

Round the World in 90 Days (I) California Title 295

It was my first trip round the world flying in a westerly direction, therefore losing one day. I started on Pan American PA 1 from London Heathrow on 27 December 1979 to Houston, Texas, and returned from New Delhi on 26 March 1980 on Swiss Air SR 804. I visited many Members of the Editorial Board and other distinguished scientists, invited most of them to contribute, and as I received only 30% of their promised articles, all was well. I greatly enjoyed these personal contacts, and as the Board Members had now received copies of the Journal for three years, they commented critically on my work.

In Texas I was able to visit friends in Huntsville, where I had a godson, and in Galveston where I had a very dear friend, Lise Darst, the Director of the Museum. After this private week, I flew to San Francisco for the Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. This was a hectic time, listening to lectures from 8 o'clock in the morning until the last press conference of the day at 8 in the evening. These press conferences, on the hour, every hour, were the most useful part of the AAAS, as they allowed me to attend only those lectures which were really promising.

From San Francisco to Los Angeles, allowing a free morning to visit the Getty Museum in Malibu. There I stayed in the home of Professor Ralph Sonnenschein, a fellow collector of medals. His discipline is physiology, with a chair at UCLA in his subject, and his splendid collection of over a thousand medals is entirely devoted to the medical sciences. My own medals [see Title 74] covered all sciences. Our close friendship survived for many decades.

In those days, one had to apply for a parking space at the Getty Museum before one could visit it. Arriving in the underground parking lot, full of tourist buses and private cars, one had to take a short up-ride in an elevator, and one left it again in the middle of the Garden of a Roman Villa—the actual Museum—in the background. I always thought of this lift ride as my only Time Travel, covering 2000 years in 45 seconds. I found the contents of the Museum, at the time of my visit in 1980, very disappointing when compared with Museums in London. I have not been back since then, and I understand that it now contains real treasures.

From Los Angeles to La Jolla. There I called on Dr Orgel at the Salk Institute, lunched with Dr Harold Urey, met Dr Kurt Benirschke a famous zoologist, had tea with Mrs Szilard, the widow of Dr Leo Szilard of the Manhattan Project and of the first atomic bomb and had dinner with Dr George Müller who had played a leading role in the Apollo Project. La Jolla was to my mind always the most beautiful Science City of California.