

England
1965

TRIP VI - 18 February 1965 - to Redhill and 23-24 February to Soest
Friday, 18 Feb. - MayFair Hotel, London. About quarter of eight
in the morning. TWA proved again it's the world's largest unscheduled
airline - we didn't get away from New York until an hour late and we
got into London just that same hour late. They had pre-assigned seats
for Graydon and me in row 27A and B, which meant zero elbow room. We
asked for some separation and they gave us A and C - that, of course,
kept those three open. The load was quite light, so just before we
went on the plane I asked if there was any chance of a window seat
for Graydon and he gave him one way up front, so that gave me a triple
and also gave Graydon a triple. During the flight we got together at
his seat once for close to an hour, I guess, talking about the general
situation at the company, but all the rest of the time I was either
sleeping or in the few minutes available I was eating. I told the
hostess to only wake me for food, so she didn't bother me when they
were drinking and she waited until everything was all ready to wake
me for my food. The three hostesses were quite pleasant girls but
they sure weren't well organized. I don't know how many times a load
of cups or something went on the floor. One of them had the job of
putting the cups in the holder above the drinking fountain. She
jammed them in upside down, making it almost impossible to get a cup
in case somebody wanted a drink of water.

Nobby met Graydon and me at the airport and brought us down to
the Mayfair Hotel, going a little bit out of his way to show Graydon
some of the city, but of course it was about midnight when we got to
the hotel. No problem with rooms - they had us both lined up with
a large room apiece.

My luck isn't running too well as far as the weather. This

morning there is a light, miserable rain so that rather than walking to the Victoria we are going to take a cab.

I am not doing very well by Graydon. Last night when we got off the plane of course I had both my bags with me and I went directly to the customs people, checked through and went out and was talking with Nobby while Graydon was waiting for his bag. It took considerable time for Graydon to come out. When we went to get in Nobby's car, Graydon commented that he thought it was unusual that he didn't have to go through a Customs declaration - he had apparently grabbed his bag and walked directly out. As nobody had stopped him we suggested we would just keep going - it would be too embarrassing for him to go back.

Sunday morning ^{25 Feb.} a little after 1:00 AM. Quite a bit has happened since I last worked on this Dictet. Graydon and I have had quite a day. I got him to get up before breakfast at 8:15 and in spite of the miserable, cold, spitting snow I talked him into walking down through Green Park watching the small scale Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, then over through St. James Park and the myriads of birds of all varieties. Here we had a little bit of argument with two geese who insisted that we had food for them, and when we explained that we hadn't come properly prepared they gave us a proper "what for". I think Graydon got a picture of me while I was taking this abuse.

Afterwards we walked on through the Government Complex and caught on to a tour group with a very chatty guide through the Houses of Commons. There were a lot more people going through the Houses today than when I went through with Ken and Dorothy. Of course, there is the added attraction of the aftermath of Winston Churchill's death. For instance, the Churchill Arch going into the House of Commons - on one side of this arch now is an empty

pedestal, which is reserved for a statue of Winston Churchill. The Churchill Arch was named after him when he ruled that the arch should be left standing although it was battered and chipped by the blast that destroyed the House of Commons Chamber. Most of that part of the building had been rebuilt and is, therefore, quite clean and new looking. This one arch, however, certainly shows the wear and tear it has been given. This pedestal must remain empty for ten years, according to precedent (and I believe law) which specifies that no statue shall be erected in this building for ten years after the death of the person involved. And then, of course, of considerable interest was the Westminster Hall where his body lay in state. This Hall is a great, cold, unfurnished room normally. It has the largest wooden roof structure with no supporting columns in the world, reportedly. It is used for many state occasions, at which time it is sometimes carpeted completely, with the walls lined with tables of refreshments, and then sometimes, as in Churchill's funeral, it is used for lying in state. There are several brass plaques on the floor which show the location where various people's bodies were exhibited.

As we went through the building, this particular guide was far more graphic than the one previously. He pointed to the specific seat where Lord Hume sits and Wilson, and so forth. He went through possible procedures, such as the type of hearings that the House of Lords participate in - it is the highest court in the land and therefore it must make final judgment on appeal on many types of cases. He described in great detail just how visitors could apply for permission to observe the proceedings in the two Chambers; even stopped at one picture and described the battle and its background - it was Cromwell's fight with the Crown supporters during which a

great fortune in gold and jewels disappeared. He told us the story about the present owner of the land and the problem he is having today of so many people coming in at night to dig in his land to try to find this treasure. He even offered, with a twinkle in his eye, to sell a shovel to anybody who wanted to join the night-time diggers. He suggested they hurry, however, because the owner was going to buy some dogs to keep people out.

Graydon was continually impressed by the fact that this is not history, it is history in the making in the British Empire.

After this we went over to Westminster Abbey and went pretty much through it. Again I tried to take some pictures under very poor light conditions but at that particular time it was sort of bright outdoors, so maybe I managed to pick up a couple more representative scenes.

By this time it was after twelve-thirty so we decided to go back to the hotel because we might have a message there, so I talked Graydon into going back by way of Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus so we could see these areas in the daytime. It was pretty cold and chilly, with the wind blowing quite hard, so we were quite cooled off by the time we got to the hotel, but the lunch in the hotel gave us a chance to warm up.

No sooner had I got to my room after lunch than Basil called to suggest the possibilities of the evening. I talked to Graydon and called back and suggested that he bring Margaret and all four of us go out to dinner together. With that arrangement, Graydon and I decided to go off to the British Museum. Again I was able to walk directly there (after having fairly carefully studied the map). It was about 3:30 when we got in the Museum and it closes at 5:00. In that hour and a half we managed to go fairly thoroughly through

the Egyptian Sculpture gallery, the Greco-Roman room, the Greek Parthenon exhibit in the Duveen Gallery, the Assyrian Saloon, quite rapidly through the 2nd floor Egyptian Gallery and Greek and Roman Vase rooms. This is a fantastic museum. For instance, on the Parthenon exhibit (Elgin Marbles^W) they have quite a large percentage of the frieze and the pediment sculpture, and many times they make mention of the actual location in another museum of a missing head or arm or something. I couldn't get Graydon to walk home from the Museum, so we took a taxi and this time I got the correct change from the pocket and paid him a reasonable tip in addition to the fare.

After an extended tea (enforced because no liquor was being served when we first arrived) which turned into an opportunity for Graydon to have a couple of drinks, we discussed all sorts of problems and other interesting items. We broke up just in time to prepare to meet Basil and Margaret with whom we went to Rules on Maiden Lane in London Town. It was established in 1798. We were told by the bar tender it was the first oyster house in London. We all ate the specialty of the house which was a sort of stew made from hare - can't remember what the actual name was - but it was an adjective ahead of the word hare. (Jug Hare was the name.)

As we broke up tonight and I came to my room, Graydon allowed as how he had had a great time and was certainly thankful I had paid the taxi fares because he didn't figure he would be able to do it in the currency of the realm - too complicated. I'm pretty proud of myself. I was able to pay on the way back to the hotel also, but I did make a mistake on the way over to the Rules place. I looked at the meter and paid the guy the meter plus a shilling tip. Unfortunately I didn't know at that time that the cab charges a sixpence extra for each extra passenger. I should have realized

this from the fare back from the British Museum, because thinking back he asked for sixpence more than I thought the meter showed but I assumed that the meter flipped over after I had looked at it, so Basil had to give the fellow another shilling/sixpence. From the cab driver on the way back to the hotel here I got two florin pieces, appreciably different in design, so I stashed them away to avoid any chance of spending them while I am here. I'll spend all of the two-shilling pieces I get but a florin piece I'd like to hang onto for a while, since it is not listed as an official coin at the present time. I'm intrigued that the Dutch use the letter f for their Dutch guilder because it originally was called a florin and had the same value as the two-shilling piece. There were two strongly competitive world trade organizations that made an attempt to bring their currencies onto a common basis at one time.

Sunday evening, about 7:30. Nobby picked Graydon and me up at about ten o'clock this morning and we headed out west from London, criss-crossing the Thames to Marlow where we made reservations for lunch at the Compleat Angler, and then went on down to Henley, where the Henley regattas are held, and back for lunch. There were moderately heavy snow flurries in the morning during breakfast, but it cleared up a little bit and only snowed again while we were eating lunch. There were a few moments of the sun breaking through during the day, but it was very chilly keeping down in the order of 2 or 3°C. Incidentally, the British weather forecast talk about temperature in terms of Celsius as a standard thing now; occasionally they will use Fahrenheit also but always Celsius.

After a very delightful lunch, Nobby gave me the map and I started directing them back through the country, hunting around for small roads and isolated towns, so that Graydon could see what rural England looked like. Finally, after quite a bit of driving, we came

to Ferratt (?) where we stopped briefly to take pictures and look at the outside and also the inside of a church built in the Norman times. This was an interesting church since it had no bell tower of the conventional castellated top, so we thought it might be a fairly old one and sure enough, it was. It was quite interesting to note inside the unlit, and therefore very dark, church was an organ and quite well kept furniture. One could see why, because on the walls all around were plaques, many of them brass, telling about memorial funds left in honor of various people. Apparently this town is close enough to London, and not too far off main highways, so that fairly well-to-do people live in the neighborhood. It wasn't obvious from the houses around but it certainly seemed pretty obvious from the plaques on the wall.

I successfully steered Nobby on home, or rather back here to the Mayfair, where we sat and had normal Tea, which consists of many small sandwiches, a great pot of tea that was so strong it looked like coffee and needed at least three lumps of sugar for me, and finishing up with all sorts of nice French pastry - I guess you are only supposed to select one of the French pastries, but I had to ask for two.

Monday morning (Feb. 22) - Getting all set to check out of the hotel and doing a little homework on exchange rates so that I can be reasonably observant when I am paying the cashier.

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Gosh, I was just listening to the tape - it was Monday morning and now it is Tuesday evening!

I did fairly well on my check out except that the Mayfair bill amounted to £6/11/0 per day, I think it was, and that added up to a big figure.

Anyhow, Graydon also checked out and I had to lend him some English

(sealed hands)

Well, I lost again by my poor memory. Somehow I've got to remember that this London Airport so-called Duty-Free Shopping Center on the trans-Atlantic flights has almost nothing. Of course they don't have that Sony radio, so I'm in trouble. Will have to wait for the next trip, I guess. Should have gotten it in Amsterdam and ^{have} tried to work out the method of getting through the customs picture. I'm sure there is one.

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Well, on board the Pan Am Clipper. We've been out about almost two hours now. I just readjusted the gain on this thing - tried to cut down the background noise. I slept about an hour already. Woke up just in time for the food - oh, I guess I had about fifteen minutes of reading before they showed up. Have been watching the American across the aisle. In spite of the rules and regulations that say any liquor brought aboard must be left sealed until after you leave the plane, he has been struggling like anything to try to get a bottle open over there. As far as I can see he has been unsuccessful in that he put the corkscrew in too short a distance and broke the cork off down inside. I guess he has finally given up and is going to follow the law, so long as he has no alternative.

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Somewhat amusing situation - the purser was coming down the aisle - there were several people standing and he had to elbow his way through. As he passed two or three people he stopped and looked back toward several of us back here and ^{quite loudly} said/that we would be having sandwiches in maybe half an hour and that he would be around taking orders for highballs and cocktails in maybe ten or fifteen minutes. Peering right over his shoulder and actually the closest person to him was a nun who observed this comment with no expression on her face at all.

Interesting sight down there - the ocean is pretty well frozen over but as we approach the shores of Nova Scotia you can see where it has been melting and starting to break up. I'll see if I can get a picture of it.

We are going very quietly right now - almost drifting. We are right in the clouds even though I guess we are still around 30,000 ft. alt. and every now and then we hit a pretty big bump, so they have slacked way off on the engines, even though we are still forty-five minutes or so out of Boston. A little while ago the purser came through and explained that it has been snowing for a long time in Detroit and they couldn't go on - that it was still OK in Boston but that the Detroit passengers would have to get off in Boston and go on on the first available flight - whatever that means.
