

Our Travels, Fall 2024

By Carlyle & Lisa Hystad

September 30, Monday: Today we started an adventure to visit relatives on the East Coast and then on to Europe for several weeks. We have not decided how long we will be gone, and have made airline reservations only for the outgoing portions of the trip. We drove from Battle Lake to a hotel located a few miles from the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport, as part of an arrangement with ParkSleepFly, a company that provides free parking near the airport and free delivery and pickup to and from the airport, in return for our staying at the designated hotel for one night before flying and one night upon return. Because we were planning to stay near the airport the night before the flight and on the night of our return from Europe, this seemed like a good arrangement. It could cost up to \$30 a day, or over \$1400 to park at the airport for the seven weeks we expected we might be gone.

October 1, Tuesday: The ParkSleepFly driver was there at the hotel on time to pick us up and take us to the airport. Our flight was to BWI. Cheryl picked us up at BWI and drove us back to her house in Baltimore. That evening Cheryl and David took us to dinner in Fell's Point. We had a delicious dinner of crab cakes. **October 2, Wednesday:** Lovely day at Cheryl's; took a walk to the harbor. David prepared sea bass for dinner, on his new 'green egg' cooker; excellent dinner and conversation.

October 3, Thursday: Cheryl drove us to Cindy and Ted's house in Bethany Beach, Delaware. Cheryl's daughter Caroline came with us to the beach. We planned to stay at the beach until Sunday. That evening we had dinner at a restaurant in Bethany, with Cheryl, Cindy, and Caroline. We all had sea food. Delicious. **October 4, Friday:** We walked on the beach a couple of times; a lovely day, not too warm or cool. Greg joined us that day; also granddaughter Julia and her friend Paul, and Ted. Some of us, particularly Caroline, spent some time working on a new 1000 piece puzzle.

October 5, Saturday: Another lovely day at the beach. We watched several dolphins swim by as we were walking on the beach. Jan came by for a visit. Ted grilled a variety of steaks for a great dinner around the massive dining table in their beach "cottage." **October 6, Sunday:** Most of the gang watched the Vikings win their game played in London, on Sunday morning, while Caroline finished the

puzzle. After lunch, Cindy and Ted drove us back to their house in Chevy Chase, MD. Granddaughter Amanda joined us for dinner there that evening.

October 7, Monday: Lisa had a long visit with her daughter Elizabeth, who drove to Cindy's place to spend much of the day with Lisa in the Bethesda area. Michael and Ashley (Chris' adult children) joined Carlyle for a light lunch at Cindy's place on Monday. Cindy arranged the lunch and joined us. Had a nice conversation catching up with the two of them. Michael is working as a computer security specialist with a contractor working for the Census Bureau, and Ashley, who got her MPH degree last spring, is working at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda. Michael was not able to bring his sons, Michael and Liam, with him because they were in school today. Unfortunately, we did not get to visit with granddaughters Megan and Anna because they were off at colleges, and Claire was not feeling well. But it was great to get to spend some time with our kids and five of the grandkids. We missed seeing Marsha, who stayed home with Claire. Cindy drove us to Dulles airport at 4:30 that afternoon, so we could catch our flight on Swiss Air to Zurich. Hopefully she did not have horrible traffic getting home.

October 8, Tuesday: We landed in Zurich at about 3:00 am east coast time (9:00 am their time). We had some coffee and found our next flight to Venice, arriving there about 2:30 pm their time. Lisa's son William (Will) met us at the airport and drove us to his place near the city of Vicenza, about an hour from Venice. Because we had not had much sleep, we did not start any new sightseeing that day. Will has a nice "apartment", which is the ground floor of a large house, with the owners living in the floor above him, which is located in a semi-rural area about 15 minutes from downtown Vicenza and about 15 minutes from the Army base where Will works.

October 9, Wednesday: After sleeping late and having lots of coffee, Will drove us to downtown Vicenza where we walked through much of the old city. The city is noted as the home town of Andrea Palladio, a famous architect born in 1508 who designed many of the major buildings in the city, and his work has been copied or designs have been influenced by him in important structures around the world, including the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC, and the Rotunda on the University of Virginia campus. Thomas Jefferson was a champion of Palladio's architecture. We stopped at one of Will's favorite cafes and had coffee and croissants filled with pistachio. We walked about 3.5 miles that day, according to Lisa's smart watch. Lisa cooked a nice meal for us that evening; the first home-cooked meal that Will had eaten in many months.

October 10, Thursday: Will had to go to work today, but was able to come home about 3:00. We rested our weary bones a bit while he was gone. He drove us to a nice park in Vicenza where we walked along the river and were surprised to see so many rabbits, ducks, muskrats, assorted geese, and other critters. We then had dinner at Will's favorite pizza place in downtown Vicenza. We walked 3 miles today. **October 11, Friday:** Will drove us to Bossano del Grappa, an historic town about twenty miles from Vicenza. The city still has walls and some buildings built in the 13th century, and is noted for its wooden bridge spanning the Brenta River. We toured a museum in the town, where Carlyle first discovered that museums and large churches tend to make him sick; actually, he discovered that walking and looking around at paintings, sculptures, etc. made his vertigo worse and he had some difficulty maintaining a vertical position, particularly if looking up. This problem continued through much of our time in Europe while visiting museums, galleries, churches, basilicas, etc., and people in Europe tend to want to show you such things. After the museum, Carlyle recovered quickly and we had a nice lunch at an outdoor patio in a large square in the city.

Below is a photo of Will at the outdoor café in the city square in Bossano del Grappa. We walked only about 2.3 miles this day.



October 12, Saturday: We got up early and went to downtown Vicenza to catch a train to Venice, where we walked to the Saint Marina hotel where we would spend two nights. We got a nice, large room, with a separate sleeping area for Will, and began the mandatory walks to see the sights in Venice, including St. Mark's Square and St. Mark's Basilica, the Doge's Palace, the Grand Canal, and miles (kilometers) of narrow canals and walkways through the island. We even took a Gondola ride through several of the canals serving as "streets" running between the blocks of buildings in the city. Carlyle had been to Venice two previous times during the 1960s, and the old city looks very much the same, but there were about

ten times as many people (primarily visitors like us) trying to check off items on their “bucket list”. Carlyle was able to see several parts of the main island that he had not seen before, and this was a first visit for Lisa. The photo below shows the bow of the gondola we were in as we went from the Grand Canal into a smaller canal. Heavy traffic is apparent even on the water. We walked about 4.3 miles today.



The photo below was taken Saturday evening, at dinner time, when the crowds had largely disappeared into restaurants.



October 13, Sunday: Will got up early this Sunday morning to attend an early mass at a nearby church; it is easy to find a nearby Catholic church in Venice. This morning, we walked to and over the “covered bridge” (the Rialto Bridge) that crosses one of the wide canals in Venice, and then to the “bridge of sighs” which connects a court house to a prison, and the story is that one could hear the prisoners sighing as they were led to the very unpleasant prison. We then got on a large passenger boat that ran from the main island to some of the nearby smaller islands (Venice includes 121 islands, but most are very small). We got off at the island of Murano, which specializes in shops that make and/or sell blown glass items. We had a nice lunch at an outdoor café. After further walking, we caught a boat back to the main train station, where we took a train back to Vicenza late in the afternoon. We walked 5.8 miles today.

The photo below shows the Bridge of Sighs.



October 14, Monday: Will took us to the Army base where he works, for a grand tour. The base is owned and managed by Italy, and we had to go through a long, rather slow process of security clearance by Italian officials before we were allowed on the base. We were able to see where Will works, and most of the significant facilities on the base, as well as where they train for upcoming parachute jumps. All American personnel at the base are required to be proficient in parachuting from planes, and all have attended jumping school in Georgia. Will completed parachute training last year, and has jumped a few times since being back in Italy. Because he is part of the Quartermaster support staff at the base, he is not required to jump as frequently as the members of the regular paratrooper battalion at the base.

Will also took us to a grocery store (on the economy – not on the base) where Lisa could purchase numerous items to stock Will's kitchen properly.

October 15, Tuesday: Will had to work all day today, and we finally got to rest up and explore his immediate neighborhood. Lisa used some of the goodies she purchased at the store to make a great dinner of steak, potatoes, carrots, etc.

October 16, Wednesday: Today was cloudy and rainy and not conducive to walking outdoors. Lisa used the opportunity to reorganize (or initially organize) the kitchen shelves in Will's apartment. And she made chicken scaloppini for dinner. Carlyle did research on what we should see in Florence, and we purchased train tickets, and gallery tickets, to spend the coming weekend there. We walked less than 1.5 miles today!

October 17, Thursday: Cloudy and rainy again. Will worked all day, and we went to another pizza place for dinner that evening, where diners had to place their orders by smart phone, from their tables – no waiter necessary. The food was better than the service or the stark design of the place. **October 18, Friday:** That evening we took Will's landlady and husband, Miranda and Scott, to dinner. We had a very good dinner at a restaurant in nearby suburban Vicenza. Miranda is Italian who was born in the house owned by her parents located where they now live. Scott was born and raised in Montana and was a paratrooper at the base where Will works. Scott is about 60 and Miranda is a few years older. He now works as an installer and maintenance specialist for an international firm, and travels all over Europe doing assignments at clients' locations.

October 19, Saturday: Took an early morning train from Vicenza to Florence. Needed to change trains in Verona, which is a major train interchange to the west of Vicenza. In Florence, we walked from train station to our hotel room and stored our bags while we continued to walk to all the major sights in the city. We saw the City Hall, the Duomo, the Piazza della Signoria, the Neptune Fountain, and the duplicate copy of Michaelangelo's David (Carlyle saw the original David during a previous visit to Florence). We had a nice lunch in a place recommended by the hotel, that specialized in large steaks; we had pasta dishes. At 4:00 we had "timed entry" tickets to the Uffizi Gallery, which contains the largest collection of Renaissance art in the city. We spent about two hours in the Gallery, which includes many paintings of varying poses of Mary with Jesus, and other early Christian-related paintings by several different artists. Unfortunately, this setting was not suitable for Carlyle's vertigo problem, and he was quite dizzzzzzzy for the latter part of our time in the gallery. That evening we had dinner at an outdoor restaurant, with umbrellas protecting us from occasional rain. Carlyle had a "minestrone" soup dish that did not contain any soup; it could be eaten with a fork. This dish apparently is a favorite in Florence. We walked 5.2 miles today.



The statute in the foreground in a copy of Michaelangelo’s David. The Uffizi Gallery is in the background, left center.

October 20, Sunday: After early morning Americano coffees and pistachio-filled croissants, we did more walking in Florence. We crossed the Arno River on the Ponte Vecchio, and saw the Pitti Palace from the outside. There was a long line to get tickets to go inside, and Carlyle was not excited about going back into another gallery. We had drinks and snacks at an outdoor café near the Pitti Palace, and then walked some more, including a couple of stops at shops along the way, before returning to the train station for the trip back to Verona and Vicenza.

October 21, Monday: We prepared for a trip to Lake Garda, which is a large lake several miles to the west of Vicenza and Verona. Carlyle did research on what we might see and do in the area. Lisa made reservations for the train ride to the town of Peschiera del Garda located on the south end of the Lake, and reserved a hotel room for two nights in the town. She also made a large batch of potato soup for our enjoyment and to leave for Will while we were gone! **October 22, Tuesday:** We took a train from Vicenza to Peschiera and walked about a mile from the train

station to the hotel which was located right next to the lake. We took a long walk along the lake and in the town, before having lunch on a boat anchored on the river that flowed from the lake past the hotel. Ducks and swans gathered around the boat to wait patiently for some bits of food from us. We took a long walk along the lake shore. There were dozens of swans, coots and aninga to greet us. We walked 3.1 miles today.

October 23, Wednesday: After our coffees and a variety of croissants, we took a long walk along the lake shore in town, where there are large houses bunched close together along a quiet street and walkway. The water is very shallow in that part of the lake, with boats tied to buoys several hundred feet out in the lake. This area has a pebble beach, and it had a few bathers even in the cool fall weather; it was the only beach we saw in the area. Lisa had made reservations for our lunch at a popular but exclusive restaurant located inside the old city wall that had been part of a fortress built in the 1400s as a portion of a massive defensive system built when this part of Italy was under the control of the Empire of Austria. We had some difficulty finding the restaurant tucked away in the fortress, but we did find it, and had a great lunch there. Carlyle had an unusual dish that included pieces of fresh pike fish caught in Lake Garda. We walked 4 miles today.

October 24, Thursday: After breakfast, we walked back to the train station and got a train back to Vicenza where we flagged a taxi to take us out to Will's place. We then prepared for our upcoming three days in Rome. We had planned to have four days in Rome, but Will could not get approval from his boss to take off on Monday as well as Friday, so we were now condensing our visit there. We walked only 2 miles today.

October 25, Friday: We got the train in Vicenza to Padova, where we were to change trains to go to Rome. The train from Vicenza was running late so we missed the train to Rome on which we had reservations; Will was able to get tickets exchanged to catch the next train to Rome in about an hour, with reserved seats. It was a high-speed train; Carlyle checked the speed a few times, and we reached a maximum of over 290 kilometers per hour, or about 180 mph. In Rome, we took a taxi to our hotel located near the famous Spanish Steps. Our hotel room had two levels, with a large sleeping area up steep marble steps, and a small bed for Will on the lower level.

We walked up and down the Spanish Steps, walked to the Trevi Fountain, walked to the Pantheon, and then took a taxi late in the day to see the Vatican area at night.

This area of Rome is also the high fashion district, with all the major retailers in the fashion world having stores in the area. We walked 4.2 miles today.

Below is a photo of the Spanish Steps, with multiple series of steps.



October 26, Saturday: Today was dedicated to seeing the Roman ruins. We first took a taxi to the Coliseum area, where by 8:00 am there were already massive crowds waiting to get tickets to get access to the Coliseum. This was quite a change from Carlyle's previous visit when there were no crowds, no barriers, no fees, and no problems just exploring the Coliseum and the nearby Forum ruins. We decided to forego the line to get tickets to the Coliseum, and walked around the "back" side of the Forum walls, where we found an entrance without a line where we were able to get tickets to the Forum ruins. We explored much of the large area of the Forum ruins until we gave up, and took a taxi back to the Spanish Steps area where we had a nice lunch at a sidewalk restaurant. After some time to recover, and some more walking in the area, we had dinner that evening at a different sidewalk restaurant nearby. We walked 3.4 miles today.



October 27, Sunday: We took a taxi in the morning to the Vatican, where Sunday worship services were being held. After gaining entrance to St. Peter's Square, through security, we listened and watched the services outside. St. Peter's Square

was crowded with people, and the Basilica was not open for visitors. Normally the Basilica is open to visitors from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. We learned that there had been a major conference of senior church officials held at the Vatican the previous days, and that they planned to reopen St. Peter's Basilica to visitors that afternoon. Will led us on a walk east from the Vatican to the Tiber River, where we found a sidewalk restaurant and had an early lunch before we went back to St. Peter's Square. As we approached the Square, it was apparent that a large crowd was focused on listening to a voice presumably coming from Pope Francis who was at the Angelus Window, which is the penultimate window on the right side, on the third floor of the Apostolic Palace on the Square. Since we did not have binoculars with us, we could not be sure it was the Pope at the window, but a massive crowd of people believed that it was.



After several minutes the Pope completed his blessing of the people, and he disappeared. We were then informed that everyone had to leave the Square. It might be possible to get into the Basilica later that afternoon, but it now appeared that it would be too late in the day before we could get through the large crowd to get into the basilica. And Will needed to get back home today so he could go to work on Monday.



The photo above is in St. Peter's Square, with the Basilica in the back center of the photo

We walked around the area near the Vatican where Will usually stays when he is visiting Rome. We saw several "Dr. Seuz trees" in the area (these are trees with a tall, bare trunk with a cluster of leaves at the top). We had drinks and snacks at a

sidewalk café in the area, before taking a taxi back to the train station for the return train rides back to Vicenza. We walked 5.1 miles today.

October 28, Monday: Will was back to work. He had recently started in a new position and his boss wanted him there all week. We used the opportunity to avoid much walking. We walked only 1.6 miles today. Carlyle read a book on his Kindle, and Lisa decided to do some cleaning and reorganizing of Will's house.

October 29, Tuesday: Miranda offered to drive us to downtown Vicenza where we could do further exploring of the old city, do some shopping, and maybe have a nice lunch. There were a few dozen vendors set up in the main market square, mainly selling clothes and accessories for women. Lisa used the opportunity to purchase several items. We walked through much of the old city, and had lunch at an outdoor café. In mid-afternoon we got a taxi to drive us back to Will's place. We walked 3.2 miles today.

October 30, Wednesday: While Lisa was reorganizing Will's apartment, Carlyle did some research on the governmental structure in Italy. The country has 20 Regions (Regioni in Italian) which are based generally on historic governance in the country. The Region of Veneto is where Vicenza is located, and it includes seven Provinces: Venezia (Venice), Verona, Vicenza, Padova, Belluno, Rovigo, and Treviso, in northeast Italy. The provinces probably are similar in size and authority to counties in the United States. Most regions include several provinces; there are a total of 94 provinces in the country. Provinces usually include defined metropolitan areas or towns, called Communes (Comuni in Italian), such as the Commune of Vicenza, and the Commune of Verona. The regions, provinces and communes all have similar elected councils, executive committees and chief executives. They all have quite limited authority to legislate and administer laws within their jurisdictions; the central government retains most powers, and can overrule the actions of subdivisions.

When Will got home from work, he drove us to a grocery store in the area, where Lisa bought items that were needed for Will's kitchen, and she bought some veal shanks she planned to use to make Osso Buco on Thursday.

October 31, Thursday: It was a nice sunny day and we walked along the country road leading from Will's place into a small village. That afternoon, Lisa worked on making Osso Buco, which uses veal shanks as the primary ingredient for a lovely dish of tender veal, vegetables and spices. That evening she dished up the Osso Buco for the three of us, and we quickly discovered that the veal was not

edible; it should have just fallen from the shank bones, but it was so tough that it was even difficult to cut with a sharp knife. We all were disappointed, but we had plenty to eat anyway.

November 1, Friday: Today, Miranda had hired a couple of guys to come pick the persimmons off the large persimmon tree that was in their yard just outside of Will's driveway. They picked several boxes full, and gave us about a dozen of them that were too ripe to keep for long. The persimmons were the size of a grapefruit, and were quite sweet. This evening Miranda and Scott took us to dinner at a nearby restaurant. We had good food and interesting conversation. Scott had recently returned from several days in Sweden dealing with maintenance issues for a client. We learned that Miranda has one child from a previous marriage, a son who has children of his own, who Miranda sees occasionally. Miranda inherited her parents' house and moved back home after being away for many years. She had lived in Montana for several months after marrying Scott, and we got the impression that she was not happy living in Montana.

November 2, Saturday: Went with Will to some nearby thrift shops, where Will purchased several pieces of furniture, with some urging and support from his mother. He bought a large wardrobe, three chests of drawers, a bed stand, a dressing table, and two nice oriental rugs. They were to be delivered to his place the following week. We have seen photos of the items in his house, and they look great.

November 3, Sunday: Today we took trains to Wurzburg, Germany. First a train from Vicenza to Verona; another train from Verona to Kufstein, Austria; another train from Kufstein to Munich; and another train from Munich to Wurzburg. This was not an easy trip, primarily because of the three changes of trains. The long ride through the Alps was comfortable and the scenery was fascinating. The primary annoyance was that the train from Verona ended at the last train station in Austria, at the small town of Kufstein, and from there we had to find our way to another train going to Munich, and that train was not nearly large enough to hold all the passengers on the train from Verona, so about half the passengers had to stand for nearly two hours as the train slowly made its way to Munich, stopping at what seemed to be every little village along the way. When we finally made it to Munich we had only a few minutes to rush to our next train, going to Wurzburg. We had been assured that we had reserved seats on all these trains, but that was not the case. It was not a good introduction to Germany.

Fortunately, upon arrival in Wurzburg, Andrea and her husband George met us and delivered us to our hotel in Estenfeld, their home town located a few miles northeast of Wurzburg. After checking in there, they drove us a mile or so to their house, where we had a very nice dinner. Andrea made a delicious pizza dish with sides, for a lovely meal.

November 4, Monday: We had a satisfying breakfast at Andrea and George's place. Then we walked around Wurzburg all day. Visited a massive castle built for a previous "bishop" (a ruling prince) of the area. It had a large garden similar to that at the French royal palace at Versailles. After walking over much of Wurzburg we finally made it back to the square where vendors were selling all sorts of things, including bratwurst on a bun, and we each devoured one of these as a late afternoon snack. After a brief rest back at the hotel in Estenfeld, George picked us up and drove us back to their house for dinner. Andrea made a quiche dish that was very much appreciated. Lisa got the recipe so she could try to duplicate it back home. We walked 3.5 miles today.

November 5, Tuesday: Drove to a park along the Main River, with a long pedestrian bridge across the River. We walked along the river, through a park area, and then into the town, and we saw the summer castle and gardens of the former "bishop" prince. We had drinks and snacks at a café in town. Some of us had waffles with ice cream!! We walked only 2.2 miles today. We were at Andrea and George's place again for dinner. Andrea made a very enjoyable spaghetti Bolognese dish. Andrea showed us some of her collection of photos, and a book about the city of Pirmasens, Germany, where Lisa lived for nearly two years while in the US Army.

November 6, Wednesday: Drove to see vineyards along the steep hillsides near the Main River. We walked in a vineyard that was irrigated with a drip system. George said they get workers from Poland to come and help tend the vines and pick the grapes. We then parked in a lot near a small town, and walked through the town and visited at least one church. We ate lunch at a small restaurant where Lisa had cracker bread and tea, and Carlyle had a ham and cheese "sandwich," The word "sandwich" apparently has become common usage in Germany. We walked only 2.3 miles today. That evening, we treated Andrea and George to dinner at a Greek restaurant in town that they recommended.

Andrea and George did an excellent job of entertaining us, feeding us, and showing us the important sights in the area, during our stay with them. Below is a photo of George and Andrea in one the cafes we visited.

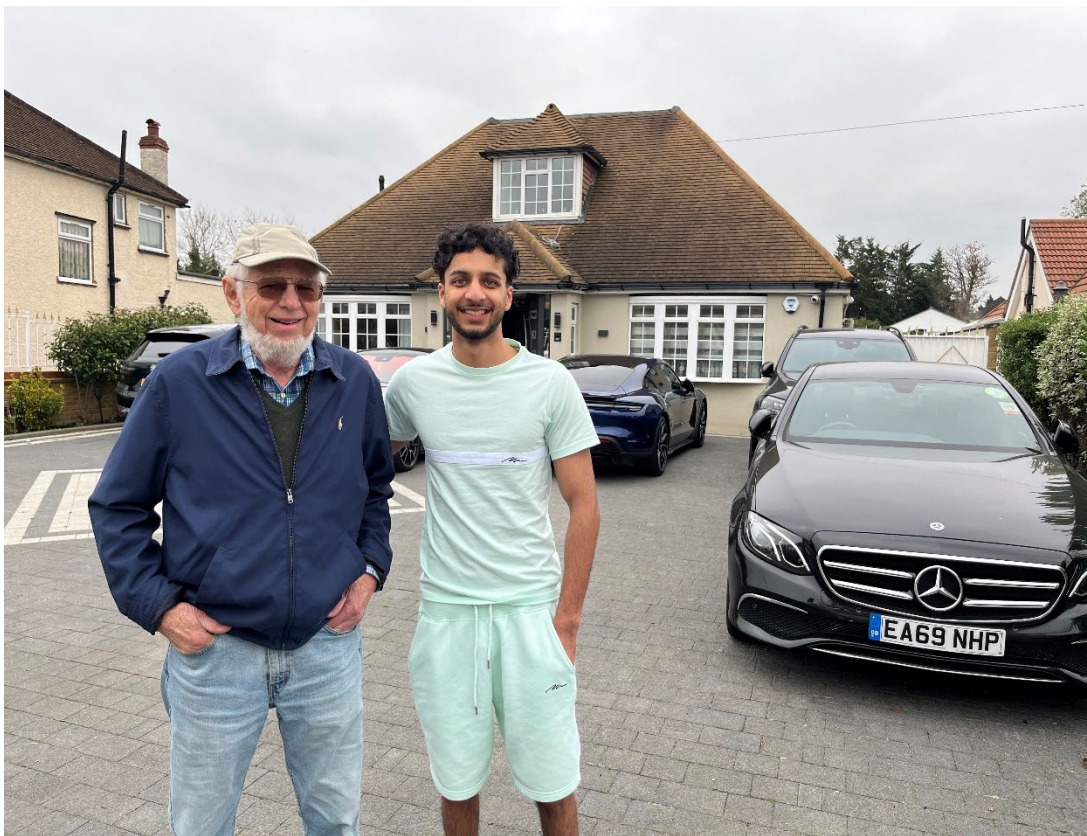
November 7, Thursday: Andrea and George picked us up at about 7:00 am and drove us to the train station in Wurzburg, to catch our trains to London. We took a Wurzburg to Cologne train, then a Cologne to Brussels train, and then a Brussels to London train. In Brussels we had to go through passport and customs control before boarding the train to London. Upon arriving at the St. Pancras station in London, we took a taxi to our hotel just south of Hyde Park, on Bayswater Road. Will flew in from Venice that evening and had a room in the same hotel.

November 8, Friday: Walking tour of London today. Walked a couple of miles from the hotel, along the south side of Hyde Park, to Marble Arch and Speakers Corner, then stopped at a Middle Eastern restaurant for breakfast. We then walked a few blocks to Grosvenor Square and saw the former American Embassy where Carlyle worked as Assistant Atomic Energy Attache from December 1963 to December 1965. The Embassy building was sold some time back and is being renovated to be a high-priced hotel. We were not able to go inside, but walked around the building and chatted with a construction worker who told us about the renovation work, and said there will be a suite in the hotel renting for 35,000 Pounds a day. After Grosvenor Square we walked to Berkeley Square (pronounced Barkeley Square) to prove that there is nothing to see there except some tall trees and green grass. Lisa claims that she heard nightingales singing. We then continued the walk north toward Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, and Big Ben, etc.



After walking through and around these sights, Lisa was in pain from all the walking so we returned to the hotel for rest. Will was still raring to go so he and Carlyle went for a long walk in Hyde Park. We went out for an early dinner, to a Greek restaurant named Halepi. The place was small and very crowded, but the food was delicious. We walked 5.9 miles today, not counting the two hours in Hyde Park.

November 9, Saturday: In the morning, we took the tube out to 73 Hercies Road where we lived in 1964–1965. The house looked much the same, but for a new front entry way and new windows. Also, the grass and rose bushes and driveway that were in the front yard had all been paved over and there were five vehicles parked in front of the house. While we were standing outside the wall and gates that they now have along the sidewalk to keep strangers away, a young fellow came out of the house to ask what we were doing. After we explained that Carlyle had lived there about a century ago, he lightened up. Carlyle asked if the garage and greenhouse were still way back behind the house. He said they were still there but the back end of the property was not part of their property now. It had been sold and separated before he moved to the place five years ago. We did not see the inside of the house.



That afternoon we saw the musical “Hamilton” at the Victoria Theater near Victoria station. It was a bit strange to see a performance about American founding fathers in a London theater, but it was a good performance and a nice theater and we all enjoyed it. After the show, we walked to a French restaurant, Chez Antoinette, a few blocks away. They said they were booked up but could give us a table if we were out by 7:00. We agreed, although we were skeptical since the place was almost empty at 5:45. Dinner was great. Carlyle had escargot in garlic butter, followed by sea scallops, etc. Lisa had French onion soup and escargot. We later learned that Chez Antoinette is rated as one of the top French restaurants in London. We walked 3.3 miles today.

November 10, Sunday: We rode the tube and walked to St. Paul’s Cathedral, where they were just starting a Service of Remembrance and Commemoration for the Fallen, for Armistice Day. We stayed for the entire service, including the processional of the Lord Mayor of London and several dozen attendees who apparently were relatives of the Fallen. We then rode the tube and walked to the Tower Bridge, and the Tower of London, which is the former residence of Kings, a prison for wives of King Henry VIII and others, and the location of the crown jewels. The Tower of London is not really a tower, but mainly a collection of two or three story buildings located on the north bank of the Thames River, and was built to be a fortress against attack from the river. We purchased expensive tickets to tour the tower, and spent a few hours there. We rode the tube back to the hotel, and then walked a few blocks looking for a restaurant, and finally chose a good Chinese restaurant, the Four Seasons, on Queensway road. Will left for the airport later in the evening to get a hotel room there and catch an early flight to Venice so he could prepare to return to work on Tuesday. We walked 6.3 miles today.

November 11, Monday: We had Americano coffee and pistachio croissants at the Granier Bakery & Café on Queensway road nearby. Took tube to explore the shopping area along Oxford street. Went to Selfridges Department store, noted as one of the world’s best department stores, where we walked around in amazement for a few hours. Then we scanned other shops and department stores in the area before taking the tube back to hotel area. Walked to the Greek restaurant, Halepi, at 18 Leinster Terrace, that we had been to on Friday night, and was able to get a table without a reservation. Another excellent meal. Walked 4.7 miles today.

November 12, Tuesday: Coffee and croissants at same place, Granier. Rode tube to near the British Museum, and was able to get in after a short wait in line. Viewed several rooms in the museum before Lisa got tired and I got vertigo. Then took the tube to Picadilly Circus, just to prove that it is just a traffic circle, with no

performing elephants. We had a very nice lunch at Milo's Restaurant near Picadilly. After more walking, we rode the tube back to the hotel and collapsed. Walked 4.2 miles today.

November 13, Wednesday: Coffee and croissants at same place. Saw "Wicked" at Apollo Victoria Theater. The musical had amazing stage settings, and set changes, and good music, but Carlyle did not find the story to be that interesting, and almost nothing to do with the Wizard of Oz story. We took the tube back to hotel. Prepared for early departure tomorrow. Walked 3.1 miles today.

November 14, Thursday: Left hotel for Heathrow airport at 6:30 am. Caught flight to Newark, then to MSP. Complicated plane change in Newark, where we had to go through immigration check and customs and then recheck bags, and ride a train and then a bus to get to another terminal to get the flight to MSP. Arrived back in MSP about 6:00 pm local time, or about midnight London time. The ParkSleepFly guy picked us up and delivered us to the hotel, where we went to bed. **November 15, Friday:** We were awake and up at about 4:30 am. I found the car in the lot, in good condition; warmed it up to melt off a thin coat of ice. Loaded up our baggage and left the hotel at 5:30 am. Drove to Maple Grove, near the Whole Foods grocery store. Found a Shoney's open 24 hours, and had a leisurely large breakfast as we waited for Whole Foods to open at 8:00. After Lisa bought two carts full of groceries, we headed for Battle Lake. Arrived home before noon.

Some More Thoughts About the Trip.

The time visiting children and grandchildren in Maryland and Delaware was great and it is unfortunate but appropriate that the grandchildren are now so busy with their lives that they have little time to visit with grandparents.

Carlyle had a good visit in Italy, although the amount of time there was primarily so Lisa could spend more time learning about Will's life in Italy. Carlyle had visited Italy three times previously, and had seen many of the same places we went this time, but it was all new to Lisa, and she enjoyed it. And Carlyle learned much that he missed the previous visits. It was a comfortable time at Will's place, and he was a great "tour guide" and great help in making things easy for us.

Andrea and George were excellent hosts in the Germany part of the trip, and Carlyle enjoyed the visit there even though Andrea is Lisa's long-time friend. George seemed to really enjoy showing us around and trying to make sure we

understood what he was telling us. Even though his grasp of English is not perfect, it is much better than our German.

Carlyle was surprised how little has changed about London in the 59 years since he left there in 1965. Parts of London and the outer suburbs have grown, but the older part of the city looks much the same, the theaters are still great, the foreign owned or operated restaurants are still terrific, and it is even easier to get around the city by the Underground. It was surprisingly easy for Carlyle to have a great return visit, and Lisa and Will really enjoyed London.

European countries seem to be making more use of automated systems than we do in the US. The use of contactless credit cards or smart phones or other devices to charge everything and anything seems to be everywhere in Europe, or at least everywhere we went. The use of credit cards and phones for quick and easy access and departure of the tube in London was amazing. And the use of a smart phone to place your order at a table in a restaurant was quite a surprise, but we probably are not ready to do away with personal service in restaurants.

On at least three occasions, someone gave Carlyle their seat on a train or a subway, because they were young and Carlyle obviously was not. Carlyle notes that it was nice to be offered a seat, but in most cases he was not in need of one. And he found it quite annoying to realize that he was widely viewed as being old. He thinks he may need to accept that fact, or just avoid traveling.