There was no mention of a navigator who'd get you back INTO London.

I suddenly had a vision of a car rental business with a fleet of 1,000 automobiles, 995 of which are being driven by North Americans who have been lost out near Shepherd's Bush since 1977.

I'd driven in England once before, years earlier, and so I bravely told myself that I'd regain the knack in no time.

And indeed, it turned out to be

Weir's  
World

by  
Ian Weir  
Thomson News  
Service



just like learning to ride a bicycle. Off a cliff.

The first thing you recall is that all the instruments in a British car are on the wrong side. Every time you shift into first you're in reverse and the windshield wipers come on when you signal a turn.

You rediscover that everyone drives 140 k.p.h. on the main motorways. They slow down to 120 on the side roads - mainly because these are just wide enough for two sheep to walk abreast, providing they're anorexic.

Best of all, you rediscover the roundabouts.

Roundabouts would have been invented by Dante, if he'd gotten round to describing the Tenth Circle of the Inferno. They're marvellous devices at which cars arrive from four or five different directions, whiz round and zoom off in four or five new ones.

I was a bit panicked by the roundabouts until I remembered that they must simply be treated as a religious experience. Just signal your intention, aim the car and trust in Providence.

Off you go - knuckles white, windshield wipers flapping madly, trying to remember the words to the Twenty-Third Psalm.

Still, I have some marvellous memories of the drive through Wales and Scotland.

There was the look on the face of the cyclist whom I actually managed to miss coming round a blind corner near Chepstow. There was the stirring howl from the oncoming driver in Ayreshire who had just discovered that one of us seemed to be on the wrong side of the road.

Quite splendid. And you remember what stoic Britons have always done in such situations.

Just close your eyes and think of the Wellington pub.

## NEWS ITEM: SCIENTISTS WARN EARTH IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ASTEROID SHOOTING GALLERY



## People's Forum

### Not forgotten

Dear Editor:

In response to the letter of Wed., July 10, 1991, "How Soon We Forget The Forgotten Few", I would like Shell Lawr and all Legion members to know how sorry I am for not inviting the Color Party to come on stage.

The Legion men and women have always been ready to help us on Canada Day and we are

very grateful to you. "You should never be forgotten."

This was an oversight on my part and it is my deepest wish you never be forgotten again. Thank you for reminding us all.

Angie Fowler,  
Chairman Canada Day 1991.

### Pioneer praise

Dear Editor:

Last month the Annual Pioneer

Days took place in Downtown Georgetown. From the comments we have received, we know that this was a most successful event and a good time was had by all.

We take this opportunity to express a sincere thank you to the many volunteers who participated in this event and to the public at large for supporting us.

B.I.A. Board of Management  
and the Pioneer Days Committee

## One voice in Quebec speaks out

It's perhaps not so surprising, but there is a certain irony in the fact that the only French-speaking voice one hears against Quebec's controversial language laws is that of Lucien Bouchard.

He's the arch-nationalist, the man who left the Mulroney cabinet over the Meech affair and now heads the Bloc Quebecois. The Bloc's sole platform is the independence of Quebec.

But, as suggested, it's not so surprising that Mr. Bouchard, a former environment minister, should be the one to criticize the language laws. Only an individual whose separatist credentials are beyond question can afford the luxury of doing something like this.

Most other Quebec politicians, regardless of party affiliation, are too concerned about their nationalist reputations to risk criticizing the laws that prohibit English on outdoor signs. Mr. Bouchard's reputation would not be at risk even if he suggested the Queen for lieutenant-governor of Quebec.

That's why he didn't seem the least bit uncomfortable or hesitant when he said he's not happy with Bill 178, the sign law. "I am not big on preventing English from being used," he said a few weeks ago.

### MAKESSENSE

Mr. Bouchard, who realizes the importance of maintaining a strong anglophone community in an independent Quebec, no doubt had some political motivation for saying what he did. Nonetheless, he also makes a great deal of sense.

Ottawa  
Bureau

by  
Stewart  
MacLeod

Thomson News  
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Since he made the comment, we've had that provincial government report from Claude Ryan, the minister responsible for language laws, which reveals that French is doing just fine, thank you.

All this talk we hear about French being in danger of extinction in Quebec would seem to be just that - talk. The fact is, the language is prospering.

What the Ryan report tells us, among many other things, is that the percentage of Quebecers who claim French as their mother tongue actually rose between 1971 and 1986 - to 82.9 per cent from 80. Another set of statistics shows that between 1951 and 1986, Quebec's English-speaking population declined to 10.3 per cent from 13.8.

Still another chart informs us that back in 1969, the percentage of managers in Quebec who claimed French as their mother tongue was 34.6. By 1989, this percentage had climbed to 58.

In 1961, 47 per cent of Quebecers worked for enterprises controlled by fran-

cophones. By 1987, this percentage had risen to 60.

### ANGLOS DOWN

We also learned that, in 1971, only 36.7 per cent of anglophones were bilingual. Fifteen years later, this had climbed to 53.7 per cent.

The report also indicates, with crystal clarity, the impact of restrictions on anglophones who qualify for English-language education. In 1976, there were from 236,000 people attending anglophone schools, compared with about 100,000 now.

The laws requiring the children of immigrants to be educated in French have also had the desired effect. The percentage of allophones - those of neither French nor English extraction - who spoke French in 1971 was 33.1. Now, it is 47.4 per cent.

In the last 20 years, the number of English-language radio stations in Quebec has declined to 11 from 15. In the same period, French-language stations rose to 118 from 55.

All in all, French seems very secure in the province - secure enough to withstand the threat of English signs on some Montreal storefronts.

But you certainly don't hear many voices, outside the Quebec anglophone community, who dare suggest a repeal of the language laws. The one exception has been Mr. Bouchard.

And wouldn't it be ironic if we had to await the arrival of a separatist government - or even a separate Quebec - before the word "stop" can be put on traffic signs in the province?

## Poets' Corner

A Misty Morn  
As the dawning sun  
Slowly swallows the fog,  
That has covered the night  
Like a greedy dog.  
The outline of trees  
Begin to take form,  
And their leaves sing out  
To the misty morn.

Breaking the dawn  
With an early flight,  
A flock of gulls  
Throw off the night.  
And as I stand in awe  
Whilst nature awakens,  
I feel Gods hand  
And my soul is shaken.

James Turner  
Georgetown.

A Thought  
Sitting in a dining chair,

Looking out at haze filled air  
Through screen and glass,  
Whilst gulls do make a sudden  
pass.

A thought didst cross my relaxed  
mind,

A mediocre temperance kind.  
And ah, I thought, "I should but  
lend an ear,

To see what may that I could  
hear."

So twas that way that I did  
meet,

With fiery eyes and passions  
heat.

The inner self that hides so  
well,

And holds me up from satans  
hell.

James Turner  
Georgetown.