

May 30, 1962

Well, Big Ben has just struck twelve (bong, bong, bong..) or rather is striking twelve, and this has been quite a day for a traveler. First of all, the plane got in on time; I had managed to wrangle one of the two groups of three seats available for sleeping and had gotten a fair amount of sleep. All of this was good! In fact, I managed to work through very smoothly from being almost the last man off the plane to being about the tenth through Immigration, but I got a real setback, namely about 45 minutes while I waited to have my bags within the last ten brought in by eight different lorries from the plane. Went through Customs very easily and found Nobby waiting for me.

I had been stupid and left my razor in my big bag, so Nobby pulled off in a little residential area, I pulled out the razor and shaved, and we then went right down to the Show and stayed there, eating a very light lunch to add to the two cups of fruit juice I had gotten on the plane for breakfast, and finally left at about a quarter of six, Nobby bringing Vin and me both to the Mayfair Hotel. He dropped us off and went on and I hope he didn't know what was going to happen because they did not have any reservation for me at all. Finally, the desk clerk called around to a series of hotels and found a room available at the Grosvenor Hotel next to Victoria Station and that's where I am now. Eventually, Vin and I got Basil Balls by phone and at his suggestion tried the White's Hotel but to no avail, so we both came down here and registered me in. They will only give me this room for one night. It is approximately 30 feet long, 20 feet wide, with an 18 ft. ceiling. It overlooks the junction of Buckingham Palace Drive and, I believe, Grosvenor Place. There is a wash basin in the room and a 15 x 15 ft. bathroom next door that I can reach only by going out into the little lobby outside my room and back into the bathroom. I have the only key to the bathroom but on the outside it is numbered and looks just like the other rooms.

June 2 ?

I'm out on a Piccadilly-bura, if you remember what a Ginbura is. TV sure makes a difference. The movie houses here - it's about eight o'clock - most of them have large queues in front of them.

New Chevrolet in the automobile show-room here - £1980.

Here I am in Trafalgar Square - still daylight and I left my stereo camera back at the hotel. I will admit I didn't expect it to be this light at quarter after eight.

Nelson's monument, tall and black, pointing high in the sky above his four lion guards and two large fountains flanking it. Many people standing around doing nothing but watching, every once in a while a couple doing somewhat more than nothing.

Sure had a tough decision today. This was the Queen's birthday and she was reviewing the troops - it promised to be very colorful - but I came here to see the exhibition so I spent from 9:30 to 6:30 there.

Now in St. James Park. You'd expect pigeons here, maybe even ducks and swans, maybe geese, but in addition there are many birds singing in the bushes as I go by. The ducks don't all have clipped wings, either, three of them just went over head.

In the middle of the Park I find the Cake House, which lists:

Tea - 5 d., Coffee - 6 d., Cocoa, Bovril, Squash, Minerals - 10 d., Fresh Fruit Juice, Tomato Juice, Bread and Butter, Buns, Scones, and Hot Dogs. Listed also are sandwiches, being different from Hot Dogs, of course, Cheese, Cheese and Tomato, Egg and Tomato, Sardine, Salmon, Ham, Pork, Corned Beef - the most a sandwich costs is 9 d. but a Hot Dog is 1 s.

They list 19 different kinds of ducks and 5 different kinds of geese. This pond is really covered with them. I haven't counted that many kinds but there are sure a lot of kinds. There is a mother duck and three little baby ducks. I wish I had my camera, or rather by now I wish it were better light because all the way through is a great variety of flowers and trees - some of them pink, purple (some of these ducks are almost all black, just a little white - here are some almost all white with just a black head and a black stripe down the back. There go a couple of very big ducks with a string of four babies right behind them. There is a lawn between the path and the pond and a great many of the ducks and even some geese are waddling around or just lying on this lawn within two or three feet of you as you go by. They seem to know they are perfectly safe.

St. James Park has no gates but many of them, for instance Green Park, is fenced in and each gate tells what time it's closed and what time it's opened. Most of them are marked to be opened at 5 AM, but some are closed as early as 6 PM and as late at 10 PM. I am on a path right now going along side had a sign on its gate saying it would be closed at midnight - no problem, it is nine o'clock - and still very bright light.

Just ate a bite of supper at J. Lyons & Co. just off Picadilly Square. Got a beef potpie, for dessert I got something like Boston Cream Pie, and to drink I took a bottle of Schwep's lemonade. It's amazing what you get away from home with the same name on it - it's a little bit like the bitter lemon I've been drinking but much more fizzy and quite a bit diluted.

I'm in the Mayfair Hotel - came back in here the second night. They explained very carefully that they had my name down as a hyphenated one - Mead-Bradner - and that was the reason they hadn't been able to find it when I gave them the name Bradner the night before. I must admit it looked a little suspicious when the fellow at the desk showed me the entry in his reservation book and it was the very last one on the page. It was interesting to note also that he had no answer at all when I pointed out to him that his friend the night before had refused to show us the reservation book when we asked for it, stating he knew well everyone who had not yet registered in who had a reservation.

Sunday, Nobby picked me up about nine o'clock in the morning to spend the day driving north and east. First of all, we stopped a moment to put a drop of oil from his crankcase on my camera so as to make it operate properly. I am afraid some of the people around at the time may have thought us quite confused!

We went up into the area where a painter by the name of Constable (John) did quite a bit of his painting. I understand Mickey likes this man's paintings quite a bit. I took a few pictures of the various churches we went to. Pictures taken of the Dedham Parish Church called St. Mary's of Dedham; also in the Parish of Stratford, St. Mary's Church which was built by the Mors family between 1499 and 1530; picture at Stoke-by-Nayland, St. Mary's Church there. Took a picture of a workhouse built in 1619 in Stoke-by-Nayland and another of St. James of Nayland; this was taken in the town of Nayland. This church was built in the 15th century. All of these churches were the same general shape with a tall square tower at one end and the church proper stretching out in one direction from this tower, the major difference being only the fancy work on the top of the corners of the square tower. I have a number of pictures of the countryside, using both the stereo and the Mamiya, and finally a picture with the Mamiya of the sign in front of the place we ate dinner (George and the Dragon). I'll give you the name of the town later. I should remember it because I navigated while Nobby drove and took him cross-country where no roads were shown on the map in a part of the country he had never been. We hit the dinner spot right on the nose.

This is beautiful rolling country with flowers and shrubs everywhere. The country lanes are very often cut down several feet below the surrounding country and high hedges crowd in to the point that two English compacts can pass only if they practically stop and inch by, but the pavement is always extremely good. Nowhere did we see anything like a dirt road.

Monday morning - another sunny day and the sky is actually cloudless. I have concluded the sun always shines in England (there are people here that say my observations are not adequate).

Monday night - Just had dinner with Rus Milham, Al Isaac, and Allen Parritt at the Gatwick ~~(?)~~ Manor Inn. I ate escargots (snails) and Tournedos Rossini, a very delicious filet mignon, with asparagus, mushrooms, and what I would call "hair potatoes". This is supposed to be Turkish food. The place itself was built in 1253. (I have a little booklet that gives its history and several pictures.)

This evening was a mixture of business, reminiscing, and telling of travel experiences. We had a great discussion on the Common Market problem, ending up with the conclusion that the problems of New Zealand, for instance, should not influence England regarding going into the Common Market - New Zealand must stand on its own feet.