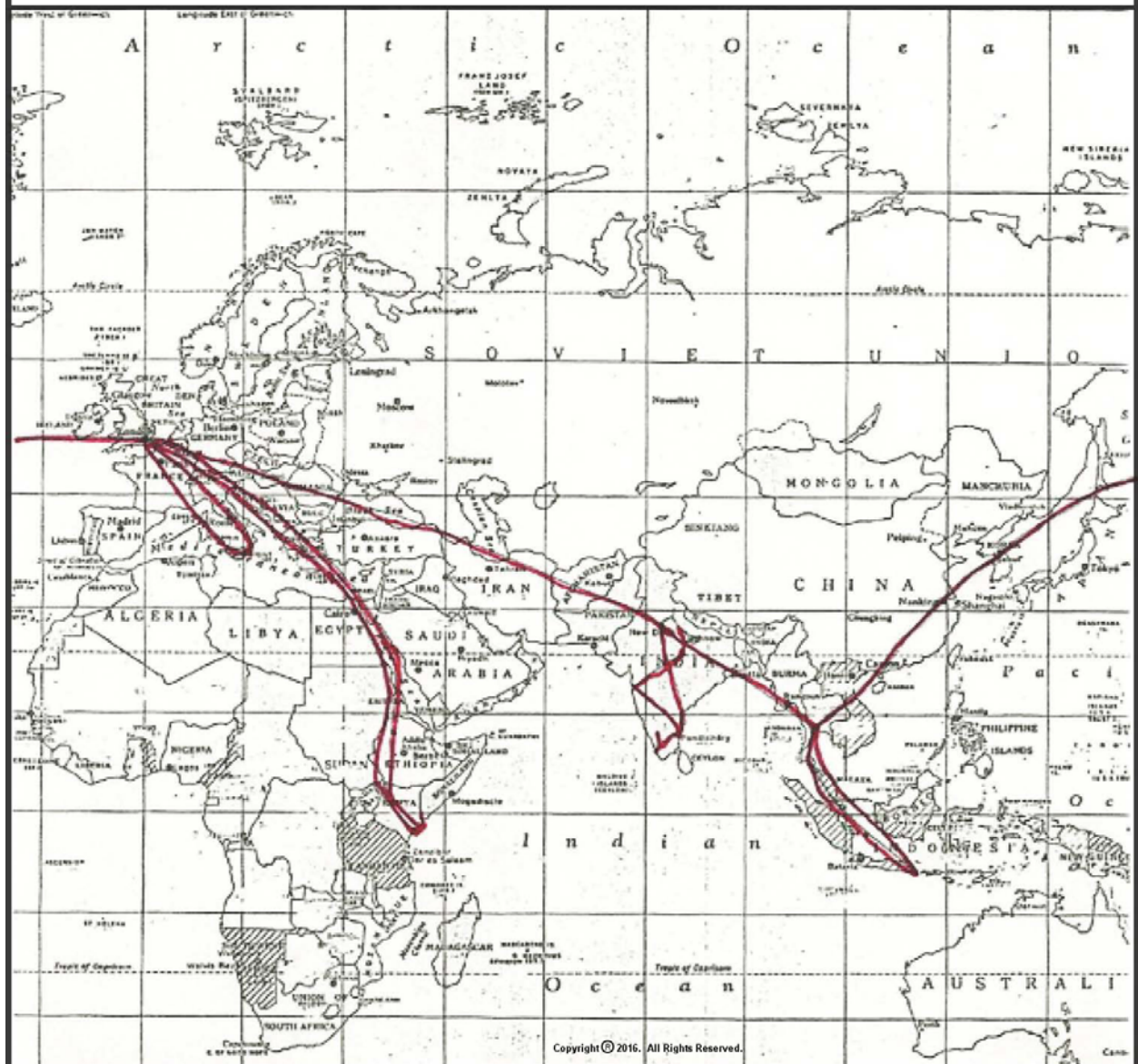


# *Around the World in 450 Days*

## The Diary of Ann Wood's Zigzag Travels



## Foreword

Gap years are gaining popularity. Students take off before or during college for internships, volunteering, travel, or fun. Workers who are mid-way in their careers, or have been downsized, use a gap for some of the same reasons, or to get an advanced degree.

My gap time came when I was downsized after working for two years on the society pages of a Washington paper and twelve in the Washington bureau of a New York paper.

In a unique twist, the house I lived in on Capitol Hill was taken by the landlord, who was also my father. As a result, after giving my two poodles to a colleague with a young son, I had no job or responsibilities.

It was lucky timing. Solo international travel was fairly safe for a woman who took reasonable precautions. And it was fun. So, I packed my bag and went off to explore new places around the world for as long as my savings lasted.

This is the diary of my zigzag travels from the U.S. to England, to Italy, back to England, to Egypt, up the Nile, to Sudan, to Kenya, around England, then on to India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Honolulu.

## Around the World in 450 Days

Oct. 4 London

The flight on Wednesday from Dulles was delayed an hour, so I spent it having farewell drinks in the Washington D.C. airport with friends. Once on board, my seatmate and I consumed all of the gift candy and wine en route to London. As a standby passenger, I suffered no indignity, except that my window seat had no window.

Getting into the flat at 37 Upper Montagu Street was complicated. I was supposed to pick up the key at 123 Queen's Gate, a nameless hotel near the South Kensington tube stop, but the previous tenant still had it. Efforts were made to locate the owner for a duplicate. Meanwhile, I was given a room in the hotel on the sixth floor, which the elevator did not reach. And, it being the middle of the night, naturally there was no porter. As I climbed, the stairway gradually narrowed, and it was difficult for me to fit my bags through its twists and turns. The bags contain my special cargo of a beige wardrobe, which I am hoping is adaptable to every occasion, and an inherited mink jacket for special occasions. At 5 a.m. Washington D.C. time, I went to bed.

The next morning the sunlight glinting on the bedroom door highlighted two words through the paint, Linen Room. Obviously, Londoners are renting out everything! The next morning, I moved down to the third floor in the hotel. There were fewer stairs to climb, but the sound of the Piccadilly line Underground trains came through the floor.

The keys to the flat were not found until Friday, two days after I arrived. I had found the flat while still in Washington and rented it by mail for two weeks. When I finally got to look at the actual space, I immediately started looking for someplace else to go. The flat could accommodate five, and probably did, until quite recently. It had a small kitchen, bedroom, bath and marvelous 12 foot windows in the living room overlooking the chic street. It was far too expensive for a long stay.

I grabbed a copy of The Evening Standard and went through the want ads. The agent at Travel Apartments Ltd. said that was the best source, after I candidly told her that her prices were too high for me. She advised me that, when I look through the ads for new listings, to skip the “AA” apartments, which are commercial firms acting as agents. The London squatters’ law protects tenants from eviction and is the bane of landlords’ lives. Thus, apartments are let on a temporary basis, to avoid problems. The landlord may let you re-rent, but they don’t have to.

A good apartment listing will not last more than a day, so a fast start is vital. I missed a marvelous flat in Holland Park by calling on Friday to make an appointment to see it on Saturday. It had two huge rooms overlooking a garden. It was in the heart of an area popular with stewardesses near the Kensington Hilton. It was snapped up between Friday and Saturday. Farewell to Iris Murdoch’s neighborhood.

I also trudged through the rain to Maida Vale to see the apartment of a retired army major and his wife, who are fleeing England in a trailer. They are hoping their escape will be financed by the rent from their flat. I had trouble

finding the flat, because the building was constructed like a modern prison block. An aged inhabitant lurked in the hallway, staring at visitors, and licking his lips. He was unable to give directions.

It was a tiny two-room, plus bath and kitchen, flat for a huge rent. The entry was so small that one seemed to pass through the bathroom and kitchen before entering the living room, or with a slight leftward lurch, the bedroom. The only attractive feature was a huge window in the living room overlooking a neighboring marquise's garden of roses.

The major and I spent some time talking about his trailer, which was parked in front of the building. It was an English-sized trailer, which means it was so small I hadn't even noticed it when I arrived. The major tried to explain the dimensions of the trailer by saying it was as long as from his chair to the end of the couch. Another six inches, and it would have been longer than the whole flat. Their ad was not clear that the two rooms mentioned were really the whole small flat.

He spent 38 years in the army in Vietnam, Korea, and Angola. He and his wife wanted to winter in South Africa. Renting their flat would make this possible. I felt sorry for them, trying to get their share of the real estate bonanza with that ugly cubbyhole of a flat. If something goes wrong with the deal, they will have a hard time dealing with it, when they are so far away. They are handling the deal themselves to save money. I wonder if they found a tenant at a price that got them out of the London winter.

In Barnes, a charming village just over the Thames from the Hammersmith tube station, I saw the outside of a cottage on Saturday, when the area was

bustling with weekend activity. By the time the agent was able to show it to me on Monday, the streets were quiet except for perambulators. The cottage was perfect—two small bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, clothes washer, color TV and garden. It looked like a Georgetown house that had shrunk in the wash. All for \$720 a month, including utilities and a maid for two days per week. The owner was a TV producer and was so impressed by Jeremy Campbell's reference letter on *London Evening Standard* letterhead that he offered to lower the rent to \$580 a month, but it was too suburban for me.



Being in town makes sense, and this ad caught my eye.

VISITOR, NR. REGENTS PK

Studio flat would suit single

Person 4/6 weeks, 55 pounds per week.

Immediately, I went to look at what they call a “garden house.” Frank Carlson and his wife, a singer named Stephanie Voss, were pleasant people and lived in a big house near St. John’s Wood and the famed Abbey Road. The flat, off the back of the house was fixed up for her mother, now recovering elsewhere from an illness, and is ready for her when she returns. My adviser at the flat rental firm had said that landlords lie a lot, and the stories are designed to keep potential tenants from planning lengthy stays.

Frank showed me the tiny apartment, and I inquired about his mother-in-law without expressing any opinion about her ability to recuperate in a one room accommodation fitted out like a ship’s cabin, with Danish, low-slung furniture.

Jeremy Campbell’s reference letter on *London Evening Standard* letterhead and my utter respectability worked their magic again, and Frank assured me that there was plenty of room in the main house for her. He asked to keep the letter, and I gave him one of my many copies. I will move into my potting shed, now a “visitors flat,” next week, or sooner if my ever-helpful adviser at Travel Apartments can find a tenant for 37 Upper Montegu Street, N.W. 1. She has shown it to some potential tenants already.

The beige wardrobe is proving to be adaptable to every occasion and has worked especially well for all of my potential landlord meetings, but the inherited mink jacket has yet to make its debut.

Next on my agenda is Bedfordshire, where the first airship in 50 years makes its maiden flight this Saturday. Then, I plan a trip to Rye in East Sussex, which E. F. Benson calls 'Tilling' in his "Mapp and Lucia" novels. I hope to walk in the footsteps of Lucia and Miss Mapp. I also am considering a stint as a volunteer digger in the Roman ruins, down by the London docks, before they are covered up with new buildings.

Yet, to be checked into more thoroughly, is the cross-Sahara trip, which has many sources and prices, according to my favorite want ads in *The Standard*, *Times*, and *Observer*. The world is a very interesting place, inhabited by a curious species.

Oct. 12 London

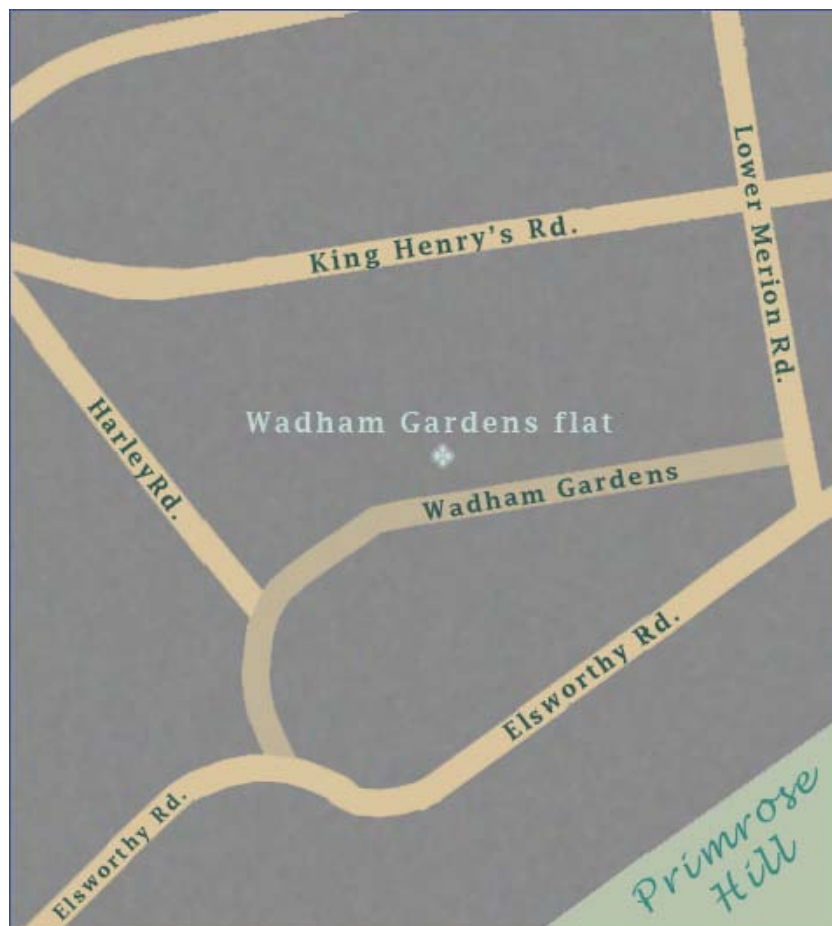
I am finally settled in the "garden house" of a large establishment in Swiss Cottage, Camden, just below Hampstead. It is tiny, but very pleasant and convenient. There are some big, slightly seedy homes, but my landlords, Frank and Stephanie, say most are in the process of being renovated.

Frank is a well-to-do businessman whose furniture firm was bought by a chain. He cannot return to the same line of work for a year, so he's about the place, too. During the last year of the contract, Frank found he had no real responsibility, but he was prevented from working elsewhere by the contract. He



was suing to get out of it, but the contract would expire in a month anyway. At the time I met him, he was drawing up plans for a new firm.

My garden house's location is fantastic. Primrose Hill is a few blocks away and the Beatle's famed Abbey Road is nearby. The view from my flat is of an apple orchard and roses, and the air in the mornings is filled with music as Stephanie practices her scales.



To call it a flat is an overstatement. My garden house was a potting shed before its gentrification. It was fixed up with a tiny kitchen and the latest Scandinavian decor for my landlady's mother. The bath is a jewel of modernity.

Potting sheds are one of those attachments to English house, where plants, bulbs and seeds are stored and puttered with. They vary from lean-tos to glass greenhouses. A row of English houses, identical in every other detail, will have a variety of huts in back used as shelter for the English male to keep his garden supplies in.

Stephanie's potting shed matches the rest of her house, a sprawling brick and timber home on a quiet tree-shaded street just below Hampstead. The houses in the neighborhood are all of the same general architecture, although different in layout, with big entry halls and huge rooms throughout. She and Frank, live in the house with their two teenagers, a boy and a girl.

By then I had become accustomed to the sight of Stephanie, with her red curly hair not yet combed for the day, dashing out to hang the laundry in the garden. I heard her cooking breakfast and saw her unloading groceries.

Anyone in this potting shed would know a lot about Carlsons. It was about the size of a one-car garage and attached to the back of their larder—an unheated room off the kitchen, where food supplies were kept. With the kitchen door to the larder standing open, even my closed door did not keep their words from my ears. They ate breakfast in the kitchen and provided me with pleasant sounds of the family getting ready for the day. They got along well with each other, and it was a gentle daily drama.

In my 15 by 20 feet of space there was a single bed along one wall with shelves and a tiny closet with the head of the bed against it. Next to the closet was the bath with a commode, washstand and tile shower stall. There was just enough room to turn around.

Across from the bed was a chair made of a folded piece of foam rubber, which flattened out as a mat for a guest. I tried it, and it felt just like a piece of foam rubber over concrete. There was a round cafe table and two chairs along one wall. Next to the larder door was a tiny Pullman kitchen with a sink and toaster grill for cooking. The sink was large enough to wash a glass or two. Underneath it was a refrigerator to hold a pint of milk, package of celery, six eggs and little more.

I occasionally put my portable radio near the larder door, to hear the 9 a.m. B.B.C. world news and to alert my neighbors that they were not alone. The tone wasn't very good, and Frank offered me a larger radio. No explanation for his apparent clairvoyance was needed.

The room was paneled on one side with blond wood. The brick wall on the other side was painted white. The vaulted roof was paneled with handsome dark wood, and the bed was covered with huge brown pillows and a brown cotton spread. The curtains were brown, orange and green. The green rug and brown chair blended in with this decor. It was a handsome room, comfortable as a shipboard cabin. Neatness was compulsory.

Stephanie's mother lived in the potting shed until she became ill, I was told. It was available until she needed it back. I had every reason to believe that the story was a figment of my landlords' imagination to give them an out from the London "squatters" law giving tenants tenure.

The timing was fine with me, because my plans were indefinite. I later found that at least two tenants had lived there before me, one for a year. How she survived I do not know. When I moved in the big windows on two sides of the

room overlooked the autumn charms of a big yard full of rose bushes and apples ripening on trees.

However, it sat on the ground with no basement, three sides exposed to the elements, and the fourth was against the unheated larder. As autumn chilled, so did the potting shed. The electric heater blew warm, expensive air toward the vaulted ceiling, leaving me to emerge each morning from my nest of pillows and comforters to frigid air. I caught a cold that eventually drove me to find another flat in order to get rid of it.

Oct. 18 London

All of the stalls' seats have been removed for the final four performances of "The Ring" at Covent Garden. Each night, 700 tickets are sold to people who sit on the floor — the whole orchestra area — which makes room for about 100 more people than if the seats were left in.

I considered sitting on the floor. But after being mildly uncomfortable in a box seat for the first performance, I scratched that plan. I decided that I would compromise on seeing only one more of the operas and not sit on the floor for the other two.

Oct. 22 London

Back in the States, the process of getting women out of the newspaper business is speeding up. News and features assignments we've been working on have become attractive to men — after previously being judged frivolous — and now they are taking them from us. And they don't want advice from women who have some new ideas, based on our solid experience.

So we women move on. There was a story about nannies being hired to work in the Middle East for rich Arabs. One firm was handling a lot of requests. I don't know how much the women find out about the Arab living conditions and the job requirements before signing up, but I heard a lot of weird women were applying. The money must be quite good.

Arabs don't seem to have rigid requirements for nannies, past speaking English and looking like a status symbol for a family who has everything. I don't know if it would violate their ethics if a nanny wrote about them afterward. I do know that taking pictures without permission can certainly cause trouble with Muslims.

There are a lot of very rich Arabs in London during the summer. The apartment I stayed in briefly when I arrived had been vacated by some. The maid had it in good shape for me, but she had horrendous tales of the habits some members of the nomadic tribes retain, even while living in modern cities. They seem to bathe frequently, but not bother with the day's litter — food, clothing, or toilet paper. My reference letter author, Jeremy Campbell, noted that I will have these same problems when living with people on my potential cross-Sahara trip. We would be unable to bathe during the three months of the trip.

I'm reluctant to give up bathing for three months for the cross-Africa trip, and I am certainly not eager to relinquish any vital organ, or even a minor attachment for some infringement of Muslim customs.

The Sahara trip seems pretty common in the London papers, and it ties in with the current fascination with that part of the world.

Oct. 25 London

The English weather makes necessary the layered look, that fashion dictates elsewhere.

“If you don’t like the weather, wait five minutes,” they say here.

The punk look is popular among the young, the only ones rash enough to shave their heads, glue their hair into spikes, and leave chilly domes and necks to invite pneumonia. The turtle neck, cowl neck, big collars, and shaggy hair on both sexes are handy things to be wearing in case of damp, cold weather in a country where 70 degrees is considered hot.

To say that English houses are cold does not adequately paint the picture. To say that the temperature indoors on sunny days may be lower than that outside is not an exaggeration. On Sundays, the English are found sitting in parks or wandering about their gardens trying to get rid of the chill felt from sitting in their own houses.

They also take folding chairs in their cars and pull them out to sit along roads and in car parks in the country. It is a thoroughly mysterious custom. They seem to be waiting for something to happen, but it doesn’t. Sunday afternoon television programming in England is a mixture of horse events, documentaries and religious programs — not very lively stuff. A whole day of it could result in a higher mortality rate among older or weak members of the family circle. As they might catch cold sitting still all day inside the chilly house.

When the weather gets colder, there are pubs to retreat to where the accumulation of decades, or even centuries, of smoke combine with the body heat of patrons for a distinctive aroma.

To illustrate how deeply ingrained in English life is the custom of slightly refrigerating the human body from birth to death, warming it only enough to preserve life, I cite a Sunday luncheon conversation between a foreign noble woman and Lord Hinton, former head of the Electricity Board in London.

The lady has lived in England much of her life, and along with Hinton had detailed knowledge of chillblains, an ailment I was unfamiliar with. They explained the causes and remedies over our meal. Several remedies were brought to the table for inspection. Chillblains usually happen on the extremities — fingers are particularly vulnerable — where circulation of the blood is not adequate for warmth. It is the most painful step one might experience in freezing. The next one is frostbite, when the nerves no longer warn of danger.

The privileged classes have a lot of experience with this affliction here, apparently.

So what should one wear during a London autumn? To start the day, they bundle up for chilly mornings and prepare to peel layers away as the day warms up. Remember, the peeling will probably be done in public.

I started out before dawn one morning to go to a village several hours north of London to see the launch of the first airship in fifty years. I had on too many layers for the midday weather and had no time to find some place private to remove a few layers of clothes before catching a country bus. My co-passengers

watched with obvious interest as I removed several layers and packed them in a tote bag already full of sandwiches and fruit emergency rations.

Removing one layer in the company of others is quite common, however. Lord Hinton barely paused during the luncheon party to remove a jacket. Later, he also took off his sweater, because of the unseasonable 70 degree weather. He was obviously down to his shirt and his skin, a condition of comfort for a 69-year-old Englishman, but too daring for an American not bred to the rigors of the country.

All clothing should be in wool, cotton, silk, or natural fibers, which hold body heat better than synthetics. "Woolies," underdrawers and vests made of wool, cotton or silk should be worn from September to June, the fabric depending on the extremes of the weather.

Over the woolies comes a blouse, sweater, skirt or pants, jacket, scarf, mittens, hat and raincoat or, if absolutely necessary, a top coat. An umbrella is always tucked away in the tote bag. Small items of clothing can be removed and tied about the neck or waist or put in the bag. Coats become a burden when carried. With five or six mix-and-match layers one can have a wide change of wardrobe available at all times.

The risk of taking everything off for a bath should be weighed carefully against the necessity of the bath and the conditions under which it will be taken. Many older buildings have vents in outer walls or windows which allow fresh air into the bathrooms all year. A wet, naked body will be endangered by this during the winter months.



Some removal of clothing will be necessary at night before getting into bed. Getting between percale sheets, which feel damp and chilly, is not pleasant. Those who plan to live through the winter should invest in flannel sheets and a hot water bottle.

Oct. 29 London

Sunday, I want to go see some people who run an Africa overland outfit. I am having fun with train schedules and bus routes, since Sunday service in Wiltshire is scant, so getting about is somewhat difficult.

I am also comparing the African schedules with those for Sicily. There's a departure to Sicily in February from Nairobi, so I could go across the Mediterranean, up the Nile and on to Nairobi to meet the departure date.

I have also been contacting other African expedition companies. I ignore the ads for "need 2 for overland trip to Africa." A lot of people start out and get into trouble of one kind or another—physical, mechanical or political. I want an outfit with a good track record.

Oct. 30 London

I saw Bergman's new flick, "The Serpent's Egg," which includes some early Nazi medical experiments. One scene shows a kindly woman locked in a room with a non-stop crying baby. She disintegrates over several days and kills it. My friend Christina, from Washington D.C., was given a few golden words of advice by her mother to the effect that a woman could cope with anything if she had adequate rest and privacy.

The Arab invasion raised rents everywhere in London, but with some legwork the selection of accommodations is wide. I have checked out some small hotels. One not far from here in Hampstead has charm and quiet rooms for 7.50 pounds, plus tax and includes breakfast.

At the moment, I am still in the converted potting shed 'garden house', The rent is paid, and I am willing to alternate between the chair-bed and the real bed for a bit of variety.

Each Monday I pay for the following week here. I am paid up through November 11 at the moment. I would like to find a place with a more effective heating system.

Nov. 1 London

For at least four weeks, beginning Nov. 11 my address will be:

7 St. Mark's Crescent

London, NW1

Telephone 485-4669

This flat is a bit of old England near Regent's Park. It was a bargain. It hasn't been renovated yet. It's furnished with 1930s furniture due back in fashion any minute. The view over the back garden and across the Grand Union Canal is a bonus. There's extra space and warmth.

Nov. 2 London

The show "Clouds" is very funny, and would be a 'wow', if the audience were filled with newspeople. First, the male reporter flirts with the female, when he

thinks she's Cuban, and then ignores or patronizes her when he discovers she's a competing reporter. She gets friendly with the tour guide. The male reporter is primarily interested in how he will look back in London. She's interested in doing her job and making contact with Cubans. Anyone who has been on a canned press trip and/or been to Cuba, may find it as hilarious, and on target, as I did.

How's this? It was in the London Times on October 24: "WANTED Substitute family, take 2 girls 10 and 15 years. Skiing holiday, around Dec. 16-Jan. 6. Substantial reimbursement offered. Green 01-435-6625."

I called. Green said he is the girls' uncle, and is acting for the mother, who wants to go away. The father is "not around," he said. There's an outfit called Universal Aunts that sends in someone to sub for Mummy, and Green had heard about an outfit that might send someone traveling. Or there's P.L.J. in Wales, where kids can be sent for fun to stay in dorms and go pony trekking any time of the year. Nice Christmas for his two nieces with absent parents! Green said the 10-year-old has "mysterious" crying spells. Not surprising!!

I'm still researching all travel possibilities.

Nov. 7 Rye, East Sussex

Here I am in "Lucia" country. The town is exactly as portrayed in E. F. Benson's novels, where one of his characters, Susan Wyse, rode around the village in her Rolls Royce, although it created a bottleneck on any street it entered.

Susan wore elegant Italian shoes to go with her sables. In reality, she couldn't have walked on the cobblestones. These are not the usual closely

packed stones, but instead, are streets made up of large, round stones imbedded in concrete. Each stone is several inches away from its neighbors, making walking shoes essential.

The custodian at the church was of an uncertain age, with a lot of white hair and no teeth. He remembered the author Benson and said he was a “nice man.” Clerks in several souvenir shops had a hard time recognizing the name of any author. “Henry James? Was he from around here?” said one, in reply to my questions.

Rye is a quaint tourist mecca on top of a little hill. People wander about peeking at houses or rent them for prices starting around \$120 a week. That’s for just a cottage. “Mallards” is one of the grand houses in town. It belongs to the National Trust. The garden wall, which stands at a right angle to the end of the house is now blank, so Miss Mapp’s (another of Benson’s characters) box seat on the activities is gone along with the garden house.

There is a memorial plaque on the garden wall dedicated to an earlier real-life tenant of “Mallards:”

“In a garden house on this site

destroyed in an air raid on

18th August 1940

Henry James

wrote many of his novels.”

The house stands on the corner of a narrow street, giving the occupants a clear view in one direction. Miss Mapp had a ringside seat at the center of town.

On a soft autumn day, it was easy to wander about and see the town as it looked to Benson and his heroine, Lucia. The steps at the Southeast corner of town that Lucia and Miss Mapp climbed that dawn when they returned from their sea adventure really exist. So does their route by the Norman tower, across the church yard, and down the street to the “Mallards.” A plaque prematurely honoring their demise is fiction.

In the summer, or when the caretaker is agreeable, it is possible to climb the church tower to peek at the corner of the “Mallards” garden where Lucia did her exercises in the yellow and black swimsuit. The town is incredibly small with a lot of arts and crafts hidden away in it. Warehouses at the bottom of the hill have been made into little hotels and restaurants with a nineteenth century quaintness.

The traffic problems in this doll-sized town are somewhat controlled by encouraging visitors to leave their cars outside the village. A small department store van tried to turn around the corner of the church yard, looming over the tiny timbered house, and five people stood around telling the driver he wasn't going to make it. He didn't.

I wore the inherited mink jacket to Tilling on its first outing. It created a sensation and gets me marvelous service in restaurants.

I have made it out to Wiltshire to talk with the proprietors of one of the African trek outfits. There aren't many firms in the field, and they all know about each other. I will be based in London for another month.

Nov. 10 London

I got up before dawn one Sunday to go down to Hyde Park to see the start of the Veteran Car Race from London to Brighton. More than 280 cars, built between 1897 and 1905, chugged out into the fog. Their passengers were dressed with great flair for warmth in ski clothes, greatcoats, deerstalkers, and fluffy furs. The one dog wore his own Labrador coat.

It looked like great fun. Many people had brought picnic baskets for their mid-morning tea. It's a one and a half hour's run, if the car goes about 20 m.p.h., but there are often delays caused by breakdowns, detours and distractions. It should be noted that not everyone takes this race in a totally serious manner.

That afternoon, I had a date to talk to some Africa travel excursion people out in Swindon, and I was able to get to the station in time for several cups of hot tea. The classified ads here run ads for various Africa overland companies, and I'm trying to talk to all of them. A lot of people of all ages go to Africa. The means depends on their means. Quite well-equipped, expensive jaunts can be arranged to North Africa to sleep under the stars in catered tents. Or several couples will band together to drive two or more Land Rovers across the Sahara. The extra vehicles are in case of trouble along the way, which should be expected. No gas stations nor mechanics can cause issues!

But most of the firms are meant for student and economy travel. Heavy trucks are used to go all the way to South Africa. The route varies according to both the condition of the roads and politics of the countries on the route. Getting the proper visas for the trip is a big hurdle. Surviving the trip is the next problem.

If people are careless or not strong enough to make the entire trip they just don't come back.

Nov. 17 London

Four well-known writers collected in Hampstead for a discussion panel, as a benefit for historic Burgh House. About 52,000 pounds have been raised for the House so far. A series of lunchtime concerts and a celebrity theatrical evening will utilize the volunteer services of other famous neighbors to preserve the old house in the center of the village.

About 150 people paid to hear Melvyn Bragg, Kingsley Amis, Elizabeth Jane Howard and Margaret Drabble answer "Any Literary Questions?" The queries were posed in accents that reflected many backgrounds.

The event was held in a room, donated by another neighbor, the Swiss Cottage Holiday Inn, and came equipped with only one microphone, which the authors had to share and seemed to find limiting.

The answers to some questions were enlightening about how writers work. They all answered each question and tended, fortunately, to reduce the length of each other's answers. Kingsley Amis showed flashes of wit. Melvyn Bragg led in the temper department — more about that later — and Elizabeth Jane Howard, Amis's wife, was least interesting.

One question from the audience was about his relationship to serious writers, Amis replied, "I'm synonymous with it, you wretch!"

The audience of budding novelists, fans, friends, and students elicited this information:

Drabble — began a novel when expecting her first child and was bored. She later wrote when the children went to bed. Now she writes when they are in school. She ended her first novel by counting the words. She determined she had enough for a book and stopped at 200,000.

She wishes she could write like Saul Bellow in “Henderson the Rain King.” She admires Jane Austen, who married off the wrong people to each other, but thinks “that’s life.” She regrets one of her own endings, which she didn’t allow to change from her original intention. I suspect that is the epitome of Drabble — a very determined person.

She said that writing the first half of a book is uphill work, but she writes because she feels worse if she doesn’t. She also likes knowing she’s half done and on the downhill slope. She starts with characters and a set of situations. She began with one character books and is going back, after trying several character books. She uses her writing to sort out problems. It’s not just the money she makes that motivates her. But also, communicating with people on behalf of someone who used to be bad at speaking with them. (I think this may make her rather tedious company.) She likes the feeling of power writing gives her.

She greatly admired the Victorian novel and wrote one, only to decide the Victorian novel was an anachronism. She thinks TV may be the death of the novel, and ignores reviews for six months. She could not be drawn into a discussion of a review she wrote of a recent Amis book (in which, I am told, she said the men and women were equally miserable). She said she didn’t recall what she had said in it, but that she has always admired “Lucky Jim.” Amis said



he never replies to reviews, so the questioner who had “always wanted to hear authors revile each other” was doomed to disappointment.

Howard — early on, wrote a dull book about a horse. At 19, she wrote a rambling haphazard novel, and later ended one book, “because a kind friend told me it was over” and another because she was moving. She starts by deciding an ending, but not how to get there.

She works from wanting to say something and uses her people to say it. She writes because she feels worse if she doesn’t and uses her observations and experiences, but not real people. She thinks literary prizes are luck, and reviews can be irritating, if facts are wrong, but are primarily a circus for the public.

Amis — wanted to be a poet, but settled for being a novelist. He says starting a book is a “nervous business.” He believes a “modern novel can’t start with the birth of the hero’s grandfather.” He starts with a situation — hero bored with job, and his boss, and his girl who will put up with hero bored with job — then minor characters turn up along the way as he writes.

He believes most writers don’t know what they are up to much of the time. He enjoys the power to hook the reader and hold on to him. “It’s a harmless form of power.” He writes seven days a week or “whenever I haven’t anything better to do.” He disagreed with Drabble that Austen was obviously a feminine writer. He thought she was typical of her time. He thinks TV may sell novels, and that big reviews are better than small ones. “It’s free advertising.”

Bragg — wrote at university and secretly yearned to publish (I suspect his yen for stardom emerged early.) He starts a novel carefully, because “the launch

determines the course.” He starts with a character achieving something, and the setting is always in Cumberland — man walking on a hillside to a fair to be hired. He writes to be published. He noted Dickens and Hardy both “pandered” to the public and changed their works to please. He likes “the harmless tyranny of creating worlds to dominate.” He was overwhelmed by great writers at 17. He read Mann’s “Buddenbrooks” eight times.

All four writers disclaimed any political statements for their characters, or themselves, it seemed. They left the situations and developments to speak for themselves, which their own statements and similarity did. They were a very experienced panel with Bragg, who appears on TV a lot, the smoothest and Amis the quickest.

Bragg is also chairman of the Literary Arts Council which disperses grants to writers. It’s about 150,000 pounds a year and is given in 3,000 to 5,000 pound lump sums to writers at all levels. From those who have already published something to those who complete an outlined project submitted for the grant.

Books do not sell well in Britain, because most people use their local public libraries — much more so than in the U.S. So while a single copy of “Jake’s Thing” may be checked out 300 to 400 times, Amis gets only one royalty for each copy sold to the library. A library may purchase multiple copies of a popular book, but it’s not the same thing as thousands of readers buying copies for themselves, as in the U.S. (Bragg seems to be on intimate terms with the Swiss Cottage branch of the London library.) Does he not buy books by other authors for himself?

Bragg replied to one questioner that, although 300 pounds for a used electric typewriter was a worthwhile cause, he wasn't in favor of small grants. (Breaking up the 150,000 pounds into smaller grants would, of course, be more work. His position as chairman is unpaid, and uses up time he could devote to public appearances.)

Elizabeth Jane Howard backs a bill that would give money to subsidize new book shops, breaking away from the idea that subsidies may only go to non-profit organizations. Of course, authors, playwrights and poets are profit-making, or hope to be. The rule seems to be different for theaters. This controversy neared the surface of the discussion, but then faded.

After an hour or so of literary questions, a certain aura of smug self-satisfaction seemed to radiate from the panel, which members of a group called "Rabies" seemed to find quite maddening. One of them asked, "How does it feel to know that the book you are starting will be published?"

"Great," said Margaret Drabble in a rare burst of enthusiasm. "I jolly well deserved it!"

The other panel members agreed with her.

The "Rabies" spokesman said angrily, "I publish my own. You don't have the guts to publish your own."

Bragg retorted, "You silly man I don't need to. Let's not be nasty. You've been bouncing up and down."

Another "Rabies" voice was heard to shout, "Shut up."

Bragg continued, “You don’t need to be selfish and second-rate. Bad manners are a sure way to draw attention.”

“I don’t need a schoolboy scolding. Why don’t you ask why I’m annoying you?” said “Rabies.”

“I’m not interested,” said Bragg.

“You’d be a better writer if you were,” they retorted.

Later, another “Rabies” person, with a bit of irony, apologized for the boorish behavior of his companions. There were rosy flushes on Drabble’s cheeks. Bragg was also red-faced and looking a bit sheepish. The smug aura that had hung over the panel disappeared in the heat of candid literary questions.

The authors had begun answering questions in careful, low, controlled Oxbridge tones and controlled manners. Regional accents were faint. As Bragg became heated, his accent was stronger.

A few days later a discussion at the Institute of Contemporary Arts centered about John Irving’s “World According To Garp.” Eva Figs, Sara Maitland, and Michele Roberts had higher passions and lower accents.

About 100 people paid one pound for the lunchtime discussion, and there was a lot of feminist political feeling in the audience and panel — not with Irving and Figs, who are the better known writers and smoother talkers.

Roberts said, “There’s a market for the feminist novel, but it is difficult to get published, because women are trespassing in the literary world. They are told their books are not good art, but who decides?”

There was some agreement that feminist rage must be refined out of novels to reflect the human condition generally. It was noted that there were a lot of bad feminist novels about. An American voice was heard to say, “When feminist novels can tell a good story, I’ll buy them.”

John Irving, best-selling author and star of the panel, sometimes seemed to be dozing off during the discussion.

Nov. 22 London

I was asked whether I would be interested in doing some stringing for *TIME*, and I said, of course. There’s a chance of their needing extra help occasionally because *The Washington Star*, one of my old employers, keeps asking for things.

Nov. 23 Chenies, Buckinghamshire

Chenies, a jewel of an English village, totally owned by the Duke of Bedford, struck me the way Timbuktu, Mali did, during a brief visit several years ago. “When’s the first bus out?” I wondered.

There are certain places where there is a stillness of inaction and one knows that a quick look around will be enough. Chenies is a house, church, school, pub and some cottages and a little village green. There is a bus out once an hour. In the half hour between arriving and departing I looked around, panicked at the thought of staying, and lurked near the jewel of a bus stop to be sure I didn’t miss the bus back to urban life.

I was huddled in the handcrafted shelter in the sun, but out of the wind, and I spied a laborer piling bricks in a small horse-drawn van. He was removing some modern touch from a peasant’s garden, using a wheelbarrow for each load.

Between them he would eye me frequently, because laborers here work at a gentlemanly pace, and catch me smiling at him. He was the only entertainment in town.

The *Time* stringing job is extremely tempting, because I covet a \$200 pair of boots for winter. Also, the cold that I caught at Upper Montagu Place lasted the entire five weeks I lived at Wadham Gardens. It was due partly to some bug going around England, but also due to the dankness of the potting shed.

The roses and apple trees in the garden beyond the big windows were lovely at the beginning of autumn. However, as cold weather began, I began to wonder if the landlady's mother was in the hospital due to spending too much time in the potting shed. Any heat in the place rose immediately to the high beamed ceiling, leaving me to wrap up in a down duvet, holding a mug of hot tea—as a hand warmer.

The National Health offices looked dismal, so I went to a private doctor, who works for the Gulf Corporation a lot. It is actually possible to get an appointment within a day or so of calling, and have the doctor come to see you. However, being accustomed to the more rugged American health system, I did not find this necessary. I know the various signs of physical deterioration and do not wait until I collapsed to seek help. Now I feel fine.

Nov, 25 London

It seems wise to hang on to this new flat for now. My friend, Louise, has postponed her trip to visit me until the first of the year, due to her hysterectomy surgery. When my young brother, Robert, graduated from high school, Mother,

he and Louise drove around France. They took Louise along to help her recover from a disastrous love affair with a Belgian she followed to Europe. The Belgian later married the cheese fondue princess of Switzerland. We all found his choice wildly hilarious, but Louise was devastated. Mother and Rob gave her a merry time.

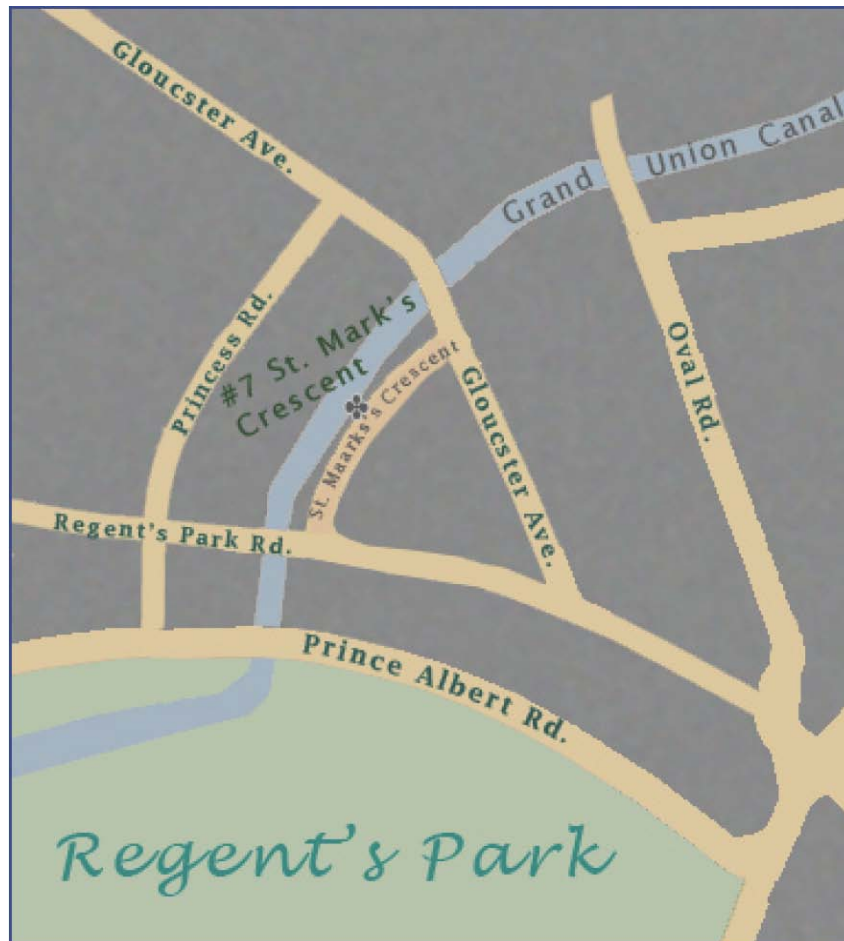
At first, Louise was going to stop and stay with me on her way to Sicily, but she is now looking forward to having me accompany her from London to Sicily. Her doctor prefers that she not travel alone so soon after surgery. I think it helps her to know that I am expecting her soon, so I am sending theater information and have a bed ready for her. I haven't heard the results of the operation, but hope that if I sit very still with fingers crossed, she'll be all right.

Last year, before even worse surgery, she had to wait for a hospital bed. She asked the doctor if it was okay to go to Paris for ten days. He said yes, but to take her x-rays along. She did and the trip sustained her later through a long, bleak recovery period. I admire her guts, or what she has left of them.

Upcoming subjects I want to write about are: My love affair with the London transit system; How I became a wharf rat; A pedestrian guide to London theaters; and "Cheap" is a respectable English word.

Nov. 28 London

In Chelsea there is a steady flow of Arab students, travelers, etc., so the merchants up the prices on everything



I'm staying near the tube line that serves popular tourist areas and Heathrow directly and am surrounded by the English, Australians, some resident Americans — and much lower prices for most things.

My new flat is, quite frankly, ugly, but with a certain 1930s charm, and the location is marvelous. It overlooks Regent's canal, so I have passing boats and ducks. It is two minutes from the Zoo and on one side is a chic neighborhood. On the other is blue-collar, bohemian, Camden Town, where houses are being renovated, and the atmosphere is much like Capitol Hill or some areas of Boston.



I'm in this flat for a while, although the house is for sale, and I am keen on seeing more of Africa. Though, now I am leaning toward a trip up or down the Nile to see the ruins. I can't move on until my new American Express card arrives. It is my only link with transient banking. It also makes cashing checks possible anywhere.

Louise had to have her hysterectomy to enable her to be very far from her doctor. Given the choice between that and hanging around Connecticut for five or ten years for nature to end her difficulties, she opted for surgery. She wants to stop off on her way to Sicily, and is also counting on me to accompany her to Italy, which, of course, I will do. If she makes it here. I have all my fingers and toes crossed for her and am hoping the operation went as expected.

The weather has been fabulous, and each sunny, clear day I leap out of bed and go somewhere that would be less appealing in damp weather. The tube takes me out to the country for a hike, and the double decker buses operate just beyond the end of the tube lines, making a fun way to tour from one little village to another.

The theater is incredible and serves London in the place of our heavy doses of television. The television here has few good things and a lot of dull programs. On Sunday, for example, which the English spend with their families, television offers hymns from some cathedral, horses in a variety of races and no news. Those attractions leave plenty of time for a long Sunday lunch, a walk in the garden, and tea in the drawing room.

Theater in the West End compares to the shows around Times Square in New York, with big name shows and stars. Then, there is the National Theater —

three auditoria under one roof — and The Royal Shakespeare Company. These are repertory companies with pools of performers. The RSC puts on plays by authors other than Shakespeare, and the National plays may be recent or several centuries old. There are fringe theaters scattered around the city where new authors and performers get a chance. Getting a ticket down front at the last minute, I found myself seated next to an actor from another show at the National. They seem to keep tabs on each other.

The movies here are much the same as in the U.S., but late night movies are popular in neighborhood theaters. On weekends, after the latest new release is shown, all-night programs begin about 11 p.m. They show old movies, and the list looks like our late night television schedules, which don't exist here.

Covent Garden is very expensive — and elegant — and I sometimes go with friends to see an opera there.

Monday I'm going to see the World Trade Center just beyond the Tower of London. There's a stretch of about 2,500 acres of unused London docks. Containerization shipping is now headquartered farther downstream at Tilbury. The company that built the World Trade Center is planning the development of this land. The WTC hotel is frequently used as a set for television films.

There are also fishing boats docked there, and shops, all very much like Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco.

Dec. 1 London

The Tower of London ranks with the Statue of Liberty as a summer tourist attraction. It is linked by a pleasant river walk to the new Tower Hotel and the

buildings beyond of the World Trade Center. It's a wonderful place to visit on a clear, cold winter day, when the multitudes, who stand in a line in balmy weather, are busy elsewhere with Christmas shopping. In the cold, only a few groups are clustered around their leaders. The Tower of London, which was a royal palace and fortress, looks like a 900-year-old walled village, give or take some modern improvements.

The tiny staircases and small rooms are difficult for large groups — or any gathering of more than four or five people. The only memory I have of my previous visit is a dim recollection of the crown jewels. They haven't changed, as far as I can tell, so the rest of the Tower probably hasn't either.

Being locked up in The Tower, which has such an ominous ring, had a class system. The bottom was truly dreadful, but higher up there were creature comforts.

The Tower is actually a whole series of towers. The White Tower, standing in the middle of the fortified area, was built as a Royal Palace and included a bare, plain, royal, Norman chapel for the King. But the fortifications around the tiny royal park include many towers, which have rooms in them that sheltered guards keeping watch on the palace defenses, and housing for prisoners.

The only surviving cell in the White Tower itself, perhaps accommodation for royalty with little hope of returning to power, is a stone hole in the wall about 5 by 8 feet with a high ceiling but no opening except the door which has a steel grill across it. There was some straw on the floor.

Far worse are two cells that either no longer exist, or tourists can't get to. In "Little Ease" the prisoner was confined in a box-sized cell just large enough for him to sit with his head on his knees. The drawing of it looked like the old cartoon captioned "People Are No Damned Good."

The other cell was somewhere in the foundations of the fortifications where, as the Thames tide came in and the water rose, reducing the area available for the prisoner and the rats in it, the occupants had to crowd together to keep from drowning. The picture is not pleasant.

But Sir Walter Raleigh had a duplex apartment in one small tower where he resided for 13 years. He wrote his biography, a useful way to spend prison time. There was a lot to encourage this explorer in his writing: seclusion, simple Jacobean comfort and his own little stretch of Tower wall overlooking the Thames, where he could go out for a breath of air.

Others did not have the materials to occupy their time so well. In Beaufort tower, which is a smaller suite, consisting primarily of one room about 10 by 10 feet with a fireplace large enough to roast an ox. The walls are covered with messages left by former occupants. One had a positive attitude and wrote that life containing some confinement was better than one with "over moche liberty."

There is also a small tower room where torture devices are displayed, mental and physical—things to puncture holes in one's body, and things to put parts of fresh-killed criminals on display.

The “Touching Gold and Silver” exhibition in the Goldsmith’s Hall in the City of London lost a gold pitcher valued at 75,000 pounds the other day to a passing admirer who not only touched it, but walked off with it.

There is no chance of any of the crown jewels in the Tower being picked up. Viewers walk around the case near the glass, but must keep moving. To stand and gaze at the blaze of diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, pearls, gold and silver you must step back and up on a slightly raised platform away from the case. The guards’ jokes are the same as I remember.

It costs 50 pence to enter the Tower and another 50 pence to see the jewels, which are immensely popular. In the winter, when there are few tourists, it’s possible to take time to look at this overwhelming, gaudy, display of minerals until the urge is satisfied.

There are vast golden tubs with peculiar, ornate shapes. Are they soup tureens? There are also great, eight foot long gold spears, big enough to gore a horse, but which seem to be religious implements of the Church of England. If ever there was a class of people determined to be crushed by the weight of its own possessions, the Anglo-Saxon royalty seemed headed in that direction.

In contrast, the ornaments are delicate in the El Dorado exhibit of South American gold on display at the Royal Academy the ornaments are delicate. The jewelry and some figures are only 8 to 10 inches tall.

Two floors of the White Tower are devoted to a display of armor, shiny metal cans modeled on the human form, which soldiers donned before mounting horses which were also armored. The little Oriental museum is a delightful

contrast to all this barbaric bulk. It includes a dazzling display of the ingenuity used in battleground garb.

The piece de resistance is elephant armor made of thousands of small pieces of metal several inches long and about half an inch wide. Larger segments are held together with metal mesh, but the main impression is the shine and suppleness of the small metal pieces, like fish scales. The huge ears and trunk of the plaster elephant wearing this shimmering coat stick out of this elegant attire, which is adorned all over with little red bows!

There is, also, a collection of battle dress and helmets from China and Japan, each combining protection and beauty. The helmets are adorned with decorations, that to my eye looked like oriental characters. It is an amusing display. The only amusing piece of English armor was one suit with an erect codpiece the size of a large Italian salami.

Dec. 4 London

“Evita” proves that knowing one ignorant Argentine hooker is enough. Perhaps another, Fanne Fox, was following in the step of her more famous countrywoman when she made her Washington splash jumping out of Rep. Wilbur Mills car and into the Tidal Basin. Having known Fanne, while trying to get her to participate in a Counter Gridiron event, I found her bright, but uneducated. And from as much as I cared to know of her, corrupt, probably perverse, and fated to miss the brass ring.

The hardest theater ticket to obtain is “Evita.” I saw it on Thursday. It’s popularity is a mystery to me. Now booking is up to June. My excellent seat was

procured at the last minute for a matinee. The time was right for the story of a woman in power but the music is repetitious. There is one charming song, sung by Peron's mistress after Evita kicks her out and takes her place

I found the rest of the music boring and repetitious. It had me dozing toward the end of the first act. It does not have the charm of "Joseph." That could be because "Joseph" had an upbeat story, and Evita was ambitious, self-centered, and greedy. Of course, she was adored by Peron, who toted her earthly remains around for 17 years after her death when their sex life certainly was over. At least, I hope so. The necrophilia element of the show — it opens and closes with her coffin being carted around the stage.

There's gloating in Che Guevara's attitude. He's pleased she got hers after all, but he did, too, later. And what's he doing in this show, anyway, except to explain things the author is too lazy to write into the songs? There's little dialogue, and the show is virtually opera, if that's a story told in song.

Peron is pictured as really preferring crossword puzzles to politics. The mystery of this show's popularity may be explained by the fact that rock musicals are "in." Also, the Prince Edward theatre is quite near London University. Many students have never heard of Eva Peron, a seemingly timely feminist subject, nor had they, apparently, every seen a bouffant white formal with a strapless glitter top.

Elaine Paige, the star, has taken prizes for her acting. She comes across as one tough cookie. U.S. feminism is years ahead of London. A musical about Jackie O would have a character with class. Or there's "Hitler--A Career" playing here, excellent material for a musical with a really depressing story. Instead

there's Evita, a musical about a woman tyrant, guarded by thugs. If we wait long enough for the bodies to be buried, maybe a musical about Pastor Jones will open somewhere.

Actually, the Hitler movie, a documentary with terrible narration is not far from the Evita format, without the cuteness of the songs and dances. The first show Sunday afternoon was almost sold out in a 250-seat theatre, although the audience reacted very little. Only when a famous Nazi, Goebbels, I think, the one who got so fat, was handing out Christmas toys in the early 1930s to children at a party was there universal, immediate rumbling in the audience — laughter.

I say the narration was terrible. It was trite. They say in the documentary that the “Nazis stamped out every human quality.” I say “not the vicious ones, just the good ones.”

Really, if history about a woman, far enough in the past so that today's theater audiences don't remember her makes a good play, there would be a fortune in Alice Roosevelt Longworth. Her life story has everything. She came from a famous, fascinating family, married into one of the finer Ohio capitalist fortunes. Her husband's sister married a French nobleman, and the newspaper clippings around the turn of the century are full of material for a show that would have all that “Annie Get Your Gun,” “My Fair Lady” and “The Sound of Music” had — and more.

Alice had family, class, intelligence, breeding, daring and charm. When her husband-to-be's sister, the princess arrived in New York for the wedding, the ship was delayed. Alice hopped on the tug going out to meet it and found there was no way to get aboard the liner, except by climbing up the rope ladder put over the



side for the customs men. Up she went. This was in 1906, and she was the daughter of the President of the U.S. Her fiancé, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, followed her up the ladder to introduce his bride to his family.

“Jesus Christ Superstar” is still playing a block from “Evita.” It is now in its 2500-plus performance. Andrew Lloyd Webber has gauged the popular taste.

Dec. 6 London

I went down to talk with Barbara Van Cleave’s old beau about possible work for the World Trade Center, an ultra modern development at St. Katherine’s Dock next to the Tower of London. I agreed with his comments graciously and complimented the project. I was fascinated by his tie with the company emblem all over it. More often Englishmen wear school or club ties. He introduced me to the company public relations woman, who used to be a reporter with *The Guardian*.

The company promotion film, which he showed me in solitary splendor, included no women in professional positions, just in social situations. The only working women were secretaries and, of course, there were wives at parties. The parade of international business people crossing the screen was all male.

“Don’t you want business people of both sexes to rent offices and stay at the hotel here?” I asked.

He sat twiddling his gold Cross pen. I twirled my silver Tiffany pen. This was not the place for me.

The Christmas goodies here in the shops are fabulous. I discovered fresh lichee nuts which are to dried lichees, as grapes are to raisins. I’d like to export

this delicacy for my friends to try, but fear problems with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

It took all afternoon today to get a ticket for France. I found that going to Dover by rail and then across the Channel on the ship was not the bargain an ad touted.

I can get there faster on a Hovercraft. The ticket had to be bought today, because Charing Cross isn't open at 6:30 a.m. when I want to go over on a day trip. There is a slow down of guards at Waterloo station, which may or may not affect trains from Charing Cross tomorrow, when I will dash over for the day to see where I lived in Calais one summer.

Dec. 7 London

Thursday, I donned several layers of clothing to cross the Channel to Calais. I lived with a French family there before biking around France on 'The Experiment in International Living' during one summer in my younger years. I want to look around and, of course, buy some cheese. The English flock across to the hypomarket for French delicacies and liquor in a huge American-style supermarket.

The town was rebuilding when I was there. It was flattened during World War II by bombers going after the port, and dumping remaining bombs as they returned from missions over England. The local people felt they had more than their share of explosives. My French family had a bomb land in the garden. It didn't explode, but had to be taken out the front door, while everyone in the neighborhood waited tensely — or left the area.

The weather in summer was chilly with the wind sweeping down off the North Sea, so December definitely qualifies as woolen undies time.

One generally hops out of bed briskly here, because without central heating, it's that or freeze to death. I miss my friends, but at least it's not necessary to nag anyone and say, "Aren't you ready YET!"

The expedition to Calais turned into a shopping trip. I seem to have purchased 15 kinds of cheese for 86 francs, which may be a big bargain, but is a heavy load of cheese on the Hovercraft. I am exhausted.

The English mail delivery is marvelous. The first delivery is shortly after 9 a.m., which makes a nice way to start the day. The correspondence is snowballing in a way I had not foreseen, and mine may have to taper off. Of course, that would cut the morning flow, which replaces a morning newspaper, of which there are fewer all the time. If it isn't one strike, it's another, and the non-striking publications do not print more to take up the slack. That would be ungentlemanly — and against British union rules, apparently.

There is total silence from Louise. I send theater schedules and magazines of interesting things to do here. She had said that she likes to go out every evening. The silence can be regarded optimistically or not, and I am too cowardly to call and settle the question, because it would be harder to write cheery letters, if the news were bad. It's a quandary.

Dec. 20 London

Confused and/or bored, I walked out of the opening night performance of the National Theater special Christmas presentation, and due to the shortage of

morning newspapers in London, I am unable to find out the ending, for which I did not stay.

The program is called “Herod” and is at the small Cottesloe theatre, a rectangle with about 100 seats on three sides of the stage level and a row of seats on three sides of each of the two upper levels, where one may lean forward on the railing and peer down at the action. The actors are inches away from the feet of the audience in the front row on the stage level. At one point God’s chief helper was declaiming straight into the face of Bernard Levin, recently the critic of *The London Sunday Times*. Levin continued taking notes. All those seen to be taking notes were male. My report is done the morning after from memory.

On the stage floor were three dials, one a Roman clock, one a calendar, and the third was a mystery. At one point Herod complains that his heart is Jewish, his hands Greek and his head Roman. That may have something to do with the dials.

In any case, the borders of the stage are used as a pathway by which, first, the musicians and then, the actors parade along its edges. There are three singers, two female and one male, three brass players — trumpet, clarinet and tuba — and two drummers, who also have small versions of the J. Arthur Rank metal gong.

The female singers play chimes now and then, and one of them plays an archaic form of the violin. The music alternates with the drama and ranges from echoes of church and folk airs to a bit of rock beat.

I know the scenery is hard to visualize. The story is also tough to explain. Musicians and actors wore long robes. However, some players added bits to their costumes. Adding a sheepskin vest turned a player into a shepherd. A crown and gold chains transformed him into a Wise Man. There was, however, a certain amount of confusion, because the actor who played Herod also seemed to be Joseph. Or at least, the man who was traveling with someone who seemed to be Mary, because she was with a newborn baby.

Not a simple Christmas story. It seemed to be an extremely complex tug of war between good and evil. Herod was torn — between killing the child, who was attracting a lot of local attention from the people and the heavens — and leaving it alone. He was irritated that it was loved, while he was only feared. A man in a beige robe told him that he knew where the baby was, and that the mother would be no problem to the king's soldiers. The actor in a special white robe, told the audience, "I am not God. I do all the work." He understood that a king might have a problem, if he added the adored child to his already long list of victims.

At one point, when the swords were pushed into a Jewish Woman's bundle (baby), and a long red scarf was pulled out and wound around her, an actor commented that it seemed the king's worst side had won. The Jewish Woman said the story was a riddle. I couldn't agree more.

After an hour I left, still pondering lines such as this one said to Mary, "You have the brown fields wrapped around your wrist."

The actors and musicians all left the stage and then filed back to bow to applause. Then they left. I, quite naturally, went to the lobby and, following the

flow of people out the door, left the theater after what may have been only the first act.

Were there other acts to come? I don't know.

Dec. 22 London

As soon as I get my smallpox shot, I can move on immediately, depending on how things shake down. Louise is planning on coming through London on January 15, and I would like to help her any way I can.

Dolores is on her way over, and the flat here in Villa Primrose will never be the same. Beautiful and exotic as a sixteen-year old Wellesley freshman, her sultry voice already has the guy in the ground floor flat intrigued. He answers the phone located on the first floor, and if the call is for Dolores or me, he fetches us to come to the phone. Since he runs around in his paisley robe, the scene is colorful.

Dec. 26 London

While the British jammed the stores in a crunch that endangered small children not encased in one of those strollers, I enjoyed the slack season in the theaters. I often bought tickets at cut rates officially, or unofficially, at curbside from people who wanted to get back to shopping.

At last report I had seen "Herod" at the Cottesloe, and I have begun to notice the theater world shrinking since then. I was squeezing by a man on the aisle to get to the next seat for a performance of "The Woman" at the Olivier Theatre when I looked down and realized that it was Herod, himself. He saw the flash of recognition, so I lied blithely and told him that I had enjoyed his performance. I

did, actually, it was the play that made me leave early, if I did. I still don't know if it was over when I left.

In "The Woman", the wittiest woman in Athens is married to the handsomest man and goes mad after defying his warlike inclinations against the Trojans. It is a stirring drama, three hours long and has many scantily clad Greeks and some bloody deaths. It is great fun.

Women, generally, are not faring well on the London stage, although there is an awareness that stories about them have commercial appeal. *Evita*, of course, dies, and there is Che Guevara's tendency to gloat over her demise.

In "Troubadour," the virgin queen of Narbon beds the married applicant, for the job of troubadour in her court. His wife complains that his only method of expressing affection for her is to beat her. After successfully gentling him, the queen gives him the job, already held by a far better singer. She then renounces her crown in favor of her nephew and becomes a nun. This extravaganza, which has marvelous costumes and a battle between Crusaders and infidels, was written by a New Yorker, who is president of the Success Motivation Institute of Japan. He's been working on it for 16 years — since the director, James Fortune, was eleven years old. Fortune's biography begins with the statement that he "has been involved in the theater from an early age. At school he produced both plays and films and finally graduated to Pinewood Film Studios at the age of 18."

He and many of the others pictured in the program were there on opening night, with an enthusiastic audience of their relatives applauding the show. The critics were not so kind.

I thought the best performance was by Andrew Wadsworth. He played Tom in “The Norman Conquests” on television. His voice stood out from the rest, some of whom seemed unable to hit the notes squarely. I was glad to leave the theater and not surprised to have the critics confirm my opinion of the show.

I also saw “Iolanthe” at Sadler’s Wells and will see some more D’Oyly Carte, just because I never have. “Saratoga” at the Royal Shakespeare is an old American farce which is fun even if there is a great confusion among the American accents. The actors have a crazy variety, and the actresses generally sound like Julie Harris.

Albert Finney and the cast of “Has Washington Legs?” at the Cottesloe Theatre do New York and Hollywood accents quite well. The movie is about the American Revolution.

My old seat mate, Herod - a.k.a Brian Cox – was also at the “Hang of the Gaol” at the Warehouse Theatre, which means that twice in three days he went to see other actors perform. Now I look more carefully at the audiences. Performers here are so good, that now it’s obvious to me that their skill is developed through their own work and studying that of others.

The Warehouse is part of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in London and is, literally, in an old warehouse located a block from Covent Garden tube station. Its capacity is 200, but is often only half full. One performance of Mary O’Malley’s new play was sold out, when I wanted a ticket. She wrote “Once a Catholic,” which is now headed for New York. Another of her plays, “Look Out Here Comes Trouble,” does well at the Warehouse.



Casual theater attire at the Warehouse is really casual. Some of the audience wore jeans that look as though they were also worn to clean the car. There was a glad reunion behind me one night between a girl, who had spent the day hitchhiking from Wales, and her friends who were saving a seat for her. All the tickets are cheap, and those for students and actors are cheaper.

The performers for all the Royal Shakespeare Theatres in London are drawn from the same repertory group, and the lead actress from "Goal" was all dressed up and applauding her fellow actors at the press night of "Saratoga."

"Goal" has more male nudity than I had ever seen on stage before. Men drop their trousers to leave lumpy souvenirs at the site of a burned-out jail. A superstitious act. The naked Greeks and Romans at the National Theater caused a sensation with only bare buttocks. What next?

The Christmas treat here is the music, which can be found in religious services. Christmas music is, after all, folk music. As a student in an Illinois village school, I spent each autumn practicing songs for a Christmas pageant with Bible readings. It was the same program that St. Paul's Cathedral here in London presented on Saturday afternoon as a carol service and blessing of the crib. At fourteen I had read the Bible story of Christmas with my classmates. Now, questions arise particularly from non-Christians about such activities in a public school. However, back then, there weren't such questions, or any non-Christians that I knew of in our village. The one African American resident was the school janitor. You get the picture.

Edward Heath, the unemployed ex-prime minister, conducted a songfest with an orchestra and choir at Central Hall Westminster on Monday. Tickets were

3.50 pounds — a top price. Mr. Heath welcomed everyone to this, his second annual performance. I could almost believe I had been to his performance last year, the atmosphere was so nostalgic. The audience chuckled over his conducting chores, which he did instead of being out sailing, which he can't do this time of year.

The carol service at Westminster Abbey featured a song by Christina Rossetti, which other programs have included, but not so prominently. It is so grim:

"In bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan.

Earth stood hard as iron, water like stone."

The program was either beyond me musically, or just too religious for a folk music fan.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Hardy's play, "Under the Greenwood Tree," has peasant male folk singing. There is also feuding with the new pastor over whether their strings and songs will be replaced by his organ and co-ed choir, which would be a shocking innovation.

At the Royal Albert Hall, I bought a 3 pound ticket from a man at the curb for 1 pound and enjoyed an evening of carols. The hall is a giant red plush Victorian candy box. Three rows of boxes around the vast open orchestra area remained lit during the program. The boxes had their curtains draped back, making each a bright window of people.

There was an English Baroque choir, the London Oriana choir, and a recorder ensemble by the Haberdashers' Aske's school for Girls in Elstree. The boys sang marvelously, and the girls mostly sat. Can't little English girls sing?

The music was marvelous, including carols, hymns, folk dances, and lots of happy, joyful music. A man played the harp, explained some tunes and accompanied his songs on it. He led the whole hall, plus a brass ensemble for some songs.

The final carol program I attended turned out to be 100 Americans singing and playing in a seedy Greek Revival church across from Euston Station on Christmas afternoon. The capacity was about 600, but only 60 tickets were sold for the performance by the Susquehanna University choir and band. The university was touring England and France during their Christmas holidays.

The leader trimmed off the last few familiar verses of many carols for the performance. When I arrived the band was rehearsing "Variants on a Medieval Tune," which drove me upstairs to the balcony where the sound was less overwhelming, and I had an excellent view of the action below. They waited until 3:15 to start the 3 o'clock program, but no more people arrived. In the next hour and a half, the unheated church became definitely icy.

Half the audience was a party of thirty Chinese women and two men. Mid-program ten women left and two were asleep. Tourist groups have few options on Christmas afternoon, when London is a ghost town. Before the program started an old man wandered down the center aisle and sat in the front pew. He talked to people around him and waved to members of the choir. An official came and moved him to a rear pew. He continued to talk to the few people around him

whenever the leader introduced a song. He did put out his cigarette. When he arrived, he was carrying an old jacket. He left before the program ended and was carrying two newer-looking ones left by singers in the pews.

It was dark as I walked home, a mile or so, and the streets were deserted. I felt sorry for a Swedish girl who stopped me to ask where the nearest bus station was. All bus and underground service had stopped at 3 p.m. due to the holiday, and there were few taxis about.

Going home, I was lighthearted from a musical Christmas. Dolores was in town to meet her sister and brother-in-law for the holiday. They asked me to join them at a hotel for dinner. The few restaurants open on Christmas in London are fully booked long before the holiday. So they went to the Ritz or Savoy bar-hopping, and I went home and put a shilling in the meter and toasted my toes in front of the fire.

Jan. 3 London

The whole country closed down for Christmas, and now I'm going to have to do some fast catching up. This may be my last week in England, and I'm going up to Cambridge for the weekend.

The English have an expression that I have only recently learned to translate correctly. "Were you on your own for Christmas?" my landlord said this morning, as he retrieved a veritable gold mine in coins from the gas meter. By then I understood that he meant "alone." Until quite recently when people asked if I was "on my own" I was interpreting it as "independent" and answering with a big grin.

Not exactly the correct response for the holiday season in a country where togetherness has not gone out of style, especially during Christmas.

Anyway, I could reassure him that I had not been “on my own.” Some American friends passed through London. I did not tell him that a few days’ contact with one of them staying with me and visiting some friends of hers in Sussex was enough. I wondered about her drinking. She is charming, exotic, brilliant, and moves from person to person, dazzling as she goes. Her drinking is not objectionable, but it is unceasing. As far as I could tell, she never stopped from morning to night. To go through London with its attractive pubs with her is like walking a dog that pulls toward every hydrant.

I have been here since the middle of September, and have continued talking to people and companies about an overland trip through Africa. It can be done very cheaply in a truck. Although I am willing to consider going without a bath for four months, I’d like to learn something from the venture besides how to camp out in Africa. There are trips on the Nile by public transportation, which wouldn’t mean being cooped up with the same people for so long, or sleeping outside for four months. One can also go by ground transportation across Europe and the Middle East to India, a popular adventure here. Although, spot wars sometimes make the route a bit circuitous.

This is what I consider being “on my own,” and I would like to get as much out of it as possible before my money runs out. When it does I will probably be reduced to clerking in the Five & Dime, and frankly, at the moment, that is more appealing than writing a series on White House offspring. I want a life with

change and adventure. Just to be sure that I didn't relapse into old habits, I burned a few bridges, and got a slight case of smoke inhalation.

Next week, I shall probably go to Italy. Louise is recovering from her major surgery and wants to go to Sicily. She is working on a book and spent last winter there and loves it. She can't make the whole trip alone, and I would like to do anything I can to help her out.

This is my fourth flat since September, most found with the help of the want ads and legwork. It overlooks Regent's Canal. It is cheap by American standards and colder than Nome, when the gas heaters are off. I woke up one morning with the French doors overlooking the canal standing open and picturesquely framing a snowdrift on the rug. The choice was to leap out and turn on the heater, close the doors, jump back in bed and watch the snow melt in the bedroom, or to leap out of bed and shovel the snow out the window, then turn on the heater and jump into bed. I choose to jump out of the warm bed, turn on the heater, bury myself back in the blankets, and wait for it to work.

I was attired, as usual, in woolen panty hose, flannel nightgown and a sweater. In honor of the English winter I have purchased a pair of cashmere panty hose, which are incredibly warm.

Jan. 8 London

I just got back from the "Famous Film Critic Philip Jenkinson's" Bogart weekend at Cambridge, which was held without "Famous Philip Jenkinson". Short trip!

There is a cablegram here saying that Louise is recovering nicely, but not coming Tuesday. She will call Tuesday about midnight. The household is used to phone calls in the middle of the night. The guy on the first floor seems to have a girlfriend who always dashes out, then has second thoughts, and wants to come back.

Never have my plans been more flexible. The one-way, second class sleeper train fare on the Rome express is about 10 pounds more than the round-trip Laker airline weekend fare to Rome. There is a Rome express directly from Calais, which might be fun, but whichever route we take depends on Louise's health. The Laker 55 pound air fare is so cheap we could use the ticket one way and throw away the return, or possibly sell it on the curb in Rome. The Apex round-trip fare on Alitalia is twice as much.

I am narrowing down my African trip options. I think I would like to make a trek along the Nile, using local transportation. It lasts one month. There's one Feb. 6, which looks more and more impossible due to Louise's arrival, and another Mar. 25. I am going to try and discourage Louise from making a quick move from here after she arrives. She said during her phone call, that she is not strong enough to carry luggage yet. I think I can influence her to eliminate Paris and, perhaps, get her to stay a week or ten days before taking a train or plane directly to Rome.

The landlord is very helpful, and will forward mail if I suddenly leave for Italy.

Dolores proved that one could call collect from the household phone, and also left me her telephone credit number, a really thoughtful bread and butter gift. Her luggage felt as though it were loaded with bricks. She had stocked up on

duty free opportunities and was taking a personal supply, as well as Scotch and brandy to all her other hostesses.

Jan. 9 London

On family: Mother had a cousin, Clifford, who spent much of his childhood living with her family in Mount Morris, Ill. He went off to World War I. When it was over, his foot locker came back, but not Clifford. About forty years later my grandmother died, and Mother heard from Clifford. People had been wondering where he was.

Mother asked him why he hadn't come home from the war. He replied that he didn't think it would matter.

Families have to drift apart or we would all still be in a huge pile in Dr. Leakey's gorge in Tanganyika.

Jan. 10 London

I nipped down to American Express to see what was in the W box. The mail is not yet back to normal after the holidays.

The battle to get compensation for the antique chest, paid for, but never delivered to J.T. and Kaye Grubbs in Alexandria, Va., will be fought out soon. The Grubbs relayed the situation to me, but I'm not clear about the problem. The owner may be out of business, but if he isn't, I have several ideas. One, if he hasn't sold the chest, I'll say, "Okay, I'll take it." Bonnie Angelo will be in her Brompton Square mansion two more years so it could stay there a while or be shipped home with her stuff.



If he has sold it, I'll say, "I offered to look into the matter, because I know businesses here sometimes get swamped, but I'm certain a reputable firm wouldn't sell something and keep the money without sending it to the U.S." If I win, but have to take cash instead of the chest, I'll just relay the money to Alexandria. We'll see what comes of this.

Louise, called last night and is planning to arrive next Tuesday, on standby from New York. That's hardy! I am urging her to stay until the weekend of Jan. 26. There's a cheap Laker ticket to Rome, but I don't dare give up the flat until we have the tickets, and don't want to buy the tickets until she is actually here.

Alitalia is double the Laker fare and has to be booked ahead. I'd have to be clairvoyant to book this trip a month ahead. We may end up doing a slightly geriatric version of the book "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay: An Unforgettable Comic Chronicle of Innocents Abroad in the 1920s" by Cornelia Otis Skinner and Emily Kimbrough.

Jan. 13 London

I got an extra bag from Washington via Bonnie's personal delivery service and am ready to pack up. There are a few things I still want to do. It will be fun to have Louise here. My singing landlady from the potting shed is starring in Aladdin, a Christmas panto, and I want to see her before it closes.

I am reading H.G. Wells's "The New Machiavelli" and looking for all the books on Louise's reading list on Sicily by John Julius Norwich, starting with "The Normans in Sicily".

Jan. 17 London

Louise is here after a total immersion course at Yale in Italian, sandwiched between two major operations. Louise, who is a serious historian, and I with my skill at writing junk, could write the saga of why it took two decades for college chums to take a little sightseeing trip. I still believe it could be an updated version of “Our Hearts Were Young and Gay”, which was about two young and frivolous girls, which we are definitely not.

Jan. 17 London

Here’s the plot for a new soap opera. Each installment is packed with action. In the first, the heroine, a veteran reporter in the Washington bureau of *The Manhattan Daily Throb*, finishes a 37-part in-depth series on the President’s four-year-old daughter and her life in the White House. It is greeted by her editors with convulsions of joy, due to her 3700 sprightly references to Jackie Onassis, Caroline Kennedy, and White House gossip, past and present.

Two minutes later she is asked to do a 40-part series on the child, based on questions readers will raise about the initial series, particularly readers who are confused about who is President of the United States and in what city the White House is located. Tragically and with absolutely no warning, a mysterious disease, not covered by any health insurance, suddenly creeps over the reporter’s hands, making it impossible for her to type. With great compassion the bureau chief suggests that she go to the ladies’ room for ten minutes.

There, the paralysis spreads to her vocal cords, making her mute. When he comes to the door asking what is keeping her and to ask that she kindly dictate the articles before she leaves for the night, she is unable to answer.

Her editors bid her “adieu.” They are afraid that the contagion will spread, or that other bureau reporters will suspect that she caught it at the White House, making them unwilling to go after the inside story on the tiny tot, who, allegedly, lives there.

They generously give her subway fare and tell her to keep all the felt tip pens sticking out of her clothing. They do not offer to shake hands.

She pushes the elevator button with her elbow and walks home, saving the subway fare for later. Incredibly, a miracle takes place on the way, and she is cured.

Realizing that scientists, busy producing complicated remedies for the incurable common cold, will never have time for this unique malady and that miracles don’t happen twice to the same person, she gets out of town. She sells off her flowers, puts her pets up for adoption, and takes a bus to see the world.

Further adventures are dramatized with no restraint, taste, or humane merit and acted with amazing realism. See your local television listing for details.

Jan. 17 London

Louise arrived yesterday full of energy and eager to go south. It is raining and snowing, and she has agreed to fly Laker on Monday. I am willing to get aboard Laker, too. We will be on standby, just as Louise made it here from New York on Air India.

More than a few years ago she was supposed to join my brother, John, his Brown roommate John Seid and me for a European trip, but didn’t get to go. She stayed at home to earn tuition for graduate school after her father drew the line at

paying for more than a Wellesley education. It will be nice to finally get to travel with her!

Jan. 20 London

The short version of the missing antique saga is the sign saying “No Refunds”. It was hidden behind a cupboard where customers could not see it.

The longer version is that a pair of very glib salesmen are content to dispense with future business, if the unwary customer enables them to sell something twice.

The trip to Greenwich was interesting but not a good day for sightseeing. The antique shop is right around the corner from the Cutty Sark anchorage, and the ship makes a great landmark. I am leaving London on Monday and went down after having my hair cut, doing the laundry, and fussing around until after lunch.

By then there was a small blizzard, and when I arrived at the shop door at 3:50 p.m., it was closed with a sign already up saying it closed at 4 p.m. Trains were being cancelled, but I got back to London and was determined to try again another day. A few days later and with a little more foresight, I checked by phone to be sure that they were there and went down and back, stopping just long enough to have a 45-minute discussion on international business ethics.

I went in the shop thinking there was some confusion and ready to take the chest if it was still there, or accept some merchandise instead, if it had been sold, and if they agreed my friends in Alexandria were entitled to something for their money or a refund. Tough rocks. No deal.

They both remembered all details vividly and told me about how they explained everything in a letter. The fact that I was holding the letter, which mentioned none of their points, caused no embarrassment.

Or maybe it did, because they didn't stop talking the whole time. From their attitude I realized the cause and the money was lost, and tried to think up a good punch line. I failed, but said that I could not accept their version of the facts, that it was the first time I had encountered such an attitude, not typical of the British merchants I knew. They didn't care the least what I thought, and we parted.

That "No Refunds" sign, hidden behind a china cupboard, where we finally located it, set the tone for an entertaining encounter that was well worth the train rides.

However, the trip to Greenwich did produce a marvelous stone crab dinner. They sell the whole animal there, not just the claws. In Florida the law is to take one claw, and throw the crab back with the other intact for protection while it grows a new claw.

Jan. 21 London

Only the English would cast a woman who has the curves of Gina Lollobrigida as a Chinese boy.

When I first knew Stephanie Voss, she was my landlady. She checked the electric meter before I moved in to be sure I was charged correctly. She showed me where everything was in the flat. She did so with a gleam in her eye that said she would notice anything missing later.

She was in her mid-thirties, very shapely, a little overweight, but very striking. She had appeared in West End productions, and she practiced scales and songs regularly each day. Her singing sounded good to me.

She was very up, when I met her, because she was about to start a two-week cabaret engagement on the South Bank of the Thames somewhere, after a year of not working. Her good spirits lasted through the end of that engagement and then began to sag. A spot on the P & O boats, entertaining on their winter cruises, looked possible. Her husband, Frank, borrowed my bedside lamp to make a spotlight on her when someone came to audition her in their living room. Nothing definite came from that.

After I moved out, I saw them several times and learned that Stephanie was rehearsing for a production of “Aladdin” at the Watford Palace theatre at Christmas. I was hooked. I had missed hearing her cabaret performance. I had to see her perform as a little Chinese boy. “Aladdin” in English Christmas pantos is often a Chinese boy for some mysterious reason. Watford is fifteen stops on a local British Rail line north of London, or no stops on an express train, but twenty miles out of town in any case.

There are so many pantos at Christmas in London that they are not all listed in entertainment guides, particularly those as far away as Watford. However, Stephanie's show was listed, and not among the fringe theaters, but under West End theaters in the most “with it” entertainment magazine, Time Out. The item included Stephanie Voss's name.

The moment I realized that I was on terms of some intimacy with the star of a West End show, I went down to Euston station and bought a round trip ticket to

Watford Junction. After quite some time viewing the railway scenery of Kensal Green, Willesden Junction, Harlesden, Stonebridge Park, Wembley Central, North Wembley, South Kenton, Kenton, Harrow and Wealdstone, Headstone Lane, Hatch End, Carpenters Park, Bushey, and Watford High Street, Watford Junction was reached. Any traveler to London will know that this is not a usual route to a West End theatre.

The theatre was a short taxi ride up Clarendon Road. Alighting, I was immediately surrounded by a crush of theatre-goers, most of them about four feet tall. I felt like Gulliver. The candy counter attendant had some difficulty seeing her customers, as they stood, arms waving, in front of her stand. A sea of little hands held coins toward her. The children were active and excited, but well behaved, marching two by two behind their teachers, or leaders, and sitting when told.

English pantos are a Christmas treat for children, and it is where they can develop their embryonic love of theater, which produces succeeding generations of adult audiences. I was mystified about the casting of a singer with a full, rich voice in a silent show, but “panto” does not mean “pantomime.”

It means women dressed as men, men dressed as women, songs and jokes, all lively entertainment directed at children. Aladdin frequently asked the audience’s advice as to whether he should do the villain’s bidding — and was given conflicting answers — generally indicating that his fans thought he was free to seek treasures and rescue the princess if he got his mother’s laundry delivered to her customers on time. As the audience detected the evil nature of the villain, there was more unanimity on advice for Aladdin, and hisses at the treacherous villain.

Aladdin was obviously the product of a mixed marriage. His stage mother was a large, hearty woman with violent red hair and an hourglass figure covered by dresses of riotous color. His brother and sister, twins, were blond and blue-eyed. All three children enlisted the audience to help guard a bag of candy they left at the corner of the stage and did not want to share. The audience was asked to shout, "SWEETIES" any time anyone other than the candy's owners approached it. Everyone did so eagerly.

There was a happy ending with everyone in the cast paired off in proper fairy tale fashion. However, along the way there was a lot of music hall humor, some of it blue. And at one point Aladdin and one of the twins chased each other through the audience, much to the delight of the children.

Stephanie as Aladdin wore a simple Chinese suit when delivering laundry but for the marriage ceremony to the princess appeared in a fitted jacket. It displayed Stephanie's ample bosom. Black stockings and satin pumps with spike heels showed off her legs nicely. The odd couple delighted the children.

A modern character was added to the fairy tale. In a sequence where Aladdin's mother demonstrated how to do the laundry she explained that it was things called enzymes that ate the dirt. A large blue, furry-headed enzyme with glassy eyes and a gaping red mouth rose out of the machine and clamped its teeth on her arm.

It was tremendous fun. The audience never stopped wriggling with pleasure. In the darkness of the theatre there was constant movement like a mass of happy little worms. There was, of course, constant noise from the young



audience, and their pleasure in the show sometimes came close to drowning it out.

Love songs were short to avoid boring the children. A chorus or so of an old Broadway favorite and then the action sped up again. The troglodytes, “troggies” for short, that frightened Aladdin in the cave where he was trapped were more exciting than Aladdin mooning over the princess. By the finale, even the “troggies” were friendly with everyone, including the laundress and the princess.

Stephanie in a black pigtail wig was the least convincing lovesick, Chinese boy imaginable, but she was impressive as a performer, charming her audience, singing songs that allowed only hints of her voice to soar through the steady bustle of activity in the theatre seats. At intermission I sent a note backstage to the star and went to see her after the show. Watford Junction has few stage door Johnnies.

She shared a dressing room with three other cast members, and it was crowded. She insisted that she had time for a cup of coffee in the half hour break before the next show started. The princess was sitting in on the conversation in her underwear. The villain was trying to get his noodle soup out of a Thermos jug downstairs when I left.

A few nights later at the end of the Royal Shakespeare production of “As You Like It” the Fool’s speech on how to lie was accompanied by much stage “business”, grunts and noises. He encouraged the audience to join in, and they did so, as happily as kids at a panto.

Jan. 22 London

We are going to spend a week or so in Rome, then amble down to Sicily, where Louise is house sitting and dog sitting for an American couple at the consulate in Palermo, who are going home on leave. I am going down to Sicily to do some sightseeing. It's a lovely spot according to Lawrence Durrell's book in "The Sicilian Carousel".

Then, Louise heads to Paris to meet her 14-year-old niece for an Easter vacation trip. My plans coincide with hers up until she leaves for Paris. Louise is used to having her mother hovering near, and I am not used to being a hoverer, but after an initial shakedown period I think it will work. Louise's mother will know the telephone number in Sicily where we can be reached, if she needs to get any hovering in.

Louise's health is uncertain, and she tires easily, but is eager to do things and not dwell on difficulties. She wanted to leave immediately for Rome, but in order to get an economy flight a six-day stop here was necessary. Her jet lag caught up with her gradually, and the excitement and suspense of waiting to be let out of Connecticut kept her going until she landed here.

We are going on Laker, and we will arrive alive, because the Queen knighted him 'Sir Freddie' for all of his clever ideas. One of which is his 55 pound round-trip fare to Rome.

Louise has an old beau in Palermo, but details are a bit unclear. Women were asking her last year why she let him push her around, and she says that if Sicilian women ask you that, you are REALLY in trouble.

The next Nile trip leaves March 25, but I haven't booked it yet. With Louise's health still questionable, I want to make sure I leave her in good shape for her time in Paris. She tires easily.

Funny how Kitty Kelley's success irritates people. Sheila Wiedenfeld has a book about her experiences in the White House that is causing talk, I hear.

Bonnie, Louise and I are having a festive farewell lunch at the Tower Hotel tomorrow. It has a wire ticker near the dining room for keeping up on world news. Then we are off to Italy.

Jan. 23 London

After lunch with Bonnie and Louise, I was thinking about how it's natural for families to drift apart.

My ancestors, George and Rebecca Potts, born around 1805, came from nearby Boar's Isle, which has gone through some name changes since. It has also been known as Bird's Isle, and more recently St. Michael's. In any case, Tenterden, tho' still a charming English town, has spread out. Many little crossroads villages have been lost. George and Rebecca and their children moved to beautiful farmland in Ontario, Canada. They settled on Potts Island near Percy Boom, where they produced more children. I am one of their many descendants spread across Canada and the U.S.

Mother always said that when we finished school we were on our own. I was twenty-five years overdue. A quarter of a century must be a record of some kind.

Jan. 25 Rome

The food here is very good. We have artichokes every day. The sun is beginning to feel warm and the air is definitely soft.

The mink is good armor against being shot while wandering around the presidential palace. Nerves are a bit taut here. Police are all over, with little automatic pistols. We didn't flee England ahead of a blizzard to get shot here!

We will leave for Sicily on Tuesday. Louise tires too quickly to stop off and see Pompeii, so I will miss the discoveries made since I went there with the two boys. She doesn't want to travel alone.

Bonnie invited me to stay with her when I go back to London en route to Africa and expects me around March 20. The route from Sicily to Cairo by way of London is caused by the vagaries of discount fares.

Jan. 26 Rome

There are contemporaries of mine who went to Europe first as students to travel or study on miniscule budgets and are now jetting between New York and Paris and London, sitting in the first class sections of planes. The common herd, including myself, is kept in back. I will not explain why there is such a vast difference in our modes of travel, but simply record the details of a trip made with an old friend in the hope that they will amuse or enlighten others who wish to venture out in the world with small budgets.

Louise was wearing fashionably baggy clothes when I met her Air India flight to London from New York in mid-January. She had undergone two major operations within a year. She took off the summer between the surgeries for

recuperation and an eight-week intensive course in Italian at Yale. The droopy look of her tweed jacket and skirt was chic — but not entirely intentional. The circles under her eyes were due to an overnight flight on a standby ticket.

She had to be at the JFK airport early in the morning to book a flight and return for departure that evening. She was, however, very cheerful. Plan A had been to arrive in November, but she was told a day before she meant to leave, that surgery was required.

She was economizing on travel because of the medical expenses, and the uncertainty of her financial life as an historian and freelance writer. I was jobless after fourteen years as a reporter in Washington, two with *The Washington Star* and twelve in the bureau of *The New York Daily News*. We felt it was a good time for a trip.

We were actually decades overdue. My brother, John, his Brown university roommate, Louise and I sat on a Florida beach one Christmas, planning to go abroad the following summer. The boys and I set sail in June on a student ship—a ten-day voyage to Amsterdam—with meager funds only good enough for a sampling of pensions in Italy and France. John's roommate and I had each spent summers in France on the Experiment in International Living. Pensions seemed a step up after camping in farmyards during bicycle tours of the countryside.

Louise was left on the dock in New York that June, and never forgave us. She missed the trip because she had to choose between spending her savings on graduate school or Europe. Her father said Wellesley was enough for a girl, and he wasn't buying her any more schooling.

The boys, later graduates of Harvard Business School and Wharton, were able to travel well on business, as I did while still a reporter for *The New York Daily News* with an expense account. Currently, I'm in a unique position to study the improvements in cheap travel over the past couple of decades.

In preparation I read Somerset Maugham and Evelyn Waugh, who traveled to exotic places with a great deal of luggage by modern standards. Waugh took white tie and tails to the coronation of Haile Salassie, and Maugham always took a large book bag with plenty of reading material.

Packing was a problem, because I didn't know where I was going. I solved it by packing a beige wardrobe of clothing. It was highlighted by a touch of rust and brown here and there and spruced up, when needed, by donning an inherited mink jacket. This wardrobe and some woolen underwear was enough for a few autumn months in London. It was, also, very useful for winter wear in Italy, where the houses were chilly night and day.

Louise studied and worked in Paris. She traveled extensively in Europe and later went to Vietnam and Cambodia while on a senator's staff. She spoke French and arrived at Heathrow with her Italian textbook under an arm. I've been lucky in traveling with friends as translators — to Spain with Judy and Robert (Spanish), Africa with Christina Wolfe (French), Cuba with my sister (Spanish), and Russia with Jim (who spoke no Russian, but wanted to share my fabulous Nagel guide to Russia's history, geography, population, economy, arts, handicrafts, folk art, literature, theatre, music, ballet, cinema and the Russian language).

Louise was keyed up from her trip and her liberation from Connecticut hospitals. I loaded her bags in an airline bus and we were on our way to my flat for a rest. She did not want to rest a week or so, but wanted to be away from the cold, rainy London weather. At the flat, she paused long enough to wash her face, and followed me over to St. John's Wood High Street for errands and a cup of tea. Then, I thought, she would go back and nap, but she gave me a fishy look and went with me to the Laker office to book our flight to Sicily as soon as possible.

The businesslike appearance of the Laker office reassured her. It wasn't luxurious, but she deemed it to be a reputable travel firm. We bought "weekday fare" tickets for the following Monday to Rome, with the return portion scheduled on Friday. The price was about \$94, a fare so low that we could use only the London-Rome half of the ticket and still save money over the fares on well-known international airlines.

Train fare on the Calais-Rome express, second class in a three-berth compartment was more expensive, and the ride, shared with a stranger, seemed too hard for someone recently out of the hospital.

Louise is a morning person, who rises with the sun, works until noon, and leaves the latter part of the day for other things. I get started early in the morning, but more slowly and work into the afternoon until time for a late lunch or early tea. Coordinating our schedules was going to take effort.

It was time for me to wind up things in London, while Louise rested and wound down, but she didn't. I went to see my former landlady, a musical comedy star of a Christmas panto show twenty miles north of London. Louise had never

seen an English panto and went along. That night we got back into town just in time for dinner and the Royal Shakespeare Company production of “Look Out Here Comes Trouble” at the Warehouse Theatre.

She did rest some in the next few days, skipping two trips I made to Greenwich on errands for friends back home. She spent a day shopping, and we had a festive farewell Sunday lunch at the Tower Hotel with Bonnie. During the meal, Louise, a serious historian, spotted a movie star across the room and didn't tell Bonnie and me — two reporters by trade.

Before dawn on Monday we were ready to go. I went out into the darkness to find a taxi. By the Camden Town tube station, I found a taxi stopped for a red light, and the driver said he would deliver his passenger and be back in five minutes. He was, and we went back to the flat on St. Mark's Crescent to collect Louise and our luggage.

At 6:35 a.m. we caught the train to Gatwick from Victoria Station. At the airport, the check-in counter was up a flight of stairs from the station platform — an easy connection. Louise stood at the bottom of the stairs while I made three trips with the bags. They all had wheels which helped everywhere except on the stairs.

The bags were heavy. Louise had a stack of reference books on Sicily. I had my portable Olivetti typewriter, which is small but heavy, a box of paper, books and clothing. We had earmarked some things for discard at the airport, if the bags were overweight and we had to choose between paying extra and leaving stuff.



I put Louise's bags on the scale and saw numbers flash by on the dial. Then mine went on, and the ticket agent pushed everything through to the conveyor belt with no comment. As I staggered away with our boarding passes clutched in my hand, Louise thoughtfully said that she would tell me the total weight after I sat down. Her bags were just within the 44 lbs. limit. Mine weighed 76 lbs. I felt every one of those 120 lbs. in my newly lengthened arms. We blessed the Laker agent for not charging for the excess.

Fog was settling in as we took off for Rome on time at 8:30 a.m. We were already Laker converts. The plane was crowded with a row of three seats on one side and two on the other — in a plane meant for two rows on each side of the aisle. The knee space was limited, and head space for tall people next to the window was a problem. Louise is several inches shorter than I and let me have the aisle seat.

Otherwise, we had everything else one might find on a Washington-New York shuttle, and more. Two stewardesses served us sandwiches and tea or coffee for free. Drinks were available for purchase, and there was a list of duty-free perfume, liquor, and cigarettes for sale. We landed on time in Rome at a secondary airport and took an inexpensive airport bus into town.

At the railroad terminal where the bus ride ended, Louise's Italian and previous experience in watching over expenses in Italy, began to produce results. She left me with the bags while she phoned hotels from a list she had compiled. That took an hour. In the lull between buses or train arrivals, every taxi driver in the area showed tremendous interest in transporting the mink, me and the luggage somewhere. I waited.

She came back with the news that we were going to the Hotel Memphis, five minutes away. The first taxi driver offered to take us there for 3,000 lira, a price she scoffed at. The driver looked at the mink and the bags and insisted on 3,000 lira. So did the next three drivers. I was curious to know when and how we would get all the bags into a Fiat taxi. The impasse was finally broken when Louise approached the drivers *en masse* and offered 2,000 lira. We struck a bargain and were delivered shortly to the hotel, where we had an 8,000 lira room and a 10,000 lira room, each with a shower. She had the pick of rooms as a reward for her bargaining skills.

Away from home everyone notices heating and plumbing differences, which are basic to health and comfort. At the Hotel Memphis the Italian solution to the problem of cleaning toilets was solved by putting them in the shower stalls. At the same time the guest showers, he or she is also cleaning the area around it. Someone in a hurry might also shower while using the toilet.

The rooms were plain and clean with tile floors. They looked a little cell-like, but had comfortable beds. The jet lag finally caught up with Louise. I was exhausted from keeping up with a jet-propelled convalescent. We parted company for a while. I explored the Vatican post office and researched trains to Sicily and went sightseeing on foot. She rested and explored by bus.

The wooden seats on third-class Italian trains left an indelible impression on me in years past. I wanted to be sure they were no longer in service on the Rome-Palermo route. The express fare was 40,000 lira, almost the same as the airline fare to Palermo. I booked us on a slower train for 16,000 lira each, second

class. Third class no longer exists on Italian railroads. Second class is the cheapest fare, but the seats are padded.

Jan. 28 Rome

The plan was to spend \$20 a day each, about 16,400 lira. Louise's ability to speak Italian and her streak of frugality helped a lot. My habit of ordering a whole meal had to be altered. Who needs three full meals a day? Her preference for restaurants with cover charges had to be modified to some without.

An Italian restaurant meal is entertainment as well as food. A leisurely tempo should be expected. One may relax for an hour or so over one or two courses. For quick pickup meals there are stand-up bars with sandwiches, pastries, coffee and drinks. Other shops have cheese, meat, fruit, milk, yogurt and sweets to buy and eat elsewhere. Chocolate is popular and comes in great brown bricks, as well as dainty pieces.

After budgeting about 9,000 lira per day for each of our hotel rooms, there was about 7,000 lira to spend on meals, sightseeing, transportation, newspapers, snacks and theater. At the end of the week we had overspent in a variety of ways and swore to be more economical in the future.

We were careful of our belongings, money and papers, but didn't worry about kidnapping, a popular activity in Italy. We knew of no one who would pay current kidnapping prices to get us back. I left the mink in the hotel only if Louise was there to babysit it.

The mink attracted attention but was too soft for repelling small children intent on stealing my purse. Bands of gypsy children collected while we looked at

some ruins one morning. Louise put her purse on a wall next to me and walked away to photograph crowds of cats playing in the sun. A man washing his car nearby alerted us to the gypsies, who were small harmless-looking children.

They were trained thieves, carrying pieces of cardboard, a trademark of their profession. It is used to hide robberies in progress as the little hands work. We gathered up our possessions and fled. Some of the children caught up with us, and I found little hands reaching toward my purse. My mink-clad elbow was too soft a weapon. Later, we watched the flock of little forms stalk an isolated tourist couple with two children of their own the way wolves stalk wanderers on the Siberian steppes.

A Yale doctoral student explained the small purses Italian women have made so fashionable are worn strapped across their bodies to keep money secure from these deft thieves. Tote and shoulder bags are easily grabbed. Umbrellas make excellent defensive weapons. We bought small purses and walking shoes with heavy crepe soles for rough terrain.

Rome bus fare was 100 lira, but passengers often didn't pay unless eyeballed by the conductor. We paid when we could get to him, but sometimes the bus was so crowded that the possible need for contraception was of more concern. Louise promised to give me a list of Italian words that I should know including: please, thank you, don't bother, excuse me, thieves, and GET AWAY!

Expressing the wish that a total stranger remove his hand from one's person was conveyed by Italian women with a look of pure scorn. However, several suggested that a sharp heel pressed firmly on the offender's instep or a swift blow with an elbow could get him to move back quickly. There should be no

conversation. Any discussion is considered encouragement. Moving away yourself in a crowded bus is difficult and does not help. He will follow. The inches gained are immediately lost, and the pressure increased, accompanied by a low down primitive rhythm.

Sex is a preoccupation among Italians — and machismo. Men found our self assurance distressing. A clerk in American Express was visibly upset and left his teller's window after Louise calmly counted the money he handed her.

"I counted it," he said.

"I always count my money," she replied.

Never was a truer word spoken. She also insisted on understanding restaurant checks, no matter how confusing or illegible. At the end of a meal she paid, she would put a notation in her notebook of what I owed her. We rarely ate the same thing, but shared the cover charge, service, taxes and wine. Her quick check of the items on the bill sometimes uncovered errors, usually minor, but a bowl of soup costing a dollar and listed at three dollars was worth straightening out.

One evening, when she had already defied a waiter and added lemon to her already seasoned spinach, he was irritated by her question about why my artichokes cost more than they had at the same restaurant the day before.

"I think he is saying they are priced according to what they cost at the market today," she reported.

His body language expressed Latin indignation. The tiny restaurant seemed to have the same customers each day we went there. Mama was in the kitchen,

and two young men waited on the regular customers. We were the only people who donned our glasses and went over the bill item by item, copying the information into a notebook.

Small children darted out of the kitchen, and a mother cat with her kittens ran under the tables. Louise reached down for her purse one noon and found a kitten sitting on it. She jumped back as though bitten by a snake. The kitten ran away, and I picked it up, putting it down quickly. It smelled terrible. Louise explained to several people that she was extremely allergic to cat hair. All in all, we felt it was time to change restaurants.

At St. Peter's, for 800 lira I rode a small elevator to the roof. The huge statues of the Redeemer, John the Baptist and the Apostles loom over the square standing on a stone railing along the edge of the roof. Tourists peek out, between the feet of the statues, at the city beyond. The roof tilts, as roofs do. There is a snack bar and four lavatory stalls tucked away up there. Stairs up the side of the dome lead to a hallway inside the dome, from which one can reach two balconies ringing the interior, one below and one above the tall windows in the dome. The view looking down directly on the altar far below is spectacular.

The Vatican mail service seems to get letters out of Italy faster than the Italian mail. The Vatican stamps can only be bought and used at the post office there.

Security in Rome creates some startling street scenes. Men armed with automatic weapons were scattered about important buildings. Police vans were parked in many neighborhoods. Two smartly dressed young mothers watched their toddlers play on tricycles in the Borghese gardens, an apparently carefree

sight. But they remained right next to the pillar box with an emergency phone where, by pressing a lever often gets immediate police response by telephone, activating a revolving yellow light atop the box.

The elegant Ferragamo shoe store on chic Via Condotti was as hard to get into as a Chicago speakeasy in the 1920s. Merchandise had been moved to an apartment upstairs, while the first floor shop was being rebuilt to include more security. First, we buzzed the flat from the front door and were admitted to the lobby of the building. Upstairs a man opened a door and peeked out at customers gathered in the hall before unlatching the door.

The mink was a passport to see the shoes. It also warmed the chill of facing machine guns in unexpected places.

Jan. 29 Rome

Louise moved to an apartment over a Greek grocery store while she was living in Washington. In one of the other apartments was a young Foreign Service Officer who later moved in with her. When he went to Vietnam, she went over to visit him. He returned to Washington, but the relationship hit some serious bumps, and she asked him to move out.

Years passed. Last winter he invited her to Sicily where he is now the U.S. consulate. She spent a month as his houseguest, just that, and at the end of her visit, thinking he'd like a dog, she got him a cute Scottie.

An animal-loving friend helped her get the dog, its shots, collar, leash and a nifty red coat. Louise went to a great deal of trouble over this bread and butter gift, and it was a disaster. Her host was furious. He accused her of planning

wicked plots, and he also accused the animal-loving mutual friend, the wife of a fellow consular office, of helping in this dastardly plot.

There was some feeling at the time that his behavior was extremely poor. Hearing the story a year later, I wondered whether he expected some other kind of gift and am racing to Sicily to see what will happen next.

Louise called the animal-loving friend, for whom she is going to house and dog-sit this year, to report her arrival time. The old beau, last year's host, happened to be there and announced that he would be leaving for Rome the same day. Louise greeted the news coolly.

Feb. 2 Rome to Sicily

The train left Rome promptly at 8:40 a.m. en route to Palermo. We were rested after a week in Rome. Louise's cheeks were pink after her morning argument over the taxi fare. Because of my lack of Italian, I stood on the sidelines.

She said the anesthetics during two long operations in the past year caused a split second delay in her responses, but doctors had assured her that these brief lapses, and the changes in the texture and curl of her hair were temporary. Whatever slight impairment existed, did not hamper her determination to get top value for her lira. The debate over the taxi fare drew passing policemen. An opponent foolishly thought to daunt her by calling on the law, adding fuel to the fire of the contest.

In Rome I declared myself unfit to carry the bags, which weigh about 120 pounds. Citing my "Joe Namath" knees from past operations, I suggested using



porters. So at the station we hailed a porter who charged 1,000 lira to cart the bags about 25 feet to a gate, where another porter had to take over for another fee, we found. The new policy was not an immediate success with our budget. Storm clouds gathered.

Louise fared well in her scrutiny of restaurant checks in Rome, which were written in chicken scratches that could be Italian or Arabic to the untutored eye. She was quick to catch hotel bills that sprouted mysterious taxes. Once into a fray, she continued to victory.

However, Rome was behind us. The train sped smoothly south and the opportunity to speak Italian on the journey to Palermo was like getting fourteen hours of tutoring for free. She soon launched into a serious discussion of the punctuality of Italian trains with the man on her left. He had been sitting silently with nothing to read and was delighted to have an opportunity to practice his English. We went over the weather in great detail.

The other occupant of the compartment was a handsome young man, a Sicilian who worked in Milan. He spoke only Italian. At Naples, the weather conversation ended, when Louise's new friend got off. A vivacious woman joined us. She quizzed Louise in English about geography. She wanted to know where in America we lived, because she had lived in Brazil for a year.

A plump, bald man with a healthy outdoor look, also, got aboard at Naples. He was dressed in flannels, a turtle neck sweater and sports jacket. He was a forester for the Department of Agriculture. We were in the midst of a lengthy, violent, bi-lingual agreement with him on the charm of the Italian people and the high quality of the Italian railroads, when it suddenly became apparent that our

car had no lights. The train sped through a series of tunnels, some quite long, that burrow through the mountains south of Naples. Each time we plunged into pitch blackness.

At first, everyone tactfully ignored the fact that the compartment was beginning to resemble a sound and light show. Finally, it became too much for the plump man, who leapt up to flick the light switch, apparently certain that if he did it enough times, light would result. It did not.

Speaking Italian gradually eliminated English, and the conversation slowed. The Italians were too polite and curious to leave me out, simply because I was ignorant of their language. Louise was my translator. With her efforts we established that we were all *simpatico*. By the time the excellent Italian train proved to have an embarrassing electrical flaw, we were discussing the amazing fact that Italians often have families of fifteen children, while Americans often hesitate at one, and stop at two.

Sex, a universally interesting subject, was never far away from the conversation until many hours later when the Neapolitan forester left us somewhere on the ankle of Italy. I said, after we had passed through a particularly long tunnel in inky blackness, that the reason Italians probably had so many children was because the lights kept going off in trains.

Our companions insisted on knowing what I had said, and laughed happily at the joke. I was pleased for five minutes until we reached the next station and the two women passengers in the compartment bade us a warm farewell. The Neapolitan moved closer and got busy trying to find out every detail of our personal habits, as well as any comments we might make on his view of family

life, size or history. Louise told him that we were both divorced, true in my case, but, as far as I knew, not in hers.

She seemed more at ease when I answered the questions. I was more at ease making up answers, so the conversation rolled merrily along. It was apparent, however, to our companions that I was not being frank when I claimed to have sixteen children. I just got carried away on that lie.

Of course, the Neapolitan was entertained by the lies, and interested to see what I would come up with next. He had Louise translating strenuously. Nuances were often lost. He showed us a picture of his wife, and Louise reported that he had said something derogatory about her being old. I pantomimed disapproval, and he explained that it was an old picture.

The crisis of the lights gave Louise's translating and my imagination a rest for a while. Men gathered in the corridor and announced that at Paolo an expert would board the train to fix them.

The people of Naples are known for their exuberance and curiosity. In the hours of the journey ahead we would tire before our cheerful inquisitor did. The talk had narrowed from a broad discussion of national family customs to marriage customs and rapidly approached individual sexual preferences. We conceded that Italians were charming and that we were enjoying this train talk. I did not know the details of Louise's personal life, but had no reason to believe that she would fancy a fling with a jovial Italian forester before the train reached Paolo. Personally, I felt destined to part from our companions as acquaintances. Flirting had to be done carefully.

Obviously, the answers to questions on whether we would like to marry an Italian, or to have children were best answered, “No.” The word came out stronger than I intended, and the Neapolitan was surprised. He tried to find out whether to take it personally. I said that it must be a terrible life for a woman. Louise took a long time translating this tactfully into, “However agreeable Italian women may find the life, for an American woman accustomed to her freedom, it would be confining.”

He took it well and summoned all his considerable vitality and vocabulary to convince us, two childless world travelers, of the charms of life as rural Italian mothers of large families. My mink jacket was a challenge to him.

Louise was on the verge of going under the tidal wave of Neapolitan dialect, expansive gestures and considerable outrage, but the quiet Sicilian, who turned out only to be tired from his long journey from Milan, jumped in on our side of the argument. He was thirty years old, fifteen years younger than the Neapolitan. All ages were established in the first hours of the conversation. The Neapolitan wanted to know whether I dyed my hair and admitted that he was naturally bald.

Our new ally, the Sicilian, was firm in his view that two children were “*basta*”—enough. He and his wife had one and were expecting another. They were looking forward to rearing them and having a better life than would be possible for them with a large family. The resulting argument between the Sicilian and the Neapolitan, whose wife was reported — by her husband — to feel it safer to have children than to use contraceptives gave Louise a well-deserved rest, while the Sicilian explained that the size of the family was not proof of manhood.

We rolled south with the roar of conversation billowing out into the corridor, where a crowd gathered to listen. People found it difficult to pass our door without stopping. The word “*aborto*” was mentioned often. I tossed my grandmother’s seven brothers and two sisters into the fray to prove that Americans have not always been so peculiar. Her German-born father, who lived in Canada and is buried in Rochester, N.Y., thus earned a manly reputation in one tiny spot in southern Italy. My own father’s four children were enough to qualify, because the Neapolitan, so far, had only three daughters and a son.

The words were flying too fast for Louise to catch all of them, but we learned the Neapolitan’s wife had discussed abortion with him. It was clear, however, that he felt any decision on family size was his to make, and the bigger the family, the better, as far as he was concerned. His earlier report of his wife’s opinion on contraception now seemed subject to his own bias.

The Sicilian looked at the mink, shook his head and smiled. The Neapolitan looked, too, and asked whether all journalists could have such things. Only journalists with no children, I told him. The Sicilian nodded his head vigorously at me, and the Neapolitan unleashed a flood of words at Louise.

As we neared Paolo, he gathered his things together with a heavy box of toys for his children. He had shared his fruit with us, but we refused his wine. He put all his trash in a neat package, put on his coat and expressed his great regret at leaving us.

And he didn’t seem to be able to do so. While other passengers moved toward the end of the car, he lingered to tell us that he often made the trip from Naples and that it was usually quite dull. His fellow passengers most often talked

about football. Did we like football? He would remember this trip, and, who knows, when we might not meet again. One never knows.

He warned us to beware of luggage thieves while the train was aboard the ferry crossing to Messina. One of us should stay with the bags, while the other was on deck. We assured him that we would be wary of strangers, and his advice about the ferry was valuable. However, in the weeks ahead, we weren't any more careful about talking with strangers. We couldn't risk missing anyone so interesting.

Feb. 4 Palermo, Sicily

At the top of the hill there was a sweeping view of Palermo in its beautiful bay and the sea beyond. Among the weeds on the hill lay the carcass of a little blue Fiat 126, dented and full of many, small, round holes.

It was a strange place to find a wreck, since there was no traffic in the pasture, only a wide dirt road that would eventually be paved and lead to new houses and lots, where more would be built. Below the hill was a group of suburban villas, surrounded by a wall and reached only through a locked gate, where we were staying in great luxury. Footpaths wound up through the wild foliage and rocks. Some lean, black cattle grazed among the wildflowers.

At the top of the hill, it was clear and windy. A golden retriever trotted at my side or ran ahead to investigate smells. It was his favorite walk and my first time, so I let him lead the way. He disappeared several times, but soon reappeared. Then he vanished in the underbrush and was gone for good. I was left alone on the hill contemplating the holes which speckled the side of the crumpled car.

Palermo, a center of vice, crime and slavery for centuries, has the Mafia. Assassinations happen in downtown streets. One could jump to the conclusion that a crumpled car, riddled with holes on a lonely hilltop had something to do with crime.

Feb. 5 Taormina, Sicily

Personally, after getting to know a Fiat 126, I felt such frustration and fatigue from traveling in one, I felt anyone would be justified in shooting it full of holes.

The tiny body of the Fiat 126 has four seats and could only be comfortable for four people used to sitting together in a telephone booth. It has a two cylinder engine. In Italy it is licensed to go a maximum of 90 kilometers an hour, a speed it can attain plunging down a steep hill. On the slightest incline it expresses reluctance to go over 70 km. per hour, or about 43 miles an hour. The engine sounds happiest when chugging along at 30 miles per hour.

Our host and hostess, also owners of an Alfa Romeo, loaned us their Fiat 126, and we drove it off one morning into the Palermo rush hour traffic for a trip around Sicily. It felt like riding in an egg beater.

Sicily has good, new super highways, which will eventually circle the island and cut across it. The beautiful, fertile island has suffered badly from invaders and looters in the past two thousand years. It was civilized before Europe, while the original inhabitants of the British Isles were still painting themselves blue, according to the portable Sicilian reference library which was piled on the back seat.

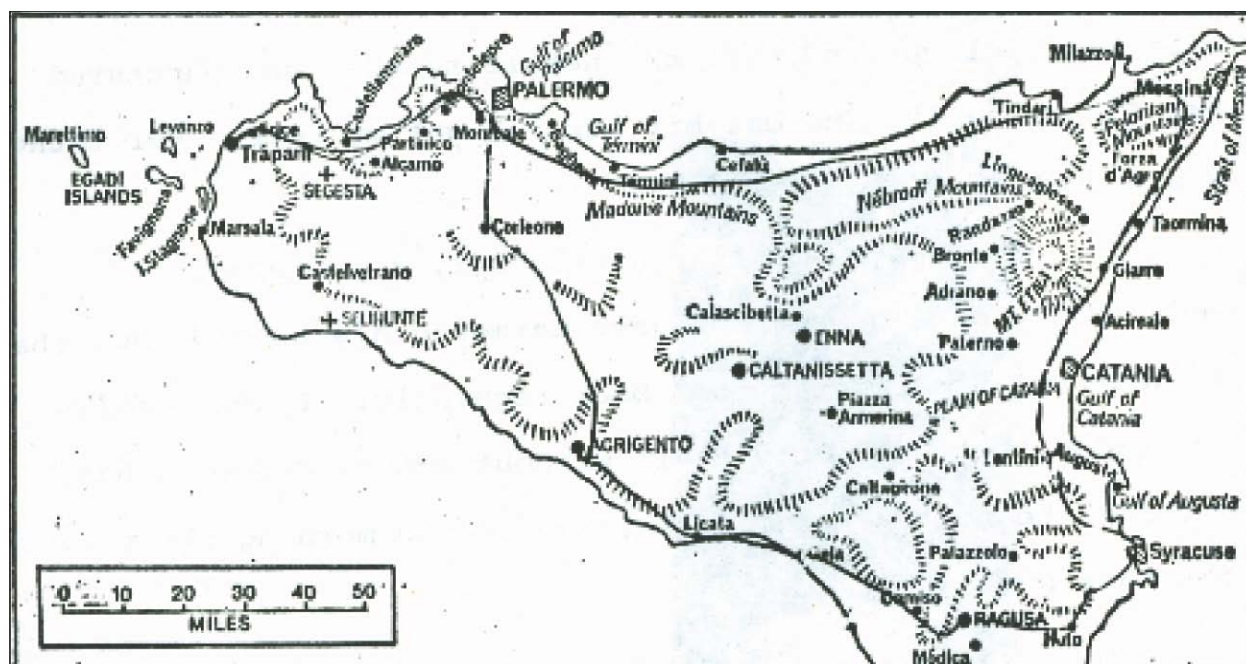
We took the coast road from Palermo around by Messina to Taormina. Then we continued down the coast through Cantania to Syracuse, driving on some new and some old roads. By the time we reached Syracuse, the bumps were getting to us.

The front seats had no arm rests, head rests, or safety belts. The back seat was filled with luggage overflow from the tiny trunk: two typewriters, coats, the Sicilian reference library and various pairs of shoes. Both front seats were uncomfortable, the driver's seat less so with the steering wheel to hold on to. Going over bumps the passenger had a handle above the door to hang on to. Doing so gave no sense of security.

Taormina sits on top of a cliff high above the famous straits. To reach it we had to drive up what looked like a jumbo, wide concrete noodle, weaving through the air to the town 663 feet above the sea. Louise was tired as we approached the town, but wanted to continue driving. Riding in a toy car up this noodle of a road, open space on either side of the pavement, with a weary driver who has admitted to mental lapses was terrifying.

We were both exhausted when we checked into a moderately priced hotel with central heating for two days. Louise wanted to spend some time in Taormina and located a cheaper *pensione*. It had closed for the winter season, but she convinced the owner to let us have two vast, cold rooms for a remarkably low price. The rooms overlooked the cliff, and the winter winds rattled the windows. I vetoed staying there, and we vainly looked for some place that would be both cheap and warm, then drove on to Syracuse.





Feb. 9 Syracuse, Sicily

Syracusa has been invaded and/or sacked over the centuries by the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, French, Spanish, Germans and Americans. The gene pool left behind, gives the population a very cosmopolitan appearance. It's hard to tell the natives from the tourists, except for some short, dark people who seem to be pure, native Sicilian.

The various invaders left their marks. From a hilltop the largest oil refinery in Europe could be seen in the distance pouring smoke into the blue sky. It is near the ancient Greek ruins of the castle of Euryalos. In Syracuse a row of new, heavily fenced villas overlook the ruins of the Greek theater, Roman forum, the Altar of Hieron II, and Latomia del Paradiso, which Dionysius reportedly used as a prison. It is now a garden of shrubbery and tropical trees with a flock of

chickens scurrying around. The rooster's crow is heard clearly echoing in the pre-dawn silence.

In the morning the trucks, scooters and cars make a din, over which can be heard shouts of peddlers hawking their wares. An old man on a bicycle sells eggs, carefully arranging two dozen in a cardboard sheet of niches fastened on the back fender. Baskets of eggs hang on either side of the rear wheel.

Men go to coffee bars on the way to work. Women go shopping. Markets have large sections devoted to Italian liquor and pasta, but there is also Woolite, Dannon yoghurt, Kleenex, and After Eight dinner mints for sale. At one o'clock, the town closes down for a three-hour lunch break, except for the post office. The post office clerks don't seem pleased about that.

We had a long search to find a hotel open in midwinter. Those listed in the guide book looked grim. One in the crowded, old, Spanish section of town was actually a ruin. The first floor had caved in. By driving around we found the Hotel Neopolis, which was small, but had a few business travelers staying there. It was a three-story *albergo* in a quiet neighborhood of apartments and small villas. It was surrounded by gardens.

Inside it was not so quiet. There was no surface that was not plaster, tile or terrazzo, making it a giant echo chamber. The rugs and chairs in the dining room were piled on the tables for the winter season. No food service was available. The lounge and reception areas were stripped of furnishings, too.

There are no secrets in the Hotel Neopolis. Footsteps echo on the stairs, and the keys in the old-fashioned locks scrape, making a racket. Usually, no one

was about, but on Sunday, the proprietor's family, which numbered eighteen people, sat down at a table in the dining room for a mid-day meal.

Most afternoons one girl, a teenager with a pony tail, long dress and socks, stood swooning in the lobby to rock music played at top volume while her mother, the desk clerk, sat knitting. We left the day after a huge television set was moved into the bare lobby, causing serious competition for the rock music.

Feb. 11 Regusa, Sicily

I thought I was going to die of cold—in sunny Italy. I was trying to sleep wearing my best brown leather boots, added to my sleepwear. I was also wearing woolen underwear, a flannel nightgown, two sweaters, a windbreaker, socks and a cashmere scarf. The boots only added to my discomfort. The non-skid soles wouldn't slide by each other, so each time I turned over my feet stuck together and woke me.

We were in Noto, and the road there was paved with good intentions gone awry. Traveling with a convalescent so devoted to economy that it verged on parsimony caused complications. Louise needed to pace herself, resting in the morning and again in the afternoon and getting plenty of sleep. There was nothing to do in the evenings except read from our reference library or take in an occasional movie, so she rested then, too. But, often during the day, when I planned to go off while she rested, the temptation was too much, and she would go along, missing her rest period.

She wanted to stay some place for a while, which I thought was a good idea if we could settle in a comfortable hotel with, at least, enough heat to take the

chill off the rooms. Catching cold at home is an inconvenience. For a traveling invalid, it could be serious. However, I found it unwise to mention what I planned to do while she napped, nor was it wise to talk about it afterward. She felt left out.

It was too cold to stay in the unheated, drafty rooms she found in Taormina, but I was wrong to drag her away from Syracuse. The modern city scattered among the various relics of past civilizations was tacky, deserted in winter and boring, but the Hotel Neopolis, aside from the din of rock music and the world's largest television set, was comfortable, economical and warm.

But, we drove to Noto, recommended by the Blue Guide as a day trip while staying in Syracuse. Advice we should have heeded. It is a good sized town of 24,000 inhabitants and was on our route to Agrigento. Noto is an example of fine eighteenth century town planning with buildings constructed out of a warm, gold-hued stone. On a balmy, sunny morning we drove into town and began our search for the hotels.

There were two in town. One was closed until 8 p.m., and the other was so sinister looking that Louise refused to inspect it. A third hotel out of town on the coast was an attractive resort hotel, closed for the winter. We returned to the closed hotel where the proprietor was persuaded to let us choose rooms before 8 p.m. We rejected the rooms they suggested, large ones with private bath, hoping smaller ones with a shared bath would be warmer. They weren't.

The bath was also shared by the grandfather of the family, the hotel doorman. The proprietor's wife suggested we have lunch at the restaurant across the street. It was a suggestion we ignored and went searching through town for

others. There weren't any others, and we got back to the one she had recommended just in time for a meal before it closed until dinner time.

Two things happened in Noto that afternoon. First, there was a traffic accident. A car hit a motorcycle, and there was a lot of blood in the street. Second, Louise sat down to rest in the warm sunshine on a bench along the garden promenade outside the old city gate while I took a walk. The town young bloods found her to be of such interest that they returned again and again to circle her on their motorcycles. They lost interest in her only when two boys in elegant Italian riding attire came galloping into town on beautiful horses and started a game of follow the leader with them.

Louise left the promenade to the motorcyclists and horsemen and joined me for a stroll around town. A procession of cars followed us as we walked. The license plates on them were from a variety of towns and cities. It seemed to be the mechanized version of the Sicilian stare.

An explanation of The Sicilian stare is needed, because it is encountered all over the island. But, it is like a laser beam in a small town like Noto. The men just stand and stare as women go by. To be most effective all the men within sight have to stare at the same woman or women at the same time. In larger cities, people have other things to do.

The next day, Sunday, we were in a bigger town called Ragusa. The large congregation of men outside church, while their women were inside, couldn't stare at us quite so powerfully. There were other things to see in the square. However, I got the Sicilian stare full force when I walked into Salon 2000, a unisex hair salon, which was full of the fashionable gentlemen of Ragusa getting

their hair blow dried. All action froze while I made a date to have my hair trimmed.

Louise was too polite to say that my company was boring, but the evidence was clear. While I was having the haircut, she happened to lunch with a vacationing Australian couple, and the encounter amused and cheered her up. The road to Palermo beckoned us to hurry through Comiso, Gela, Licata, Agrigento, Corleone so we could get back to the many distractions of city life.

Feb. 20 Palermo, Sicily

Stories of snow in the north drift in and make the cool weather here seem perfect. The villa looks out to sea across the top of Palermo. The city is quite flat between enormous hills that rise along the coast around it. The weather is rainy and clear, sometimes both at the same time.

The flowers are lovely, and the house is so big that that Louise, our hostess and I, who don't have a great deal in common, can spread out amicably in it. We each have a wing. Louise is a bit short tempered. She still tires easily.

I talked to Bonnie in London this morning. She is in touch with Trailrovers for me. The departure for Africa is March 15. I will be here until March 4, fly to London and stay with Bonnie at 36 Brompton Square.

There is a cheapie charter outfit here, and I can fly directly to London from Palermo with, perhaps, a stop in Naples. The flight is not available daily.

Feb. 21 Palermo, Sicily

The consul general's oven was broken, and he was claiming the Magic Chef range in the villa of our hosts. Since our host worked for him, the range had to be given up. Our host's wife had found the Magic Chef gas range, left by some past consul general in a back room of the consulate office, and taken it home two years earlier. So, her claim to it was weak.

Rented houses in Sicily come equipped with walls, ceilings, and floors. Electrical fixtures, sometimes even the light switches, as well as all appliances and, often, the clothes cupboards must be installed by the tenant. Our hostess had furnished a sprawling, four bedroom, four bath villa with living rooms on several levels and a huge dining room.

The house came with a sink in the kitchen, only because it was built into a special niche and permanently anchored to the kitchen with handsome blue and white ceramic tiles cemented around it. Finding the Magic Chef was a lucky stroke when she set up house in Palermo. She was philosophical about losing it. The rules of the game were very clear in the Foreign Service, and the range belonged to the consul general, whenever a consul general wanted to claim it.

Unfortunately, the consul general's wife did so just as our host left for the United States on home leave, and our hostess was getting the house ready to leave it in Louise's care and join her husband in New York. She thought it might be inhospitable to leave the house with nothing to cook on.

Impulse buying in Palermo is possible, but not a good idea. The first price quoted is often not the sale price. "*Sconti*," the discount, is available with bargaining on the most surprising items, a non-scheduled airline ticket, for instance, or a kitchen stove.

Our hostess, South African by birth, previously lived as a diplomatic wife in Turkey and France. Consular families are entitled under Italian law to a discount of 14 per cent on any purchase over 100,000 lira, the equivalent of the tax Italians would pay. The discount can be recovered from Rome by a store selling an item to her at a discounted price. Our hostess was ready to do battle for the bargain.

The hitch is that application for the refund may only be made by the purchaser. The store must, first, trust the purchaser to do the paperwork of applying and, second, wait for the ministry to pay up. The first is more reliable than the second.

Our hostess, indignant that foreign diplomats in the U.S. pay no taxes there at all, was in no mood to let the 14 per cent slip away. She considered installing some temporary cooking appliance until she came back to Italy and had more time to battle over the discount, but in a hurry for some replacement, she might have to fritter away the 14 per cent.

A tall woman, she looked like an adult in a toy department as she peered into one oven after another. All of them small by American standards. After looking in several stores, she found a gleaming confection of white-painted metal, chrome and glass with an oven two-thirds the size of the one on the Magic Chef. The stove burned bottled gas, essential for diplomatic entertaining which had to continue even when the local electricity failed.

Next, she had to persuade the store that the 14 per cent discount was legal, and that she would apply for it to be returned to the store. This stage of the battle



included frustration, some tears and a letter from the U.S. consulate explaining Italian law to the store. Our hostess agreed that it was a lot of bother.

She nearly gave up. As the battle dragged on, it seemed she would be lucky to get a 7 percent discount. Appliances in the various stores had no price tags, and she needed a good memory as she went from one to another. Summoning her energy for a fourth day of assault on stove stores, she took a letter from the commercial attache and a consulate truck along in case a deal was made.

The commercial attache also called someone he knew in the Italian government, who called the store. So while the salesman continued saying, "No, no, no," to our hostess, the manager said, "Yes, yes," and made the sale with the discount. The stove was adapted from city gas to bottled gas, loaded on the truck and escorted home by our hostess leading the way in her Alfa Romeo.

It was raining and the truck driver and his helper did not want to get their smart attire wet switching the new stove for the Magic Chef. The consul general's wife graciously agreed to wait an extra day for it to be returned to her possession. Hooking up the new stove the next day depleted the gas tanks, so refills had to be ordered. They were delivered by a man who had interrupted a fight with his wife and was in a hurry to get home to resume it. We read the instructions and baked a fish for dinner. All told, that meal took about a week to prepare.

Feb. 22 Palermo, Sicily

Sunday afternoon is a busy time in Italian restaurants, with whole families relaxing over their meal for hours. Our hostess suggested taking the meal at a

small restaurant overlooking the harbor in Mondello, the fashionable seaside resort outside Palermo. Tables were much in demand, and she swore to the owner that we would be there at 12:45. She took us there by a shortcut, which involved waiting at a railroad crossing for twenty minutes we didn't have to spare. She worked off her impatience by expressing colorful disapproval of drivers who went to the head of the line of waiting cars. When the gates went up, she put the Alfa Romeo in gear and we sped on to Mondello.

One of her dogs joined us for lunch. He was a tiny, long-haired chihuahua with excellent table manners. Her other dog, a large golden retriever had been off courting in the neighborhood when we left the villa. He was curled up by the front door, bloody and in distress when we got back. One front leg didn't work, and his chest was very sensitive. We thought a car had hit him.

Getting an Italian doctor away from his family on Sunday afternoon would be difficult. It took five hours to locate a veterinarian who would make a house call on a dog.

The retriever could have slipped through the electrically operated gate that protected the villa and wandered onto the highway, but it seemed unlikely that he could have gotten back the same way. When I looked him squarely in the eye, he did not seem mortally wounded. Rather, he seemed a bit pleased with all the attention he was getting.

We had tickets for the ballet that night. Our hostess and Louise stayed with the dog, while I delivered their tickets to some friends and went with them to the performance downtown. Our hostess was dashing out to fetch the vet when I

returned. She said I must hide, because she had told him that she was all alone with a dying dog.

Unfortunately, the vet lived nearby. Louise and I were chatting in the kitchen when our hostess returned with him. He seemed unperturbed by the deception, and the retriever revived to bark at him energetically. The vet gave him an antibiotic injection and said to give him another shot later and bring him to the office on Monday.

Some debate ensued on who was the most qualified to give injections. Our hostess once tried injecting a beloved cat and bent the needle, puncturing her own finger. The cat bit her, so she didn't want to try again. Louise got my vote. Her father was a doctor. Finally, our hostess called a neighbor, a professor of medicine, who came and gave the dog his second shot. He did not volunteer to come back regularly.

Louise was persuaded that the dog would not hate her for giving him injections, and she performed the task daily. In the morning the dog was lively and eager to be out. That afternoon the vet took a close look at him and said he had been shot. Nothing was broken, but the dog was so full of buckshot that after he was cleaned up, he glittered in the sunlight. Back home he lay on the kitchen floor licking himself, and every once in awhile some buckshot would clatter out onto the tile floor.

Feb. 23 Palermo, Sicily

Our hostess is not going to join her husband in the U.S. for his leave. A job at the university came through for her. To get it, she has to be ready to start before he returns.

Now I expect to leave on March 4 and will be at Bonnie's until I leave for Cairo, which is scheduled for March 13. I have to get two visas in London, and the Sudan visa in Cairo. The Trailrover organization requested that I be in London by March 6. Louise will not be alone here in Palermo now that our hostess is staying. So, I am taking Ali Air from Palermo to London. Not Alitalia. Ali is an outfit that has planes, pilots and passengers, but doesn't seem to be well known outside the London-Sicily route. I look closely at the pilot before I get aboard such airlines.

Feb. 26 Palermo, Sicily

On Thursday Louise invited me to leave Italy immediately, because I was driving her crazy. On Friday she was disappointed that I could not lunch with her. Fatigue and lovesickness have caught up with her while still convalescing from major surgery.

Last year she stayed in part of an old friend's vast apartment for a month. He fed, housed, entertained her and loaned her his car for excursions. This year as we drove around Sicily he was much on her mind, but he seemed to be avoiding her.

He left for Rome immediately after our arrival. When he returned, he did not get in touch. One night she woke our hostess with a request for tranquilizers, saying she felt on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Our hostess said that

perhaps Louise could use the experience in her novel. Our hostess preferred action to suspense, and while Louise was at church on Sunday, she called the old friend, whom she knew well, to see what was what.

It was not what a lovesick convalescent needed to hear. He said Louise sounded just as she had the year before when she relied totally on his hospitality and grew sulky if not included in all his plans. Our hostess pressed him to come over, which he did, bringing his Arab houseboy. They had drinks with Louise, who seemed excited, but unhappy with the visit.

A few days later the old friend included the three of us in his birthday luncheon party, seating himself between our hostess and me, and putting Louise at the far end of the table. Our hostess later commented that there was an intimacy in the way the old friend took a large ripe olive and passed it across me to the Arab houseboy, seated on my right. I had to agree that they seemed to be very good friends.

The party of a dozen guests included writers, diplomats and an amusing sixtyish woman, who was witty in both English and Italian. Married three times and asked if she would try again, she said, "No, are you kidding?" and laughed merrily.

The Arab houseboy acted as hostess for the gathering. He was obviously not only there to do the housework. The motto for such cases should be: Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Love's Dwelling and Find the Arab Houseboy Seated To Lunch With The Ambassador.

Mar. 6 Palermo, Sicily

We sat in the Shangri-La, a second floor restaurant overlooking a busy square in the center of town. Our table was on the terrace. Below, the square was full of stalls selling fruits and vegetables, souvenirs, and candy. Customers wandered about. One couple strolled along casually through the crowd. The girl's shoulder bag hung loosely at her side.

The roar of a motor scooter was heard and then the machine appeared at the corner of the square. Two boys were astride it, as it wove among the pedestrians, brushed by the couple, sped up and raced across and out of the square. The couple ran screaming after it. One of the boys held the girl's purse aloft as the motor scooter disappeared from view.

Some Sicilian scenes:

\* \* \* \* \*

"The sea was in a tempest," the guide said, describing the storm that washed the Normans up on the shore of Sicily at Cefalu a thousand years ago.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Greek temple at Segesta stands in a green valley. To the west is the village of Eice on the top of a mountain overlooking the sea. On a clear day Africa is visible in the distance.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sunday lunch in Portobello, a seaside village, we sat outside at tables covered with white cloths that billowed in the wind. Down the street a woman tossed her slops out of an upstairs window. Nobody parked in front of her house.

\* \* \* \* \*

At a dinner given for a visiting Foreign Service doctor in an elegant penthouse apartment, one of the consular officers, a bachelor, discussed his own body hair and women's menstrual periods. His conversational topics are well-known in the diplomatic community, and he has difficulty getting dates with girls in either Rome or Palermo. The bodily hair he discussed was not that missing from his balding head.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whizzing along the autostrada in the Alfa Romeo, our hostess held the car at 160 km. per hour, as she talked a mile a minute. The speed limit was 100 km., and we flashed merrily by all other traffic. Going 160 km per hour was slower than our hostess liked, but was definitely more than her passengers felt comfortable with. The car seemed ready to lift from the highway and take off at every curve — over the metal guard rail and into space. The car had no seat belts.

\* \* \* \* \*

Buying a ticket on A.L.I. airlines at \$100 for a direct flight from Palermo to London, I was assured the flight would leave that day. Alitalia, the railroad, and the ferry link between Sicily and the mainland were all strikebound.

The A.L.I. ticket agent said, "We don't believe in strikes."

\* \* \* \* \*

Our hostess looked up over her morning coffee to see five cows trampling her budding garden. She ran screaming out the door to attack them. They retreated behind the clothesline, where they were trapped, hesitant to advance in the direction of our hostess, and unable to retreat, because of the stone retaining wall. They milled about trampling bushes and spring bulbs. The golden retriever cut off their escape to the driveway. The ten tiled steps leading to a lower terrace did not attract them.

We put the dog in the villa and chased the cattle around the house. Once in motion they went quickly into the driveway, down the street toward the automatic gate. The gate obviously had something wrong with it and was standing wide open.

Mar. 10 London

Bonnie is housing me at 36 Brompton Square. There is no outlet other than Brompton Road, so it is quiet and country-like, with a large garden in back. The house has five floors, and Bonnie occupies four, using the ground floor for storage. There is a sixth story on top of the house, a separate floor, connected only to the house next door. Both houses are owned by a couple who live in one of the flats in the house next door.

Bonnie's house has a dining room, den, powder room and kitchen on the main floor. Above that is a Chinese red (or *Time* red in tribute to her employer) and white living room with a terrace overlooking the garden. The next floor has



the master bedroom, dressing room and bath. On the floor above are three small bedrooms and a bath. That's where I am staying.

The footsteps above me were a mystery until I knew about the extra story on top of the house. There is no access to it from Bonnie's house. The heating pipes for both houses are in the walls between them, making the house warm throughout and extra snug on my floor, where the ceilings are not as high as on the other floors.

With nine days between arriving from Sicily and leaving for Cairo, there was a lot to be done. I had no sleeping bag or mosquito net, and tropical gear is hard to find in winter. I bought the suggested malaria prevention and malaria cure medicines, as well as two diarrhea medicines, mild and acute. I also received a shot in the flank against possible hepatitis, and have taken precautions against smallpox, cholera, yellow fever, typhoid, and polio.

I got my passport visas for Egypt and Kenya on a miserable, rainy day. It was the first bad day all week, and I was groggy from shopping all day and going to the theater at night. I had to wait for one of the visas and spent the time dropping things, spilling coffee, and practically falling on the floor until I found that my chair was broken. Every time I moved to let someone by, the chair wiggled and threatened to tip over.

I saw three comedies. One "The London Cockolds" is two hundred years old. A Tolstoi comedy, "Fruits of Enlightenment" is a bit more recent. I saw Alan Ayckbourn's, "Joking Apart" opening night. I also saw one drama production, the final performance of "The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs." By the time I return from the

Nile, both the Royal Shakespeare theaters, as well as the three National theaters will have new productions on their stages. Delightful.

The list of travelers up the Nile gives everyone's birth date along with other information. It includes a 64-year-old woman who went overland to Asia. There is another woman, 62, then me, and seven men and women who are twenty years younger. There is a 45-year age span between the youngest and the oldest. There are five from England, two Australians, one new Zealander, a Canadian and me.

We must travel light. A canvas tote bag will hold my clothes, personal items, medicines, plastic cup, plate and eating utensils. The sleeping bag is to supplement hotel accommodations. We arrive in Cairo sometime after 1 a.m. I asked Trailfinders about making a hotel reservation, but apparently, if the plane is quite late we bed down on the air terminal floor. What a change from expense account travel with the White House press!

After this, Trailfinders will not schedule any more trips on the riverboats going up the Nile and into the Sudan. They break down frequently, extending that part of the trip, while a boat is pulled up on the river bank for repairs. The riverboat trek is supposed to take 12 days, but if there is a breakdown, the delay can be indefinite. Trailfinders will continue to schedule downstream trips, because a boat can drift with the current even if the engine fails. I was assured that if we get stuck somewhere beyond the 45-day limit of our Air Sudan tickets, we will not have to buy a higher priced ticket on a better known airline.

Bonnie offered to put me up when I return on or about April 27. She has also let me store some things. The mink is staying in London. She also convinced me

to leave the typewriter behind. It's seven extra, valuable pounds, in my luggage, and she thought it might make my traveling companions shy. I am practicing legible handwriting.

I purchased medical and repatriation insurance, which also covers being hijacked for up to 12 months. Repatriation insurance wouldn't be necessary if I could count on the President of the U.S. sending an Air Force jet for my body, as he did for Nan Robertson's husband. However, if Air Sudan kills me, I won't need repatriation, as I'm sure my ashes will be scattered in some interesting spot.

Our leader, Richard Greenhill, son of a diplomat and graduate of Cambridge U., will be staying at the Everest Hotel in Cairo. A single room there is 1.90 (Egyptian pounds) plus 12% service. The lobby of the hotel is on the 15th floor of an office building, and the hotel goes up from there. Other inexpensive hotels are: the Ambassador, Carlton, Grand, Nationale, and the Anglo Swiss. There are also two youth hostels in town. Trailfinders people do not mention hotels like the Hilton and Sheraton. When I did ask, I knew it was not the Trailfinders way.

Suggested reading:

The White Nile, and the Blue Nile, by Alan Moorehead

The Splendor That Was Egypt, by M.A. Murray

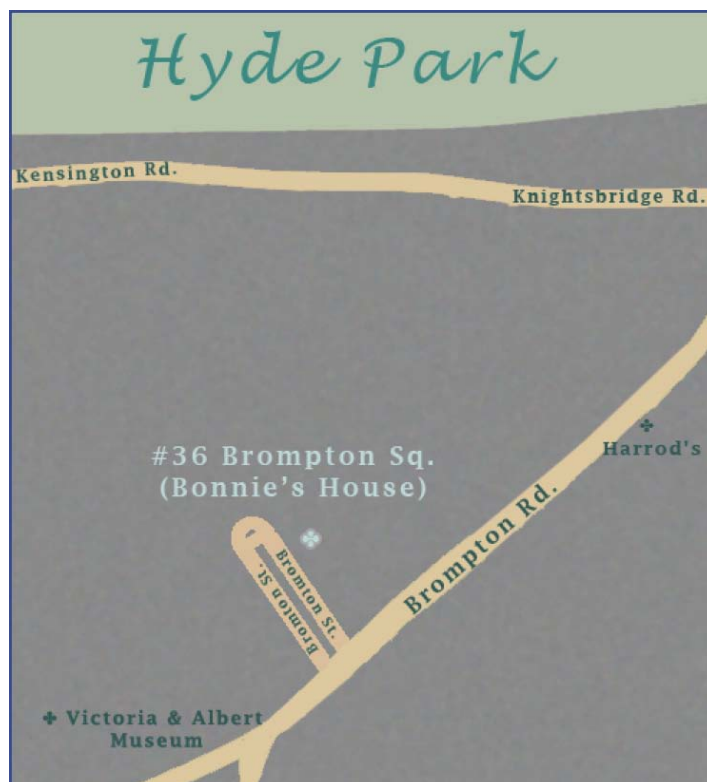
The Egypt of the Pharaohs, by A. Gardiner

Egypt Travel Guide, published by Roger Lascelles

Animals of East Africa, by C.T.A. Maberly

A Guide to Kenya and Northern Tanzania, by David F. Horrobin

Mar. 11 London



Without the typewriter or mail service, I may disappear until the end of April. Bonnie will hold mail here in London. Imagine endless pages of handwriting? Silence may seem preferable.

Mar. 20 Cairo

I'm stuck in Cairo, back from Aswan. I couldn't continue up the Nile, but came back to try again for a Sudanese visa. Before we left Cairo I got a letter from the American embassy and took it to the Sudanese for the visa. My application was not accepted, because I had put "journalist" as my profession.

The first secretary was finally located after a run around the block from the chancery to the embassy and back to the chancery and then back again to the embassy. He said for me to call him Friday. To a Muslim, this is like a

Washington bureaucrat saying to call him on Sunday. The outlook was not encouraging. The other Trailfinders all have their visas. One was even able to get hers in London — a fluke.

The flight from London took about seven hours with a stopover in Rome. At Cairo we boarded buses for the terminal, and one passenger looked up as we approached it and said, “This isn’t Rome!” He had slept through his stop.

Richard Greenhill, our intrepid Nile guide, met us at the airport, standing on the sidewalk outside to collect any passengers from the Air Sudan flight who did not look like camel drivers. It was hard for him to make a mistake. With him he had Allan, who had come on a just-completed trip down the Nile. He was not the only member of the group to survive the trip, but he was the only one still in Cairo to prove to us that we could make it.

We loaded the group into two taxis and drove to the Everest Hotel which comprised two floors of an office tower on Ramses Square facing the Cairo railroad station. It was still dark, but the traffic flow and din in the area were incredible and got worse as the sun came up. Below, old streets and new overpasses merge, loaded with vehicles that weave through the maze of cars and trucks, blocked by an occasional donkey cart.

Lynette, a New Zealand girl, who had been working in London as a barmaid, and I were given a room just as the sun came up. We napped a bit and met Richard and four other Trailfinders to go apply for our Sudanese visas. Richard is tall, thin and a speedy walker. We raced along behind him through downtown, and it was still a 45 minute walk to the embassy.

The others got their visas, while Richard and I chased down the first secretary. He was on the telephone, but broke off politely and asked us to be seated. He said, that since I was a journalist, approval for a visa must come from Khartoum. That would take ten days to two weeks. We were due to leave Cairo in four days. He was gracious and said that was a problem. He also said that did not allow sufficient time for a request to be processed and a response to come from Khartoum. He said that I should call him in ten days. We parted cordially, and I expressed my hope that I would be able to visit his country.

He held my application in his hand as we parted, which was better than having it rejected and handed back, as had happened earlier. Richard said not to worry that his contacts at Sudan Air would give him a reading on the situation.

Sharman's camera was taken from her luggage en route from London to Cairo, and we went to look for a replacement. A young man walking along with us, told us he would lead us to camera shops, but he didn't seem to be able to find any. Instead, he told us all about himself and invited us home to tea with his family. After two hours of his walking company, we had sodas with him and then said goodbye. Sharman, an Australian debutante, refused his offer to show her the sewers of Cairo the next day. Did I hear that correctly?

Sharman and I had lunch with Richard, Allan (of the previous expedition), and two of our group. The lesson from that experience was not to lunch with ravenous young men and offer to split the check with them. My New Zealand roommate said the meal threw her budget out of balance for the week.

The cost of this trip is about \$1,000 for transportation by air, train and riverboat, plus \$200 for equipment.

### Proposed Route with Stops Marked in Red



Mar. 27 Cairo

You're not going to Egypt alone?" shocked friends said. I tried to humor them.

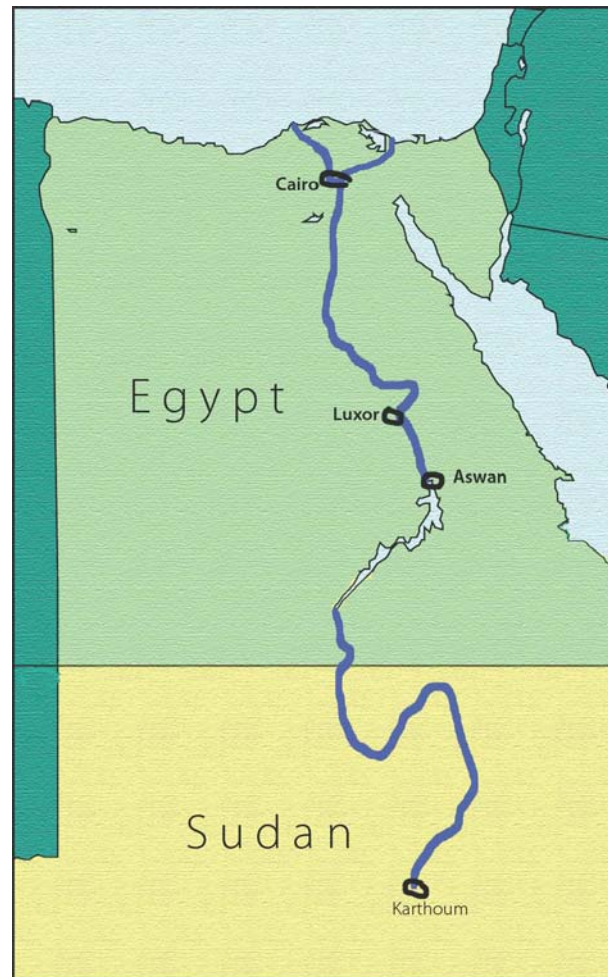
"No, of course not. There will be the pilot, the crew and all the passengers. I'm sure to be jammed in with a lot of people, considering the bargain price of the ticket, and there are certain to be a lot of Egyptians about the countryside." I suppose more tact could have been used.

In my defense, I was a bit sensitive after inoculations for yellow fever, cholera, typhoid and smallpox and tired from packing my sleeping bag, Swiss army knife, flashlight, water jug and camping clothes for a trip up the Nile.

A handful of Americans use local public transportation and stay in Egyptian hotels. More Europeans seem to do so. I'd like to return sometime, after I've recovered from the shock of my first visit.



### Route I Ended Up Taking



No matter what the timetable says, planes in Africa seem to answer some primitive call of nature and settle back to earth just at dawn, when weariness is worst and delays getting away from the airport most painful. Cairo is a vast growing city of old crumbling buildings, new crumbling buildings, crumbling streets and crumbling sidewalks. I was told that the local desert sand doesn't bond well in cement. The sand from Saudi Arabia must be imported to make lasting cement and that's too expensive to do. It's hard to believe that the only alternative is to build things that crumble as they are constructed.

Traffic races through the streets, sometimes heeding stop lights, but pedestrians must take care. Antiquated buses speed by, jammed with passengers inside and agile young men clinging in clusters outside to the window and door frames. The din of horns, motors and screeching tires continues twenty-four hours a day.

Add the broiling heat and a lot of dust, and tourists look stunned and a little frightened as they leave the Hilton. There's a dead end street between the hotel and the National Museum, where taxis and buses park, waiting for business. I know this, not only because I have visited the museum, but also because I have tested the salads at the Hilton several times. Salads or any uncooked vegetable or fruit should be chosen carefully to avoid unpleasant illnesses. Hilton food was deemed safe.

On the streets there are constant health reminders: lepers, polio victims, people blinded by bilharzia, a worm in the Nile that works through the body to the eye and destroys vision. It's hard to fuss over a brand of shampoo in the drugstore, or whether Crest is mint-flavored, when the clerk gazes at you with one of these milky eyes.

At a bus stop there were two young girls in crisp cotton dresses, hair done up in ribbons, ready for a party. But only one wore white cotton socks and shoes. The other was barefoot, one leg twisted and malformed. The other foot was splayed from carrying all her weight. She could only hop on it. Her sister helped her board the bus. Polio?

These are the sights in the streets of Cairo. You can fly 425 miles (850 km) south to Aswan in your private plane and stay at one of the luxury hotels or with

the Begum Khan at her villa there. But poverty and ignorance is always around the corner. Down by the river bank, I saw a mother scoop water from near a drain pipe and give a cup of it to her baby.

I carried water purification tablets and disinfectant to wash my hands before eating, when soap and water were not available. I still discussed bodily functions, my own and other people's more than I care to. Anyone allergic to dung and dust should stay out of Egypt. And if you're due for surgery, remember the Shah of Iran. His preference for going to a doctor was first in New York, then Mexico, then Cairo.

The hotels are more expensive when I chose my own, but the Lotus Hotel here in Cairo, which I and a lot of Scandinavians find quite adequate, doesn't appeal to Americans. We can stay wherever we like, but when the group arrived here, it made things simpler to have everyone at the Everest hotel where Richard was staying.

The suburbs of Cairo are about to engulf the pyramids at Giza. The Step Pyramid is several miles away, still picturesquely surrounded on all sides by the desert. Transportation from Giza is by taxi, horse or camel. One of our group, who had tried it, said that a few minutes riding a camel is enough to get the feel of it. How right she was!

A whole day is torture. The only relief from this sickening heave of a camel's walk is to prod the camel into a trot, but camels like to do things with each other. As soon as one slows down, so do the others. And even a trotting camel doesn't go very fast. How to sit on its broad back is a problem. Astride, side-saddle and cross-legged are all painful.

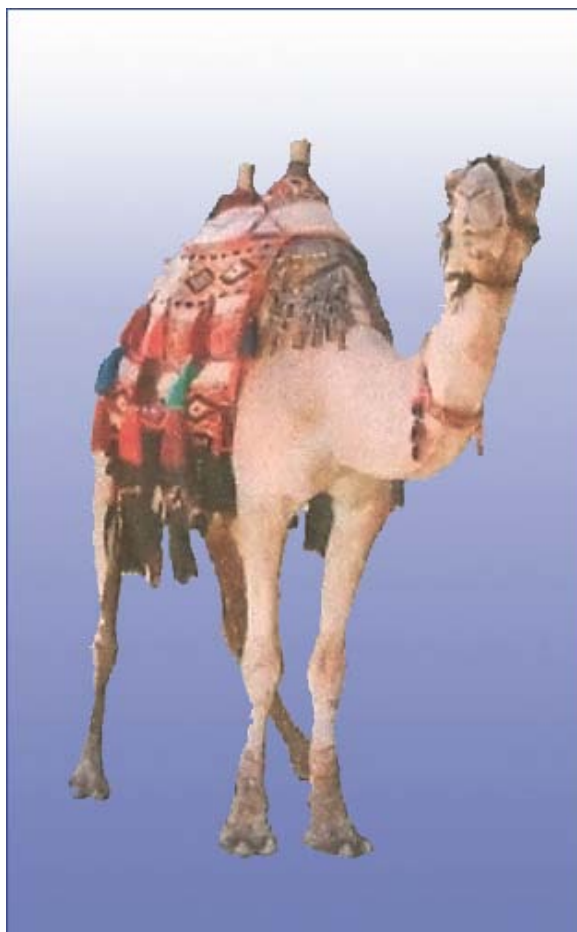
It took my camel three and a half hours to go from Giza to the Step Pyramid. The ride takes an hour on a horse and fifteen minutes by taxi. When we got there the camel knelt in the sand, and I staggered off to a hut to purchase lemonade. A few in our group were able to walk around the pyramid and take pictures, proving they had been there. I had several beers. The bottles were larger than lemonades, and the ride was only half over.

Going back to Giza the sun blazed on the sand, and I tied my jacket over my head, urging my steed into a gallop. Repeatedly. A camel's foot is spongy. Each time weight is put on it, it compresses and then expands as the weight is lifted. It's very interesting to watch this happen a few thousand times, if you have nothing else to do except think how uncomfortable you are.

Our guide, an old man on a donkey, rode along with us and did not like it when a German boy got down off his camel and walked. The boy strode along beside us, keeping up easily with the camels. I yearned to walk, too, but feared my legs were paralyzed. As we neared Giza after dark, the old man made the boy ride with him on the donkey, rather than enter town on foot, poor advertising for his camel riding business.

Later I found that I had two huge saddle sores at the base of my spine, each about five inches in diameter. They broke and had to be kept as clean and dry as possible to prevent infection. For the next week or so, leaning against the back of a seat was not a good idea. When my back sweated, salty water dripped into these wounds. The temperature was usually over 100 degrees. My posture improved.

We had second class rail tickets from Cairo to Luxor and then on to Aswan. Richard does the standing in lines for us and an Egyptian line takes the endurance and drive of a pro football player. No one else wanted to ask for 1st class and make him stand in two lines. Since I'll be coming back alone from Aswan for another try at getting a visa for the Sudan, I splurged and opted for a 1st class ticket.



My saddle sores were better when we reached Luxor, and early on a beautiful morning I rented a bicycle, ferried across the Nile and pedaled six miles by fertile fields toward the arid Valley of the Kings to see the famous tombs. The air was clear. The road rose gradually, and the sun was hot, but not yet

scorching. Reaching the valley, I coasted down hill and parked the bike against a rock near King Tut's tomb and went below.

Climbing up and down in various holes in the ground was hard, hot work. After several hours I went into the air-conditioned restaurant for a cool drink. Several busloads of people arrived and vied for seats. Tempers were short. An elderly Englishwoman and her husband were too late. He looked hot and sick. She begged some French people for a seat for her husband. They gave no sign of understanding English, so I gave him mine.

On the other side of the room in an area reserved for diners, a V.I.P. group was getting excellent snack service. It was Jack and Mary Margaret Valenti, their children and an *au pair* girl. Valenti, former right hand man to President Johnson and czar of the Motion Picture Assn., is a director of T.W.A., which owns the Hilton hotels. Once when I was assigned to cover a party at their house, Mary Margaret welcomed me and an *Evening Star* photographer, Rosemary Martufi. Arriving home, Jack threw us out after calling the *Star* top editor who cancelled the assignment. Democratic Jack wanted no coverage of the party given for Republican Everett Dirksen. So, we had met before. They were staying aboard the Hilton barge that goes up the Nile to Luxor and Aswan. He had a common tourist worry about being left behind, however, and kept an eye on the T.W.A. bus outside. I was relaxed, resting for the six mile return trip, knowing that my bike would not leave without me.



From Luxor, we went by train to Aswan.

My advice to anyone headed for a sail aboard a felucca on the Nile is to pack a picnic lunch. I knew enough not to swim in the Nile. Doctors of tropical medicine on two continents warned me of the perils lurking in any freshwater river or lake. When we set out on a felucca from Aswan for an overnight sail, I sat in the hot sun, watching others dive into the blue depths.

I spent the time watching the skipper cook up a stew for our supper using water from the Nile. He put a pot of fire on a plank extended over the side of the felucca and brewed his stew over it. Preparations began in mid-afternoon, and the meal was served after the sun went down, but the temperature later proved to have been too low to purify whatever lurked in the water.

The felucca was pulled up on shore, and we spread our sleeping bags in and next to it. About 3 a.m. growls in my stomach woke me. Other figures emerging from sleeping bags marched down the plank to the shore. The west bank of the Nile was dark as we went looking for separate bushes. I had a million stars and one small flashlight to light the way.





**Ann Wood in Egypt**

In hours before dawn I explored the area repeatedly. After the sun came up men from a nearby village arrived to smoke a water pipe. Women came to fill five

gallon gasoline cans with water and carry them home on their heads. Several of our group were invited along for tea. Boys walking to school stopped by to see what was happening.

The felucca remained on shore while many of us kept disappearing into the bushes. Privacy became a problem, as we were the objects of so much local interest. About 8 a.m. a suggestion was made that we set sail.

Those of us afflicted with the Pharaoh's Revenge insisted on remaining until our Lomotil took effect. Then as the noon sun rose high in the sky, we set sail for our return trip to Aswan, bidding farewell to our village hosts, and leaving many white dots of Kleenex tucked in the sandy soil.

The other Trailfinders continued up the Nile by steamer to Wadi Haifa and caught the train on to Khartoum, a train ride that takes from 23 to 50 hours, depending on how late the train is. Passengers often don't remember exactly. I hope to catch up with them before they leave Khartoum for Kosti, in Sudan, still farther up the Nile. Then they go on to Juba. Part of the trip may be by bus if the water is too low, or if the steamer is broken down.

The only dates that are firm are airline reservations. We are due to fly out of Juba on April 17 to Nairobi. There's only one plane a week, and demand for seats can be tight. Juba is an old British retreat and apparently worth seeing. It is certainly not simple to get there.

Our Air Sudan tickets are valid for flights from Cairo to Khartoum and to Juba, which we did not plan to use. The purpose of Trailfinders is to go overland wherever possible. Would Stanley and Livingstone fly? But, due to my visa issue,

I will have to fly to catch up to the group before they leave Khartoum. But first I have to return to Cairo by myself.

On my first class return from Aswan to Cairo, a gallant Egyptian gentleman suggested, as I stood in line, that the facilities were unsuitable for me. He said that I should wait to use those in the Cairo station. We were eleven hours from Cairo. I knew horrors awaited me when a man came out rolling down his trouser cuffs.

Food on the train was served on big metal trays brought to passengers. The once-white jacket of the waiter looked as though it had been used to clean the galley. It killed my appetite and made me glad to have Lomotil tablets.

Apr. 3 Khartoum, Sudan

Getting here was an adventure.

Back in Cairo, the many Sudanese embassy and Air Sudan staffers I encountered in my attempts to get a visa to their country were not amused that I had put “journalist” on my application. It was a very serious matter to them — and for me, too.

By the seventeenth day of my efforts, a week after the rest of the Trailfinders left Aswan for the south, by river and train, while I returned north to Cairo, I was getting discouraged. By then I knew I should have put teacher, student, business, housewife — anything else.

Lounging about the Hotel Lotus in Cairo was broken by daily visits to the Sudanese embassy. Staying close to the hotel was essential, because the Pharaoh continued to exact his Revenge. Lomotil is available without a

prescription in Cairo, and after buying some more and reading the instructions I cut down and finally eliminated its use. That is not meant to be funny. According to the fine print Lomotil slows down the digestion and most other vital organs, all of which I was aware of. It made the daily trek to the embassy an ordeal.

I was getting no information from the embassy about the progress of my visa application, and finally went to the offices of Sudan Air. At Sudan Air, a man who knew Richard, my Trailfinder coordinator, made a few phone calls. I had to admit that Richard had told me to go see the man. But, between spending so much time in the Sudanese embassy and the Lotus Hotel's toilet, I had forgot to go to the Sudan Air office. Magically, I had the visa within two days!

Late one night, I checked out of the hotel and took a taxi to the airport. The aged driver was insulted by my repeatedly asking when we would get there. I believe that he knew I thought I was being kidnapped to be sold to some unwary white slaver. But, he knew, which I didn't, that the airport is a long, long way out of Cairo.

We got there in plenty of time for me to nap for several hours on the waiting room chairs. The plane took off sometime in the middle of the night and reached Khartoum, as African planes seem to, as the sun came up. Instead of a long, smooth glide to approach the runway, the pilot circled the town and seemed to dive into his approach, a unique experience in a huge four-engine jet.

I went looking for the Trailfinders and found them in several hotels, all ghastly. The mid-priced hotels in town seemed to be full of business travelers, French, English, etc. The luxury hotels, which are near the Blue and White Nile

junction, are beyond Trailfinders' budgets. Their lodgings were downscale, very downscale.

Trailfinders can always rustle up a meal from their backpacks. A collection of trash, bottles and cans, was growing in a far corner of the vast room I was sharing with a number of others. We spent very little time there. Stunned by the 100+ degree heat, we went to the Commonwealth Club, a haven for possessors of Commonwealth passports. I was a guest in the country club-like place with a tempting swimming pool and a restaurant that served excellent hamburgers. The group had decided against going to Juba, a picturesque old hill town, for excellent reasons: the temperature was reported to be 120 degrees; the World Health Organization reported cases of bubonic plague there; and Idi Amin, after being chased out of Uganda, was reportedly headed toward Juba.

Tony, the local representative of another overland company, sent this Telex to his head office in London:

HI MARTIN: REGRET THE LATEST NEWS. JOHNSTONE'S TELEX JUST ARRIVED. HE HAS NOT RECEIVED THE VISAS IN DAR ES SALAAM. THEREFORE, HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ASK YOU TO CONSIDER FURTHER LOBBYING FOR JOHNSTONE TO COLLECT THE VISAS IN NAIROBI. SITUATION IN UGANDA WORSENS WITH POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS IN SOUTHERN SUDAN. RUMOR FROM TRAILFINDERS NILE ROVER GROUP NOW IN KHARTOUM THAT BUBONIC PLAGUE IS RIFE IN JUBA MAY BE EUPHEMISTIC FOR AMIN RETREATING WITH SUDANESE MERCENARIES. REGARDS, TONY

If any further reason was needed, the steamboat used for part of the trip there might be halted due to a strike, which would cause us to miss our reservations out of Juba on Air Sudan to Nairobi. Or the reservations might disappear in the confusion. Usually, a reservation on Air Sudan was not a guarantee of a seat, if one were not prompt to line up for boarding. There was only one flight a week from Juba to Nairobi. Later, we heard that the political developments had cancelled all flights out of Juba for the next three weeks. Our stay there could have been a long one.

Richard and two others of the group took off from Khartoum and headed for Nairobi, just as I arrived, to prepare an adventure there for the rest of us. We would follow as soon as possible. I stayed at the unspeakably dirty hotel. After a night in the group room I booked a room next door, which had a working fan. The management was so impressed with my efforts to make sheets out of the vast quantity of mosquito netting I carried, that a man was sent up to sweep the room.

I saw the Blue Nile meet the White Nile, trekked about town in the heat and returned to the pool at the club.

A little bit of information about our guide:

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Richard Greenhill, 22, Cambridge University graduate, answered an ad in *The London Times* and became a Trailfinder expedition leader.

"I knew the kind of life I wanted to live, and it wasn't in business. I had been on a lot of interviews with companies that wanted me to go into public relations.

They'd train me in London for about three years and then I'd get a sales meeting in Houston as a treat."

Richard's father was a diplomat and later headed the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. Richard wanted excitement and jumped at a job of organizing trips up and down the Nile. These trips are aimed at the 18 to 35 year age group, traveling on a shoestring. His own per diem went up after he done a dozen trips from 5 pounds to 5.50 pounds. Call that ten dollars a day.

You don't have to be in that age group to be a Trailfinder, but you do have to look after your own baggage, make some of your own reservations and arrangements, and be able to sleep in a sleeping bag, when necessary. Transportation on this expedition included trains, riverboat, camel, horse, buses, trucks, bicycles and a felucca.

Richard was hospitalized in London for a bad case of parasites after one trip, but he continued swimming in the Nile. Inland African waters may be fresh water, but they carry a lot of nasty parasites that, as doctors told me, may enter any bodily orifice. Richard, himself, advised: no tap water or milk to drink, no cakes, raw vegetables or fruits to eat. He was six feet two inches tall, weighed 160 pounds, and was usually hungry.

Apr. 10 Nairobi, Kenya

Getting out of Khartoum was complicated by the political situation in Uganda. It meant making reservations on whatever flight Air Sudan would book us, and then going to the airport, lining up and getting aboard before all the seats were full.

On arrival in Nairobi, we joined Richard at a hotel packed with Asian refugees driven out of Uganda by the upheaval there. Rooms had whole families in them with the family Mercedes parked outside.

In Nairobi, our first adventure was a safari. We took two huge trucks to the rugged country around Lake Turkana, where lava rock is strewn as far as the eye can see around the crocodile-infested lake. The Trailfinders were part of a group of forty passengers. The trucks were a Bedford and a Mercedes with benches built on each side of the truck body. Facing out, passengers sat on these holding on to the railings in front of them or bracing their feet against them.

As far as the eye can see the land around Lake Turkana, formerly Lake Rudolph, is covered with large rocks. Concrete slabs were laid to ease traffic down the steep hillside to the shore. These are called steps and are just that. The trucks rode over rocks and then bumped down the slopes they covered.

We camped by the lake for two days and swam in the pool of the simple safari lodge. It had an airstrip for fishermen, who don't fancy the road trip. No wonder. Turkana is one of the world's largest desert lakes. One spot near a native village was supposed to be safe for swimming, because the resident crocodiles — supposedly extremely territorial beasts—had been shot. I wasn't convinced that neighboring crocodiles wouldn't move in.



## Photos and Excerpts from Ann's Diary

Expedition to Lake Turkana

FIRST DAY

Picnic near Nyaruhuru

Camp at Maralal



SECOND DAY



Expedition to Lake Turkana

SECOND DAY  
(Continued)





THIRD DAY

Arrive at Lake Turkana



FOURTH DAY

at leisure by lake





FIFTH DAY



Across Kaisut desert







FIFTH DAY



Onto main Marsabit road

FIFTH DAY Camp at Milgis Luggar -  
with scorpion

SIXTH DAY Arrive Samburu Game Reserve

THE SEVENTH NIGHT back in Nairobi the manager of the Hotel drove three of our group to the hospital with gastroenteritis and malaria. Frozen meatloaf wrapped in foil and carried in an ice chest on the expedition was a frequent main course. Safari Camp Services ran short of supplies for forty hungry explorers. Two nights earlier I was late putting up my tent and missed the meat course. I had no stomach problems other than hunger. There was no other source of food on the trip.

## Turkana Lake Expedition Brochure

### SAFARI CAMP SERVICES LIMITED

#### WHAT IS THE TURKANA BUS ?

It is a camping safari to the eastern side of Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolf), departing from our Koinange Street office, Nairobi every second Saturday at 8.30 a.m. and returning the following Friday at approximately 5.00 p.m.

#### WHO RUNS IT ?

SAFARI CAMP SERVICES LIMITED entirely and completely. We have the proud record of eighty scheduled departures (as of January 1979).

#### WHERE DOES IT GO ?

FIRST DAY - picnic lunch near Nyaruhuru. Camp at Maralal.

SECOND DAY - ascend 8,000 feet Losiolo Escarpment, descent into the Horr Valley, camping by a Stream just north of South Horr.

THIRD DAY - Arrive Lake Turkana around 2 p.m. camp at Loyangalani.

FOURTH DAY - At leisure by the lake, visit El Molo Bay, tribal dancing in the village, swim at Oasis Lodge (20/- per head for 12 hours)

FIFTH DAY - Depart early morning across Kaisut desert, onto the main Marsabit road, camp at the Milgis Luggar.

SIXTH DAY - Arrive Samburu Game Reserve around midday, swim at Buffalo Springs, game run, visit lodge.

SEVENTH DAY - Return to Nairobi via Nanyuki.

N.B: The return route from the Lake may be varied according to weather and road conditions in the Kaisut desert.

#### WHAT DO YOU REQUIRE TO TAKE WITH YOU ?

Owing to limited storage space on the bus please make your packs as small as possible, either a small case or kit bag.

- a sleeping bag
- 20/- if you wish to swim at Oasis Lodge.
- Alcohol refreshments etc. there is nothing to be purchased en route.
- A torch if you wish to read in bed.
- Wear thick shoes or boots. Carry tough safari clothes. Warm clothes for first and last days.
- Small change - if you wish to take photographs or purchase artifacts.

#### WHAT IS SUPPLIED ?

Everything.

Transport is by rugged overland seven-ton trucks with outward facing seats.

Excellently prepared cooked food.



Camping equipment. consisting of mattresses, tents, stools, tables lights and all kitchen utensils.

You are expected to help erect your own tent.

#### WHO GOES ON THESE TRIPS ?

Everybody.

Usually about eighteen persons per departure, sometimes forty and sometimes six. All nationalities, quite a few residents who know they cannot get there by their own vehicle for the price. Mainly young or young in heart. We discourage only those who are looking for lodge type luxury, dust free mini-buses, a hot shower and cold drinks every night. It is an expedition. The thousand odd clients who have ridden the Turkana Bus have had nothing but praise for it.

#### HOW MUCH IS IT ?

Less than half the price of any other safari, only Shs. 1750/-. Completely inclusive. Shs. 100/- secures a booking.

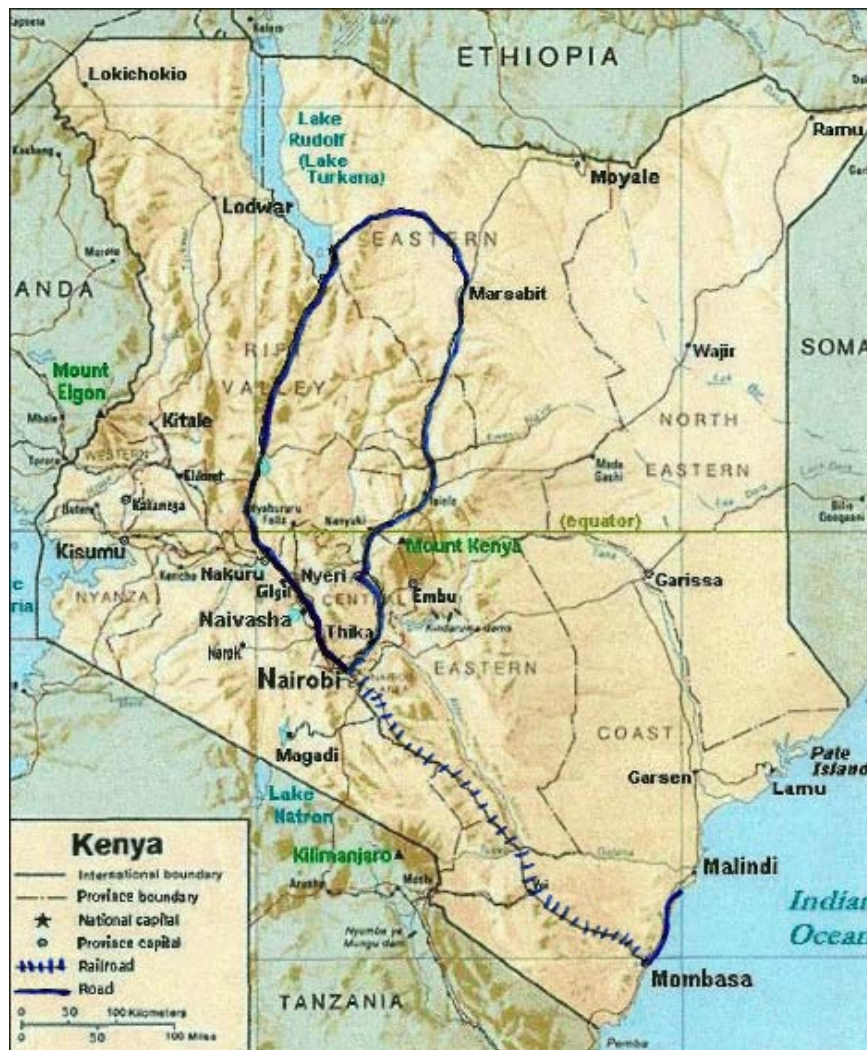
#### DO WE SEE MUCH GAME ?

No, usually some the last day in Samburu, but this is a safari to 'vanishing Africa' one of the remotest and fascinating areas of all Africa. The eastern approaches to the Jade Sea. Camels yes, Turkana and a place in the sun you will never forget.

#### WHY LAKE TURKANA ?

The discomfort of a safari to Lake Turkana is easy to explain. It is a long way (nearly 1,000 miles round trip). It is a lot of driving most days, it is tough, dusty and bumpy. The rewards are harder to describe. Your first glimpse of the remote waters (covering an area large as England) guarded by mystical giant Mount Kulal, unchanged by time is a memory that will serve you well in the great cities of the world. This is an expedition and we promise you an expedition atmosphere. But do not take our word for it, ask any of the hundreds of Turkana Bus Week clients of the past. No two safaris are ever the same and the adventures we encounter will fill volumes.

## Route Taken in Kenya



A small boy invited me to visit his mother in a round grass hut. We entered through a low, small opening. The doorway had a bend in it to prevent wildlife from wandering in. It almost kept me from getting in at all. I stooped and crept along until the room opened up ahead of me. There was no space free of cooking, sleeping or decorative objects. I stood with one foot in the living area and the other in the sleeping area. My right shoulder was over the kitchen area.



The place was full of people sitting in the dimness, lit only by what light came through several slits in the walls. I was presented to a young woman holding a tiny baby. The boy said the baby was one day old, holding up one finger for emphasis. When the baby was held out for me to inspect, it looked brand new and still wet. Maybe he meant one hour?

We drove away from Lake Turkana, east across the Kaisut desert, bumping along in two ruts. There were no other vehicles in either direction, only some Masai tribesmen on foot. It was the beginning of the rainy season. If the road across the desert became impassable, we would have to turn around and go back. Turning the huge trucks in the ruts would be difficult. Twice we got stuck where water had settled in dips in the road, making vast bogs, but the two New Zealand drivers and their four black helpers piled rocks in the mud under the wheels and got the trucks moving.

We reached the main north-south road from Ethiopia late one day. It was unpaved, but wide, flat and dry. The Mercedes truck picked up speed and disappeared ahead. Our truck had a flat tire, and we found to our dismay that the jack was on the Mercedes. It would soon be dark. The Mercedes driver would not come back for us, if he missed us after the sun had set.

The African helpers collected rocks, piling them up to form an improvised jack. Under one of the rocks was a small, brown and white viper, a very poisonous snake. As the man lifted the rock and saw it there, he jumped aside with remarkable agility, still holding the rock. We all admired the snake's handsome colors and then the men stoned it to death.

Camp stools and mattresses were spread out in this main international road, and we relaxed while the tire was changed. No traffic came by to disturb us. It took several tries to get the truck up securely on the rocks. Each time it fell off there was a sigh from the audience, as the truck sank down. By the time we caught up with the Mercedes, a campsite had been selected for the night, and dinner was being prepared.

We set up our tents, being careful to look out for scorpions and snakes. My tent mates were resourceful travelers who were always replenishing supplies at unlikely places. They had gotten some Scotch somehow at Lake Turkana, and invited me to have a drink before going out to dinner around the camp fire. Call it alcoholism, laziness, or just plain dumb luck. We missed dinner. There had not been enough for forty hungry travelers, plus drivers and helpers. It was all gone when we held out our plates.



An explanation of food storage is due here. This was the seventh night of a trip, during which ground meat was carried with ice in a food locker aboard one of the trucks. It left Nairobi frozen, but whether it remained cold for a week is doubtful, judging from the results. The next day people began to be sick in varying degrees, except my tent mates and I, who had been too late for the spaghetti and meatballs dinner.

When we got back to Nairobi, Sharman, the Australian debutante, was taken directly to a Nairobi hospital with serious gastroenteritis. Several others in the group were treated for that and malaria. The Trailfinders went back to the hotel, which was still full of Asian refugees from Uganda. That night another Australian called the desk for a doctor, and the hotel owner drove him to the hospital where he was, also, put to bed with gastroenteritis and malaria. Both Australians were in the hospital for four days.

Doctors at the hospital encouraged the Trailfinder group to stay in Nairobi for several days in case more came down with something. Our two senior women, both in their 60s, flew back to England, hoping to get there with their good health. The youngest Trailfinder, 19, came down with malaria and retired to his hotel bed.

The hospital was quite attractive. Our patients had nice woodland views from their windows and glucose drip sacks hanging by their beds. Sharman's hospital bill was \$240 which included six drip sacks, a lot of antibiotic injections and a four-day stay. It also included some Valium, prescribed after a reaction to some drug frightened her so badly, that she went into hysterics and had to be calmed chemically.

April 21 Watamu, Kenya

I felt due for a rest and decided to head off on my own. I boarded the train to Mombasa, sharing a sleeper compartment with the Scottish wife of a Norwegian engineer. She was on her way to join her family for a beach holiday south of Mombasa. They were driving, but she preferred the overnight trip on the slow train. Hotels around Mombasa would be busy for schools' Easter vacation. The Scottish woman suggested that I stay at the Turtle Bay Hotel near Malindi, sixty miles north.

A Colorado couple returning from two years in Saudi Arabia thought it sounded good, too. I wandered about Mombasa in the morning and turned down a \$100 ride in a tourist agency Land Rover to Turtle Bay. Instead, I bought a ride for \$2 in a brand new mini-van which took me sixty miles to Malindi. Then I splurged and got a taxi to take me the six miles to the hotel.

The Colorado couple was more adventurous. They got seats for \$1 each in an old bus as far as the turn-off to Turtle Bay. After waiting about 15 minutes, another bus bound for Watamu, which is a little further up the coast from the hotel, picked them up. They emerged from the jammed vehicle, a modified pickup truck with some chickens on board, much to the surprise of the other guests at the heavenly Turtle Bay Hotel.

Through the palm fronds hanging over my balcony I could see the Indian Ocean rolling onto white sands. Sounds of happy children playing in the pool filter through the air. The room was modern, tastefully decorated in brown and white curtains and a bedspread of African print. The bath is modern and, best of all, it works.

The breezes blow the mosquitoes away all day and most of the night. When it is calm, there are nets to drape over the bed. Servants run about silently attending to the needs of the guests. One gave me a bouquet of bougainvillea blossoms and returned the plastic bags I pack my shoes in and had missed. He had thrown them out when he tidied the room. They were marked Express Bakery and were easy to identify.

The dining room is an oasis of pale blue linen, and there is a patio, where one may dine amid flowers and palms. The meals are varied, delicious and well-served. Large English breakfasts begin the day: all the fresh pineapple and papaya one can eat. A buffet lunch with hot and cold dishes, many salads, sweets and more fresh fruit is set out at midday. Dinner has set menus with many courses, topped off by sweets, cheese, and/or more fruit. It is served by the pool with disco music for dancing until 10 p.m. Then, everyone goes to bed.

For those who need a pickup, there is afternoon tea. It's easy to work up an appetite swimming, sailing, fishing, scuba diving or sunbathing. The off-season rate for all this, including meals, between April 18 and July 15 is \$15 a day for a single or \$30 for a double. I may never leave.

May 6 London

After six weeks of carrying 40 lbs of luggage in 100 degree heat, it's nice to be back in chilly London.

Flying on Air Sudan is an adventure—or an ordeal. The tickets cost one-half the fare of more familiar lines. Aeroflot also sells bargain tickets, but has a reputation for bureaucracy that makes people worry about getting them honored.

My 45-day excursion ticket was in its 45th day on the date I was scheduled to leave Nairobi. I was told not to worry. They said the stop in Khartoum after midnight wouldn't count as the 46th day. In the morning, I went swimming at the Intercontinental and had a leisurely lunch. Then, I went back to my own hotel — still full of Asian refugees from Uganda. I packed my bags and left at 4:30 p.m. to get to the airport for a 6:10 p.m. check-in time. Then, a two hour delay was announced. We would now take off at 10:10 p.m.

I browsed through the duty-free shops, boarded the flight to Khartoum, and then stretched out across three seats in the plane. But, then it filled up. Whole families boarded. Women and children filed back to the coach seats. The men sat in first class. The family members visited back and forth. When the children visited their fathers in first class, they returned carrying extra sugar packets.

I was reduced to one seat next to the window. A mother put her children next to me and sat across the aisle from them. The one next to me seemed to have six elbows. She was in constant motion, spoke no English, and I knew no Arabic. She and her sister traded seats, and her sister began turning the pages of my book. I removed her hand, and she was offended and, again, traded seats with her sister. Miss Elbows remained next to me for the rest of the flight.

The children slept all the way to Frankfurt, but were awake for breakfast. I waited for their trays of food to land in my lap. They seemed to know what I was thinking and were very careful. They copied what I did with my napkin and utensils. I helped them with some of the hard parts like getting butter out of its foil wrapper and onto rolls or opening tiny containers of cream. In gratitude they gave

me goodies from their own grubby little hands, which I consumed politely—glad not to have anything spilled on me.

During the night I opened my sleeping bag as a huge pillow and used it to fill the contours of seat and window. In the morning people in front and back of me had to help me refold its billowing shape into a compact little package.

We were five hours late to Heathrow. A tidal wave of passengers from New York and Miami were lined up for customs. I waited an hour in line, while the other Trailfinders went quickly through the Commonwealth passports line and waved goodbye. I called Bonnie, who had tickets for us that evening to a new production of “Taming of the Shrew.”

My watch said it was 3 p.m., almost a whole day since I had left the Nairobi airport, but I had been taking it easy since getting out of bed 32 hours earlier — carefully consuming no alcohol. I was in fine shape for the theater.

A man was wrecking the scenery on the Aldwych stage as we took our seats — a real eye-opener. He seemed to be a drunk who had wandered up from the audience. He was, in fact, the star of the show, Jonathan Pryce (Petruchio). It was a unique staging of the classic, with a lot of noise to keep me awake. A brass band marched through the action. The production was staged by Michael Bogdanov.

I slept soundly that night. It had been a long day.

For three weeks I’ll be at the Chelsea Cloisters. Bonnie offered me her house while she is back in the U.S. for a couple of weeks in June. I can fix up her garden. She is storing my excess stuff.

Some repairs are due to be made at the house. An outside drain pipe — the only kind this house has — froze and cracked in the winter. Every time a tub in the house is emptied, some soapy water leaks out of the pipe, down the outside wall and collects on the terrace. Since that is where she has cabinet members, publishers and movie stars for drinks, it would be unpleasant to have bath water showering down upon them, if the occupant of the flat at the top of the house bathed during one of her parties.

May 10 London

The Parrot Club is an oasis in the Basil Street Hotel, which ladies can repair to for a rest after shopping down the street at Harrod's. Members read magazines in the lounge, have a light lunch, or tea, use an iron, hair dryer, heated roller, use the foot massage machine, take a bath, or change and feed a baby.

Dues for out-of-town members are modest, and for foreign visitors miniscule. It's the kind of place where tall, slender English women with perfect complexions, fitted navy blue coats, restrained spring hats and patent leather shoes appear with the first spring breeze. Their husbands wear dark, three piece suits and never carry packages of any kind.

The club was named after a bird who lived at the hotel for years. He was exiled to the country after waiters taught him a too-colorful vocabulary. The premises are located in a building that used to house the booking hall at the Sloane Street end of the Knightsbridge underground station. When booking operations were moved to the Harrod's end of the station in 1936, the hotel



absorbed the building. It has the big arched windows like so many period tube stations, giving the club rooms lots of sun.

The club was founded in 1971 and has 2,000 members, many of them working women, or women who live outside London and use it for shopping trips to town. About 40 members use the club each day. Men are welcome, if they are meeting a Parrot lady. The ambiance is terribly British — restrained and pleasant. The decor is in timeless taste: muted colors, traditional furniture, flowered carpets and lace-covered tea tables. It's a place for meeting a mother-in-law for tea, a husband before dinner, or just sitting and reading a book. The only sign of organized activity is a notice that bridge playing is permitted. Club members get a 12 percent discount on Basil Street Hotel rooms.

The American Women's Club near Sloane Square has bathing and changing facilities, classes in Italian, French, aerobics, yoga, antiques, bridge, needlepoint and art. There are drama and choral groups, a travel club, theater outings, luncheons, new member teas, fashion shows, a monthly magazine, Saturday night square dances, a spring charity ball and an annual thrift bazaar. The dining room serves lunch and tea, and a bar is open during pub hours. Of the 500 members about 400 are Americans. Visiting members are welcome for a small fee.

Members are not supposed to be reserved about getting acquainted. A message from the president posted in the lobby said that she “had tried to make the point that a warm and friendly atmosphere in our club is a prerequisite for success. This is true in almost every group in which we are involved. While there are always sub-groups within a club which are built on shared interests, they

cannot remain exclusive and at the same time be an asset to the organization. While close friendships are a positive byproduct of club membership, we must try to include and welcome others, especially new members.” Copying cool British reserve not encouraged.

However, the club magazine included advice on adapting to English ways: “You can be sure that some English do say what they mean. Some don’t. Equally so is the fact that some will want to get to know Americans, and some don’t.”

May 29 London

Bonnie flies to Washington tomorrow with the mink and my pocket tape recorder. After London I don’t want to carry anything valuable. I am now down to two suitcases and a tote bag and will get rid of one bag by shipping more stuff.

I will stay at Bonnie’s and then find other digs for a while. I plan to head to California via India, Thailand, and Indonesia.

The best gift I can give Bonnie is not to advertise her hospitality before the summer rush season. Recently, she had such a busy time that she gave up her own bed — it had been the last one in the house without a visitor in it — and slept on the sofa cushions in the garden room on the ground floor. The house is so large her guests didn’t know where she was.

There’s a great month-long trip by train around India aboard a private car. You do your own cooking while the car is taken from one city to another.

May 31 London

Lord Louis Mountbatten, 79, has gone into trade and opened his house to the public. This is no longer frowned upon among the English upper crust faced with decaying mansions and soaring maintenance costs. He even has a gift shop where quite expensive souvenirs of “Broadlands” are for sale.

These include crystal from Germany or Eastern Europe, as well as Wedgwood, bookmarks, key chains and postcards. There is also an assortment of cocktail table books on art, Queen Elizabeth II, the Prince of Wales, and Edwina, the late Lady Mountbatten, who inherited “Broadlands” from her father. It had been in his family since 1865.

The house dates back through Lord Palmerston’s family, step in-laws of Lady Mountbatten’s family, to the 16th century when it was a Jacobean manor house built on property owned by an abbey before the Norman conquest. Since 1066 it has been fixed up a lot.

In the 18th century it was given an elegant Palladian facade, and a Victorian wing was added in the 19th century. Lady Mountbatten removed those 28 rooms in 1954. It stands at a bend of the River Test. It’s a big, rectangular mansion in need of expensive roof repairs. The Mountbatten family hopes the income from tourist fees and souvenir sales will pay for its upkeep.

General Manager Bob Pullin was hired away from the Queen Elizabeth Country Park, an English version of Disneyland. He estimated the bank holiday crowd on May 28 at 4,000, and said that 5,000 people can be handled in a day. Daily crowds have been around 1,500 to 2,000, but the weather has been rainy since Prince Charles attended opening day ceremonies. A vast field has been designated the parking lot.

“Broadlands” is on the edge of the village of Romsey about 15 minutes from Southampton by train. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh spent their wedding night in the Portico room in 1947. His uncle, Lord Mountbatten, and Lady Mountbatten also honeymooned at “Broadlands” in 1922, before going on to visit Charlie Chaplin in Hollywood.

The Portico room has a rose, green and white flower pattern fabric, designed for the royal yacht in 1854, on the bedspread, curtains and chairs. Profiles of Victoria and Albert are sketched among the foliage. The room also has a white vase decorated with profiles of Elizabeth and Philip nose to nose.

“Broadlands” is a retreat for the royal family. The Queen uses another room as an office during visits, and the question of where she sleeps was left unanswered. A large white sign in the Wedgwood room announced it as the site of Mountbatten family teas.

On the morning when I walked in the front door, stately, white-haired Lord Mountbatten was greeting visitors in a colorful, highly decorated uniform. As First Lord of the Fleet and last Viceroy of India he had a lot of ribbons on his chest. He had been to a dress rehearsal for the Queen’s birthday parade in London, an hour away. The uniform looked well-used, a bit shabby, and slightly large for him now. He certainly seemed to enjoy himself, and a group of tourists carefully wiped their feet on his doormat before advancing into the house under his gaze.

His military trophies include the Japanese sword surrendered to him as supreme commander for Southeast Asia at the end of World War II. General MacArthur, the supreme Pacific commander, wanted the Japanese to keep their swords, which had tremendous significance to them. Mountbatten, remembering

what had been done to British prisoners of war said, "I thought they could jolly well give up their swords."

Mixed with the military things are family mementos. Next to a picture of warships he commanded, is a picture of him as a babe in the arms of Queen Victoria in his christening dress, which is also on display. She was both his great-grandmother and his godmother. A drawing he made of a tiger at the age of eleven is signed "Battenberg." The family Anglicized its German name in 1917.

Lord Mountbatten's elder daughter is the wife of Lord Brabourne, who is producer of the films, "Tales of Beatrix Potter," "Death on the Nile," and "Orient Express." Another daughter is married to interior decorator David Hicks.

"Broadlands" is a private company, and development of tourist facilities will be planned carefully. New garden paths were put in, leading to Porto-johns hidden behind a wall. The temporary tea tent will be replaced by something permanent. The sales and gift shop is in a rebuilt dairy building, and new fences indicate where tourists are not welcome. Some of these are seven feet tall and solid, insuring privacy for Prince Charles who likes to fish for trout in the River Test, which winds for more than three miles through the estate.

June 1 London

An article in Harper's-Queen said Bonnie Angelo entertains the cream of society, which is true. Powerful press people, and theater people, too. The court circular is entertaining, formally repeating royal names, assuming that one cannot remember Princess Anne is also Mrs. Phillips from one paragraph to another. I have planted red geraniums and white petunias in Bonnie's garden in

appreciation for her delivery of the mink to the U.S. I have also chopped down the jungle in the rest of the garden. This house should come with a housemaid or a yard man, depending on the sex of the bureau chief assigned to it.

*Time* columnist Hugh Sidey's daughter and a friend stopped by for a while on their way from school in Paris back to Washington. Nice girls. Good yard workers, too.

June 4 Horsham, West Sussex

Christ's Hospital is a school, founded in 1553 by Edward VI, as a hospice shelter for orphans of professional men in the City of London. It's not as elitist as Eton is, but it has many traditions. The uniform the boys wear is still a 16th century style. In their gray knee britches and long navy blue coats, white shirts with bibs hanging over the neck of their coats, they look like boy clerics. The only touch of color are the bright yellow knee socks. Only in the residence halls may they wear their own 20th century clothes.



The president is H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester. The facilities are excellent. There is a new arts center with classrooms, offices, a library and a large theater copied from the style of Shakespeare's time with impressive technical equipment backstage.

Academic achievements are stressed, and the most famous alumni are dramatist Thomas Middleton (1580-1627), poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), and essayist Charles Lamb (1775-1834).

In 1902 the school moved to spacious ground in Sussex outside Horsham. It had been north of London near Hertford, where the girls' school is now. Making the school coeducational at Horsham is under consideration.

The girls have abandoned their traditional attire of long dresses, white pinafores and poke bonnets. Now they wear skirts, striped shirts and red jackets. A major point of the reorganization discussion centered on what the students would wear, whether to have the boys give up their picturesque reformation costume.

The school continues to educate children whose parents cannot afford to do so. The system used to choose the lucky ones is a lot like the way United States members of congress appoint candidates to U.S. military academies. The difference is that the British sponsor of a child for Christ's Hospital, not only nominates a child he does not necessarily know, but also foots the bill for his or her schooling from the age of 11 to 18. About two thirds of the 850 students are chosen and have their tuition, board and room paid for this way.

Rules prohibit sponsoring one's own child, but they have been changed to allow sponsorship of a relative. Some parents advertise in newspaper personal columns for sponsors with available openings. The City of London used to sponsor five scholarships each year, and there are other special openings for children of a specific age or orphans with particular backgrounds. Traditionally, the school favored orphans of military men, lawyers and other City of London men.

The tie to the City of London remains strong. On September 21, St. Mathews Day, students march through the City to the Church of the Sepulcher with dignitaries of the City, as a reminder of their urban past.

On Speech Day the boys formed up and marched with the skirts of their long blue coats flapping in the wind to reveal snappy yellow stockings. They turned



their “eyes right” passing the Lord Mayor who reviewed them in his full official attire, the plumes on his three-cornered hat floating in the breeze. Several London policemen were on hand to keep an eye on his solid gold mace of office. The girls from Horsham were in the audience with the student families as the boys marched by to the tune of Sousa’s “Washington Post March.”

June 5 London

I travel by day in exotic lands and stay in at night, so I see little lurid life.

I did hear of one young woman who literally was jumping from bed to bed in Khartoum. The man she arrived with beat her up, and the consensus — reached around the pool at the Sudan Club — was that she really was nuts. She was shipped home to France.

I see couples travel together quite sedately whatever their legal status. On these camping trips into the wilderness people seem either discrete or celibate. They could also be worn out from travel or put off by the unwashed odors of their companions.

June 10 London

Bonnie never has time for gardening, and the evening of her return she was planning to give a dinner for the shadow cabinet. Drinks on the terrace would be nice if the smooth perfection of the neighboring gardens on either side of hers was not marred by her shaggy jungle in between.

The large, square, perfect garden on one side belongs to the owners of her house, and their gardener mowed the grass back and forth with a border around the edge, making it look like a lush, green, textured carpet. In the garden on the

other side, the gentleman of the house, a brain surgeon, spent the evening hours among pots of plants and flowers. Bonnie's garden obviously needed help. Humphrey, the gardener who maintained the garden in Brompton Square came by to chop at her grass occasionally, but that was all. At the back of the garden, facing the house, was a fifteen foot, long-dead dogwood. Dead rose canes hung on the fence around it. Huge honeysuckle vines hung on a wooden fence along one side of the garden and threatened to pull it down.

I wanted to plant the luscious, red geraniums that I had seen at the Chelsea Flower Show, a strain called "Irene" that was developed in the U.S. I began clearing and cleaning the garden by sawing down the dogwood.

I dashed about town using the underground trains to get to various flower and garden supply shops. The trains were full of lively men in kilts, tartan hats and scarves, singing songs in Scottish accents and dropping beer cans about. It was the weekend of the England-Scotland soccer match. Ten special trains full of fans arrived in London for merry making. Several men were stabbed on an inbound train on Friday, and one died from his wounds.

By Saturday afternoon Knightsbridge looked like a war zone. Shops were closed with metal shutters down over the plate glass windows, and pubs were closing. The usually busy streets were left to the invaders. Trains on the Waterloo underground line stopped for a while, after someone pulled the emergency cord on a train. The passengers got out and walked along the tracks, avoiding electrocution. Service was resumed after everyone was off the tracks.

Back at Brompton Square, I saw Humphrey's equipment scattered about in the enclosed garden across the street. I went in to look for him, and when I got

back to the gate, it was locked with me inside. Bonnie was so busy she had never asked for a key. Was help at hand? Nancy Astor's maid, who also cleaned Bonnie's house once a week saw me penned in, but didn't know where to find a key.

There was a risk of being gored by the spiked fence, if I tried to climb over it. Humphrey returned and freed me, but refused to help any more with Bonnie's garden. The Brompton Square garden committee had given him an ultimatum about nipping into houses to "help out" in the suspicion that he was a bit of a tomcat and that not all he did on these extracurricular visits was gardening.

Mr. Wells, the landlord's gardener next door, was obviously keeping an eye on my struggle to make the lawnmower mow. He came walking along the top of the brick wall between the two gardens and offered to take a look at the machine. He cleaned the moving parts with turpentine which helped a lot, and I mowed the grass.

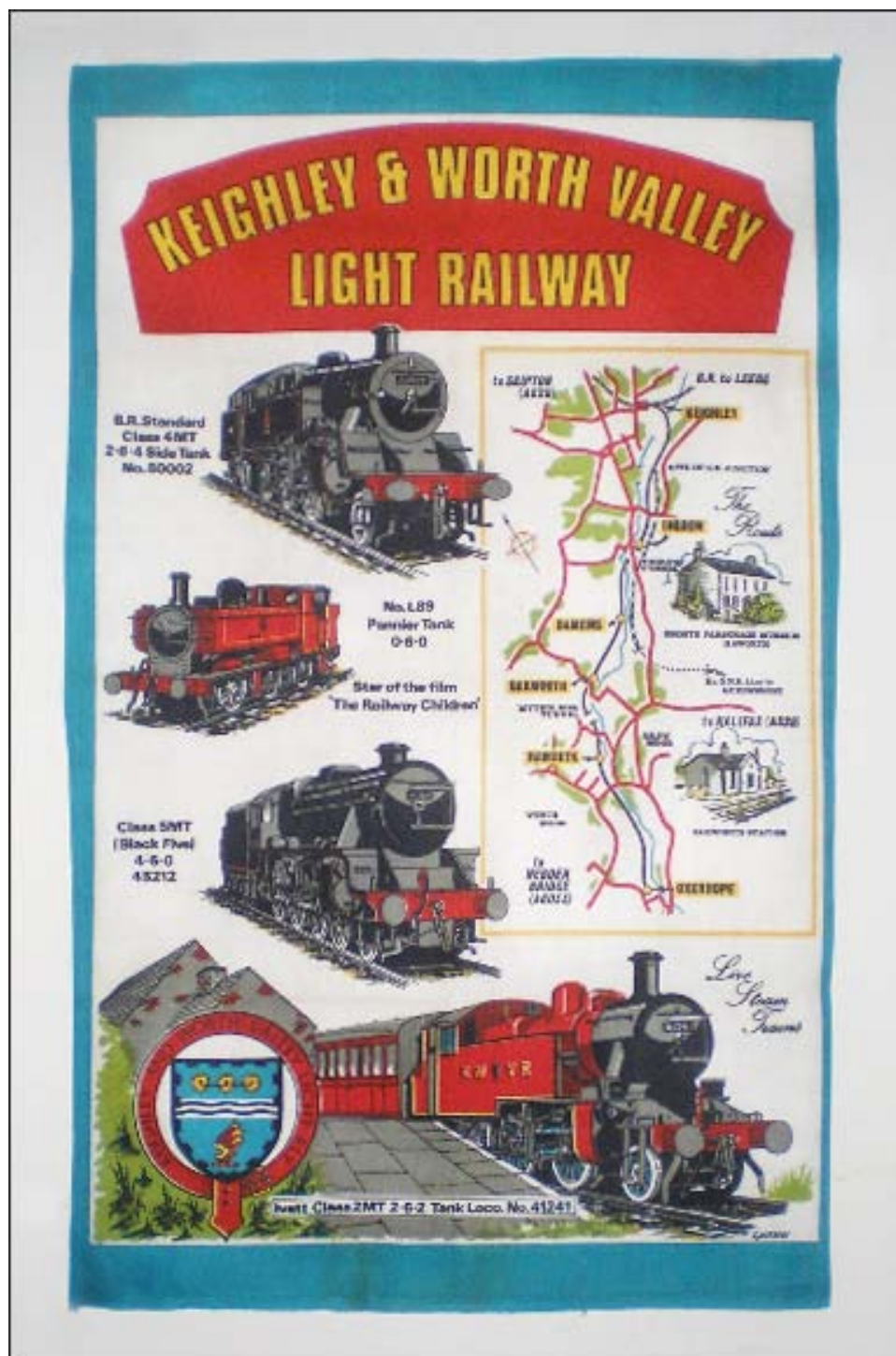
The white-haired retired officer who had served with Ike came to the window of his mews house in back to compliment my efforts. His view of Bonnie's garden was getting to be very nice.

June 16 Haworth, West Yorkshire

I began my search for Charlotte Bronte's world in York, a pleasant cathedral town two hours from London. The station is just outside the old city walls, and the walk to the hotel took about five minutes through neat parks and streets. I visited the railroad museum and gathered up information on Yorkshire.

Early Saturday I started for Haworth, where the Brontes lived. I had no idea how long it would take to get there, or how to do so. At York station, I was told to take the train for Leeds, change at Keighley and go on from there by bus to Haworth. However, at Keighley, when I asked for the bus stop, I was told to go across to another platform and take the Keighley and Worth Valley Light Railway, an old line the goes six miles up Worth Valley. It's a private business, run by volunteers as a tourist attraction. At Haworth station the village is visible at the top of the hill.

There were notices in the village that the annual meeting of the Bronte Society would be held that day at 2:30 p.m. The speaker was author Margaret Lane. I went to see the Bronte house, the cemetery that stands between it and the church, and all the shops in the tiny village before the meeting began. I bought *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* by Anne Bronte.



through the house until I found the proprietress in the kitchen deboning chicken for dinner. She was not serving lunch.

“Woodland” once belonged to the local mill owner, one of the few guests at Charlotte Bronte’s marriage to Rev. Arthur Nicholls. I had a leisurely pub lunch, and was done in time for the meeting and Margaret Lane’s discussion of Charlotte Bronte’s love life, all guesses, since it was not the sort of things a minister’s wife wrote about in those days.

Haworth is charming on a sunny, summer afternoon. There have been changes since the Bronte days. Their house has an added wing which doubled the size of the small, two story house. The old church was demolished in 1879 and replaced. Rev. Bronte’s successor planted trees in the graveyard. They are now old and are softening the previously bleak view from the Bronte windows.

The illnesses that plagued the village, and the Brontes, killing people regularly, are gone. The village drinking water is no longer taken from water running down off the moors and filtering through the graveyard into wells. The roads are paved. In bad weather Charlotte often had to walk to Keighley for transportation to London, because the valley road became impassable for carriages. The railroad came later. She went to London to see her publisher and went to parties where she met Thackeray.

I returned to York for the night and went the next morning to Scarborough, a seaside resort where Anne Bronte died. Alan Ayckbourne tries out his plays there before opening in London.

In the afternoon I stopped by Beningbrough Hall, located a few miles north of York, which the National Trust has acquired and is spending 400,000 pounds to restore. The house was designed by William Thornton, who was an assistant to the architect of Castle Howard outside York, and went to America to design the U.S. Capitol. The style was familiar. The restoration is by decorator David Mlinaric who made his name working for Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull. There is little furniture in the house. Pictures from the National Portrait Gallery are hung on the walls.

The National Trust provides tourist comforts of the nicer sort. There is a cafeteria, a large car park, and a walled vegetable garden turned into a grassy picnic area. The estate, originally 6,100 acres, is now 300 acres, but still impressive. The walk up the driveway from where the local bus dropped me at the gate was about a mile.

The bell tower by the stable yard had pictures of sturdy, uniformed, glum-faced servants, and a list of the household — twenty-three servants to serve a family of two adults. Pulling a cord started a tape to hear it playing the orders of the day. The lady of the house asks the cook to recite the menu for house guests. Supplies include: salmon, beef, sole, veal, pigeon, venison and seafood — and something that sounded like grouse ears. The servants' menu was roast mutton, then cold mutton and then hashed mutton.

The master is heard summoning the butler to discuss wines for the guests, and the groom comes to talk about a stable boy, leaving the estate to better himself elsewhere. He was earning 12 pounds a year. The gardener, whose Yorkshire accent contrasts with the master's upper class voice, is complimented

on the supply of fruits available from the greenhouse: nectarines, plums and pineapples.

Quite a contrast to how the Brontes lived.

The grandest Yorkshire estate is Castle Howard, still lived in by a Howard. I went out there the next morning, and again, the bus dropped me at a nearby village. It was a two and a half mile walk up George Howard's drive to his castle. On the way, a tall Texan was the only person I encountered. He joined me, but I said, "Please, go ahead if you find me too slow."

We kept going, and going, and going. Finally, I said, "I won't be offended if you stop for a rest, but I have to rush on to see the castle and get back for the last bus to York." He was beginning to gasp and dropped down at the base of an obelisk. There was another quarter mile of driveway to go.

Castle Howard was used in the film "Brideshead Revisited," so a lot of television viewers have seen its grandeur. A fire years ago damaged one wing, the exterior of which has been repaired, but inside was still a mess. There is plenty to see in the huge house. The Rubens with John the Baptist's head on a platter is there, and the library is so vast that the ladies of the York Literary League come, volunteering to dust and repair the books. It's a popular local activity.

June 16 London

I leave Aug. 11 for India. The schedule after the middle of September is tentatively: Bangkok, Singapore by rail and on to Bali and back to Bangkok to



catch a plane for Hong Kong, Tokyo and then the U.S. Or, I might go to Australia and New Zealand and then the U.S.

In the meantime, I am mapping out the minor railroads in England. Most of them have routes that can be covered in about twenty minutes at a very slow pace, but they are great fun for loony people, children and railroad buffs. They tend to be isolated routes abandoned for lack of business, sometimes unconnected at either end to any British Rail service. However, they are in picturesque parts of the country, and riding the private railways of England is a good way to see remote places.

I start riding little English railroads the first week in July.

June 21 London

Setting deadlines for myself is no problem. I have not missed one yet. However, the details of living take up an incredible amount of time. Having a secretary or porter would help.

This week I nearly blinded myself reading the rail schedules, trying to find links with the twenty minor private railways listed in the back of the British Rail book of timetables. A few railways are in the middle of nowhere. They are scattered about England in interesting places, including the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Man. Some have service only in the summer, so by starting at the beginning of July, I might have enough time ride many of them.

There was a Rolls Royce rally Sunday at Leeds Castle which Bonnie wanted to see. We had sunshine for the trip. Bonnie was a good sport and continued to

have faith in my sense of direction even after I led her down a cowpath covered with souvenirs of cow passage—when she was wearing open-toed sandals!

Two years ago I got as far as the Leeds Castle gates on a day when it was closed. This time we found the people path after one wrong turn on the cow path. There are usually footpaths around country stations that local people use. Leeds was renovated with a Whitney dowry and is decorated with early 20th century American-rich taste. A nice cozy, comfortable castle.

Monday night we went to the opening of “The Rake’s Progress,” which I enjoyed and the critics didn’t. Baba had the loveliest, curly, auburn, knee-length beard, perfectly matching her coiffure. With her white Empire-style wedding dress, it was nice.

Bonnie has gone to Strasbourg and may get together with Fran Lewine this weekend. She is there on an exposition for the Transportation Department. Then they come back here, and I have tickets for the opening of the Peking Opera for us.

Currently, I am staying at the Chelsea Cloisters on Sloane Avenue, but will go back to Bonnie’s when she goes to Africa. I am a burglar alarm and also mow the lawn, but am greatly indebted to her for her hospitality. She also takes my mail in for me.

Frivolity this week must be chalked up to mid-summer madness. The sun comes up at 4 a.m. and sets about 10 p.m., which makes lots of time for activities. Intellectual or indolent. The English rent canvas chairs and sit in the parks, exposing winter white flesh that should best be kept private.

I have sent the last box of winter clothes off to my friends in Washington and am left with summer clothes and a ton or two of paper, books and the typewriter. The latter dropped on my toe and the floor, damaging neither, but snapping the carriage return lever. Pictures are limited to Minox snaps I've taken and had developed, but not printed.

Next week is the tennis matches at Wimbledon. There are want ads for tickets. Americans buy a lot of the seats. There is also a summer invasion of Arabs.

Theater is always tempting. London critics here do not use little flashlights during a performance or applaud afterwards. They do travel to Manchester, other cities and suburbs for their reviews. When the review of a show is bad, I go quickly before the show closes. I have seen "Troubadour" and a few of the other flops here this year. The audience on opening night, was full of people who spoke quite familiarly of those involved in its production. Terrible reviews. It's closing day came quickly.

June 22 London

The plan to go around England on minor railroads, relics of steam locomotive days, is shaping up. Some are only a few miles long. There are twenty of them listed in the British Rail schedule book, almost as a footnote in the back. Most are run by hobbyists, and only operate during the summer and around major holidays.

Then, in August I start for India, then Thailand and down the Malay peninsula, perhaps Australia and New Zealand. By careful synchronization, I should go broke and reach the U.S. at the same time.

The Arabs and Americans are arriving in London, and prices have just jumped again. Green peppers yesterday were priced at \$1.40 a pound or \$1.06, depending on whether they were bought in a chic Chelsea produce market or from a street stand. Things should be slightly better when the English produce ripens, but tomatoes and oranges are all imported now. Yesterday, when I was told that raspberries were five dollars, I asked, "Per berry?" They were from California. The tomatoes come from Spain, and the oranges from Israel.

British people are nice once they get used to the funny way I talk. Bonnie has been most hospitable, housing me sometimes as I pass through town, and keeping my mail for me when I am away. She is incredibly busy, and in return for all her help I have had long talks with the plumber and talked a gardener into repairing the lawn mower. He didn't go so far as to cut the grass, but I did, once the machine was working. He has the reputation of being the neighborhood tom cat, so he has other demands on his time.

June 24 Tenterden, Kent



My ancestors, George and Rebecca Potts, born around 1805, came from nearby Boar's Isle, which has gone through some name changes since. It has also been known as Bird's Isle, St. Michael's, and now Tenterden. And, although it is still a charming English town, Tenterden has spread out. Many little crossroads villages have been lost.

June 25 Sittingbourne, Kent



The Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway was a surprise, an old industrial line, running two and a half miles from one Bowater paper mill, spewing sulfur fumes, past a pipe plant, a storage company, a sewage treatment field and, finally, through an orchard and a pasture of grazing cows. When the wind is blowing from almost any direction the smell is unpleasant.

Bowater still owns the line, but rents it to a group of volunteers for one pound a year. About 300 people pay two pounds a year to belong to the group. Volunteers staff the offices, maintain and crew the trains. About thirty are needed each week to keep the trains running. They work/volunteer on their days off from paying jobs. My engineer was an aircraft parts maker.

The cars were built to carry freight and are fitted with seats for passengers, some with protection from the elements. In others, passengers rode through a sudden thunder storm, rain pouring down on them. A German tourist, who expected to see picturesque England, asked the engineer, "But why do you go out here? There is nothing for us to see."

True. At the end of the trip out to the Bowater plant there wasn't anything to see except a hut, which turned out to be the clubhouse where snacks and souvenirs were sold. A young boy plugged in the kettle when I asked for tea. Then he dashed across the room to the souvenir stand to sell me a tea towel with pictures of Sittingbourne and Kemsley engines on it. He wiped off the old enamel-topped tables when customers finished their teas.

The secret to this line's existence turned out to be that the steam pipes for the two Bowater plants run along the railroad right of way. Bowater holds on to the property for the pipes, and the railroad volunteers maintain the right of way.

June 28 London

It's lovely around Cambridge. One of my railroads is out in Norfolk beyond it, so I will be heading out there sometime. The countryside is cool and green and lovely.

I was offered a spot in the September India trip, one of ten in an old private railroad car, as opposed to the August trip which would have been one of twenty-six in a dormitory railroad car.

July 2 London

Between July 28 and August 12 I will be at 36 Brompton Square alone. The four storied house has three bedrooms, smartly furnished, with a lot of geraniums in the pleasant garden. The fashionable square, quiet with no through traffic, is conveniently located a few minutes walk from the Mecca for the global sisterhood of shoppers, Harrod's. Lady Astor and Arthur Koestler live down the block—not together.

When Florence Lowe was here in an expensive hotel room, Bonnie had her move in, because she thought the price dreadful. She's very hospitable.

July 26 Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

I'm off to the hinterlands to look for Blandings Castle, a figment of P.G. Wodehouse's imagination, but so charming a one that I'm sure his millions of fans would like to know where it can be found. He built it out of memories of turn-of-the-century England and, believe me, there are a lot of places where the nineteenth century hasn't ended here.

July 29 Cambridgeshire

My friend, Robert's English visit was a really unique gift and made my birthday. On our travels, his colleague, David was fun as long as he was weakened by jet lag. As he recovered near Cambridge he became less so. We stopped at a huge old house which is now a toy museum and had great fun. David, now wide awake, vetoed visiting George Washington's ancestral home, declaring "we had done enough sightseeing", so we drove on to Cambridge.

After two weeks on the road I am very sleepy today.

Aug. 7 London



Landscaping at 36 Brompton Square was fun. Getting rid of the debris was less so.

The trash men were truly impressed with the six jumbo bags, three junior bags and four cartons of trees and bushes sitting in front of the house. Not enough to want it for themselves, however. Someone rang the doorbell, and while his assistants scurried up and down the basement stairs of neighboring houses, making their collections, the driver called out something to me.

“Sorry, I can’t hear you,” I said.

My non-English accent caught his attention, and he got out of the huge vehicle and sauntered over.

“Gardener do this?” he asked, indicating an open bag of jungle vines.

“I did it myself,” I replied. “Is that wrong?”

“No,” he said kindly, “but we’re not responsible for garden refuse.”

The truck had already passed up this pile earlier in the week. I needed his help. The joy of seeing the beautiful garden renovation might be dimmed for Bonnie, if the debris from it blocked entry to the house.

“Could we come to some arrangement?” I asked.

“Oh, I think so,” said the driver with a smile, and he immediately began to help his loaders gather everything up.

“You can give me a drink,” he added pleasantly.

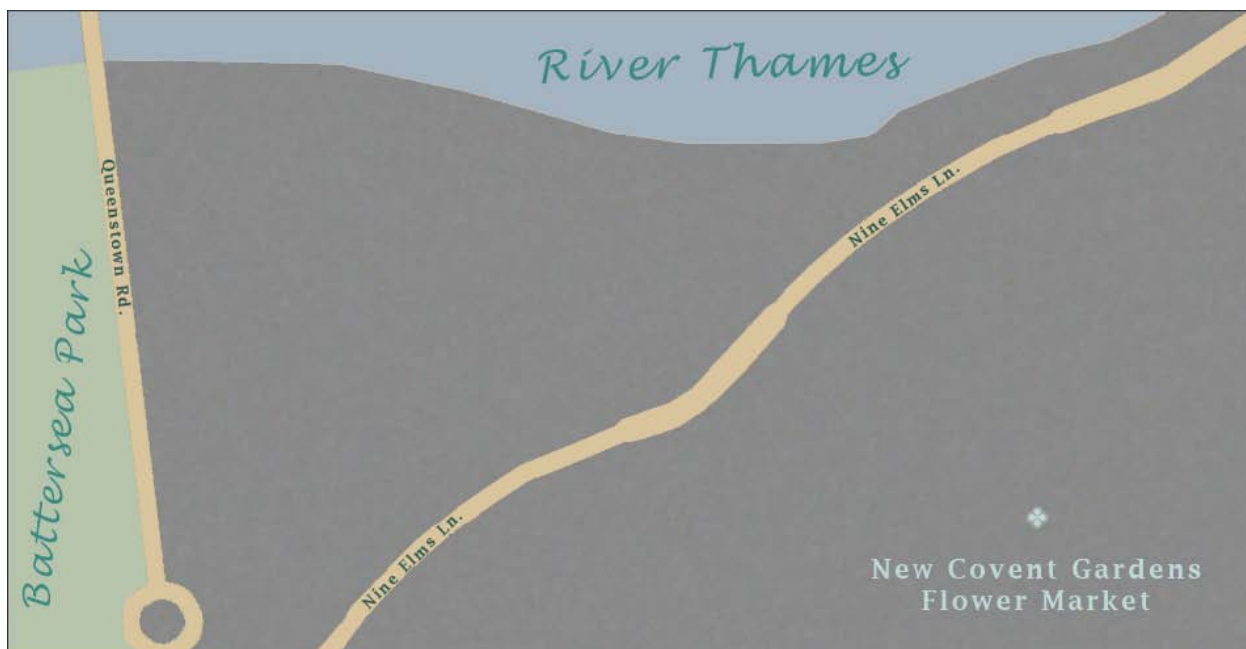
I laughed and watched it all disappear with great pleasure. As the last of it went into the truck, I said, "Really, can't I give you something for your trouble?"

"Whatever you think it's worth to you," he replied, and smiled, happy with my modest tip.

After the cleanup I planted an instant flower garden that I had transported from the new Covent Garden across the river. I went over early one morning and competed with all the florists and flower sellers to pick out the flowers I wanted. My choices were set aside and then I had to find a man with a cart to go around the enormous hall and gather them up.

Most people have trucks or cars to take their purchases away. I had come by the underground. By then the morning rush hour had started, and the new Covent Garden is on the other side of the Thames beyond the Battersea power station. There I stood with my boxes and trays of flowers and plants trying to get a taxi. Fortunately, Englishmen are gardeners at heart, and a driver not only came to pick me up, but loaded everything up with great good cheer and delivered me back to Brompton Square.

The final few plants came from a garden supply store not far from the house, but there was too much to carry. The shop owner's brother brought me and the plants back in the delivery van, greatly impressing the electricians who were working in the house. He carried the plants back to the garden and then helped with the digging, telling me about himself.



When I first saw him he was washing a car in front of his sister's garden store where he was helping out. He explained that he was in reality, a chemical engineer, who had spent several years working for Monsanto in Decatur, Ala., and Pensacola, Fla. With his earnings, he bought a house in Richmond, just across the Thames, next to his two unmarried sisters, one of whom owns the garden supply shop. He bought her the truck, when she took over the shop from the previous owners, who had gone bankrupt to their great profit, by an English accounting system which I do not understand.

His sisters cook very well, he commented, while passing through the kitchen. The grandeur of the house seemed to awe him a bit. I still need some rose food and grass seed, so I may see him again.

The red and white living room is quite pleasant with the sun coming in two tall windows overlooking the square and French doors on the other side opening on the terrace with the garden below. It is a lovely place to work. Every afternoon

a beautiful blue landau, horse drawn of course, with two perfectly groomed attendants comes clopping around the square with sightseers. When I get restless, I go out in the garden and work there a bit more.

So I do work for *Time* in a way.

Tonight I have a date to see the new Stoppard play with some friends. He's an economist and she's Roger Bannister's research assistant, and they have gathered up some people for the evening.

Aug. 14 London

I am going on a trip around India living on a deluxe railway carriage, beginning in mid-September. It's the first time first class accommodations have been used by Butterfields Indian Railway Tour, 62, Victoria Walk, Horsforth, Leeds, England phone: 0532 584774. Ashley Butterfield has been riding the rails in India for years. Someone from Oxford I met on the Nile trip, who is beyond student age, went last year with a lot of students. Their accommodations were bunks (hostel fashion) in what looked like a wooden cattle car. Periodically, people escaped to a hotel somewhere.

A newspaper had a picture of a little band headed up the Nile. The cover story was written by Richard, our courier. The courier buys your rail tickets, etc., and goes on without you if you don't show up for a departure from somewhere. The story is about Richard's first trip up the Nile several years ago.

All these adventures have forms to sign absolving the organizer of any responsibility if you kill or maim yourself—or if anyone or anything does it for you. What's life without a bit of danger?

Aug. 14 London

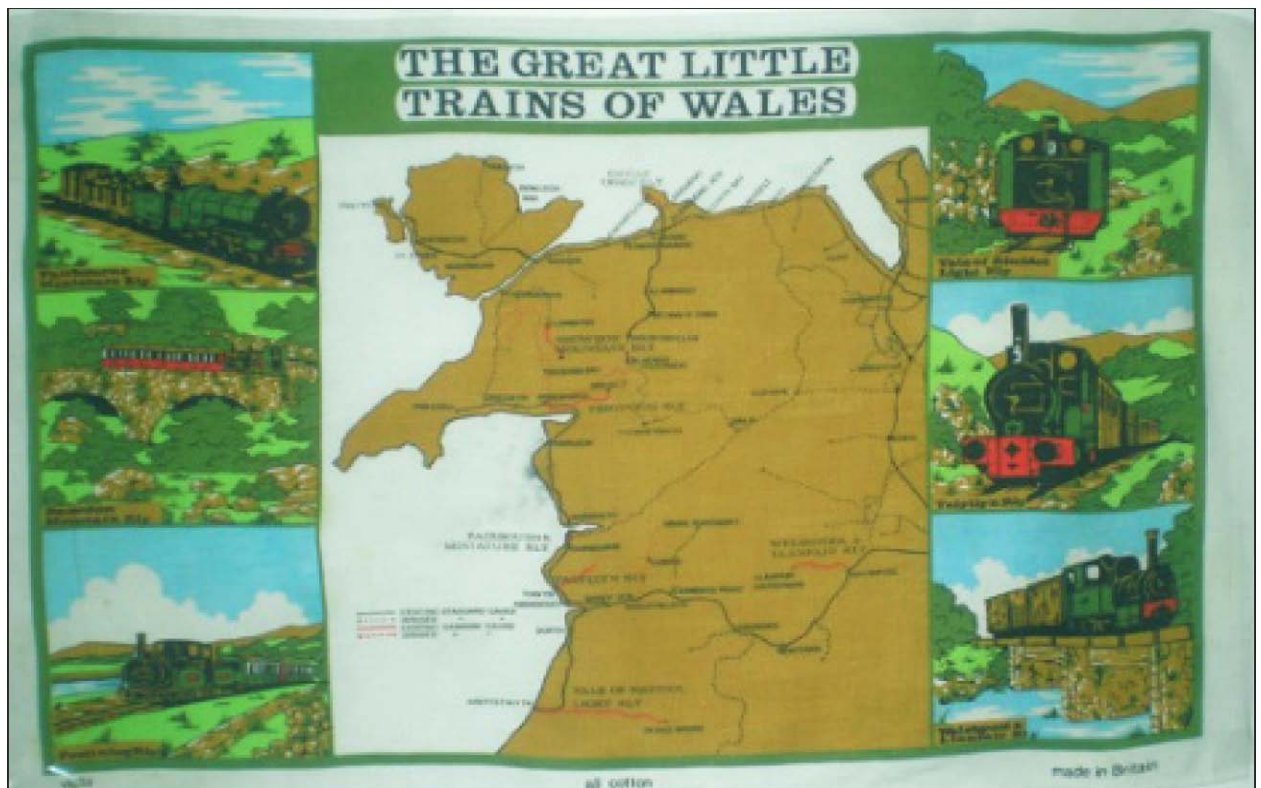
My schedule as of today:

<b>Tentative Dates</b>	<b>Destination</b>
AUGUST 15 – SEPTEMBER 5	WALES, THE MIDLANDS, LAKE COUNTRY AND EAST ANGLIA TO RIDE MINOR RAILROADS
SEPTEMBER 6 – 15	LONDON
SEPTEMBER 15 – OCTOBER 23	DELHI, AGRA, MUMBAI, CHENNAI, KOCHI, JABALPUR, ALLAHABAD, VARANASI, LUCKNOW, AND HARDWAR, DELHI
OCTOBER 23 – DECEMBER 20	BANGKOK, SINGAPORE, BALI, SINGAPORE, BANGKOK, HONG KONG, MAYBE TAIPEI OR TOKYO, SEOUL, HONOLULU, LOS ANGELES
DECEMBER 25 (CHRISTMAS)	WASHINGTON

Now I am off to ride a few more of the minor railroads of England to see the nostalgia buffs and their steam trains.

After India I'll head back to California via Bangkok, Singapore, Bali, Hong Kong, and Seoul. Seoul is a necessary stop, because I need to purchase a ticket on Korean Airlines in Bangkok at what I hope is at great savings over other, more familiar lines. I also hope to reach Washington by Christmas. I am learning to write by hand. The choice between lugging the typewriter or my books, maps, schedules and clothes was no choice at all.

I am working on a piece on England's minor railroads. On one, we stopped so the engineer could take a bucket of water and try to put out a brush fire along the track. He is the most important person on these lines. People volunteer their weekends and holidays cleaning cars, repairing equipment or selling souvenirs to work up to the big job of being an engine driver.



Aug. 15 Kidderminster, Worcestershire

On the 15th, I started riding the volunteer railroads in Wales. Some bed and breakfasts around Wales were in out of the way towns and villages: Powys, Aberystwyth; Dyfed Balia; Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd: LLanberis, Gwynedd; Chester, Cheshire; Arrad Foot, Cumbria; and Pickering, North Yorkshire. Heading East, there was a bed

and breakfast for me in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire; and more in Norfolk: Cromer; Holt; and King's Lynn.

Sept 5 King's Lynn, Norfolk

For about ten dollars can get you a bed and a hearty meal in the morning in England at a bed and breakfast. Stop in the tourist information center in town for a list of places to stay. These centers are particularly useful in towns that are busy only during the summer and have few hotels. During the season, they are frequently open seven days a week.

The proprietor of a bed and breakfast will show you about their place before you decide to stay. By mid-morning, the landlady is off to market with her basket for groceries and gossip, so it's best to book early in the day or late in the afternoon when everyone is back for tea.

If there is a guest book, you are expected to write something appreciative. It is also a good idea to mention any damage you do. She will certainly know if you burn a hole in the dresser top or polish your shoes with a towel. She may hint about unacceptable behavior by commenting on some misdemeanor of a previous guest. In return for her ever-watchful eye you will get a standard of cleanliness no hotel chain could match.

I let someone in the tourist center book a room for me, whenever possible. That way my hostess doesn't know I'm American until she can see with her own eyes that I'm civilized. Don't expect hotel services and

meals in your room. Bed and breakfast proprietors are often retired couples with back problems that will usually prevent their getting your luggage up and down stairs.

The husband, acting as host, is responsible for discussions of travel and what kind of jam you want with breakfast. He is neither porter nor taxi service. He will tell you about bus routes and rail schedules. The chance of renting his car is small. The landlady will exhibit an interest in your bathing habits to coordinate the need for hot water. Follow any hints she drops in this matter.

You will be sent out after breakfast for the day to sightsee. Your hosts have things to do. And it's just common sense for them not to make a practice of leaving strangers in the house. The summer evenings are long and pleasant for rambles in the country. If you stay in for the evening, be careful of your television manners. Your hosts may have waited all week to see episodes of "Dallas," "Police Woman," or "Starsky and Hutch", that are re-runs to you.

So it's early to bed, nudged there by a polite inquiry about the time you like to eat breakfast. She will say, "Do you have breakfast at 7:30 or 8?" Choose one of those.

Bed and breakfasts offer comfort and convenience to paying guests, plus the opportunity to meet the natives. There is an occasional eccentric. One slightly addled, elderly lady welcomed me into her gloomy house in Chichester, giving me what she said was the last room available and talking of endless bookings. I waited at breakfast for

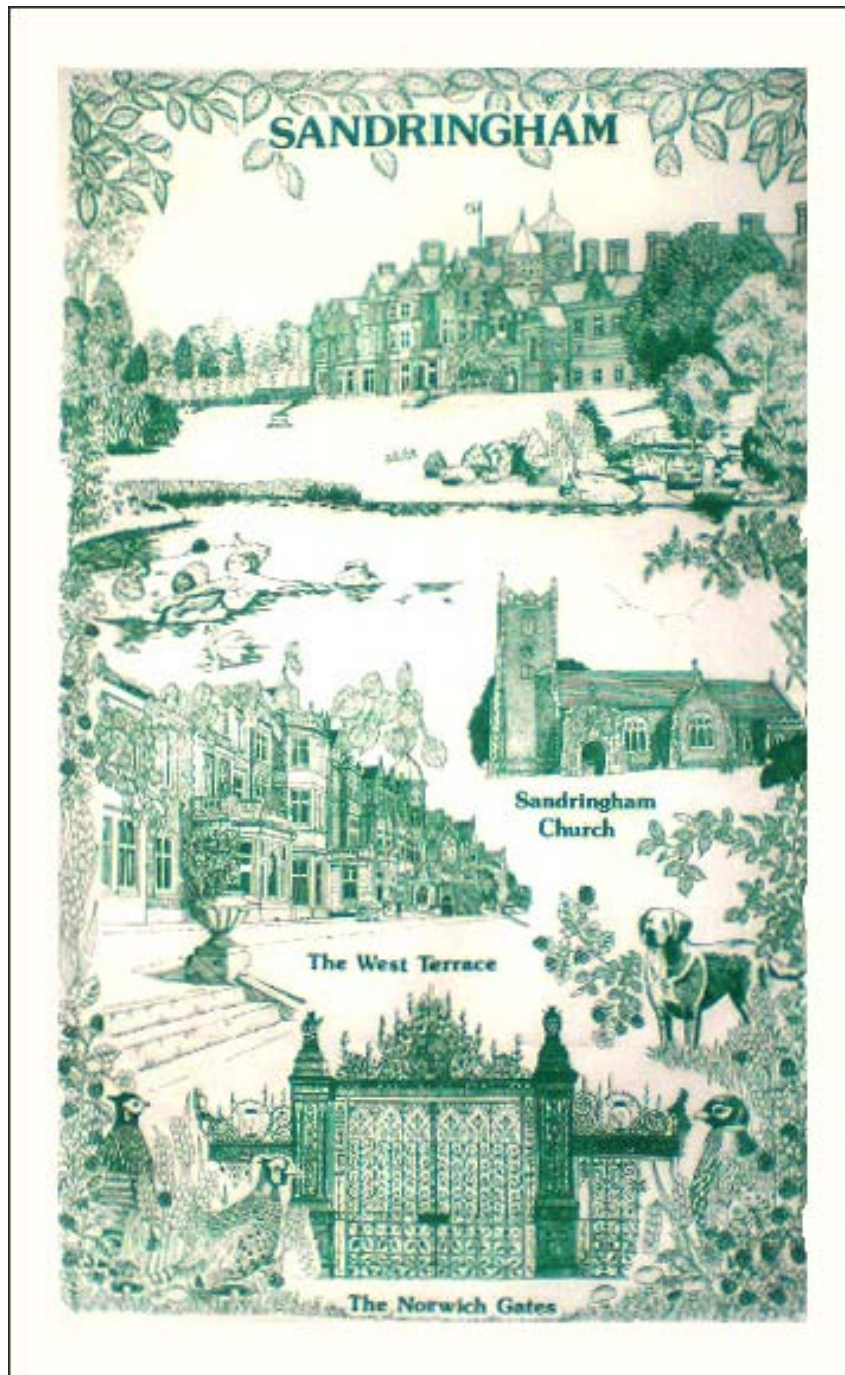


someone else to appear. No one did. Another chatty landlady after I returned from dinner displayed a surprising knowledge of what I had in my unopened suitcase.

Sept 6 Sandringham, Norfolk

Sandringham is definitely a class operation. Lovely house and acres of perfect lawn. The place obviously has a wealthy owner, so famous that she signs herself simply Elizabeth R.

Why she wants strangers queuing up to pay to go through her living room is a mystery. She doesn't allow them inside the fence around her place in town, except to get to the art gallery around by the servants' quarters and, heaven knows, there are always people hanging around the front gates snapping pictures of the guards.



The Windsor family mementos were worth the trip to the far reaches of Norfolk to see Sandringham. A folding screen in one sunny, comfortable room was covered with many small family pictures. The

faces have been better known to the public on coins and stamps of the realm.

There were tasteful little “no smoking” and “please do not touch” scripted messages on cards scattered about the walls and furniture. The notice I liked best was propped in front of a trio of African violet plants on a lovely old side table, “The flowers in this vase may be purchased in the garden stall in the war memorial car park.”

Sure enough, along with china, candy, bread boards, glass, post cards, book marks, books, tea, coffee and cakes, one could buy plants to take home. And letter paper. I’m using paper with an etching of Sandringham for letters to friends. The bearing of the clerks in the shop was apparently cloned from the lady of the house, so regal were they in bearing while selling stamps.

Sept 10 London

A Harley Street doctor said I do not have an ulcer, so I do not need to worry about eating hot, spicy foods. I have an insurance policy that is supposed to get me home if said hot, spicy food eats a hole through my anatomy. The policy runs — an unfortunate word — from Sept. 15 to Jan. 15, and supposedly eases the situation in emergencies. I’ve never figured out what that means, since it’s still cash on the line when something happens. But, apparently, the U.S. embassy will advance cash if you have insurance.

The Indian Rail Rover trip is described thusly: “For the first time we are able to offer our Indian Railway Tour using a deluxe coach. The 32 day tour will cover 4,000 miles of the Indian sub-continent. Accommodation is in double rooms each with own shower and toilet. There is a large well-furnished lounge cum dining room, a kitchen, pantry and store room. The party will not exceed 10 passengers, thereby giving maximum room and comfort.”

The Indian rail carriage, called a bogie, will be attached at Ashley’s request to various trains for our 4,000 mile trip. Leaving from Delhi, we will go south across to Chennai on the Bay of Bengal, west to Kochi on the Arabian Sea and then north again to Mumbai and Lucknow, and then back south to Delhi with stops at many cities, towns, and villages along the way.

The contact in India is c/o Butterfield Tours, Chennai Hotel Connaught Circus, New Delhi.

I have my visa and am ready to go.



Sept 16 Delhi

I arrived in Delhi after an overnight flight via Geneva where I changed planes. Strikes in England prevented a direct flight. There were few other passengers on the plane, and I cleared customs with little delay as the sun came up.

Outside the terminal a rattletrap bus waited. For 4 rupees I got to Connaught Circle in the center of New Delhi. Most of the other riders were airport workers. I found the railroad station by mid-morning and then the first class tour operation arranged by Ashley Butterfield and run with his girlfriend Jackie. Then, I explored

the bogie, the private railroad car, that would be my home for the next five weeks.

Ashley with a yen for travel, quit driving a London bus, went overland to India, and then led groups via public transport through the Middle East to India as long as the political situation permitted. Finally tensions in Afghanistan restricted his activities from India to Kabul. So he zeroed in on India, where Indian Rail leased bogies for pilgrimage groups to visit holy sites, and would let him use them for tours.

I heard about the rail tour from an adventurous sixty-four-year-old woman on the way up the Nile. She was doing her “bucket list” on the way to New Zealand and the Great Barrier Reef. She had gone on a Butterfield rail tour aboard a third-class bogie before leaving Cambridge University, where she helped James Watson build DNA models.

Everyone in the group had responded to newspaper ads for First Class rail travel and arrived in New Delhi expecting to go aboard our private carriage on Sept. 16. However, because Ashley didn’t order the car for delivery until the scheduled date for our departure on the 18th, there was only the bogie from the tour he had just finished on view. It was a third class car, and several members of our group were upset by the sight of it.

It looked like a wooden slum after five weeks’ habitation by twenty-six, mostly, students. Even cleaned up, it wouldn’t be much—wooden shelves around the walls on either side of the mid-section with a big stove in a kitchen area. It looked like one of those cattle cars bound for concentration camps, only there

were no dead bodies in it, just old clothes and various trash that looked thoroughly repellent and smelled.

Ashley, all enthusiasm and energy, dismissed the mess and suggested going to a restaurant. He is a fair, slight Yorkshireman. Clad in shorts, sandals, and a shabby shirt, he led us to a “meals ready” Indian restaurant, his favorite kind. We were each given a big, green banana leaf and the food was dished onto the leaf for us to eat with our fingers. For this you keep your right hand as germ free as possible for eating. The left hand is not used for food, but is saved for sanitary purposes.

Two women from Cambridge, who had answered the ad in *The Observer*, sat among the laboring men of Delhi eating dinner from banana leaves—wondering what his next surprise would be. Seeing the bogie with two travel-worn passengers from Ashley’s previous trip—one ill and still aboard with a stomach disorder in the mess, they fled to a hotel.

Ashley thought it was funny. Most discomforts he found amusing, and minor ones he usually ignored. His assistant, Jackie, a Cambridge graduate, fell for him on one of his trips, was in her twenties. She has the manners of a diplomat’s wife and the build of a Chinese coolie. She spent months carrying water buckets and cooking in temperatures as high as 120 degrees. Every railroad station had tap water which was safe to drink and was used for cooking, but it had to be carried to the bogie.

*The Observer* ad, which was accurate, I must say, but, perhaps being British, a bit understated. Our accommodations were princely next to those of most Indians. The 1927 Pullman carriage had four double compartments, one

smaller than the others, but with its own private shower and toilet. The others had washstands. A large shower-toilet-laundry room extended across the end of the bogie. The corridor from it, past the compartments led to a parlor, about 15 feet long. Beyond it was a pantry and a kitchen with a huge iron wood burning stove.

The refrigerator was in the parlor along with a six-foot couch, easy chair, six-foot dining table, and a buffet cupboard. When extra seating was needed, stools were moved from the compartments. With the twelve members of our party in the parlor, it was jammed.

Indians may travel in carriages of the same size, but without compartments, with as many as eighty-three aboard one car. Some have fewer, twenty-five or so, but none matched the luxurious layout of our First Class carriage. This Pullman was built in 1927 and came with handsome panelling and crystal wall lamps. Each compartment had a window fan, wall fan, and ceiling fan.

Our bogie was unimpressive from the outside. Like most other Indian rail cars, it was painted barn red, and had bars on the windows, making it look like a prison car. In a line of more plebeian “pilgrim” carriages it could be spotted by the distinctive grills that covered the window fans. These have straw covers and jut out from the side. A servant was meant to wet the straw to cool the air going through the fan.

No servant for us. That luxury went first. Ashley off-loaded the servant, along with his belongings, before we left Delhi. Ashley had sold ten tickets on a carriage with four double compartments. Two extra unacquainted ticket buyers, one male and one female, paid 100 pounds rather than the full 150 pounds and were assigned to the parlor couch and table for sleeping. However, the girl was



traveling with her parents and spent much of her time using their compartment, the only one that had a private toilet.

Ashley and Jackie slept in the pantry, which did not look as though it had been painted for a long, long time. They applied a can of light blue paint to the walls to brighten the area, but the kitchen next to it was left alone, looking like the Black Hole of Calcutta.

I was last to arrive, and Ashley indicated that he planned to pair me with the other American, who in addition to her other charms, was foul-mouthed. A major hazard of traveling alone is being housed with someone dreadful. Disease and accidents can be avoided, prevented or cured. There is no relief from an obnoxious roommate. In the meantime, Diana Coke, a brilliant, formidable English woman, got to the car early with the others, and rejected the other single possible cabin mates, one a nurse on vacation after delivering babies in some remote African village for two years, and the other, the rich, eccentric American woman, who had just completed an overland trip in Africa. Diana, decided sight unseen, that I had to be a better candidate than either of them. The American had powerful body odor and was also obese, a rarity among the nomads I encountered.

Diana, daughter of the Raj, and wife of the professor of international business at Edinburgh University, left him and three children for a nostalgic visit to India where she lived until she was eleven. Her upper class accent and confidence was daunting. Next to being closeted with my fellow American for five weeks, this was a minor problem. Two weeks later, when I heard the Cambridge women talking about trading bunks as Ashley gave out clean sheets,

I spoke up. Diana cheerfully traded with me. Her bark was worse than her bite, and she had a merry sense of humor.

We learned about the existence of another rail class above First Class after we got to India. It's called simply, "Air Conditioned." The only public ones I saw, were attached to an express train. There were, also, private air conditioned elegant cars, definitely not barn red, with royal Indian crests on their sides parked at the private siding at the New Delhi station. In Mumbai one small Indian group had five servants in a shiny car.

Outside of Delhi we are the object of curiosity. Indian pilgrims rent cars on the Indian Railway to be attached to various trains for pilgrimages to holy shrines. Ashley had discovered this system and used it to book tours for groups of tourists, usually students, or those willing to camp out in the basic, primitive cars.

Many English men are fans of trains, standing in stations all over the country, making note of those they see. Ashley was definitely a fan, by the choice of his career and how he scheduled our bogie. Most often hitched to local trains, we moved slowly sometimes, barely getting up speed after a stop at one small station, before reaching the next. Men lined up on the platform at each, those in front pressing their noses against the bars to look in at so few people in the unusual car. The windows and shutters had to be open or we would have suffocated. We sat reading in the parlor with eyes looking over our shoulders.

There is a second class Indian sleeper with three-tier metal or wooden shelves, along the insides of cars. Rolling dormitories. Regular first class cars have two tiers of padded shelves with a door closing off each set of four shelves,

or bunks, into a compartment. If Indians, particularly pilgrims, are given a long pause at a station, they wash and hang laundry out along the platform to dry.

Major stations have retiring rooms, away from the main part of the station, where passengers wash themselves, their children, or their clothes. Some of these rooms have couches, but Indians travel with bedrolls to spread out for a rest. Many travelers stretch out on the floor of the station, which usually have no seats. Imagine Union Station in Washington D.C., with hundreds of people lying on the floor with or without mats.

We were dependent on the station workers to fill the train's water tanks and recharge it's batteries. Long runs should have recharged the batteries, but that didn't always happen. A run of several days could mean dim lights and slow fans toward the end of the run.

At Delhi there was a separate entrance to the private car sitting at the station. It was down a quiet road landscaped with flowers and trees, so we had no need to go through the hubbub of the main station. At Mumbai, we were left on a track that had to be reached by a back alley beside Victoria Station. In the alley, children and rats scampered in the mud. The monsoon season was not over.

The shelves of the huge iron stove in the kitchen of our bogie were used for storage. Building a fire in it would heat the whole end of the car and might roast Ashley and his girlfriend alive. Yet for years, obviously from its appearance, it had been in use. We ate al fresco on the platform where the grill was set, bringing out a small table and some chairs. When word comes the car was to be shunted, we moved quickly. Once there was so little warning that breakfast

remained on the platform. The carriage is not always in a station and may be taken on little trips to have its water tanks filled.

It left Victoria Station, while Ashley was in the stationmaster's office being assured that it would remain parked where it was. A load of shopping and several blocks of ice were left behind as it began to move. I leapt aboard to lock the doors and spent much of the morning alone riding out of Mumbai. I was so far out in the suburbs that when Ashley arrived to relieve me, I went across the tracks — something that has to be done with great caution — and caught a local train, which made two stops before reaching Mumbai.



The run from Mumbai, formerly Bombay, to Chennai, formerly Madras, was two nights and a day, and we made it attached to the Chennai Mail. We raced along at over 70 m.p.h., which made sleeping difficult with all the bouncing. At Chennai, the fans stopped at 4 a.m., which was soon after we arrived. Chennai is an important port, and one good thing about railroad stations is that there's usually an electrician available. One came over and hooked the car to the station

electricity. At various stations the aged refrigerator was worked on and revived. It was on its last legs.

The river that runs near the station was full of pollution and industrial waste, and had an incredible stench. After a 12-hour sightseeing trip down the coast, another night of the smell, and clouds of mosquitoes, I booked into a hotel for two nights to breathe air conditioning. The husband of one passenger left his wife asleep with the screens and shutters up. She woke eaten alive, and we took turns applying ice to her back to ease her pain.

Ashley, leading his inaugural First Class tour after years of really roughing it, considered us a decadent lot, used to a soft life. We had a tendency to go off to lunch and swim whenever we were parked in a town where a hotel offered such hospitality. We weren't fussy about it being a luxury hotel, but we did like the pool to look clean and the restaurants to provide cutlery with the meals.

Ashley and Jackie shopped and cooked for us most of the time with passengers drafted as helpers. Native markets sold everything from flowers to meat. The sights, sounds and smells in the heat were sometimes too much for his passengers, which amused him. One of the men, along to carry things, almost fainted when he saw a butcher hacking off some meat for our dinner from a huge carcass.

Ashley loved special events and made an effort to dress up when we took him out for a meal. Other travelers in tidy, color co-ordinated resort wear would watch him in his clean, but sometimes torn shirt, shorts and sandals.

For his thirty-ninth birthday Jackie gave him a party aboard the bogie, which was parked in Benares. For two mornings when we went down to the Ganges, we would see corpses burning on funeral pyres. I was ready for a change of scenery. Several people in the group took Ashley sightseeing, while Jackie hung colored streamers and a sign in big letters, "Happy Birthday Ashley," along the outside of the car.

The party menu was jello, cake, ice cream and tea. The time was set for 5:30 p.m., but the sightseers returned at 7:30. By that time the strawberry ice cream was a pink puddle, and the sun was going down. A crowd gathered when Ashley began lighting the extensive collection of fireworks someone gave him — large rockets, small bombs and sparklers. The Indians on the platform enjoyed the show and wanted to join the fun. They were, unfortunately, almost invisible in the darkness, and there were some scary moments when dark hands reached out for sparklers or the unpredictable explosives went off. Ashley held out a large cracker with a short fuse for me to light with a sparkler, but I backed off, sure he'd lose a hand if I did.

In Benares I bargained for silk saris, one for Judy back in Washington and one for me, over cups of tea.

From Haridwar, our northernmost station, Diana and I rode with a mad cab driver to Rishikesh. He hit a boy carrying a milk can on a bicycle, exchanged some hard words with him for being in the way, and then sped into a squeeze play with three rickshaws. He hit all three in a telescoping move and berated them, too.



In Rishikesh, you can go swimming in the Ganges, which is not yet used for funerals this far upstream. The place is full of shrines, beggars and tourists. Some beggars sell packets of small change for tourists to scatter among other beggars. Other activities are: acquiring serenity, watching sacred cattle drop turds in the street, and eating in “meals ready” restaurants. The Beatle’s swami moved from here to spotless Switzerland.

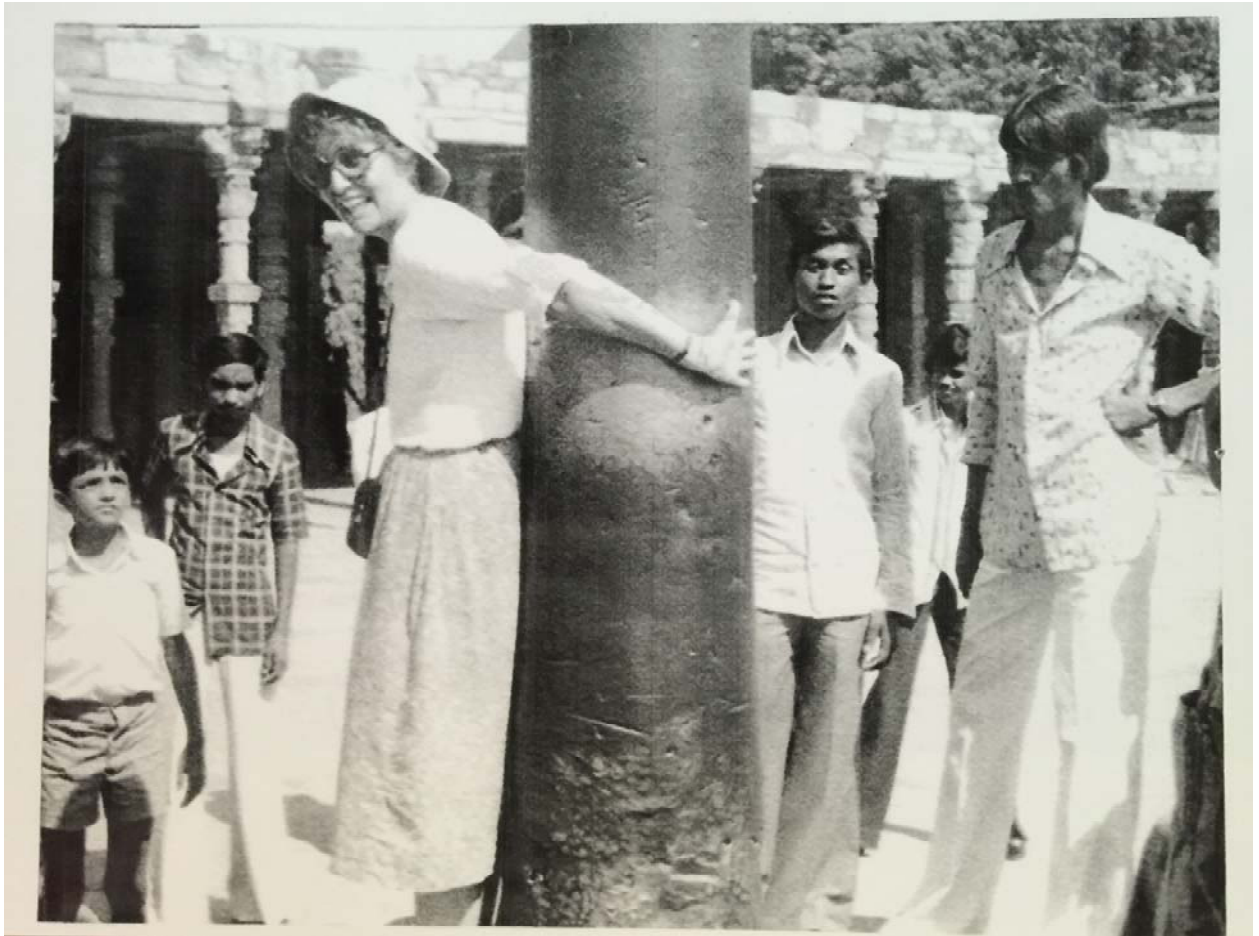


Back in Haridwar, the monkey population of the station, was waiting to greet us. Some were ready to move into the bogie, taking an open door or window as an invitation. Handing out bananas to them and alms to beggars were the main activities.

Diana and I heard that Ashley planned a farewell dinner to be cooked on the platform among the horde of monkeys. We looked for a way to get back to Delhi. The planned menu was to be everything left in the larder and shared with the local beggars and, of course, the monkeys as guests. That afternoon an ancient bus took us on a five-hour tooth-rattling ride back to Delhi, where we checked into the Y.M.C.A. hotel.

Oct. 21 New Delhi, India

We arrived in time for Diwali, an Indian holiday that celebrates the end of the financial year with sales and tremendous fireworks—both happening in the streets. Diana bought three Kashmiri embroidered robes for the price of one, 24 rupees. *The International Herald Tribune* cost 9 rupees. I bought five cotton blouses from a heap on the sidewalk. One was labelled “Tequila - Montreal, Los Angeles, New York.”



The Y ambiance was like staying in a well-kept co-ed college dorm with private rooms. The hotel is part of the American missionary effort, so the atmosphere is unlike that of a resort hotel. Diana nearly choked when God was included in a luncheon conversation. A notice warned: “God is a participant in every conversation under the roof.” And His name popped up several times.

An American teacher on holiday from a missionary school — where children of American missionaries, not natives, are educated in Pakistan, told us that she had come through a crisis after ten years there. She asked God to give her guidance, and He gave her an extra class to teach, the school play to direct and

some new students to counsel. She decided that He meant her to stay in Pakistan.

Diana's hauteur helped her get John, one of our group, out of the hotel when it was time for them to leave for the airport before dawn. John had left a bag with us, but stayed at another hotel, and the doorman would not let that bag out of the hotel. The staff thought he was trying to skip without paying for his room. Since he hadn't stayed there, he had no receipt for a room.

We had stirred up the desk clerk, the cashier, as well as the doorman and were at an impasse. The only thing to do was to wake the manager who lived at the hotel but, unfortunately, was asleep. He answered his door in rumpled pajamas and a bad temper. However, he calmed down when faced with Diana, daughter of the Raj, and okayed an exit permit from the hotel for John's bag.

Oct. 23 New Delhi, India

A month ago, Bonnie forwarded two notes, and miraculously they were here when I arrived at the Hotel Connaught, which Ashley, our Huck Finn from Yorkshire suggested.

The hotel is the pits. The lobby is a "meals ready" restaurant for Indian workers. The cashier dug down in a pile of papers under the register and pulled out my mail. I thanked him and moved to a hotel a few blocks away on the other side of Connaught Circle about ten stars better and still nothing to write home about.

I leave for Bangkok shortly and have spent the morning at the *Time* bureau using a typewriter, which even has a new ribbon. In Bangkok, I will explore

possible routes to Singapore. Both Thailand and Singapore allow two week visits without getting a visa ahead of time, and I will try to keep within that framework.

My last rupees are for my cab fare to the airport for the flight to Thailand.

Oct. 31 Bangkok, Thailand

Jim Thompson is famous as an O.S.S. agent who adopted Thailand as his home after World War II. He is credited with bringing Thai silk to the notice of fashionable people. First, he had to get the Thais back to weaving it.

By 1959, he completed a house for himself and his collection of Thai art. Thai houses are high and shuttered. They have grills just below the roof, where the walls meet it, and between the rooms as a device to allow air to circulate. Jim's house is six old reconstructed Thai houses, each of which is a room in his house. The largest is a drawing room, open on one side overlooking the canal (klong). Thai art, furniture, and silks are used throughout the house. The decor is a combination of a museum of art and Palm Beach comfort.

His collection of Thai and Oriental art included Buddhas, carvings, porcelain, sculpture, and furniture. Two lions in the garden were used as ballast on ships from China. He spent years collecting these treasures. One large wooden printing block was found in a chicken yard. It can be taken apart to apply dye of different colors on various sections. It hangs on a wall of one room, and a fabric printed from it covers the cushions of an elephant chair nearby. He calls it the elephant chair because it was originally a saddle for riding an elephant.

The dining table is two mahjong tables that once belonged to the King of Thailand, when it was called Siam. Several beds also belonged to royalty. The

tables have the royal crest, and the beds have various numbers of toes on the feet. Two lamps are made from drums turned upside down.

In the decades since he assembled the house and his collection in it, the neighborhood has gone downhill. The klongs that are transportation and drainage canals for the city are overburdened and malodorous.

Downtown at the Jim Thompson Thai Silk Co., Ltd., yard goods, clothing linens and other items made of Thai fabrics are for sale. The merchandise is extremely popular with tourists. Bangkok is the place to have clothes made. Many shops have Thai silk, beautiful cottons and other fabrics. Thai women are chic even in this hot steamy climate. While I become wrinkled and wet looking, they remain fresh and neat in softly pleated skirts with bloused tops. Some costumes have ruffles, gathers or other fancy touches, but a lot of them have the soft, coordinated elegance of Italian fashions.



Bangkok is a boomtown. An editorial in *The Bangkok Post* advertised a new shopping complex for suburbanites:

“The architecture of this exciting new complex is indeed extremely pleasing to the eye. From the first glance at the outside decor it clearly tells the story of old England somewhere in the 17th century—the Tudor period.”

Bangkok has changed since Thompson disappeared without a trace in the Cameron highlands in 1967 at the age of 61. There is suspicion that his disappearance had something to do with his alleged C.I.A. connections.

Nov. 4

In any list of great railway journeys the one down the Malay Peninsula from Bangkok to Butterworth Station in Thailand and on to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, ending in Singapore is tops. I bought the ticket thinking a train went all the way, which it doesn't. It takes three different trains to reach Singapore.

The scenery is spectacular. Plantations of rubber, copra and dates abound. The land is so rich and the growing season so long that some plantations have three crops growing in the same space—tall, coconut palms wave above lower-growing crops lined up neatly among their trunks.

The Thai train in second class has two single seats facing each other which make up at night into an upper and lower berth. Next to the seats on the aisle side are fixed stainless steel racks which are both for luggage and climbing into the upper berth. The seats are not closed off from the corridor. Privacy is provided by curtains across the berths after they are made up by the porter.

There is a shower at the end of the car, which I used often. There is no air-conditioning and clothes stick to the body and the body sticks to the seat. Eating picnic meals is messy, but I showered any time I felt grubby, which happened, at least, three times a day. Not everyone took such advantage of the facilities.

The night on the Malaysian leg of the trip between Butterworth and Kuala Lumpur was spent on a hard berth in an older carriage.

Nov. 6 Singapore

Garuda, the Indonesian national airline, is one of the airlines I'd never heard of before I bought a ticket to Denpasar, Bali on it. A local joke is that Garuda stands for "Going All Right Under Dutch Administration." Since colonial days are over, the saying is not a compliment. Service is erratic.

Nov. 8 Kuta Beach, Bali

My bible, *The Budget Traveler's Asia*, stressed that the fork in the road from the Denpasar airport is a major landmark for economy-minded tourists. Turn to the right and you go to Sanur Beach, where big hotels are lined up on spacious grounds along the shore. Prices vary, but begin around \$40 (U.S.) a night per person for a room and meals. Turn left, and you are soon at Kuta Beach, a village with smaller hotels and cottages, shops and restaurants. Hotel prices start at \$1 (U.S.) per night in this haven for Australian students, surfers.....and me.

However, after trying the Wisma Adi Yas overnight in Denpasar, I found it a bit too native. For \$2.50, I got a cement hut with a cot where I lay awash in my own sweat until morning. For an additional \$0.50 cents (U.S.), I was given breakfast with an obliging local lad as my table mate who ate the second meal that came to me, because I asked for two eggs. Two heavily salted eggs were too much for me. He gobbled it down and sat stroking the gamecock that sat in his lap. Cock fighting is a popular local sport.

Nov. 9 Kuta Beach, Bali



I'm here on Bali doing serious research on recreation in a tourist paradise. There's always something to do, dancing to watch, and the surf to splash about in.

The day begins long before dawn with the crowing of the roosters. Actually, they never shut up, crowing a bit here and there twenty-four hours a day. They have plenty to crow about, because cock fighting is a major sport here, and basket cages for family favorite fighters can be seen in front of many house along country roads. Since cock fights often end with the death of one of the combatants, the birds crow while they can.

There is a major festival here on November 21, and I am hoping to see Balinese dancing at it. If the tranquility of the island doesn't bog me down, I may go see some dancing before then. Every evening tourists and natives, young and old, flow to the beach to see the sun set from the shore, the major daily event here.

I am mulling over the lure of Japan and teaching English to Japanese businessmen. The way my New Zealand informant detailed the idea, it sounds very lucrative. My ticket on Korean Air is good for a year, and includes a stopover in picturesque Seoul and Tokyo. I wouldn't be marooned in the Orient.

Nov. 10 Kuta Beach, Bali

The *Budget Traveler's Asia* guide advises travelers to stop using toilet paper and adopt the bottom sloshing method of the locals. It is done by using the handy plastic scoop left in toilets or the water taps placed about 12 inches from the floor. It is, however, awkward for people in Western attire.

Men and women who wear sarongs have a simple way of achieving privacy by unwrapping the fabric to shield their actions from view, whether inside or outdoors. Balinese native dress does not include pants. People who wear underpants and use Balinese toilets have to be careful not to slosh water over them. Small children squat unembarrassed almost anywhere they are, and men frequently step aside to relieve themselves on a nearby tree.

Westerners who insist on using quantities of paper often jam the plumbing, much to their embarrassment. Lines outside the “Ladies” can be long, but unwrapping and rewrapping a sarong or sari takes time.

Nov. 11 Kuta Beach, Bali

Bali is known for its bare-breasted beauties. The early Christian missionaries made Balinese women aware that the rest of the world did not go *au naturel* from the waist up. As a concession to foreign customs, most of them cover up in town. However, a traditionalist old woman sometimes will be seen in Denpasar bare to the waist.

A bare chest during strenuous labor makes sense in this hot, humid climate. Women haul goods to market on their heads. They also carry paving materials in the country where roads are being worked on. Bare chests might be healthier.

Sometimes the women are topless and sometimes they are covered up with a jacket over a fancy bra. Out in the fields women of all ages work with their jackets tied around their waists.

After the missionaries preached wearing clothes to the natives, the tourist boom came along to confuse things. Particularly along Kuta Beach and around

hotel pools, tourist women lounge bare-breasted, and along the beach, men and women appear naked. Nude joggers bounce along the beach, with parts of anatomy, male and female, bouncing. There's room for everyone and all couture styles on the miles of Kuta Beach.

When the Balinese women come along the beach to sell sunbathers another bikini, massages, or delicious small pineapples peeled and cut for eating by hand, they cover up with sarongs and tops.

Nov. 14 Kuta Beach, Bali

The Oberoi is a gorgeous tropical hotel. It consists of a group of luxurious native-style cottages on a long walk along a stretch of Kuta Beach for about \$40 to \$60 a night. It's okay to stroll along the beach from a dollar-a-day room to lunch at a better hotel. Attire is informal.

I have the same sand, clear water and view of the mountains, palms and sea for considerably less. My handy guide book to Asia is full of helpful information on getting around this part of the world, such as: Why not take local transportation from the airport to downtown for a few pennies, rather than paying tourist prices of quite a few dollars?

Nov. 14 Ubud, Bali

The village of Ubud is an art center and has a small hotel with a swimming pool, service and amenities geared to European tourists. However, a friend in London suggested that I stay with Oka Kartine, who owns an art gallery. Two B.B.C. producers who have the same kind of helpful friend, were also staying there. We agreed that people who recommend Oka's place should mention the

native-style plumbing. My private bath was a room with a tank in the corner and a ladle to pour the water from it over myself. Getting in the tank, which looks like a tall, narrow bathtub is a no-no. You would not have a clean supply of water for use later.

The B.B.C. producers found they were sharing their bath with all the servants coming in to do laundry. They have now moved on to Legian Beach. It is a modest beachfront hotel with attractive rooms, a pool, outdoor bar and dining room. It is just down the beach from Kuta Beach. They pay \$18 (U.S.) a day.

First, I moved to a cottage hotel in Kuta Beach for one night. It looked charming and tropical. It was. For \$1 (U.S.) a night, I had my own room and bath, no electricity—kerosene lamps—and huge cockroaches. I killed one during the night that was five or six inches long. In the morning his relatives had eaten him. At least his remains were gone.

I moved that morning to the Bruna Beach Inn. The architecture is a Balinese version of the American roadside motel of the 1950s, a simple row of rooms, but the setting is paradise on the beach. The price is \$5 (U.S.) a day.

Nov. 15 Kuta Beach, Bali

Sunbathing is popular, but cremations and fire dancing appeal to the curious. Balinese do not die to oblige tourists who want to see a cremation. The Balinese will fire dance, but it's hard to find it when it does happen, because the government has banned this activity.

Not impossible, however, because the government is based on Muslim Java, from the next island up the Indonesian chain. The dancing takes place on Hindu

Bali. The Hindus add Balinese touches. They wear sashes to enter temples, forbid women entrance during menstruation, and employ turtles in religious ceremonies. I haven't figured out what the priests do.

The official tourist handout explained that the religion is too complicated for anyone except the priests to comprehend fully, but that the people still enjoy it. The priests seem to have a light work schedule.

Young girls prepare small palm frond baskets which have bits of rice, flowers and incense, and a few drops of something else. Perhaps water? They place these tokens in doorways of homes, businesses, on the beach and in some unlikely spots each morning for the gods. Crunch! And I've smashed one underfoot.

It's embarrassing. Is it desecration of a religious offering?

Looking through the racks in a dress shop, my fingers came away gummy with rice. Oops. The local people take my clumsiness calmly, so these little tokens could be to them what rabbits' feet are to us.

There is a major festival each 210 days. For that, altars in temples and gardens are draped with black and white checked skirts. Over the hotel reception desk I saw a drawing, a stylized sketch of a man facing forward with a ribbon tied around his penis. The language barrier prevents my understanding the meaning.

Nov. 16 Kuta Beach, Bali

The lean look is popular. Many Western travelers lose their roundness after a trip in this part of the world. Unfortunately, some already slender people may come to resemble starved prisoners of war, after a bout with some bug. Some

are happy with a flatter look in local clothing, such as sarongs, pajama-like pants and bikinis, which is the correct attire for almost any occasion here.

The day begins at sunrise, shortly before 4 a.m., when the local workers start their activities. In a resort that is expanding, this means they will be building new additions on your hotel or fixing something. The roosters crow. The piglets squeal, and the cows wander by my bedroom window rattling their bells as they graze among the palm trees. These animals supply the hotel larder in one way or another.

In most of Asia the basic rule is: If you can't cook it, peel it, or disinfect it, don't eat it. However, I enjoy the marvelous variety of fresh fruits here with no worry. One New Yorker I encountered in Agra, India, would eat only plain, boiled rice, which seemed to be carrying caution to the extreme. Although, I have to admit, a good part of my diet in India was bananas. By law, milk in India must be boiled before being served. But, who wants to drink hot milk when the temperature is close to 100 degrees?

On Bali, life is full of exercise and fresh air, with outdoor meals of seafood, fruits, and vegetables. Along Sanur and Kuta beaches, there are snack bars serving bowls of yoghurt piled high with fruit: pineapple, mango, papaya, breadfruit, and others I can't identify, but enjoy. Sitting on the beach during a hard day of swimming and sunning, I buy fresh pineapple from a woman who brings it by, peels one deftly and then slices it down along the core, handing it to me by the foliage like a giant lollipop to nibble on.

Every Eden has its serpent. A six-foot, slim, gray snake hurried off the path to Kuta Beach and slipped away, as I started down the path, heading for a swim one day. It was no more anxious to meet me than I was to make its acquaintance.

Nov. 17 Kuta Beach, Bali

The night is balmy. The air is soft and darkness pleasant after the glare of another sunny day. Rain falls in Bali, apparently, only between midnight and 4 a.m. The restaurant is a garden with tables set on raised concrete platforms to keep them above a flood. Palm fronds form the roof. Basket-shaded lamps hang over each table, giving a soft glow. The night is silent, after the soft putt-putt of motorbikes pass and whenever the stereo is turned off. Disco music is a fact of life, no matter how remote the corner of the world.

The foliage and open air of this restaurant soften the music's blare a bit. But the emptier the restaurant, the louder the music will be turned, to mask the lack of customers. It's the slow season until mid-December, when the Australian students begin to arrive. In some places, it is possible to have the music turned low upon request. However, it will be turned up again with the next cassette, so it's hardly worth it. The waiter leaves the pad and pencil for me to write what I want to eat. He usually sits down at the table while I write it out. This custom takes some time to get used to.

A question to the waiter often produces an agreeable smile or giggle, but no answer. He may speak a few words of English, but what he says usually makes no sense to me. Dinner is leisurely. I could, in fact, sit over a meal until the restaurant closes, because the check will stay at the bar until the customer goes there to pay it. Ordering two or three courses at a time can be a mistake, unless

you don't mind eating dessert before your main course, if that's the order they happen to arrive in. Or everything will arrive at once, and you'll still have to eat dessert first, if you've ordered ice cream. It melts quickly in the heat.

My dinner is chicken and vegetables on rice with two fresh lemonades, and pineapple flavored with rum for dessert. The bill is \$2.17 (U.S.)

Nov. 18 Kuta Beach, Bali

The Balinese are extremely friendly. Each one says, "Hello," to me in passing. An aged man hobbling along on crutches on a sandy path stopped and greeted me, as I walked to breakfast at 7 a.m. A boy just old enough to toddle about the hotel garden in his usual attire—nothing—took his bottle out of his mouth to say, "Hello."

The older children and young people who hawk so many items usually ask, "Where are you going?" It is surprising how many Westerners, knowing these children speak only a few words of English, will explain pleasantly in great detail just where they are going and why it is not convenient to browse among the merchandise being offered: batiks, wood carving, chess sets, carved cow bones, straw hats and purses, shell jewelry and beachwear.

Balinese frequently spot something purchased on the island and want to know how much I paid. Fellow tourists want to know where. There is a great deal of bartering and it is a lazy customer who does not get the price lowered. Balinese men and women, also, frequently ask one's marital status and number of children. Young Western women who wear scanty clothing off the beach may



be badgered by lewd remarks. But, any woman may suddenly find a young Balinese man walking along with her, probably trying to sell something.

A variety of activities are available, but one of the most popular, is to ride on the back of a motorcycle. This is frequently offered free, or the price is “up to you.” Young women go whizzing off, hair flying. The alternative transportation is a modified pickup truck, the local public transport. Motorbikes are for rent and are good vehicles, if you like riding on rough roads, full of potholes.

Dressing preppy is the best way to get a visa. Foreign males with long hair have a hard time getting visas to enter Indonesia. However, on the islands the natives have exotic hairdos. A lot of the local men are short, dark men with long hair and teeth set squarely in the jaw. An invitation from one of them to watch the sunset could be just that, a local custom. A lot of people stand on the beach at sunset, looking out to sea.

Nov. 18 Kuta Beach, Bali

The Balinese New Year comes every seven months and is the cause of much ceremony. Five days before the holiday there is a holiday to celebrate the coming holiday. Not knowing this, I watched a procession of the landlady and two young women, begin a rite at the shrine in the hotel garden.

After the landlady put flowers and liquid on joss sticks on the altar, they went across the garden to the kitchen and emerged with a roast suckling pig on a platter. They presented the pig at the garden shrine, at another near the reception desk and then went down to the beach and showed it to the gods there. A little while later I heard the sounds of chopping, and a young man

appeared on my porch with a large plate of undercooked pork, some rice, and tea. He explained that this was a holiday treat.

I drank the tea, ate some rice, and one piece of pork. The landlady stopped by to talk about local customs, and eyed my progress with the sacred pork. I said I was on my way out to lunch with friends, so I could not do the meal justice. She was very friendly. When she noticed ants on my porch, she showed me another cottage which costs \$6.50 (U.S.) a day, which she wanted me to take instead of my \$4 a day cottage — at no increase in price.

I accepted her offer, and seemed to have avoided eating raw pork and offending local customs. However, as she left, she said the pig would be saved for my dinner.

Nov. 19 Kuta Beach, Bali

The steamy languor of Bali gradually creeps over one. I swim just after the sun comes up and again just before it goes down. In between there's reading, shopping, and occasional sightseeing. Any vigorous activity causes sweat to pour forth from every pore.

The only group that seems to be constantly active are the boys who round up customers for the bemos. These are the modified pickup trucks with seats in back, which are the taxi and bus service on the island. Bemo routes radiate along four main routes from Denpasar. To get from a town on one route to a town directly across the countryside, but on another route, it is necessary to go back to a junction point where bemos collect. An hour's shared ride on a bemo along one of the routes costs about 12 to 15 cents (U.S.). Or a bemo can be chartered,

which will require haggling with one driver and his friends to get the price way down. However, there are times you won't mind as much about paying more. After standing with two fellow travelers at a hot, deserted crossroad, we hired a bemo for two hours for \$5 (U.S.).

The driver zipped along the one and a half lane macadam roads, avoiding potholes, people, animals and other vehicles in heavy traffic. The countryside is lush, green, and lovely, and there are many pedestrians. Women stride along balancing loads on their heads. Mother hens and their broods are given right of way by bemos.

A young boy hangs off the back of shared bemos calling out its destination while en route. When it stops, he jumps off and runs about collecting new riders. When he takes the basket from a woman's head and loads it into his bemo, she's his customer. There's less assistance when passengers are disembarking, and the boy is off for new riders. The driver indicates it's time to go by driving off slowly, giving the boy time to get his foot on the back step and grab hold, before picking up speed.

The bemo stops anywhere when flagged and discharges by request. The route is up to the driver.

Nov. 20 Singaraja, Bali

Nowhere else will a dollar go so far, so pleasantly, than on this island east of Java.

You have heard tales of Australian beauties gamboling *au naturel* in the surf at Kuta Beach. Or zooming on a moped along the shore or up to the mountains,

past lush green rice paddies, behind a new friend clinging to his waist. In this fantasy, both wear t-shirts, jeans, and thong sandals. His hair blows into her face.

Well, if this is your fantasy and you could easily fill the role since you look the part, then you're just the type of person the Indonesian government would rather stay home — yours, not theirs. You will get a visa to enter the country only if you pass inspection. Bali has fabulous tropical scenery and a mellow lifestyle, and the government wants to keep out people who look like beach bums. Of course, once on Kuta Beach, the chinos and blazers are shed, sometimes more than that.

Resort wear on Bali is hip-hugging drawstring pants for both men and women, with a bikini top for the ladies. Old pajama bottoms will not do, but that's basically the style. The real Balinese pants can be ordered and whipped up overnight for you by one of the many island tailors, for a few dollars.

The t-shirts that cannot be worn when applying for a visa should not be left at home. In fact, they are better than money in the suitcase and can be traded for merchandise, lodging, or food. The ones that seem to be hot for trading are noticeably American in some way. Zany or college t-shirts are highly valued.

Entrepreneurs have tried starting businesses in Bali, in order to keep returning to this Garden of Eden. They run into a variety of problems. One got a large order from a New York store for bikinis made here of native batik—the fabric that is bought by so many tourists here. However, the order fell through when the Balinese did not make the sizes standard. There was slim hope that one size 10 would have the same measurements as another size 10, driving the department store buyer crazy.

One day, a doctor from the Ford Foundation entertained me with luncheon talk of hunger in Bangladesh. He also told a story of instant justice on Bali. It seems a tourist mistook the naked charms of a Balinese girl. The Balinese regard bare chests as air conditioning for one's body, not allure. The alleged rapist was found later in his room at the Legian Beach hotel, fatally stabbed.

In Ubud, Oka Kartine had told a story of how villagers police themselves. A housebreaker was caught by the townspeople, and she said, "He died." She explained, "The villagers corrected his faults."

Bali is the most popular of the Indonesian islands with tourists. There have been stories in newspapers that on Timor, Red Cross and Catholic Charity efforts to relieve starvation are discouraged by the government, which prefers that the natives die out. Tourists are not encouraged to visit. A Canadian engineer, working on Java, said that a building on his mine site was used to confine natives, deemed communists, after a roundup in 1964. They were left to die without food or water. Guards prevented a breakout. Inside, the natives resorted to cannibalism.

Nov. 21 Singapore

My 6 a.m. local flight from Denpasar via Jakarta to Singapore was delayed, because the front door on the DC-10 to the passenger cabin was unlocked, but would not open. By the time the door was opened and closed, a group of senior citizens from California and Oregon missed their connecting flight from Jakarta to the U.S. The group, mostly dentists, was bused to the airport at Denpasar at 4 a.m., where there was no restaurant, and the little bits of sandwiches, served after we took off hours later, vanished quickly.

As we flew from Jakarta toward Singapore the sun was shining, but black clouds hung over the city ahead. Thunder and lightning closed around the plane during a very rough approach. Then we circled through the weather front and broke into the sunshine for a smooth landing.

Nov. 25 Singapore

In Singapore, two fellow travelers from my flight on Garuda and I shared a cab to the Intercontinental, where we found the room rates had tripled since *The Budget Traveler's Asia* was published. It was then 9 p.m. Raffles Hotel is the most famous, but that kind of picturesque architecture is being replaced by a lot of Los Angeles-type modern buildings. We called around and went to a Chinese hotel, where the grandfather slept in the corridor. The two pairs of slippers under my bed led me to believe that some of the family had vacated the room while my luggage was carried upstairs.

It was a grand old house set in lawns with vast hallways and high ceilings, shuttered windows, grillwork, and balconies. Looking out of my Somerset Maugham-era room across the trees, I saw smart, hi-rise buildings, topped by television towers.

Nov 26 Bangkok, Thailand

Coming back from Singapore on the train, some native men somehow boarded the train, and did not wait for it to reach the station. Entering the car, they removed ceiling panels, as well as panels below the washstands which stood in the open at the end of the car. From behind these panels they removed paper parcels, replaced the panels, and dropped off the moving train, as it slowly

approached the outskirts of the city. Passengers watched them, but no one said a word.

Nov. 27 Bangkok, Thailand

A German businessman who travels frequently in Asia suggested trying cheap Chinese hotels in Bangkok for cleanliness, price and availability. There's usually a Chinese restaurant on the first floor of a building—and in this climate the folding doors will be pushed back revealing the whole floor during the day. Among the tables will be a stairway leading to the hotel above.

However, I went back to the hotel I found on my first time through town, which is right around the corner from the luxurious Orient Hotel. I slip over to the Orient Hotel in the mornings and enjoy a grand breakfast on the terrace overlooking the river.

I had planned to try another selection from *The Budget Traveler's Asia*, but I arrived to find the lobby full of Australian students who had no reservations either. They and their backpacks were spread around the shabby lobby. Over the desk there were signs forbidding all sorts of activities by guests at the hotel, a sure sign that the hotel is the pits. I opted not to even try to stay there.

The price of breakfast on the River Terrace of the Orient Hotel has risen from \$4.50 to \$5.50 (U.S.) in the past month. Such extravagance is balanced by cheap Thai meals for lunch and dinner. I find these served along the streets, in alleys, and in shanties on vacant lots.

In these, a cook stands over a portable stove. Customers choose which morsels they want. These tiny kitchens produce meat soup, or meat and

vegetables on noodles or rice. Some cooks work mostly with pork or seafood. Others with beef, duck or chicken. Fried chicken pieces are also for sale from sidewalk frying pans. Your pay for items chosen. Chicken feet are the cheapest.

Decor for these restaurants is spartan. Formica kitchen tables with stools or chairs around them are inches away from traffic. An 8 baht lunch (40 cents U.S.) may go to 10 baht (50 cents U.S.) if the restaurant is actually off the sidewalk and under the shelter of a building.

The food is displayed and cooked in a glass-sided cart. It is ready, needing only to be combined as the customer chooses. A dipper of soup stock is used to heat the noodles, and the meal is served. It's very good.

For dessert, there are other stalls selling pineapple, papaya, watermelon, jackfruit, and other fruit that I don't recognize. The fruit you select is cut up and slipped into a cellophane bag. Bags of fruit are sold with a large toothpick and cost about 10 cents (U.S.)

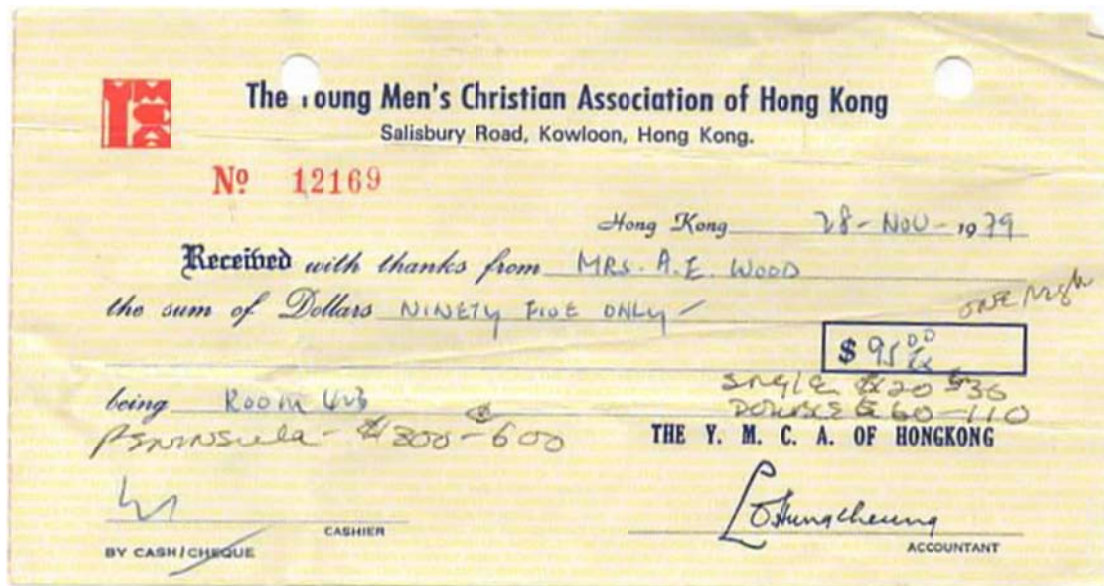
The food here is bountiful, varied, and cheap. The major danger in eating in these street places is keeping out of the way of pedestrians.

Nov. 28 Hong Kong

It's harder to get a room at the Y.M.C.A Hotel than at the Peninsula, its luxurious neighbor on Salisbury Road right in the heart of Kowloon. Money talks at the posh hotel. The Y is so famous as a good deal for price and location that people stand by at the check-in counter in the morning, hoping for a cancellation. Reading about this in my budget guide, I called ahead from Bangkok to make a reservation. Two businessmen from Alabama arrived together as I was checking



in. One had a reservation at the Y, the other at the luxurious Peninsula nearby. When the latter saw the room his colleague had been given at the Y with twin beds, television and private bath, he begged to share it.



Nov. 30 Hong Kong

These are the books I started out with: *The Budget Traveler's Asia*; *Fodor's India*; *Life on the Mississippi*; *Wuthering Heights*; *Jane Eyre*; *The Eustace Diamonds*; *The Portable Hawthorne*; *The Adventures of Huck Finn*; *Persuasion*; and *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*. They were given away as I read them to lighten my luggage.

Somerset Maugham had a book bag along on all his travels. Air travel now makes that sort of weight impractical. My tote bag with a sturdy wood-enforced bottom and wheels had space for maps, schedules and books to be read and then discarded.



Hung Hom Station to peninsula hotel hong kong

Walk 2.6 km, 35 min

The route I took from the Hung Hom Station (formerly the Kowloon station) to the Salisbury Y.M.C.A. which is still located near the expensive Peninsula Hotel



Notes from Ann: The Y.M.C.A. is across the street from the elegant Peninsula Hotel.

Now it is called the Salisbury-Y.M.C.A. and looks even more terrific and may have been remodeled or even moved recently. It would still be a great place to go back to.

The only television I've seen in two and a half months was a "Kojak" re-run in Indonesia. Newspapers were past their prime when I read them. Major U.S. stories were a paragraph or two on the back page of an English paper. *The Bangkok Post* had a big story reporting, "Famous author Deborah Davis checks into the Orient Hotel." I saw a story in *The Asian Wall Street Journal* several days later that she was on her way to interview the Dalai Lama.

*The Asian Wall Street Journal* is available many places that *The International Herald Tribune* is not. Business people seem to buy it, but American tourists seem to leave their worries about news in limbo. They are always open to discussing shopping, but not politics, foreign or domestic.

The modern nomads are a colorful, zany mixture of jeans-clad wanderers. Traces of old colonial days are found in cemeteries where wives, children, and husbands lie under headstones that tell heartbreaking stories of lives ended, sometimes suddenly, in a foreign land. Travelers now seem to wear several faces: the bland one of the tourist going after pictures to show back home, the serene one of the seeker of truth from some guru, or the haunted one of a seeker of drugs.

The business breed is spreading. One young man, who was born and grew up on a rubber plantation in Malaysia, sat on the train to Kuala Lumpur. He was returning for a few months to make contacts that would help him with a job application in Akron, Ohio.

Riding on a local train from Kowloon through the New Territories, the route was lined with buildings. The buildings are hives of activity. Many are where “made in China” clothes are manufactured. Then, gradually, the apartment buildings and city life fade and small farms appear. At a station where I was lost, a young man gave me directions to the Chinese border, warning that there was nothing to see there, except the mountains beyond.

“You don’t see the people or their culture,” he said. He was right. The distant mountains were hazy.

Dec. 7 Honolulu

This is my first time in Hawaii, and it’s odd to be here on the anniversary of the Japanese bombing. There are a lot of Japanese tourists, easy to spot,

because many wear the white cotton and brimmed hat that my balding uncle used to wear playing tennis.

The Korean Air Lines ticket included a stop in Saigon, but my funds are running low, so all I saw was the airport. Koreans boarding the plane carried an amazing amount of luggage. One man coming down an escalator had a package about 2' by 2' by 2' balanced so precariously on his head that he almost tipped over backward.

The Waikiki Grand Hotel fits my diminishing budget, which is remarkable for such a popular tourist town. I called from the airport to make a reservation. I've moved several times from the back of the hotel toward the front to better rooms, as occupants left. Now I have a view. The hotel is at the end of the beach with a park and Diamond Head beyond. It's six blocks along the beach to the big hotels and a meal. The huge size of restaurant servings is incredible and may account for the size of Hawaiians.

After a week of sun, sand, and R and R, I will head back to Washington and be there for Christmas. Judy showed my stories to Livingston Biddle at the National Endowment. She thinks he said he would have some quarterly editors write critiques, but the talk was vague, government-speak. She considered his comments to be standard English professor criticisms, saying the stories were 'really' novels and should be accordingly expanded. The advice such people give if presented with a novel, is that the work is really a short story.

Judy is known for her charm and wit, and he may have agreed to the appointment, just for the pleasure of her company. Also, he seemed to think that it was her writing she wanted to discuss. Well into their conversation, she had to

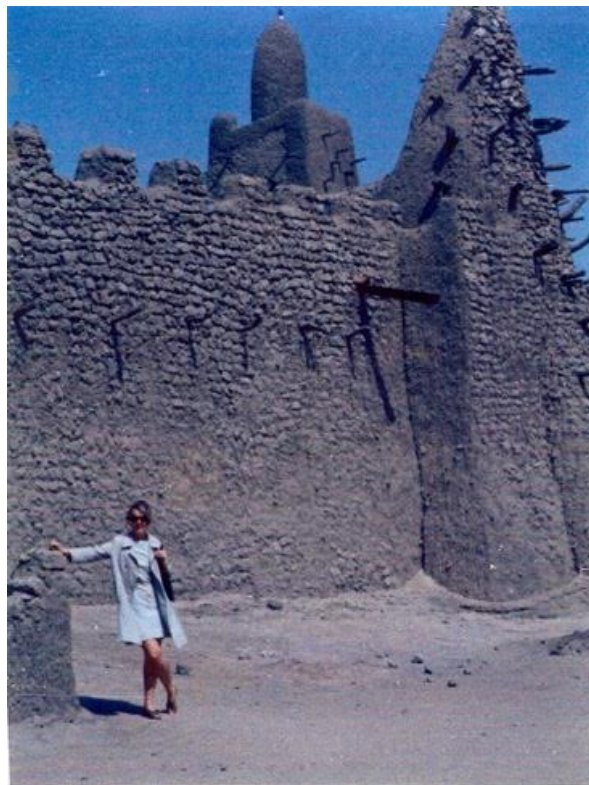
point out the manuscript on his desk said clearly, “FIVE SHORT STORIES BY ANN WOOD.”

I am considering other lines of work.

## About the Author

Her grandfather emigrated from Canada and was editor of two Illinois papers: first, *The Canton Daily Register*, and then, *The Lake Forest News*. Her father began as a stringer for *The Chicago Tribune* while in college, and retired as chairman of the Tribune Company. Ann began as a copy girl in the newsroom of *The Washington Post*, and was soon promoted to the lofty position of ‘head copy boy.’ At *The Washington Evening Star*, she wrote about parties and features, before joining *The New York Daily News*’ Washington bureau.

Ann traveled before and after to interesting and exotic locations and wrote about her travels:



Ann is posed in front of the big downtown mosque in Timbuktu, Mali, Africa.



Kennedy Center dedication (L to R)  
Leonard Bernstein, Roger Stevens, Jackie Onassis, Ann Wood



DAILY NEWS, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1978



T-shirt fad has hit Havana, too—with nationalistic tings, of course, see left. Movie posters are popular in Cuba. Bottom left is poster for "Doctor Dolittle"; bottom right is one for Alfred Hitchcock's "Marnie."



News photo by Jim Corbett

## For Havana shoppers it's long time no spree

By ANN WOOD

**H**AVANA—My sister, Janet, already had a box of cigars and wanted no more rum, so for her birthday during an eight-day trip to Cuba I gave her a Cuba T-shirt, some movie posters, a book for a young friend, and bought her dinner. As companion and translator during the trip she deserved the best, and in Cuba, that's it.

Tourists accustomed to Fifth Avenue shops and who go abroad to window shop for luxuries, even if they don't buy them, will miss that pleasure in Cuba. The plush rooms at the Havana Libre, once known as the Havana Hilton, are clean and in remarkably good condition, considering they were furnished just before the revolution. The vast shops off the tropical lobby are not.

One side of the hotel, with black leaping ganchos painted on the glass walls, is closed with plywood replacing a broken plate glass door.

There's a souvenir shop with ashtrays, jewelry, matchstick figures, shell mosaics—horrible tourist junk. Janet refused the offer of an animal born with bird feathers and shells dangling from it. The antique shop had little merchandise, mostly old glasses. The perfume and fragrance also had little stock and few customers. Cubans are not welcome at the tourist hotels unless they are registered guests and a guest card is needed to get into the coffee shop. The private dining rooms on the mezzanine are used for tourist group dining.

Each big hotel also has a discount shop for tourists, featuring cigars, rum, T-shirts and ugly, poorly made purses. That's where the action is. Russian tourists, Czechs, and Americans, who are now permitted to import \$100 of Cuban merchandise into the U.S.

Non-smoking Americans may find that hard to do. It is possible, however, to spend money—and a lot of it—in a luxury restaurant. Food, clothing and gasoline are strictly rationed, because so many consumer goods are in short supply due to the U.S. ban on trade with Cuba. There are new Chevrolet taxis made in Argentina, but there is no junk food. None.

Cubans shop in bleak supermarkets where a major decision in a downtown one was between row after row of yellow soap or row after row of green soap. There were several types of fish, no meat to be seen, and one type of rice, sugar, and baby food displayed. There were bananas, turnips, onions and potatoes sold in the market, and in an open air market in the parking lot there were several other vegetables, including cabbages. Sixty people, women and old men were waiting in line here. Bags of hard candy were

kept inside in the market in boxes next to the cashier's knees at though they were the most valuable item in the store, and were the only sweets aside from ice cream that seemed to be available in sugar-growing Cuba.

But although supplies are short, dining out is a popular recreation for Cubans as well as tourists. It gives Cubans something to spend their money on when there isn't anything else, and it absorbs the tourist hard currency. And old-world style and courtesy are still to be found in restaurant service, although variety may not.

Dr. and Mrs. John Walsh and six friends paid about \$20 apiece for a lobster lunch at La Florida, a Hemingway hangout and prime tourist favorite. But at another Hemingway hangout in the seaside village of Cojimar, Janet, Monica Healy, and I were offered a menu with cherna cooked eight ways listed. There was also paella, usually made with lobster, shrimp, squid and cherna, a native fish, but only cherna was available that day, so we decided to have it grilled.

The 10 Americans who run the U.S. interest office in the old embassy eat lunch in the building because officially they are in limbo. They are not tourists and so can't change dollars for pesos to spend that way. And in the embassy world, they are a minor office of the Swiss Embassy, although they work in several floors of the old American embassy.

Lunch the day we dropped in on them was a brown bag sandwich for the political officer and his wife, who also works there. Two other employees were sharing cold boiled crayfish, papaya chunks, hard boiled eggs and a can of Norwegian sardines.

One evening we went to a movie to see a French film, "El Matrimonio." It was half over, and the manager warned us we couldn't see the beginning. The manager told us that the movie posters we had asked about were available at a theater down the street, which would close at 11 p.m., so we only saw five minutes of the movie. He escorted us three blocks to the other theater with his flashlight—no small service on the pothole ridden Havana sidewalks. Delightful Cuban posters are produced for foreign as well as domestic films, but are not available at every theater. We bought 10, including one for Alfred Hitchcock's "Marnie," and for "Doctor Dolittle" with Rex Harrison.

At the Havana airport upon our departure Janet received a gift glass from the bartender after she negotiated adjustments for her tale that members of our group had protested during a four-hour wait for our plane. The tourist official who she told earlier that Cuba's tourism facilities were 25 years out of date may not have been charmed by her, but ordinary folk liked her line.

# Girls who took a holiday on Trust

HOW DOES this sound for your next summer holiday? First, pay £400 cash, in advance. Then travel at your own expense from the United States to Lynton in North Devon and live for three weeks in a converted farm house on top of a 700-foot hill with no transport into town after dark.

Sleep on bunks. Do your own housekeeping and cooking, with tinned rhubarb a staple. By day, clear trees and shift about

10 tons of rock to rebuild an 18th-century lime-kiln, rattle off for cross-country trips in a van or listen to interminable speeches by visiting bureaucrats. At night, watch conservation films five evenings in a row.

This curious vacation was arranged by the National Trust in collaboration with Earthwatch, an American organisation which sponsors

scientific research projects all over the world. An advertisement offering a chance to take part in "environmental assessment, natural history and landscape improvement" on the supposedly beautiful North Devon coast lured exactly three Americans, who paid £250 a day for the privilege.

Among them was Ann Wood, an intrepid Washington columnist for the New York Daily News.

"In a very short time we were exhausted and having a miserable time," Ann told me. "One of the girls, an art student assigned to Exmoor by her college, got extremely depressed. The two men were like rabbits caged with lions. When we were not doing the backbreaking labour of cutting down trees and moving dirt and rocks, we were swept off on a frenzy of sightseeing to National Trust properties."

"The speeches we sat through had an Alice in Wonderland aura to them. One speaker told us to go and observe people on the beaches, to see what tourists really do without actually asking them. The thought that we were paying 31 dollars a day to listen to such drivel began to recur frequently."

After five days we were in a mutinous rage. We telephoned Lawrence Rich, Appeals Secretary of the National Trust in London, and he spent a day with his shirt off helping us clear trees. Then he went straight back to London to take his young son to the movies.

"Trust officials were totally perplexed about our complaints and burnt up the telephone wires talking to each other. In the end, bad manners and foul language were the last desperate remedy we tried, and it worked. After a telephone conversation blue with words learned in years spent around newspaper offices, Mr Rich's attention was finally captured. Our team leader, an inflexible English schoolteacher, was removed and the programme changed to conform more closely to the one we had been given before we left the U.S."

The strain on British and American nerves evidently was considerable. A meeting with a National Trust executive at Saltram House, headquarters for Devon and Cornwall, ended in "coffee and insults". And a scheduled meeting with the donor of Dunster Castle, a Lt-Col Luttrell, never took place.

"One reason given me for that omission was that since donating his castle to the

trust, who still has an apartment there, is restricted to certain areas and is not allowed to use the front stairs," Ann said. "That certainly might make the Trust bureaucrats the wrong people to ask him a favour."

## Why Castro lives . . .

AMERICAN gangsters, who used to cultivate the art of privacy, are coming to fancy themselves as memoirists. The latest one to burst into print is Charles Crimaldi, a hitman or professional killer for the Chicago underworld for more than 30 years.

Crimaldi, very much the new breed of assassin in neatly pressed sports clothes and the passionless manner of an airline reservations clerk, worked for Sam de Stefano, one of the kingspins of organised crime in Chicago.

He murdered about 30 people, mostly businessmen who welched on loans, then, out of disgust with the growing interest by the crime syndicate in heroin traffic, turned informer for the United States government. De Stefano was executed with a shotgun in his garage a few months ago and there is a \$50,000-dollar contract out on Crimaldi's life.

His story, told by a former United States Intelligence officer, John Edgar, is published this week in a book called Crimaldi: Confessions of a Killer. In his book, Crimaldi claims that "Teamsters' Union leader Jimmy Hoffa, Chicago underworld leader Sam Giancana and West Coast gangster John Roselli, were all killed by the same man from the Central Intelligence Agency, acting on his own, to wipe out all traces of the underworld's involvement in CIA schemes to murder Fidel Castro."

"Jimmy Hoffa was apparently the intermediary when the CIA brokers the Chicago syndicate into the plots on Castro's life," John Edgar

2-1 EVENING STANDARD, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1978



## Jeremy Campbell's Washi



Below are photos from Ann's Earthwatch expedition. A girl from Wenatchee, Washington holds the team's Earthwatch Project Leader. She had considerable backpacking and wilderness experience and is obviously very strong!



Ann now travels to and from work on her bike -- with her poodles. Pepper is pictured here anticipating their next trip.



Note from Ann:

*I used a tiny Minox camera during my travels and sent some films back to my friend Robert in the U.S., who took them to a place for developing, where most were ruined. Several more I took to Embassy Camera, located on Connecticut Avenue in Washington, D.C. Embassy Camera had done a lot of work for me, but they had to send the Minox film to New York, and the film nor photos ever came back.*

*This is why the diary is illustrated with so few photos and of such a mixture of quality.*

Ann is the author of:

- Where is Blandings Castle?  
in  
*P.G. Wodehouse*  
*A Centenary Celebration 1881–1981*  
James H. Heineman  
Donald R. Bensen  
Editors  
The Pierpont Morgan Library  
Oxford University Press
- Born-again British Railroads Run on Volunteers' Steam  
Smithsonian Magazine

# *Around the World in 450 Days*

## The Diary of Ann Wood's Zigzag Travels

