

## Persian Expedition with Ruth Bramley 1963

Friday July 12th 1963

Left Jersey airport about 12.15. Channel TV took pictures of us boarding the aircraft; it should be shown on news tonight. Said goodbye to Dodo, Minko, Sue and Simon and Lalondes who have been staying at St.Brelades. Landed Cherbourg about 12.45, very easy trip. Cleared customs without any trouble, just 200 fags and whiskey to declare.

Set out through the Normandy countryside, very rural, mainly Heinz 57 cows. Passed through Bayeaux (note to see tapestry on return). Caen. here the traffic direction is terrible and we got lost, the sort of festival being held. Lisieux and Evreux. Through valley of Risle; country gradually changing to wheat, corn, some maize but badly in need of weed killers. Rocleboise- lovely view of Seine. Nantes; very good roads, got onto motorway towards Paris. Passed through forests near Versailles; must have been hunting ground of Louis XV 111 years ago, with wild herds of deer.

Versailles. Had some trouble finding the municipal camping ground, gendarmes very helpful. Camp very crowded but accessible to all facilities, even H2O. Tickets 3.60 for car and two people. Cooked meal on temperamental stove; beans, sausage and eggs. Just experimenting with everything. Everyone here seems well organized.

Saturday 13th July. Versailles

8.30 Left camp after English breakfast. Toilets rather primitive, i.e. Greek style. Went down Avenue de Paris, flanked by trees to the Palace of Versailles, with guided gates and an impressive rise to a figure of Louis XIV on his charger. We wandered around the outside and grounds ( open at 10 am) and were impressed by the layout of the gardens. The Palace was designed by Charles Le Brun and I think the gardens were partly designed by him as well. There were a series of geometric forms, cones of small trees bordering the path and an amazing long distant view of a rectangular lake stretching from the fountains in front of the Palace as far as the eye could see, bordered by silver woods, the same that Watteau painted so feelingly. We departed along a good motorway to Fontainebleau, along forests that must have once covered this part of France.

Passed through Sens; the country undulating in arable agricultural curves. Stopped by roadside before Trees for lunch. Took photos of poppies and cornflowers which adorn this road for hundreds of miles. Chaumont was a town on a hill with an impressive 3-tier viaduct. Rather nice sloping roofs. Langres; famous for its basketry. An experimental willow farm helps the industry. (outside Langres). We ran into heavy rain by Lure, and it continued for the rest of our journey. The stuff on the roof rack got a bit wet, mainly bedding, so we decided to make for the Youth Hostel in Basle.

Basle. Easy frontier, just showed our passports. Stopped at city information. Found YH, cost 2.80 Swiss francs for night (for 2). No showers but very good cooking facilities in kitchen. Met Egyptian boy studying in German and group of Germans who sang with a guitar to our vegetable curry. Retired early.

Sunday 14th July Basle

Left YH after some fuss with warden about leaving beds tidy, very fussy. Found zoo and wandered around, well spread out, lovely lioness and cubs. Moved leisurely along route to Zurich. Followed Rhine valley to Brugg and Baden, lovely Swiss houses eh route. Went into Zurich but being Sunday, everything was closed. Found very nice camping site about 5 miles out, on edge of Lake Zurich; lovely sunny afternoon with view over lake to mountains we are to cross tomorrow. Ruth is suffering from bites, received at French camp. Spent the afternoon reading and lazing in the sun. Ruth spent a disturbed evening, trying to be sick but not able to. Rather cold night.

Monday 15th July

Left camping site and went to Zurich again to buy films; not successful but Ruth bought a close-up lens and I bought a watch, just under 5 pounds. Lovely long ascent into mountains through Pfoikou and Sargans. Sargans is famous for iron ore mines. Went through Liechtenstein (FL no plate), over River Rhine. Passed through Swiss/Austrian customs without any hitch and again began mountainous ascent to Arlberg Pass. Stopped for lunch in field en route; heaps of grasshoppers. Took photos of cows while waiting for car engine too cool. Gradually climbed to Arlberg Pass (5,912 ft.), round hairpin bends, with magnificent scenery. The mountains in this area are capped with snowing seem unrealistic to the heat below (95 F). Descended cautiously, stopped to photo wild flowers. Passed Wiesburg Castle, traffic quite thick and continuous, but since everyone drives at a good speed, there are no hold-ups. Collected water for radiator from River Ibun, which we followed almost to Innsbruck. Deposited our tent at campsite outside Innsbruck, then went in search of food, which we found at a rather posh restaurant on the main street, called Maria Theresa. Expensive (8 /- each) but excellent service with ham and eggs cooked well, so we had no cause to grumble. Retired in light flanked by mountains and many campers.

Tuesday 16th July

Left camp 7.30. stopped for petrol and continued up the mountainous roads to Brenner. Impressive bridge being built across the mountainside for new autobahn, Innsbruck to Brenner. Stopped for an hour getting through Brenner Pass. There were streams of cars and the pass itself was a thriving tourist community. First inkling of Italians, the sooner we get out the better, I feel. Bought petrol coupons, stopped for breakfast near roadside, had another long hold-up at level-crossing. We then began a series of mountain zig-zags with some of the most impressive scenery of the trip so far.

Dobbiaccio, mountain town more Austrian than Italian. Passed over Cimabanche Pass with a magnificent view of the Durrenstein Drei Zinnia and Monte Cristallo mountains, snow-capped and very majestic, I took photos of both. Cortina, interesting town in the Dolomites, huge ski jump used in the Winter Olympics. Followed down industrial valley to Vittorio-Veneto, the roads wound in and out from the mountains to the plain, which had all the appearance of Greece, vines, maize and peach orchards. After Treviso, we branched off for Venice across a causeway. We could only go so far because all transport around Venice is on canals. left for coast, towards Trieste.



Came to Lido di Jesolo, a real tourist spot mainly consisting of hotels, cafes and tourist shops; glassware, scarves, and bags being the main features. Found camp that was meant to be on the sea but we were so disgusted that we never went down to it. Picked tent next to a much larger and superior one, next to an aggressive German who looked like a left-over from the Nazi regime who wouldn't move his car for us. Decided to stay one night instead of two; washing and toilet facilities shocking, rather cramped night.

Wednesday 17th July

Bought some scarves and Ruth a glass vase in Lido di Jesolo. left about 8.40 eventually and continued along by plants; sugar beet, maize, vines and melons. Rather swampy land followed to Cervignano-del-Friuli. stopped by roadside at sea and I had a bathe. Wonderful warm water.

Trieste. Bought petrol and left quickly; Yugoslav customs quite decent, considering we hadn't got entry or exit cards. Visited Grotto of Postonia, an elaborate tourist attraction.(Discovered in 1818, 24 km long but only 5km open to the public. Used by Germans during WW2 as a petrol store, blown up by Yugoslav partisans. Lower part 200 metres stalactites are hollow, stalagmites not. Takes 3 - 30 years to complete one meter. Proteus type fish i.e. with feet, found in some pools). Endless miles of caves. We must have walked about 2 miles and rode about 10 km by train. We had to hire capes because of the cold. Afterwards had delicious fried chicken in a cafe with Yugoslav music playing in the background. Followed forested road to Ljubljana. Slight trouble finding camp but well worth it; lovely open field and fairly good facilities.

Thursday 18th July

Left the riverside camp, one of the nicest we have come across; cost about 7/6 for all of us. Found way out to Zagreb, about 90 miles from Ljubljana. Fairly sinuous (A.A.term) road to Zagreb, undulating (another) and then broadening out onto a monotonous plain for about 280 miles. main features purely agricultural, fertile ground: sunflowers, wheat, potatoes, SB harvesting in progress, large wheat stalks tied in stacks, beans and hops in a few places. We stopped at odd intervals along the route to relieve the monotony. 300 miles on the same road is just unbearable, especially with no traffic hardly and the same unending plain. We got rather worried when signs saying "petrol", turned out to be false and we were practically down to our last gallon when we found a petrol station. We had to wait while an oil tanker replenished the ever diminishing supply of "super" petrol. It is like coming to an oasis after that road. Continued taking alternate photos and snacks to let the engine cool down. Temperature unto 100 F in car so must have been more outside.

Road led past airport into Belgrade. Very modern style buildings on road in, obviously built in the last 2 years, no road signs. Found camp on wooded hill above Belgrade; rather silvan signs in woods to WCs etc: We followed two French cars obviously in pursuit of the camp, who were in turn following a Yugoslav car which was leading us a merry dance around the woods.Lovely view over Belgrade. had some rather boisterous Hungarians next door. Little man who thought we might be interested in Jute Box, compered we supposed.

Friday 19th July

Got up around 5 am but didn't leave camp until about 7.45. Sent off telegram to AA for 2 ignitions for the car, to be forwarded to Istanbul. Saw shop selling hats which in fact delayed us by 2 hours because they also had wooden ornaments etc; bought hat and wooden pipe, beautifully carved. had to change a further 2 pounds in bank. Left Belgrade on road to Kragujevac. Met group of students from Shoreditch Training College. They were heading for Greece only in a type of van/lorry. Winding road through villages, tarmac and cobbles intermittently. Bought some apricots, spent the morning waving to children and people through the countryside, it seems to be a kind of Yugoslavia's welcome. There was a market in progress at Kragujevac with cattle in various stages of growth, being dragged home by their new owners.

Stopped for petrol with the usual ordeal of having to wait while the main tank was being refueled, only on this occasion the tanker was drawn by only horse power, literally rather ironical. A party of three French people stopped for a chat, they are going to Ankara and Izmir. We find that the further one is away, the further people seem to be going. Crossed very rickety wooden bridge over river which had been truly washing red soil, but that didn't detract from hundreds of people bathing in it.

Paradin. Left old road for new auto put, even had cats' eyes ! good surface, mainly flat country, 101 F in car. Nis. Difficulty in finding road to Dimitrovgrad. Large band of gypsies with brass instruments passed in garlanded carts, must have been to a wedding or something. Our tarmac roads for over 1500 km, have at last ended, civilization is at an end, at last we start our trek !

Roads almost disappeared, stoney road across mountains, still signposted ! ( i.e. take care, road narrows, maximum speed 30km), agriculture improving, if anything, tobacco drying under polytene, neat vineyards with concrete posts. About 15 miles of being hurtled from side to side and wondering when the next bump would hit us. A half mile of good tarmac then terrible road, like going through a newly sloughed field, except that in a plowed field one doesn't have to compete with steam rollers for traffic rights. At one [point the Mini collapsed in a heap of stones about as big as her and we had to call for the aid of a few roadmen, only too anxious to help female adventurers. Occasionally bits of tarmac protruded between the ploughed field effect of this road which will, I feel, be completed in another 10 years, with luck. One bit we had a diversion through a village which nearly proved the end of the Mini's sump. But we took photos of women spinning etc:. Met group of French from Marseilles en route to Lebanon, must have been at least 8 children. Stopped for water in village after Perot, we were going to camp but the villagers looked rather hostile so we pressed on to Dimitrograd which we reached about 7.pm. Decided to call it a day and enquired about hotel ( we deserved it after the journey), there was only one, they informed us, with about 6 beds, as far as I could make out. Rather casino type eating and drinking place beneath with prostitute types, with us above. Hope it doesn't turn out to be a brothel. national flags are kept in the lavatory which could do with a good dose of Dettol

Saturday 20th July

The night was uneventful although some loose man poeked his head in without knowing, c'est la vie ! Had to exchange more Yugoslav money to pay the hotel bill about 6/- each. Left Dimitrograd on very rough road again to frontier. Oh! the bank at the station where exchange was made, had a nasty little man there who refused to change Ruth's travellers cheque, because it was not attached to look, i.e. only half perforated.

Arrived at Yugoslav frontier, very modern with marble floors. It appeared we were one of the few cars passing because the two guards were engrossed in an intense game of chess, which seemed to be reaching its climax as we approached, since various ejaculations were thrown out and cries of "Ya !" etc; echoed throughout the empty customs palace. Luckily a third guard allowed us to pass after supporting the red frontier bar at arms reach.

Reached the Bulgarian frontier where a smart swarthy man in a green uniform with red cuffs and collar and bits of brass scattered around, stood with a sword about one foot long to greet us. We surrendered our passports and sat down in the office to obtain insurance (voluntary / compulsory type), which is their only source of stable income from infrequent travellers. The customs officials in turquoise trousers looked through the car and had ideas that the lilo pump was an unexploded bomb. We left after a drink of fizzy lemonade, served by a sulky girl with too much mascara. Passed raspberries, acres of them, almost a temptation to sit down and gorge. Good road, mainly cobbles but some tarmac, traffic mainly lorries and green motor cycles. Stopped for breakfast where I came across a black snake which appeared to have dropped out of a tree and was gone in a flash; caution from now on ! Rather barren country. Followed with a few odd soldiers on horseback and sheep, towards Sophia. Tomatoes with gangs of women.

Sophia. Rather an oppressed city with little gaiety. Queues of people waiting at food shops, maybe there is some form of rationing. Accident in centre; masses of people just gaping for at least half an hour. The museum was shut so we took a few photos of prominent churches and left. Little difficulty over obtaining petrol, cost 6/8 gallon. Good road bordered by rose trees. Ran into heavy thunderstorm but it helped clean the Mini. Arrived camping site in Plovdiv. Campsite good with all facilities, but no people. Only about 5 lots turned up while we were there. Camped on side of river, river name unknown. We went some 10km into Plovdiv in search of PCs and created a huge stir when we turned down a street used apparently on Saturday nights for pedestrians. We collected a group of onlookers in a short space of time and French being our only communicable language, we talked mainly on topics such as whether we liked Bulgaria etc: It certainly appears to be a very closed state, very communistic especially Russian communism, dominated by Russian street signs, machines and poster advertising the sickle and hammer. We were given 5 PCs with Bulgarian compliments and we exchanged Peter Syvessant cigarettes.

Sunday 21st July

Left camp over plains with a few vineyards, orchards and maize; quite a change in cattle, rather mulberry colour with no white around muzzle and of lighter build. We stopped for photo of shepherd and his flock; he was highly delighted. Passed first cotton growing and more tobacco. It became a feature throughout the villages we passed to have roses growing by the side of the road; apparently there is a valley of roses somewhere in Central Bulgaria.

Arrived Hascovo the centre of the cotton and silk industry according to AA but we never saw any evidence of such. Country became more barren towards the border. Bulgarian border 10.30. Same little man in yellow shirt and green uniform, same waiting period and customs. A party of Danes in a coach. Turkish frontier. More formalities and we met the lot from Paris again. Country seemed immediately to change, became more treeless and likewise the road deteriorated. For about 50km, the road was an endless series of lumps and bumps and diversions. Edane. Came quickly through and started on a road more

boring than the Belgrade-Zagreb one. (temp: 102 F). Stopped at a cafe for lunch. There were soldiers everywhere en route, obviously after the coup d'etat., many tanks and lorries parked at strategic places. Road unvaried but wind started up as we approached Istanbul and traffic increased.

Istanbul. Entered about 4.30. Found our old hotel closed down but went to a student hostel nearby, very clean and comfortable. It has a lovely view over the Sea of Marmara and old Istanbul. Very helpful group of students who helped unload the car, for fear someone might steal the contents. Went down to the cafe attached and were greeted by two English (one at least Scottish) chaps who agreed to combine common with us for a few days. One chap Tom, the Scottish one, comes from Glasgow and the other, Trev, a Cockney living in Brighton, the latter being very vivacious and gay especially. Went over to Beyoglu to cafe, we visited last year near Ataturk Square. Had first shish kebab, it was gorgeous. Came back via chai house at about 12.30 and sat outside the hostel singing folk songs to Trev's guitar. I think we woke up a number of people but they seemed to appreciate it. Retired about 1.30 am.

#### Monday 22nd July

Left hostel about 9.30 with Tom and Trev bound for a day at the sea. Followed coast road up the Bosphorus, passed fish restaurants and interesting wayside villages. Went through several military zones towards Black Sea area and had to turn around on more than one occasion. Reached Kilyos after about two hours, lovely beach but tourist price 2.50 lira. Large Greek ship on beach in the process of being broken up. English speaking skipper on board. Swam and lazed around in the sun all day. Had a lemonade and beer during the afternoon but felt sunburn creeping on but of course we had all burnt. Tom felt rather seedy after a stop for a baklava (Turkish sweet) and was sick, so we abandoned our evening to run him back to the hostel. Went out to a cafe nearby for a shish kebab with Trev. had an interesting conversation on the subject of approach to sex, from male and female viewpoints. Trev is very much a free love addict but he seems to have summed up our attitude to sex. We found it very amusing and enlightening. It is one of the many occasions when one meets people with a common interest in travel and one is able to discuss any topic under the sun. We feel a mutual achievement of having travelled on our own initiative so far and it seems to be the common denominator which brings us into contact. We ended up at the hostel quite early and retired rather tired and burnt.

#### Tuesday 23rd July

After breakfast spent the morning firstly at the Blue Mosque which is near here. There were hordes of tourists which rather marred things but we were able to sit down for an hour or two and absorb that ever fascinating magnificence of the blue spheres and domes rising from thick Turkish carpets, which are so nice to walk on in bare feet. We then moved on to the Bazaar where we explored once more the fascinating maze of shops. Tom bought a set of chessmen for about 12 pounds, in ivory, beautifully carved. Trev bought a type of lyre for playing with his skiffle group. We have undertaken to take it back to England for him. Our morning tended to merge with the afternoon as we lingered in the Bazaar, looking rather for future buying than intention to buy this time. We had shish hamburgers in a cafe in the Bazaar and then wandered back to the hostel. . Went out to find an Austin garage where the car keys are meant to be arriving, only cable to say they are on route. Looked really

presentable and the man spoke good English. We returned to the hostel for washing session and received ourselves of Trev and Tom's company. Went out for dinner in Taxin Square, where we left the car and wandered off down a main street, merely to find fodder. Had lamb chops in gravy which was very pleasant and afterwards an ice-cream in a separate place. Came back to hostel for sing-song with Belgium girls and the Turkish chaps in the hostel. They sang a bit of Turkish music which was so funny that we all collapsed in laughter. One of them gave a realistic version of Elvis. Retired about 1.30 am, very tired.

#### Wednesday 24th July

Late lie-in, rose in time for 11. Had coffee brewed downstairs. Went straight to the Bazaar where we stopped for lunch of shish kebab, very funny place with three floors and a lift joining the three. The three chefs cooked on the top floor and then had to rush down the narrow stairs in order to reach the food at the bottom of the lift. The lift sounded as if someone was falling down the stairs each time it moved. We walked through the Bazaar and climbed one of the fire towers which had a sort of cafe at the top which only served chai. A group of fire watchers in uniforms patrolled around. It was a long climb up a spiral staircase but well worth the view at the top which I sketched over the university. Sat in nearby mosque which has thick red carpets and was a true mosque in that no other tourists moved the atmosphere. Wandered along streets outside covered Bazaar; metal junk yards, copper and steel shops, bookshops etc; a real maze of diverse goods, places making bedsprings, shops selling army decorations, and trapper-type hats.

Came back to hostel for shower etc; We are fascinated by the view from our balcony of a building being constructed opposite. The means of carrying everything to the top is purely done by hand and all the builders seem to live and sleep in it until it's completion, presumably. Went out along coast to find a fish restaurant. about 11 miles. It had a sort of Heiza 57 band and various decorated females who wailed in Turkish music while the lighting system went on and off. This was not apparently intentional, as there had obviously been a power cut. We sat down to an enormous meal of sole; one each. They were so large that they hung over each side of the plate; cheese, tomato salad and lovely white wine provided the finishing touch, and melon to finish but had a lovely price at the end. I was so tired that I hadn't the energy to drive and we got home eventually at 3.45 am and drank another bottle of wine which we had bought earlier on that evening. The boys had to climb in through windows to let us in; c'est la vie !

#### Thursday 25th July

Ruth and I went to view the Blue Mosque exterior and sat drinking chai. Met the boys and had cherries and peaches upstairs; then went to the Bazaar where we completed the movie film. Got invited into a suede coat shop where they offered us an evening out in exchange for a bottle of whiskey. We more or less let the subject drop and spent an amiable hour teaching them English. Took movie film of various market scenes and returned via post office. met two girls from Edinburgh studying fine arts. They are only staying in Istanbul. Went out along coast for a meal, hoping to bathe, but no places suitable. Had sing-song back at hostel, as final round up to our few days stay. No keys unfortunately.

#### Friday 26th July

Left hostel about 10am with Trev and crossed Bosphorus by ferry, about quarter of an hour and cost 10 lira. Passed through barren countryside with the first olive trees we have seen. Army stations, goats, vines and peach orchards were only intermittent. Drove along Sea of Marmara but a railway line most of the way, stopped us from bathing. Stopped for lunch after Izmir in an orchard of tobacco intercropped with cotton etc: Took cine film of thrashing process with buffalo, cows and horses. The minarets were made of aluminum which looked like guided missiles; perhaps this is a fallacy on the part of the Russians who claim the USA have missile bases in Turkey. Some of them had loud-speakers attached which looked slightly out of place. Passed through mountain scenery with Shell signs saying "Clean WC." Baskets being sold by wayside and large herds of horses and cattle, the modern highway did diversify a little ! but they are building another elsewhere. Started looking for likely camping site. rice paddy field in one valley. Found ideal spot with stream, grass and no unwanted onlookers. We made a fire and cooked steak and kidney curry and sat round to the guitar.

#### Saturday 27th July

Quite heavy dew around our camp. A peaceful night except for odd lorry roaring along the main road. Dry plains for miles on end with Ankara in the middle. It was city of wide boulevards, trees flanking each one with a more road-conscious population than the mania of Istanbul. Had police check on the outskirts of the city, they wanted to see our passports but seemed unconcerned there were three people in the car and only two passports produced. We found a map eventually but there didn't seem to be anything we wanted to see. Ataturk's mausoleum, a rectangular building in a honey-coloured granite on a hill about Ankara. The interior was of black, grey and reddish marble with a gold-mosaic ceiling. The actual tomb was placed in a window overlooking the city. Sent off PC from station and visited the museum, of no particular significance. Started off on road across land which is virtually desert, cultivated in a few places with wheat, barley and rye. Reached point where we saw a lake in the distance with a mirage of water above it. When we got closer it appeared as a great lake of salt, dried up but with water about 6 inches under the surface.

Stopped at Sereflikocisar for some chai. These places are like oases in the middle of burning road with no green for hundreds of miles; we came across a patch of trees generally around a petrol pump with a village attached. Passed on through open plain with volcanic mountains in the distance, occasional whirlwinds rising out of the lifeless plain; very colourful dress worn by villagers with chain of coins around head. People taking on a more Eastern appearance, more Mongolian features.

Aksaray. A point we turn off good tarmac onto dirt track. Another road is being built but meanwhile we suffered the consequence of the old intercepted by the new. Good speed maintained, about 40 mph. Found water hole with trees and rather contaminated stream. Several peasants cutting wheat with hand sickles who appeared friendly and several children who watched our cooking procedures with wide open amazement, while their cattle fought each other in the dust. Kids were probably hungry as well but it would have been impossible to offer them anything. Special amusement over teeth cleaning, they had obviously never used tooth paste. We undressed with audience and settled down to relatively undisturbed night.

#### Sunday 28th July

The local peasants started work at dawn so we were awoken early. Had cornflakes in best English tradition. Set off on road to Goreme, quite good dust surface. Passed through Nevsilim en route, main features very Eastern, graveyards around in large numbers, makes us feel uncomfortable but still it doesn't seem to matter. Passed through steep village with view of valley full of volcanic formations, each a meteorite on a smaller scale. They are called Fairy Chimneys. The formations are of volcanic origin, smooth soft lava-type rock, pink, golden and white in colour with some natural holes and crevices already made for inhabitation. The sight from the top of the valley is of a maze of these cone-shaped formations, it was like Disneyland, some had small apertures in lines where pigeons had nests, like little windows. Went through the village on the hill, with flat roofs and narrow streets.

Met party of French en route bound for River Ganges. Found another village at foot of hill and tried to go along riverbed but got bogged down in sand. With the help of car mats and several village boys ploughed our way though only to find that the road led nowhere in particular so we had to replace our steps. Spent some time looking for churches to no avail, there are virtually no signposts or tourist guides at all. Anyone who reaches the place is unique, so nothing is really known. Met some Lebanese in a cafe and they informed us where to go. Found a smaller valley at which point we left the car and paid to go in, (75 ?) Rather a scramble to get in some of the rocks but remarkable evidence of Early Christian habitation. Eating places in great evidence and churches as well. Earliest had motifs, unvaried in red pigment, very crude and unimaginative, purely symbolic I should think, many covered up or obliterated. Reminded me of the Moorish arches in Southern Spain. The obviously later Byzantine art, 11th C AD was of frescoes with little but purely natural colour or decoration. These depicted lives of Christ and saints, St. George being popular. Many of them have been obliterated, especially faces. These are apparently the finest examples of Cappadocian art., especially in the church of Karanlik Kiise, the Dark church, we needed a torch to see anything. It was shaped in arches with small domes forming the roof, pillars built on extra. There seems to be a correlation between placing of graves and churches. Nearly every church had graves at the entrance, rather small, so perhaps they dehydrated the bodies first. Some churches were inaccessible while in other we had to bend nearly double through the tunnels to reach them. We were all very impressed but only wishes there were more details for tourists about them.

Met group of Italians drinking beer, coffee and vino which we were given in exchange for a few English songs. One chap had a very good tenor voice, obviously sang professionally in a nightclub or somewhere, because he would let the others sing. As we left that group a Turkish chap came up and asked us to join his party for another drink and song. Thus replenished we reluctantly left and made our way back to our camp of the previous night. Quite a wind and plenty of onlookers again. Ruth found a tortoise down by the river, a surprise visitor. We went to sleep to the sound of a lost frog or perhaps it was just a mating call.

Monday 29th July

Left camp about 8.00am. Hit one bump in the road which cause petrol gauge to collapse, it must have been the petrol tank that got hit. On more detailed examination found this to be true. We stopped and found the pipe almost flattened but Trev managed to get the gauge working with the help of some insulating tape lent by a passing Lebanese who offered

assistance. Trev then departed en route for Istanbul and home. it felt very strange no having a third member in the car. Road across desert type with series of stoat-like animals by the side of the road. Saw our first camel but it seemed to be lost sitting by itself in a field, must be the only one for 100 miles. We saw about two cars on this road which ran straight for 50 miles, just a few scattered mud-huts with straw piles on roofs and one isolated block of prefab-type council houses, rather incongruous. View of Taurus mountains stretching in line with snow on peaks.

Passed Ulukisle where we bought food and started climbing out of the plain. Twisting road with precarious obstacles; i.e. coaches, lorries, and road-ups. we saw one bus having on two wheels over a precipice, rocking ominously while the occupants climbed hurriedly to safety. it has tried to pass a road-up team on a bend with a petrol tanker coming in the opposite direction. I wouldn't have like to be in it. passed Civilian Gates, narrow v-shaped gorge. Mountain scenery with timber yards. Road was good in patches, mainly petrol lorries as traffic. By-passed Tarsus where apparently Anthony and Cleopatra first met. Went through Adana, intending to stop but there didn't seem much to see as we pressed on through orange groves. Saw one of the Crusader castles but did not stop since there will be many more.

Stopped at Ceylon where we found the one and only hotel, Ordu Palace. large congregation of onlookers with one chap who spoke a little English. Managed to put Mini in corn barn amidst heaps of corn that was stored there. At least it was under lock and key ! Went out with our friend to a restaurant near a river; the food was rather poor especially the meat but yoghurt and egg plants were delicious. Went to have ice cream, usual doldrum. Returned to hotel where we did some much needed washing.

Tuesday 30th July

Drove off at 7.30am over fertile plain, very flat, mainly cotton, well irrigated. had first glimpse of sea, the Med. But the whole area was overrun by the militia, especially Iskenderum. left immediately and climbed slowly up mountain, with occasional rumples of tarmac to add to the hazards. Saw crane upside down, as was try the rest of the day. The accident rate seems inversely proportionate to the number of vehicles. Breakfasted on scramble eggs and toast. Missed road to border so diverted to Antakya, nothing significant there. Another road across plains of cotton, to more barren country approaching border, with coils of barbed wire separating us from Syria.

Turkish customs, easy quarter of an hour. Over barren land to Syrian customs 4 miles on. Very pleasant reception. Immediate change in country; dress and people, feeling of being in the East, proper. Long clothing with white head cloths, typical Laurence of Arabia style. Land still barren with cotton, figs and olives predominating. Flat roofed houses with large cone-shaped tops, must be ovens or chimneys. ( Temp 108 F) Military check point; they exchanged waves, I think they were more curious than anything else.

Went to Aleppo out of curiosity; mosque with silvery roof and citadel, very crowded and difficult to find one's way around. Pro-Nasser demonstrations everywhere; "Nasser is our Chief" etc: painted on every wall. Good road all the way but bad drivers. Passed herd of camels. Hama, veiled women in black predominantly. Bridge with water wheel . Passed Muslims heading for Mecca at 5.0. Large reservoir and dam guarded by militia. Sugar beet carted to factory.



Homs. Found hotel with slight difficulty as to which to choose. Reached what AA would class as 3\*. Party of French staying there, like a British WI group. Went out for meal in cafe on main street, very good chicken and rice with sort of kebab in delicious tomato sauce, only 4/-. The proprietor had an English lesson and likewise we had an Arabic one. He introduced us to his friends who took us around the Bazaar, where we had a delicious milk and flour dish. Had a stop in a knife shop, very tempting but will look in Damascus. Closed in roof but quite cool, shower but no water. Had tea in lounge.

Wednesday 31st July

9.45 left Homs, after changing 5 pounds in bank. (10.6/1 pound). Road over desert, rolling plain, few isolated camels with people attached. Had breakfast by roadside, no shade, nothing to see except lone rat poking its head out of a hole. Police check; looked a passports upside down but didn't recognize the difference. Descended to plain that was cultivated by maize, vines and olives, a change from 100 miles of desert. As we entered the suburbs, there was great evidence of the coup d'etat a fortnight ago; tanks lined the route and the militia were in great numbers. There is a curfew at the moment, midnight to 5 am but it doesn't really concern us. Found tourist police who supplied us with maps etc: Went to Austin distributors, very nice group of Syrian, plus 2 English reps, who had just flown in and two Lebanese. We talks shop for a bit and then they took us to a super restaurant in a cave-like place with waiters in gold lame jackets. large shields linking the tunnel to the cool cave beneath. We ate and drank to Ravel's Bolero and some Swan lake. The hors d'oeuvre was on two wheel with trays between flooded by a sort of Arabic kebab in gravy with rice. This was followed by a sort of omelette on hamburger, swilled down with beer and rose-coloured wine from Lebanon. They had roses on the tables which was laid with gold-embroidered cloths. A fitting welcome to Damascus.

Gerald hemming the Middle East rep for Austin was vey pleasant and the only member of our age group. He was educated at Worcester Grammer School.

Found hostel which was situated behind National Bank; it appeared very clean with facilities for cooking, washing etc: plus courtyard at the back. The warden used to be an official guide and proceeded to tell us how we could do the city in about two hours. We had a shower and then went to see St.Paul's window, where he escaped, Acts 9 I think. We got lost in the Bazaar coming back and went down a street called "Straight", although it appeared very crooked to us. Spent the rest of the evening chatting to an American girl and Dutch chap who had hitched from Tunisia, some hitch ! it makes us feel our feat is nothing. Had lemonade in cafe. The hostel closed promptly at 10 pm.

Thursday 1st August

Went firstly to Austin Co. where the car was take off for servicing and repairing, apparently oil leak caused by loose nut on sump. We were entertained all morning by them. Went first to the Iraqi Embassy to check permits and visas to go to Iraq. Seemed OK but they were a bit vague. Wet with Mr.Rogers (Austin World rep) to National Museum where we saw interesting remains from Palmyra and Jordan. We were particularly impressed with the layout, the best we have yet seen. We were taken round by one of the designers there, after which we returned to the motor showroom again and went off in search of real damask works. David Harris, the local Austin rep, accompanied us and helped me spend about 9 pounds on material, all handmade silk damask. It was beautiful only this is too

weak a word to describe it; not only this but silvery filigree, copper, gold, mosaic and leather work. One could have spent 100 pounds, happily. It was here that Queen Elizabeth II's coronation dress was made; two men making about 1 and half yds per day. There were endless things we could have taken but money was a limiting factor. Went back to Austin and out to lunch at a place called the Gondola, good Arabic dishes with delicious fruit to follow. Said goodbye to Mr. Rogers afterwards, he is going to write home from Cyprus. Went off for petrol with Manager of Austin and he treated us to an ice cream which they beat with pastels until it became hard, this sounds ludicrous but it works ! They add lemon and other things which make it delicious.

Went to see the Umayyad Mosque which contains the tomb of John the Baptist. It was entirely different from the ones we had seen in Turkey, far more spacious, with no central dome. it was built around a courtyard and they appeared to be far more religious-conscious than the Turks. We had to leave between 4.30 and 5 because of their prayer time. They seemed to sit around in small groups ,talking. There were some fantastic dresses worn by the women with gold in abundance. We went during the time to Saladin's Tomb 3rd Century, enclosed in a marble room with super carpets. We had to tip the little man who opened the door. Went back for a brief visit to the Mosque again and then wandered back through the Bazaar to Austin where we reluctantly had to say goodbye. They refused all payment for car servicing, including oil, plugs, contact points, really they were too kind. Exchanged addresses and returned to hostel. Cooked egg and chips.

Friday 2nd August

Left about 9.15. Slight difficulty finding the road because there were no signposts; about 3 or 4 military check ups, with machine guns and armored cars at the ready but they were quite amicable. New roadsigns" shooting soldier beware." Had slight hold ups at the borders, the Syrian one and again at the Lebanese one. We had to buy visas at the latter, cost 2/- and change currency. The country changed from being arid to a fertile plain of vines, maize etc.:. We visited a jesuit farm at Taarayal, taken round by an old chap in safari outfit. Friesian cattle, cheese (semi soft) like Stilton without mold, unsalted butter and cream produced very hygenically. Looked round horticulture department , mainly cyclamen, strawberries and strange fruit called "Kaki". They also had a large reservoir which we drove around.

Arrived at Baalbek. We met the keeper of the Acropolis who took us on a conducted tour. It was a fascinating place dating from 2000 BC with various remains from other centuries incorporated in the main building. Some Egyptian- type columns , with Roman columns of granite bought from Assam. The stage is built around what was the sacrificial altar. Our good friend, so far ! has managed to acquire two fee seats for the festival tonight.

Went about 10 miles out to see the American University farm of Beirut. We were conducted round . It is quite recent 1952 mainly for the control of insects. Apparently the Lebanese are over-willing to use insecticides and fertilizers, which rather means they have to be controlled. We visited an archeological site which has been in progress 9 years, remains of village 2000 BC. We were entertained by the Dean who wanted us to stop for their celebrations (not Syrian type) but we had to refuse. Cattle of Danish Red variety and Fresians. Returned and had an expensive cup of tea at Hotel Baalbek. Met our friend and his friend Solomon at gate; walked through town to hill where Jo had a friend who was willing for us to camp outside his hotel, the best in Baalbek. This seemed almost too good to be true especially as King Said of Saudi Arabia' son was staying there. It was here to

that Margot Fonteyn stayed last year when she danced in Swan Lake at Baalbek.

Ruth had a rather narrow escape from Jo, who she left hugging a tree. We returned downtown for a meal and went to the Festival. Jo by the time had departed and Solomon's English was not good !

The Festival consisted of Lebanese folk lore called the Cascade. The whole performance took place on the old steps of the Temple of Jupiter, onto which an additional platform for the dancers, had been added. The music was mainly supplied by flutes and a small orchestra. The atmosphere was tremendous and the acoustics, perfect. The play, being in Arabic, we didn't understand but there was a great deal of dancing in magnificent costumes, with very good beat and rhythm. The climax came when soldiers appeared on horses and an artificial waterfall cascaded down. Needless to say, the ordinary militia were there in great numbers . Also we sat next to some people who spoke French and therefore could explain it to us. Met dear Solomon again and he came to help us pitch our tent at the hotel, some help ! We were provided with a late supper at 12.30 with wine and delicious soup. We had full use of the washing facilities, really generous on the part of the hotelier. (apparently an Irishwoman owned the place). Retired to the amusement of the rest of the people there, a lot of them stayed up all night , playing cards. The poor staff who had to stay up too ! Place called " Villa Konan " fountain included.

Saturday 3rd August.

Left hotel reluctantly and went back along road of previous day to Syria. Met two groups of English at both borders, quite unusual, all heading for Jerusalem. Syrian visa cost 2/6-. Stopped for breakfast of porridge oats. More military checks than ever on approach to Damascus, they must be having some more celebrations. Across further desert, just stones. Bought some eggs from small boy at wayside, there were several Bedouin camps along the route. How they can survive is a mystery, there is literally no vegetation in this part.

Jordan border. Quite efficient and helpful. Rolling plains with some cultivation, tomatoes and orchards near villages. A few herds of camels. Typical biblical scenery; flat roofs, donkeys, and long garments. it is very easy to imagine the scene 2000 years back. Passed out of more fertile area into mountains, pure sandunes, no vegetation. Went down below Sea Level to Dead Sea, a blue mirage stretching for miles on the left of the road. passed over River Jordan which was guarded at bridge by militia, NO photos !

Jerusalem. Built over mountain side , a skyline of churches, minarets and domes. Many one way streets and tourism in great evidence. Everywhere appeared full and we were forced to stay in a hotel for 10/- night each. It is very comfortable; interior sprung mattresses, own shower and WC. had dinner in the garden with Canadian boy who is here as part of a unit of 600 Canadians in the Middle East at this time. Started diarrhoea and pains, beginning of my dysentery attack.

Sunday 4th August

Spent the night in agony until I got out past the night porter to the car for some codeines. Ruth got the doctor this morning (a Cairo one) who immediately diagnosed amoebic dysentery, inflamed bowels and cramp. He gave me an injection for the cramp and some

pills (Entrobex and Paratropin). I'm on a diet of Leben, Arabic for yoghurt and fresh lemon juice. Ruth went off to Bethlehem for the day with chap in charge of immigration round here. Came back at 6 pm. I spent most of the day asleep ! Jordan wireless program; Haydn's 45th Symphony, followed by Baptist hymn singing , then Frank Ifield in Top of the Pops. Had dinner of yoghurt and talked to American, rather boring so retired to bed early.

#### Monday 5th August

Went in search of the sights of Jerusalem. There seemed plenty to see and plenty of willing guides to help us find them. Drove partially up Mount of Olives and left the car to climb the rest. Called in at convent on way up and visited the church of Pater Poster, the Lord's Prayer in about 40 different languages round the walls. It had plastic daises on the altar which rather made the place a bit false, to put it mildly. we were driven, or rather forcibly guided into the Church of the Ascension on the top of the Mount of Olives, where the traditional footprint in the stone is where Christ ascended to Heaven; very touristy so we made our way hurriedly back to the car. Went to find Botanical collection at American Colony and were met by a charming old-world American lady, Mrs. Whiting, whose parents had founded the Colony about 65 years before. She told us the history of how her mother was shipwrecked in Mid-Atlantic with 4 children lost, and how her father had come to Jordan to found a colony in her memory. Her sister, Bertha Spafford Vester, had written a history of the Colony called, " Our Jerusalem ,"published by Middle East Export Press Beirut. She organized hospitals etc: We had a lemonade in marbled floored and tiles American Colony Hotel, saw some water colored iris painted by her. She was really charming but we didn't really see much of the botanical collection we had come to see. Went onto the Archeological Museum, well laid out and catalogues in detail in each room. We saw in particular, the Dead Sea Scrolls, a remarkable collection in separate room.

Had lunch at the hotel and rested for a couple of hours. Called doctor again for a check up 10/-. He was very pleasant and wished we had been at the Dead Sea with him for a swim the previous night. Wrote PCs and sent them off, then wandered through the Old City, rather touristy and like Rhodes in many ways. Met group of English in Vanguard that we had met at the Lebanon border before. We swapped some coffee for dysentery drug and fly spray. Also met S.African called Martin. He's been touring for 8 months. Returned to hotel for early night.

#### Tuesday 6th August

Left about 9am. Met English/ Pakistani group from Loughborough who we had seen before in Yugoslavia. By coincidence it was driven by Roger Lamb's brother (Sutton Bonington, year below). he looked as bigger drip as RL himself. There were 3 English and one Pakistani.

Went to see Jerico, modern town with abundance of bananas, lemons, jacarandas and dates. The ruin was very disappointing; perhaps we were expecting too much or were in a hurry to move on. It too was spoilt by hordes of American females, all doing the place without having any real interest. We reset the Loughborough crowd and on the way out another English crowd (about 10) in a Thames van, just from Jerusalem going towards England.

Amman. We passed through seeing nothing particular of note except there is supposed to be a Roman theatre. Police check on road. Zerka. Ruth changed travelers cheques. Began to hit desert, many army units with soldiers and desert-colored trucks.

Mafrā. Desert town on fringe. Stopped for tea and took photos, at which point an English-speaking Jordanian approached and invited us to his house for beer and coffee. He had been with the RAF, ground training corp and had romantic memories of Blackpool, of which he had dozens of lurid-colored PCs. We were stopped shortly afterwards by the police and some horrid-type wanted a lift. But we also met a Belgian guy by the name of Marcel who we squeezed in to share out desert journey. Temp; 110 F. From here on there was nothing of agricultural, civilization or anything living of note for 500 miles, except occasional isolated pumping station belonging to the Iraq Petroleum Co: which had a line of crude oil from Iraq to Haifa since 1948. Israel has held Haifa so the line is closed.

Jordan customs. There are about 100 miles between Jordan and Iraq customs. Filled up with petrol and were invited in by the petrol man, cafe proprietor and general owner of the palace. People have to be adaptable in these parts; since it was dark, we decided to stay the night and the petrol man was only too happy for us to be in his cafe for the night. We cooked our supper of curry and he provided the tea, we invited him to share our meal but he must have just eaten. Marcel discussed with us his Yin/Yang theories while we listened to the music of Beethoven, I think, on the radio. An Iraqi pump man stopped en route and suggested we drove overnight to Bagdad. We were so tired that we thought it was better to stay. We were shown the washing facilities, a dirty oil drum from which he washed our feet and a WC, rather less W than C with cockroaches everywhere. It was obvious that we were special customers because he had to take the padlock off the corrugated iron door. We retired to bed surrounded by upturned chairs and tables, with noises of passing lorries, stampeding camels, noisy donkeys and music from nearby Bedouins. The proprietor kept waking us up by smothering us in blankets, although we were already too hot. A rather disturbed night all round.

Wednesday 7th August.

Woke with the dawn and after trying to get away for about an hour, left eventually at 5am, having exchanged English cigarettes and being given Belgian chocolate.

Arrived Iraq border to find very bedraggled, sleepy group of border officials. The whole place seemed asleep. We had to wait until they got out of bed in their nightshirts and changed into everyday dress. The official sat on the floor and stamped our passports on a foot stool.

Rutbah. Customs Iraq. Very abrupt and unpleasant atmosphere, in fact the most hostile and aggressive border we have yet been to. The Nairn bus had just arrived which didn't help matters, in fact we were rather ordered about. Had sort of shish kebab on thin pancake at a cafe, caused great interest. Left on one the worst drives, or at least the most monotonous I have ever done; 150 miles at 60 mph in the heat of the day, temp inside 108 F, it must have been 130 F outside, just on and on, nothing to see, utter boredom.

Ramadi. The end of the desert; the first sight of palm trees with dates and a reservoir! We stopped and plunged into the water, marvelous! It was like a miracle after that desert. We stayed there about half an hour, lazing in the cool water. Had tea at cafe and pressed on for Bagdad. Fairly fertile valley, especially after the desert.

Bagdad. We entered in the old part and drove around until we could drive no more. There were no signs, no people who spoke English or who could help us, in fact a hostile reception. Tanks more than Damascus and soldiers were guarding every street. We were given a lead eventually by a taxi to the British Embassy but the taxi tried to charge us 10/- for just going around the corner, some help ! We went into an air-conditioned atmosphere of a place like home , we immediately felt relaxed with a typically British Embassy official talking in a language we could understand. The taxi driver who had followed us in stood arguing for some minutes but was quickly dealt with and politely told to get out ! Having established out whereabouts, we were given the address of the YMCA so we went there. We have a bed on the roof for 1/- per night but meals are expensive. I think we are the only girls staying there. Ruth and Marcel went out dancing at the Auberge while I retired exhausted to bed, having driven nearly 400 miles across a desert in the midday sun !

Thursday 8th August

Woke up with the dawn; it was a peculiar sensation especially as it got lighter and hotter and we were forced to retreat down to the grass courtyard. Went with Marcel, Ruth and an English chap in the car ( in front, that poor Mini !) to register ourselves in Bagdad. This is essential for anyone coming here or leaving. Spent the entire morning sweltering. I think this is the hottest city on earth. Marcel and Ruth went off to PO while I got hotter and madder and eventually drove back with Reg. Spent the afternoon chatting with an Iraqi who had studied electrical engineering in England and an Indian who studied law there. He talked about various places around the world, our usual topic of conversation. Went out to the swimming pool the rest of the afternoon, it was wonderfully cooling, although too much chlorine !

An Iraqi local took Reg and myself to the Bazaar to get some Iranian currency. Good rate of exchange 22/one pound, same as in England. We sat opposite the money changer, smoked and drank Coco cola. The the money was shown on both sides and prices agreed on. The other handing over his money first and I gave 5 pounds. We looked around the Bazaar which was smelly , dirty and very disappointing. The copper shops could not touch the Istanbul ones. Went to look at New Mosque, now being built. The plaster has entirely been carved by a few hundred skilled men. The designs are fabulous; part of the pulpit is of black Italian marble. The little man in charge invited us into the guest room and offered us Cococola, the national drink here. We went out to view a canal about 5 km away but the only significant thing was the sponginess of the turf. Came back and went out with my Indian friend. He's absolutely charming, keeps polo ponies and a racehorse (Owen Tudor strain) in Calcutta. I felt really happy and relaxed for the first time in some days. We went to a nightclub called " the Embassy" , supposedly the best in Bagdad. There was a lousy cabaret with a few skinny girls with feather and sequined stocking, out of step and rather clumsy. The only bright thing was a group from S.America. We danced a bit, daily good band, and came back at 3.30am to the hostel. Ruth and Marcel had been feeling the effects of the previous evening.

Friday 9th August.

Went out early through the Bazaar to the Archeological Museum. It was another example of fine exits spoilt by display, a great shame. it was overcrowded and tiring to see. Several things from Babylon and Ur and original scrolls of Euchid's theory. The bank chap who took

us round tentatively asked for a date either today or tomorrow, I have to keep thinking up excuses. We returned via a Mosque which I could only take from the outside and via the New Mosque we had seen the previous evening, the carvings were even more superb by daylight. Returned to hostel where we spent the afternoon in the pool area, it was the only cool spot. Went out with Manon to the Hotel Ambassador, very good beer and to Al Memullo, a restaurant off Revolution Square, sort of shish kebab without being cooked on a skewer. Had the river with us so went down the side of the Tigris where a ferocious dog practically attacked the car and then the National Guard accosted us with a gun through the window. Really this city is so unromantic, and these guards so trigger-happy, it doesn't pay to go out. How pleasant it would be to have some English freedoms here.

#### Saturday 10th August

Went with Jo (Iraqi electrical engineer) to the Kadhorain Mosque, some beautiful gold minarets and dome but unfortunately foreigners are not accepted and we could only glimpse at what must be one of the most beautiful mosques in the world. Jo has a TR 3 and it went like a lamb. Visited PO and bought large basket to accumulate all our loose gear. Sat in lounge then went for a swim, we seem to live in the pool. Had to get rid of Jamel (the banker), at least Marcel did, and his friend the Arab doctor who was repulsive. Also had to rid ourselves of the Ford man. We went out in a foursome to the Auberge, where Ruth and Marcel had been previously. I think we were all feeling the effects of tiredness, since the evening seemed to lack a certain vigor. The band was quite good but enthusiasm lacking and the cabaret was lousy as usual, but I think it was our general mood. Had a frustrating time with Manon afterwards; it's impossible to write about this.

#### Sunday 11th August

We went out intending to take cine film but like a fool, I left my bag on the car roof and somewhere it dropped off to the tune of 70 pounds. It was not worth crying over spilt milk. A taxi driver had seen it drop off but had not bothered to pick it up. We went to the police station and they were surprisingly efficient and immediately sent off about 5 little meant to search the area but it was of course hopeless. We forgot about the loss and had a sort of Arab sandwich made from whole wheat and filled with meat and spices, very nice. Took cine film. We had a talk at lunchtime and decided against going to Ship. We are all fed up with the heat and down there it is likely to be a furnace. The pool was closed all day so we went to sleep in the lounge. Had an interview with Arab newspaper and pictures taken all over the car in our jeans which they insisted we put on. As Manon didn't turn up I went to the Ahoryah Rest House where Ruth and Marcel's pals live. Had a very enjoyable evening eating and drinking. I think Manon had expected me because he said the next day, how he had waited all evening.

#### Monday 12th August

Left early for Babylon, cine of camels and tanks. Found difficulty in finding the road and it was semi desert for about 50 miles. Met German car and same Americans. Ruth complained of feeling sick, so I looked around by myself. Apart from a nice gateway, the ruins were only a cut above Jerico; perhaps it was because Ruth was unwell that it wasn't more enjoyable, so we quickly came back and I drove her straight to the Rest House. Stayed there until 3 then returned to Marcel at the YMCA. Swam all afternoon and again

returned to Ruth. Marcel decide to heal her with his Yin/yang theories. I left them to each other and went out with Manon to the Ambassador for a beer and to the Al Mecca for some food. Then we sat in the Mini listening to the dogs and guns. Poor Manon encountered a savage dog on the way home but managed to escape.

Tuesday 13th August

Ruth appears to have recovered but stayed in the Rest House where we have all stayed for the past two days. Pleasant to have the car unloaded. Went to the PO again for Marcel and Manon joined us. He is crazy spending the whole morning off work; anyway he came to the police station as well where we received VIP treatment and got a statement about the loss of money for the insurance company. The poor police chief had been transferred to North Iraq and he was convinced he would never come out alive; it was a fate worse than death. Came back via India House where we got free tea samples. Did heaps of washing on return and ironing, then departed as usual for swimming, stayed until after dark there. Met two English boys en route for home; I think they had hitched from India. Made definite decision to leave the next day; Bagdad is one of those places one can never leave. Went for final evening with Manon to Al Mecca, and although we had an invitation to join the others at the Ali Baba, we stayed away and went back to the Rest House for a bit and then bought some delicious Amstel beer, cold ! at the Ambassador. it was 1 am so we had to drink it in the car. nearly got a bullet in our tires when we failed to stop at National Guard point. we must leave tomorrow. Got in at 3.30 same time as Ruth and Marcel. Agreed to stay another day but then thought better of it.

Wednesday 14th August

I finally managed to stir the others to the fact that we must leave Bagdad; it was a wrench, not only for them but the fact i had to leave Manon. Perhaps he'll meet us in Teheran. I had breakfast with him at Al Mecca and regretfully drove back to the Rest House. I'm sure he though we would stay. Finally left about 12.15. Said goodbye to Mr.Gabriel and thanked him for his marvelous hospitality. Road followed desert-type scenery, brick factories and chimneys, extreme poverty; some plantations of young trees, palms, rice. Went into desolate hills, no vegetation; police check and Cococola signs.

Iraq customs. Rather dirty but we were let off the price of a stamp, were told to wait but only 5 minutes in fact.

Iran customs. Refreshingly large building to cater for the tourists of the future but when we saw them unload a bus of carpets etc: it was understandable why they wanted the space. After traipsing from pillar to post, we met the German couple we had seen at Babylon. Little man in orange cage; whether he was to be protected or others to be protected from him, we never knew. Excellent road after pot-holed one to frontier. Wonderful scenery; started mountains and green valleys, very good first impression, especially in setting sun. Peasants, very colorful and unique, colored clothes and fascinating faces, not that we were eager to stop. They were sifting grain actually on the road, a public highway ! Some were resting nonchalantly across. Met Germans again as darkness fell and decided to camp somewhere together. Road steepened as we crossed the Paytagh Pass and climbed Zagreb mountains. Terrible road; curves, rough surface, hairpins and dust , all in darkness. Stopped eventually at transport cafe and set up tent on veranda-type space with old man who stank ! and smoked. Marvelous atmosphere, Persians in turbans sat cross-legged



around pool which was supplied constantly by a stream from mountains. We must have been about 5000 ft up. They reminded me of the monkeys at Basle zoo as they picked their noses and snatched continuously. A few soldiers there with loaded rifles left carelessly around with what appeared to be a happy group of prisoners! Many mosquitoes and other bugs and lorries stopping through the night.

Thursday 15th August

6.45 left camp after porridge breakfast; this has become our staple early morning diet. Fertile plain to Kermanshah. We only stopped for petrol, doubtless we should have stayed more but like so many of these places, it simply isn't possible in the time. Stopped by river for two hours, marvelous mountain water very cold and full of fish. Marcel managed to catch a good lot. Across plains, cereals, tomatoes, grapes.

Hamadan. Stopped for sandwiches, delicious. Modern city very high up, about 8000 ft. large boulevards and unhelpful people, apparently famous for wine producing but we didn't sample any. More plains and cereals. Dust storm, everything got covered. Found river but not possible to camp. Camped near village next to irrigation canal. Great interest from locals. Had fish and eggs. Marcel lit a fire and we thought we would never get rid of them. Very cold during the night, needed sweater and jeans.

Friday 16th August

Dust road again, very monotonous; must be like the American deserts of Colorado where cowboys roam. Road corrugated and irregular, impossible to keep up constant speed.

Arak. stopped for petrol, road bad until nearly to Sum where we branched off onto a very good road to Isfahan. desert and mountains, road bordering Great Salt Desert, very hot. Cultivations near town; melons, lucerne and tree plantations. Met English Land Rover, 4 English chaps going back home. Found hotel eventually, Hotel Cyrus. Trouble about leaving the car on the street or near hotel; eventually compromised and parked half across pavement. Rested for some hours and then went in search of cafe. Wonderful shops, spoilt for choice. Already we had begun to like Isfahan, its long boulevards, copper and silver shops. Found disreputable cafe which served delicious chicken kebab with grilled tomatoes and a sort of mint with onion salad. Had also a sandwich of cheese and corn afterwards. They make delicious long sandwiches here for about 10 ? had also lousy ice cream which was shredded like spaghetti and served with lemon sauce. Slept soundly.

Saturday 17th August

By the time we had had breakfast, it was about 11. arranged to meet local called Mohammed, (they are all called this). He took us to see the Allgapo Palace on the side of a square which must surely be one of the most beautiful in the world. Flanked by two magnificent turquoise-domed mosques, spread out like a landscape garden with a large rectangular pool with fountains. Green grass and flowers are a characteristic of this city, which rises out of the Great Salt Desert. We were overwhelmed with the coloring and decoration of this mosque and the minarets. Found a shop which sold fresh apple and lemon juice, delicious and a change from the Pepsi cola and Canada Dry which are so prevalent. It's a shame that in a fruit producing country, it should be so difficult to find fresh

fruit juices. left Mohammed so he could have his lunch and made for the Bazaar, to which, since our arrival, we had been attracted to like a magnet. Tried to change Marcel's Iraqi dinars with out success, it is a problem here. Bought jug, copper bowl and some material, a real shopping spree. Got back to where the car was parked to find that the petrol cap was missing. We had left a man there looking after it but there were so many people, especially children in the area that anyone could have pinched it. We caused a great deal of interest and a crowd assembled but no petrol cap, so we went to the police station where they were quite efficient. The chief man rose from his afternoon siesta to give us the full efficiency of the Isfahan Police Force. We went to the Bazaar again but were unable to find anything; meanwhile the little man who had been watching the car was put under temporary arrest. We had to plead for his release, a few hours later. meanwhile we waited and eventually managed to acquire a new cap with a lock. The little man was released and we were 180 rials poorer.

Met Mohammed again and went to what must have been the most expensive restaurant in town. Before this we had another shopping spree and bought a sheepskin jacket and then bought fur hats. we went back to Mohammed's place to sleep; carpeted floors, rather hard as we had forgotten our lilos. We saw Mum but were not introduced. It was strange because in other places one is automatically introduced to Mum first. Rather queer toilet system again, elongated hole with watering can.

Sunday 18th August

Arranged to meet Mohammed later and Marcel went off with a Jordanian chap to change money. Ruth and i wandered around shops, bought 3 plates, Isfahan blue pottery; the trouble is one is spoilt for choice. Met charming German at the mosque in the square, in fact I took him for English. Met everyone else; English chap, Jo and German at the Aligapo Palace. Left mini permanently parked outside police station. We had now gathered quite a contingent. Went off again to see the inside of the mosque, one needed peace and time but we could get neither. Had lunch with Jordanian at his hotel, shish kebab the national dish, rice with meat on a skewer. Met everyone again after going with Marcel to buy sandals; what trouble, he's hopeless in practical matters and about as Yin as I am Yang. Mohammed insisted we went to see the Shaking Minaret, en route for swimming. Two tater ape-like men sat like prisoners in the minarets, rocking backwards and forwards. We went into the elusive swimming pool; it had become this after about 18 km although we had been told it was 6km. We drove out into the desert with not a sign of water or even a green plant and eventually came to an isolated pump station. We were amazed to see a pool of clean water. marcel plunged in just as the pump man arrived, who nearly had a heart attack when he saw the body in the water. We all grudgingly returned to the taxi and humped over another kilometer to the second pool; lovely cold water but s lot of weed at the bottom. Returned to Isfahan and had a great deal of trouble with taxi prices, we had been away three hours. Went for a last lemon and apple then set off by night for Teheran.

Drove about 100 miles, dreadful lorries dazzling and very straight roads. I nearly slept so we decided to camp till morning. Turned off the road into the desert and slept with Marcel between us. it was the coldest night we had had, even with jeans and sweaters, socks and sleeping bag, we were cold !

Monday 19th August

Set off again at 6am, later than intended and followed a monotonous road; bi-passed Sum and went on to Sarah (petrol). The road worsened on approach to Teheran and traffic also. The driving I think is as bad if not worse than Istanbul. Found English speaking policeman who directed us to Austin Co. Unfortunately it was a national holiday to celebrate the suppression of some revolution so everything was shut including the Austin place. Found British bank in same building and equally British bank official, Mr. Heaton who gave us a good idea of where everything was and also promised to find out about the money I was expecting in Teheran. Went uptown the university to enquire about staying there; arranged to meet someone at 3 pm. Went in search of exchange place and met Pakistani and three Germans who had been in Bagdad. We were introduced to another Pakistani, Nobori, alias Tiger who invited us to stay at his house. Marcel went off with the Germans to their hotel. Had refreshing shower at Tiger's house and met his mate called "Love Boy". The reason for this name being that he had fallen in love with an Iranian girl and she would not love him so he took poison and spent a few weeks in hospital. He still loves that girl ! Went up via American Club to Durban and Shimeran, high in the mountains near the Royal Palace. The streets were crowded and we had difficulty getting through with the Chevrolet, our second car now. Returned to American Club where we drank lemon juice and watched film, "the Huns", blood-thirsty. Returned to Tiger's place for sleep.

Tuesday 20th August

Left for Austin place. met Mr. Apcar, the Austin agent. He had a letter from Gerald to tell him to feed us with the national dish and to look after the Mini. Also saw Mr. Heaton who confirmed my money had come to the Central Bank. Went off to the bank where we were shunted from counter to counter for a couple of hours. Went to the American Club for some beer and provisions. met Mr. Apcar for lunch and sampled the national dish again, beautifully cooked rice mixed with butter and raw eggs, shish kebab on top with little cucumbers, chutney, onions etc. Ruth went off in search of Marcel with Mr. Apcar while we returned to Tiger's house. Had just started some washing when our Jordanian friend arrived and was invited in by our unsuspecting Pakistani friends. He persisted in wanting to come to England with us and I kept telling him it was out of the question. Eventually the Pakistanis came back and we decided to go swimming. The Jordanian was forced to leave but told me he'd come back at 8 pm. Went up to the American Club where we had the swimming pool practically to ourselves. I alone went in, lovely and cold. Came back to Tiger's place and drank about 15 cans of beer between us. It was during this time that the Jordanian came again. They told him in so many words to clear off but he persisted and returned about half an hour later. This time the boys got irate and there was nearly bloodshed. He claimed he had got persimmons from the Isfahan police to protect us, he want to find Ruth and other such rot. The third time he came he brought a local policeman and I heard the full-fledged battle from the back of the flat. Eventually he went ; thank goodness we have some protection ! Ruth came back late so missed all the fireworks. Spent a rather restless night , not from choice either. This is written with two of my fingernails squashed so it is probably illegible !

Wednesday 21st August

Took Mini first to Diesel White Co. outside Teheran near airport. Servicing expected to take one and a half days. Called in at airport to send off PCs to Fielder and Nichols . Drove in Chevrolet belonging to Yunis alias Mo Pakistani; it's wonderful having alternative transport. Went to the British Embassy to find out about exit permission. The building looked like a

relic from 17th century but British in character , of course ! The will move into a new building shortly. Went to the American Embassy for chicken and home for lunch. Rested during the afternoon on and off. Then went out in search of the Bazaar with Tiger and Yunis. The prices varied so much from shop to shop. Went mainly to silver shops and tried to buy a carpet. Tiger was offered a commission on selling one to me. He told them i worked at the Embassy so that the price dropped. Decided against it eventually. Bought a beautiful Persian miniature painted on ivory, a hunting scene, 10 pounds. I would have like two but price is rather high at present. Came back for delicious chicken curry. Ruth stayed away overnight at the same hotel as marcel and the Germans but had to sleep behind locked door.

Thursday 22nd August

Went to office for exit permits but since Ruth hadn't got her passport, we had to return to the hotel. We spent the entire morning filling out forms and waiting for permits. it was only because we smiled at them that we got the permits before Saturday. The offices open and close at will. Returned for lunch. My finger got slammed in the door of the Chevrolet at this point, so I'm rather handicapped, luckily it had rubber padding. Went up to the pool but my hand prevented me from doing much swimming. it also started blowing a gale and raining so we decided Mo, alias Yumin and I , return to Tiger's place. Went shopping after tea; bought two silver boxes and jewelry, and to top it all a carpet which Tiger and Lover Boy bargained for, for about an hour. Got it eventually for 14 pounds. Had some super cherry juice. Came back for last curry supper, they had become like brothers to me. Tiger gave me a cap his sister had made.

Friday 23rd August

We were half decided as to stay another day at least and I know Ruth didn't want to leave Marcel but she persisted and came back from his hotel at 9 am. We all went out to buy some cane blinds that I wanted and also sent off a 21st birthday telegram to John. Had eggplant curry for lunch and reluctantly packed the car; it was another of those partings we hated making. had said goodbye to Marcel previously; he had travelled 1200 miles with us. I shall remember Mo for his expressions like " cotton pickin thing", "stinker" and a few other choice remarks. so we bid farewell about 4 pm and left Tiger's house to drive for the last time through that hair-raising traffic (11 road deaths per day in Teheran). Travelled through dry mountains, being Friday many people walking or in cars, odd assortment of people in scarlet dresses.

AbAli a mountain resort, heaps of picnickers, snow-capped mountains all around. There was genuine non-irrigated grass around, watered from the streams flowing from the high peaks, walnut trees and other covered the mountain slopes. At every corner there was another camping resort. Passed through several tunnels inside the mountains. Lovely scenery ; meadows by side of rivers, came down onto very fertile plain, rice growing in abundance, saw Caspian Sea in the distance.

As darkness fell we came to Shahi then onto corrugated dusty road. Stopped to inquire way and found some people out of petrol, so supplied them with the last of our Yugoslav petrol. We refused payment and they were delighted. Swampy area with hundreds of mosquitoes and other bugs so we were not eager to stop and pressed on to Babol where the good road started again. Ended up at Babolsan where we hit upon a hotel by chance called persian

Villa Hotel. We arrived out of the gloom to find two RAF types sitting with a French girl. Had enormous inner of fish, chicken, veal etc: and talked about the RAF in Iran. Comfortable night, shower water rather brown in colour with peculiar smell, so we probably ended up more dirty than clean !

Saturday 24th August

Left villa minus 400 rials, after scrambled egg breakfast, obviously RAF trained ! Took a look at the Caspian Sea and drove along its coast for about 200 miles. At first land was a bit scrubby with hundreds of cattle and horses, feeding at the sea shore, feeding at the sea shore. Definitely a virgin area with such a high humidity and rainfall, this coast line could be cultivated to be one of the richest agricultural areas in the Middle East. Along past fields of maize, jute, rice and cotton, mud villages with thatched roofs, sifting corn on road.

Mahmud Abad. Typical large village , very wild looking people who stare incessantly, although this is meant to be a tourist area. Sand dunes encroaching on land, need for agriculturalists ! The mountain then started coming down to the sea, thickly forested; wonderful change of scenery after deserts and plains. Visited citrus farm but no one there.

Ramsar. Very large European looking hotel where the King stays but it looks totally out of place in this ,yet undeveloped tourist spot. Tea plantations became more prevalent and we stopped at a tea factory where we saw the tea drying on racks, fermentation, heating and crushing of tea, mainly used locally.

Rasht. Child with hoop ran into the car, just not road conscious; I think he only bruised himself and was in shock but it caused a great crowd to gather and we felt very guilty. I was only going about 5mph. Found Iran Hotel where English speaking director of the local dairy introduced himself. He was also director of Pepsi Cola and other factories. He was very charming , his name Mr. Zaraly and after a drink of beer and putting the car in the garage, we went to look around the dairy.; made unsalted butter, yoghurt and ice cream. Small plant with heaps of room for expansion but the main problem is the cows just don't produce enough milk. Poor Mr.Zaraly wants to improve thing but is lacking in the knowledge and Government help. Went out to dinner with him and walked around the town, saw some wood-carving but nothing special.

Sunday 25th August

Had breakfast and met Mr. Zaraly again and he introduced us to other town officials; we had been over-charged about 10/- for use of shower which hotel manager had apparently put up with his own money, so we , as mugs, were expected to pay until Mr.Zaraly insisted he gave us our money back. left hotel and drove to see farm outside with Mr.Z; nothing special soya beans and melons. He wanted us both to stay and look around the Caspian and to help with the agricultural situation, even offering us a a partnership in the farm and dairy. left reluctantly to mountains; lovely scenery, pastures, rice fields and cattle, very like Austria. Road curved up and down mountains, became drier, old olive groves. Passed Karin Dam and reservoir, very impressive. Over dusty plain, monotonous to Qazvin (4,379 ft). Good road to Takistan where we met the first of endless gravel and dust roads; small mud villages again, vines, cotton etc; Met group of English going to Australia, family, the first of about four groups we met in two days. Seems we are going in the wrong direction ! Came through gorge and up mountain; stopped at cafe for tea and eggs; discovered our

first puncture. great deal of assistance in changing the tyre, in fact we didn't have to do anything. We drove on a few miles, drove off the road and slept in the car for the first time, not too uncomfortable, carpet helped as padding.

Monday 26th August

Set off at 5.30 am. Attractive scenery; cultivated valleys with lovely wild, and some cultivated flowers. The rain during the night had turned parts of the road into mud patches and heavy lorries coming through caused deep correlations which the Mini sank into. At one of these, Ruth said gaily, "take the middle," at which point we hit the sump hard on some rocks concealed in the mud. About 100 yards later the Mini stopped and refused to budge. The oil pressure dropped to 0 so we guessed that the fuel system was at fault. A passing lorry stopped and immediately noted the trouble, a flattened fuel pipe under the car. With the help of passing interpreters, our gallant lorry driver filed and reformed the pipe, helped by rubber hosing lent by a passing bus student from Brasenose College Oxford, on his way to Teheran and some more Australians heading home. Another trouble with the fuel pipe cause a further delay of an hour. Altogether these men took two hours and would accept no payment except the cost of the rubber hosing. Started again in front of the lorry; really difficult road, thick dust and many hairpin bends but the scenery was most impressive, red and orange mountains. Real tarmac for the last stretch to Tabriz.

Took car to garage for new fuel pipe and tyre repair. Met IranianGreek who helped interpret; Maurice

Chevalier-type, took us to his hotel for lunch, grilled ribs, very delicious. More gravel road, a lot under construction, corrugations and diversions. Met another couple of Australians heading for Sweden. They invited us to camp with them further along but we pushed on as it was only 5 o'clock. Met the four English chaps en route for Australia again. Started to rain heavily; villages, tobacco, sunflowers.

Khoy. Last stop in Iran for petrol. left as dusk was falling and hit our worst patch yet. A river of rain and water coming down the road towards us. At first it looked slightly flowed and it was only when we got into the torrent that we realized quite how dangerous it was. In 1st gear we seemed to be static with the road being washed away from under us. It's like a swimmer feel when he's trying to swim against the current. we tried one side and another and inch by inch the Mini crawled forward. By this time the bottom of the car was flooded and we prayed that the engine would not become like this as well. The water must have been two feet in places. For about one and a half miles we drove in this way, praying that the Mini would pull through. whenever any bit of land appeared out of the flood, it was generally covered in soft mud and our wheels couldn't get a grip. I think another few yards and we would have been finished. As it was a path of road appeared still with intermittent river patches. Met another car going downhill, we had been moving up. Came to riverbed over road where the road no longer existed; about 30 yards of heaped gravel with rushing water in between. we were just abandoning all hope of crossing when two Vis came across and a bus. They advised us with to go back to Khoy, which would have been impossible or to cross the river to the village, which seemed equally impossible, this while advising us to do one or the other and raising their hands in horror. When we suggested staying put, they left us to our fate. We decided to cross and did so fairly well, with the Mini performing like a tractor. On reaching the village it was obvious there was no cafe, even which put it on our very low level and the people looked extremely demented and hostile. As we were eating

the best solution, since darkness had fallen, an English voice came through the window and an English/ Indian by the name of Harold, introduced himself. When one of the headmen came at us menacingly with a snake, we weren't anxious to discover whether it was alive or dead, but since it looked horribly alive, we decided to make a retreat anywhere but stay in the village. Harold came with us to save his fate and we pressed on. Another few road subsidences until we reached what appeared to be the finish.

Another river flowing across the road with a steep drop of about 3-4 ft into it. We saw a jeep which had got stuck so decided it was too dangerous; at the same time the Mini gave her indication too by producing a flat tyre. A passing jeep helped with the puncture and told us they'd help us across the river. We lifted and slid Mini to the river where she promptly stuck in the gravel. With the help of one in and six out we pushed her out and drove across the river bed. The rest had to wade through the mud and the water. Eventually reached fairly solid ground, occasional rough patches. Came suddenly across a sign reading "H. Park." it was glorified cafe-hotel but it seems to be trying and we had the offer of food and sleep so we stayed. Delicious eggs and tomatoes. Room next to store room, i.e. people coming through all night, rats in the roof and other creepy-crawlies, WC without W, outside quite hygienic in mud surroundings, washed ourselves in pool with frogs. Slept very very well !

Tuesday 27th August

Arrived Maku and got our first view of Mt. Ararat, the mountain where Noah was supposed to have landed from the ARK. It is an impressive mountain, purple hills capped with snow-laden summit, quite a climb !

Iran customs and border. Same trouble over rooms, we were shifted around like sheep. Said farewell to Harold, ; he had been an unexciting companion to say the least ! quite pleasant but we didn't feel he was worth the inconvenience of fitting in a third person.

Turkish border. Very individual attention, wanted us to stay, so much to stay for. We sat and waited for the cloud over Mt. Ararat to clear but it didn't so we reluctantly moved on. Dogubayazit. Reached 10,000 miles on our gauge but it gave up at this point so have to rely on AA route. First minaret, feel like home or at least familiar. Wonderful wild flowers along route, these continued while we remained in the mountainous districts, it was a pity we didn't have longer to examine them. Agir. Very military town as was the whole of this area, being so close to Russia, about 40 miles, it is a very strategic point. We kept passing military vehicles, man and machine the whole time. Had one shower of rain which semi-washed the car, she was still covered in mud. Climbed grass-covered mountains and stopped at cafe. Group of men in car insisted on washing the Mini and giving us chai and cigarettes. Passed military convoy on way down, the first of many; the soldiers could never believe their eyes at seeing two females alone in a car. We waved gaily on passing and nearly caused several army collisions. After Tahir, road good, metalled type in true Turkish style, a few pot-holes here and there. Rich valley grasslands with good-looking cattle and sheep, barley, potatoes and sugar beet.

Pazinler. Here we were meant to pick up a military escort but it never appeared, instead we joined a convoy of army lorries which seemed the next best thing. This place seemed to produce little else but soldiers.

Erzurum. 6,300 ft, we found the atmosphere extremely cold and it got colder through the evening. Found Hotel Gur Palms; not very savory but help with unloading the car.

Interpreter turned up in form of Turkish Army officer. nearly everyone here is connected with the army; out of 90,000 inhabitants, 30,000 are army. We nearly tried to stay at an officer's club in mistake for the hotel. Unloaded all our stuff, half upstairs, half down. Mini stay at side of the hotel. Invited out to officers' clubfoot meal, hotel manager furious we weren't eating at his place. Food rather greasy and cold, especially as we had begun to feel the climate at 6000 odd ft. We had attempted to have a shower but the water was ice cold and we would have frozen. had to wear sweaters as it was. A band with mainly twist selection and the officers' children dancing apart from Ruth, provide our entertainment. Hotel keep kept bothering us and eventually told us we would have to leave, apparently this was a form of protection for us. We protested and a better English-speaking chap persuaded the hotel to have us, just as we'd made up our minds to leave anyhow. The bickering continued for about an hour, all we wanted to do was sleep ! Eventually stayed and refused offer of officers to stay with them. had chatter a great deal about Russian border; all the one officer did was to look through binoculars at Russian maidens bathing in a lake between the borders. Apparently the two countries hate each other and Russia is scared of Turkish aggression if it is ever used.

Wednesday 28th August

The hotel proprietor paid our breakfast, must have been trying to make amends. Took car to have puncture repaired and bumped into the German boys who we'd seen in Bagdad and Teheran, we thought they were in Pakistan. They are traveling the same route so we'll probably meet them again. Bought some rope and fruit and tried to leave but a minor army maneuver was in progress; guided missiles, tanks, guns etc: We were stopped by soldiers and police so we watched the procession. left by another way half an hour later. Fair road of asphalt, interesting drive, at first hills with fat cattle in pastures, potatoes, barley, sugar beet and lucerne.

Alkali. More army in convoy and based; model of atom bomb in ground and toy missiles. Mountain pass 8,000 ft. Stopped for lunch and to view flowers; wild michaelmas daisies and californian poppies. Car stopped and gave us some cakes, typical wayside hospitality, pleasant avenue of poplars.

Baylrt. More army, parade with band and cavalry (took illegal distant picture ). More mountains , evidence of landslide across road, not very pleasant in winter.

Gumuisave. Attractive alpine-type mountain town with apples and walnuts in plenty. Then started, I think, the steepest drive of the journey to the Zigana pass 6,600 ft, barely worth a mention by the AA but a terrifying road, well built but so high and twisty, it seemed never ending, almost appeared over clouds. Lovely views, stunted oaks, blackberries and mountain flowers, azalea bushes covering mountainsides, must be a wonderful sight in spring. There was a mist when we reached the top, sheep being dissected. Hesitated about going down, but it turned out to be fairly light but rather cold, cloudy for the rest of the journey. Steep and windy descent, my mind was going round in circles. Alpine-type villages, some friendly, others a bit hostile. Maika. tobacco drying, maize used as prop for bean growing. Arrived at the Black Sea, at last !

Trabazon. Hotel Ural Palms. Interpreter in form of hotel boy. Put Mini in communal garage and went to cafe across the street, served with best attention and food. Two Americans came in and sat down, as they said, in passing and guessed we were either English or German. They are serving 15 months with the US RAF in Trabazon and don't they know it !



We had an unending commentary about how awful the thought Turkey was, how Turks threw rocks at them and how it was a worse existence than in Siberia. Apart from this depression, we had quite a pleasant evening. Came back to the hotel for tea when the hotel proprietor looked so disapprovingly, really turned sour. When we came down the next morning, he was all smiles, this chaperoning spirit again. The hotel is mentioned in the AA as the best in Trabazon but like all Turkish hotels, falls well beneath English standards.

Thursday 29th August

The boys came early since we had promised them a swim, it was both their birthdays and anyhow we had intended to swim in the Black Sea. Spent the morning lazing in and out of the water; it caused a great crowd to gather and stare at these strange English girls. The Turkish women bathe in special dresses, they would do better in swimsuits. Dropped the boys at the Air Base above the town and set off on a good road for a bit, then it deteriorated to worse than bad; winding in and out the coast, dusty and dangerous at corners, over match-work bridges. Interesting scenery though, mainly hazelnut woods, the main produce of this area. Along the shore of the sea which really has black sand; tobacco, olives and figs. At every village, thousands of hazelnuts being sorted and dried.

Al Gorele. The whole town, streets, pavements and everything devoted to space for nut drying. More alpine scenery as we climbed a few mountains and descended to the sea again. This coastline would have great potential if the road was good. Road up after Kesao; very bad potholes and no warning signs, we hit one very badly coming over small hillock just a gap looming up, it almost swallowed up the Mini. They are trying to build a road; patches of gravel surface, more potholes. This must be the worst road we had yet passed.

Giresun. More road works. Ordu. Found Hotel Selim Palms, hoped for an early night but in vain; Lancashire voice sounded as if we were leaving for food, ex-Merchant Navy type working on radar equipment on mountain top near Ordu. Came to cafe with us and paid because he said it was worth it to have some English conversation. Seems that he got along with the Turks very well, had friends all over town, i.e. cut above the Americans, they are so tactless. Spent a pleasant evening drinking coffee and talking about Hotel Berlin in Ankara where most of the people seemed to be hermaphroditic. Hotel proprietor very funny, walked around in leather jacket and never shaved. We left Mini locked up in nut factory.

Friday 30th August

Our nut friend came and we had breakfast, some trouble about getting billed instead of raw eggs. Went round to the nut factory where nuts were graded and cracked and put into 80kg bags for England and Germany. They will apparently last 5 months, opened; some go to the Cadbury factory. We ate enough nuts until we were nearly sick and again had to leave but not before a large crowd of people saw us off, including a group of English working for the Marconi Company. Gave us a sort of nut paste. Good metalled road along coast, more nuts, small stitches of gravel than good road again.

Unye. Very good over coastal plain; cattle, maize, houses on stilts, floods?

Samsun. Festival in progress, anniversary of Ataturk's freedom of Turkey from Greeks; flags, very gay. More gravel road, this time worse than ever, large rocks scattered indiscriminately around to form road surface; it was like travelling on a rough mountain side

for 50 miles. Road works added to the hazards, wooded patches on mountains then typical central Turkish feature-less brown hills with scrub bushes. Steep climb into pass, had lunch on top.

Hause. Good metaled road for about 12 miles then dust again and very sharp stones for another 60 miles. Corum. roadworks again, corrugated gravel, fertile valley, vines and millet.

Sungurlu. Found Hotel Erol Palms, the only one in the village; some French-speaking man tried to invite us out for dinner but we evaded all invitations and dined across the street. Good meal of stuffed egg-plants, liver kebab and shish kebab. The festival was still in progress; men with drums and clarinets march through the streets and boys carrying lighted torches, also a fireworks display; if we hadn't been so tired, we would never have got to sleep !

#### Saturday 31st August

Had some good fried eggs for breakfast. Started one dusty road again, road works with some soft earth to plough through. Photo of peasants, very bright costumes, gave them Agripas ashtray, which was fair exchange for photo, and melon they gave us. Lots of buses en route, we were covered in dust. Bi-passed Delicce Started onto tarmac rather skeptically as these generally never last long. Barren hills until Ankara which we also bi-passed. had stop for lunch in pine forest where we had a general dust out.

Bohi. Stopped to buy blackberries, they were delicious. Quite heavy traffic to Izmir. Crossed again on ferry to Istanbul. Felt like coming home. Arrived at hostel where we were immediately recognized but some trouble about being put up since they are expecting 65 English men. Eventually they issued us with a room for two with lovely soft beds, bought for the English. The whole place had been specially decorated for the occasion. Went to have meal in cafe downstairs, met an English chap on motorbike, nothing special but entertained by our lurid Persian tales. Viewed Blue Mosque at night.

#### Sunday 1st September

The first day we really have been by ourselves and able to relax. Being Sunday, unlike other Turkish towns Istanbul seemed dead and closed. The garage for Mini as well so we came back to the hostel and were told that the Patron or Big Boss had ordered us out and that it was now to be a Men's hostel and that we'd only been allowed there one night under special concession. We argued and the other chaps wanted us to stay but in vain. We agreed to move to Girl's hostel down the street. Spent the day at the other hostel on the balcony, writing letter and diaries. The English never turned up, although the Sazu man rushed about all day dressed up in a suit, brushing against the fresh paint and cursing the English. had lunch at cafe off Taksim Square and returned again to the hostel. Went to Blue Mosque for sit and sketch and again later for a photo of the moon behind the minaret. Retired early as Ruth has a cold . Met girl called Eve who we've agreed to take to Salonica.

#### Monday 2nd September

Took Mini to garage and tried to change money without success, just no black marketeers

around. Went to Bazaar and bought; goat hair rug 7 pound, swede jacket 7 pounds, leather suit 12 pounds, cuff links 1 pound, gold necklace 2 pounds, Phew ! Got some good bargains but spent a lot of money. Had lunch at Bazaar cafe. Met carpet man again. Went to get Mini from garage 4 pound, but she's clean and fit again. Rang up Swedish man to put him off date tonight. Went up to Taxim Square for last meal at cafe with draught beer. Went to Blue Mosque and met up with Cambridge chap, very English but not at all studentish.

#### Tuesday 3rd September

Eve slept with us last night so we could make an early start. Man with key to laundry cupboard in hostel had not arrived so we had to wait until he came, to collect our luggage. Set off at last plus Eve and skin/pottery drum which was beaten at intervals throughout the journey. Ruth had lost her voice so the journey was somewhat quietened with intermittent scribbles for communication. Same road, slightly improved, sunflower harvesting in progress. Dreadful road 20 miles before Edirne. Stopped for shish kebab.

Turkish customs. Ages to wait, some poor devils being turned back to Alexandropolis for visas, after hitching to Edirne. We waited for about an hour while the officials got more and more futile. Clock back: one hour.

Over border to Greek customs; totally different, made us feel really welcome except one who was offended when I refused to change my Turkish money, poor rate of exchange. Went on bad road along River Eurotas to Didymoteicho, improved; mulberry trees, tobacco, maize, lucerne, cotton.

Alexandropolis. Memories of Greek police last year. Oliver across plain to Comotini. Darkness fell as we passed Kanala, so we pulled up at camp 50 miles outside of Salonika.

#### Wednesday 4th September

Left camp. Very jolly crowd of 8 Americans and other jolly Greek teenagers were too much for us weary travelers so we made haste for Salonika. Dropped Eve and our passports for visas at Yugoslav frontier. Arrived lunchtime at Institute (where I had stayed a couple of years before). Welcomed by Mrs Kokolyos who invited us to stay and Magda, who's grown fatter; in fact everyone here seems to have. Went off to sea with person who was in charge of the rice section when I was here before. Past Trade, she's staying in a hotel near the beach and sea, no change and cafe at hand. Went to see Poppy on return; she now has an American accent and phraseology after her year in the States but is fluent in speech. Unfortunately she under an attack of dysentery or something similar and having terrible injections to cure it. It was excellent being able to speak with her, especially as she now understands the subtitles of the English language.

#### Thursday 5th September

Went to Salonika taking Mrs K and dear Functie; he is a little horror and it was all Mrs K could do to restrain us from giving him the beating he really deserves. Went to call on Mrs K's sister who has spent most of her years in America and was very envious of "us young things". We collected our Yugoslav visas without any trouble and changed money at the

Central Bank. Returned home and cooked egg and chip lunch, meal home style. Spent the afternoon at the beach, gleaning a little of the sun we so badly need now. Returned back but Poppy was out. Cleared out library and sorted our things.

#### Friday 6th September

Mr.K had returned during the night and was delighted to see us. Ruth discovered her glasses had disappeared, so long search began, even to beach of previous day. Started off for Athens rather late, good road. Picked up German hiker en route for Larissa. Flat plain; cotton, jute, tobacco, sugar beet, lucerne, the latter proves the extent of irrigation program, far more than in previous years. Passed Mt. Olympus, a bit of snow on top; olives, figs, apples, tobacco drying houses and factory. Had to pay 40 drachmas toll for motorway, a bit steep! Through valley with Springs of Daphnia, at which we didn't stop. Had some cakes in Larissa and bought fruit. Picked up another hitchhiker near Larissa, very pleasant chap who was some distant relative of Brenda Hargreaves (Jersey and Malvern), small world again! Part of road up mountains being repaired and diversion past Lamia. New road to Athens on which we had to pay a further toll of 20 drachmas, really a cheek there's little alternative. Arrived Athens and went in search of optician and oculist. Decided to stay at Youth Hostel the night as Ruth's appointment took all evening. Met SB (Sutton Bonington) boy on motorbike (Istanbul) again. Had supper round corner, some trouble over beds so had to sleep on the landing.

#### Saturday 7th September

Ruth's glasses took only two hours to make so we went shopping with new hitchhiker (SB) called Dave. Bought some sandals and a dress for Sue. Nearly got had up for parking in front of bank. Started off for Sounion, went down the Cape looking for a suitable bathing place, found one fairly near with some trees and beach. Spent the afternoon swimming and bathing, plenty of rocks for use of goggles and flippers. Ruth met an octopus and we saw some Greeks hunting them, all we really lacked was a harpoon. Cooked curry. Disturbed about 1.30 am by lorry-load of intruders, noisy Greeks. Before this we had seen the sun setting at Cape Sounion, together with about 100 other people, really it was a farce and quite funny watching the sun go down, it was lovely though if you forgot the other people.

#### Sunday 8th September

Viewed the arrivals of last night, one large family; we were able to get our own back as we disturbed them in their afternoon nap time. Spent the day bathing until about 3 when we departed for Athens. Went on part of a new road to Corinth, further toll of 10 drachmas. Had lemonade at cafe in lemon and orange groves, plant of melons for sale and grapes. Arrived Napoleon in time for further sunset. The Youth Hostel guy remembered us from last year. Now no eggs or supplies, unfortunately. The place was full, they seem to have expanded since last year. met German and Chiran who joined us for a fish supper on the waterfront. Ruth splashed out on a blue wool dress. English nurse working in tourist shop, helping Greek Revolutionary movement.

#### Monday 9th September

Met German and Chilean again and they agree to come to Toson. Said goodbye to Dave; he had been quite funny at times, especially with his talks about salesmanship experiences. Went to beach at Toson, where we stayed for the rest of the day. Camped at camp site near village, rather windy. Pleasant group of Germans in very exclusive camping set-up. Almost impossible to fix tent, against prying wolves on the other side of the fence.

#### Tuesday 10th September

Had morning at Toson, then left around 11 before the sun got too high. Bought a basket in Argos (20 drachmas), where they were making them. Bought also two bottles of wine near Neuneas (54 drachmas). Stopped in Corinth for some cakes, place crawling with British people, no longer wave at friendly while lettering. Went on part of the new National Highway again, turned off for Thebes. Mountain scenery, olives, pines etc. Stopped at cafe for cheese and ?. Their supper arrived off bus; one dead sheep so mutton tonight! Through plain of Thebes, patchwork of brown and yellow, ploughed and unploughed bare wheat fields; took cine of cotton pickers. Arrived Delphi where we put up at Youth Hostel. Couple of Scots girls in room. They really thought they were being adventurous by hiking in Greece. It makes us feel rather superior when we casually mention visiting Iran. Had supper of toasted cheese at hotel Delphi's, together with Scots and Australian girl. Looked around shops but found that things have become very second-rate after Persia. It really does spoil you in certain respects.

#### Wednesday 11th September

Had the best breakfast of our trip; ground coffee, eggs and honey and beautiful fresh bread. Stopped in Arachova to look at rugs but only bought a shirt (55 drachmas). The road is being improved in places, sometimes a little hazardous. Stopped in Lavadira to go to the bank. Road to Lamia very deserted, in fact four petrol stations that we tried, were closed, everyone using the coast road now. Long climb up and down mountains onto plain near Lamia; pampas grass, cotton, millet and maize. Onto new road again. Had lunch at sea near Katerini. Met two non-depressed American GIs, who thought Greece was primitive and had only got as far as Istanbul in Turkey, because the roads were so bad. They had been intending to go to Israel, not very adventurous, Americans never are! Arrived back at Salonika. Went to bed early, director in bed with fever and stomach trouble.

#### Thursday 12th September

Went round Institute after doing our washing etc: it took ages to see and talk with everyone, generally along the same lines; same news, same questions. Looked around vegetable experiments with Mr. Dweruras; they have expanded during the last two years. Went to sea after lunch and stayed till 6. Decided to go with Poppy and Mrs P to International Fair in Salonika; thousands of people crowding there. British stand where USA was last year; mainly cars, washing machines, Hoovers and textiles, not very exciting! We ate hot dogs and drank beer in bohemian fashion and only viewed a few of the exhibits.

#### Friday 13th September

Went to Institute to collect tomato and other seeds for Ruth to take back to Wellesbourne,

said goodbye to all and sundry at same time. did some shopping in Salonica, including one hour at American Express waiting for Ruth's money and one hour listening to records. Went also to the Austin garage hoping to have fuel gauge mended but it is completely broken. Ruth having a another attack of dysentery. Spent afternoon packing and sorting everything, not so much as we first thought. Went to Poppy's for supper and met two of her Americanized Greek friends.

#### Saturday 14th September

Left Institute after taking photos all round, and Salonica for the third time, Always feels slightly nostalgic, seems almost like another home. passed through Evzori to Greek customs, slight hold-up. Onto Yugoslav customs. met two Australian girls in a Mini who had had their windscreen smashed by a small boy throwing a turnip, very pleasant ! Road very good along Vardavalley; olives, lucerne, maize and heaps of red peppers drying on sides of houses, mulberries, and cotton. Road bad for about 20 km as new autobahn under construction. When we got onto it , it was a fantastically constructed road along the narrow gorges of the Vondor. Tito Velds , pleasant little town on side of mountains, minarets still in evidence. We got slightly lost in finding autobahn again and Skopje we bi-passed; few signs of earthquake but it was impossible to tell. Had some apricot juice in Kumanova , hills and pastures quite like England, maize cut green, some good fat cattle, many black figs. I was beginning to feel the effects of the long drive and very little sleep, sort of dysentery and tiredness combined. Nis. found pleasant camp site in sort of park but feeling too wretched to do anything but crawl into my tent and sleep.

#### Sunday 15th September

Left camp across rolling countryside; tobacco, maize, meadows etc: millet and lucerne. Met a man carrying a double bass, no reason in the middle of nowhere ! Diversion off autobahn through village Smedosseva, where some sort of fair was taking place. Alongside R. Sava, peach orchards and bank holiday traffic. Passed straight through Belgrade onto monotonous autobahn , although it seemed quite interesting after the desert. General assembly in progress, flags of all nations. Stopped at petrol station where we exchanged road conditions with American-Persian and American who were heading that way with no route in mind ! Arrived Zagreb as evening approached and got lost in traffic and town; helpful but more hindering police. Found camp amidst misty willow trees attached to park, where we had to walk through a restaurant to get to the showers, which were warm ! Washed hair to celebrate and retired in damp bed.

#### Monday 16th September

Left camp on very pleasant rural road; churches, villages and farmhouses, very attractive and becoming more Austrian each mile. We stopped to dig up autumn crocuses. Selina. pleasant country town, more individual farms with joint cultivations around villages. Varazdin. flat plain with jute, potatoes, marrows and hops. Maribor. thatched cottages, vines and prominent shrines.

Yugoslav- Austrian border. Very quiet, no trouble or time wasted. Stopped for lunch soon after in meadow. Went round Graz about a dozen times trying to find a way out. We find that Austrian towns are badly signposted. Hay meadows and mountains giving way to

orchards, lucerne and green maize near Brick.

Vienna. Arrived in rush hour. In guide book it says Vienna is an easy city to get to know but we found different; no signposts and the street names unreadable until we were upon them. We had a great problem in reading any sign and got lost several times. Found Youth Hostel eventually, quite a long way out of the city in a park. Rather more exclusive than normal run of hostels, more select bunch of hostellers. Went down town in search of food; had frankfurter and beer in expresso bar; not like English one, quite a lot of elderly people reading newspapers. Returned to sleep with one Lebanese and nine Australian girls. We were sleeping in wrong beds and got into a row about this, really two rules in these German- Austrian hostels.

Tuesday 17th September

Parked car near Homburg and walked through Rose Gardens to Franz Joseph Plaza. Found queue into Spanish Riding School, joined it and got seats for an unexpected performance. Some unknown VIPs had arrived and the performance was put on specially. The whole display was given to the music of Strauss and Mozart; really a wonderful place with chandeliers and superb horsemanship. The whole could have been in an 18th Century ballroom, apart from the sawdust floor. I was really transfixed by the haute evoke and could have watched them for ever. We wandered around some expensive shops, things not as exciting as we had thought, so no real incentive to overspend. Had expensive but good meal of veal with various spices in an expresso-type bar, then collected Mini and drove to Shroneburn Palace, which again we had difficulty finding. Wandered around after beer at cafe, through long avenue flanked by beech trees and ending in Neo-Clissic statues in fountains. Walked around a very dirty zoo, partly to kill time and partly because we lacked initiative or energy to do anything else. Went back to hostel where we read and cooked supper in the car park. Talked to German travelling with Australians and Lebanese, he has been around the world four times and says that Indonesia is the place to see.

Wednesday 18th September

Had breakfast with Lebanese, Australians, German and two Americans on stoves in car park, much to the amusement of hotelier. Started off out of Vienna, got lost for the umpteenth time. Found autobahn, beech and spruce woods. Stopped in Milk for food, large monastery on hill. Started off again along this fairly mountainous road, rather misty so there was not much of a view.

Arrived Salzburg. Found Youth Hostel but it was locked up so again wandered through the town. Bought some shorts for Simon 30/-. Stopped in cafe for Vienna Snitzel, veal done in batter, delicious but expensive. Returned to Hostel, heaps of beds and very regimented. The whole place was not at all welcoming and closed early.

Thursday 19th September

Left Hostel after wakey-wakey radio wakening us at 6.30, Ugh! Drove slowly through mountain valleys and lakes to St. Wolfgang. Very pleasant spot situated on lakeside with famous White Horse Inn situated in the middle. Sat in a cafe on the side and drank coffee while a small band came and played Austrian music as they drank liters of beer. Took

photos of them and they took one of Ruth. Returned back to Salzburg leisurely. Went to see West Side Story for my second time, sub-titles in German and much of the sound was reduced but otherwise good. Found half a camp, one with facilities but no campers on the Muneiben road. The people there thought we were a bit odd but laughed good heartedly when we agreed to stay. it was situated near a swimming pool with changing rooms etc: rather damp night !

#### Friday 20th September

Left Salzburg and crossed into German, on autobahn for the rest of the way; woods, fields, rather monotonous except it gets you there at a fair speed. Stopped in wood for lunch, away from road. Looked around Munich for Auerhues but have wrong address so gave up and found Youth Hostel instead; quite a large and modern place but very stiff hours, not allowed into bedrooms until 8pm and had to be out by 8 am. Cooked curry for supper and went to bed after having looked around the shops in Munich.

#### Saturday 21st September

Met American who spoke German fluently and he offered to come with us to see the processions at the start of the October Beer Festival which we were fortunate to be in Munich, at the time. Wandered around Muenchen to Hoffburg Haus, a beer house where everyone had already started drinking in earnest. Long parlors with flagstones and long refectory tables and benches, where red-faced Bavarians sat down with foreigners to liters of beer. The upstairs of the has reminded me of a mediaeval manor house with shields and coats of arms decorating it and very long banqueting , now drinking, halls. The beer is drunk with salted figure of eight buns. Returned to the centre to watch the procession of beer haus taveners, each brewery had a separate float drawn by large, Suffolk-Punch type roan stallions. They were magnificently decorated in shining harnesses with metal pieces all over. The floats mainly consisted of beer barrels, surrounded by beer maidens in white blouses and pinafore dresses waving beer mugs and throwing flowers. Between the floats were brass bands, players dressed in Tyrolean costumes carrying various old arms of the beer houses they represented. This was very much in true Bavarian spirit; few other places would celebrate for one month over beer !

We bought a pair of shoes from a shop called Salamander, very rash but the shoes and clothes in Munched are superb. Stopped in beer haus /cafe for lunch and had translation of the menu by a German lady whose daughter had married a US serviceman. Had soup typical of Bavaria; pigs liver with dumpling floating in it, flooded by roast pork and potatoes. Went onto the Beer Festival which was a sort of Battersea on a more entertaining level. Centred around beer gardens , there was a bevy of funfare amusements and meat and cheeses for sale. I had a liter of beer and it nearly finished me off. Most people spend a day drinking 10 or more of these. We were there during the afternoon only, but by evening things must have really started to liven up. Went back to the hostel where we met a group of four from England and two Australians again. Retired early.

#### Sunday 22nd September

Some students at the hostel were doing Bavarian dancing so took a cine film of them. Long time in leaving. Stopped on way out to visit Botanical Gardens; good selection of tropical



and water plants and superb display of Chrysanthemums and Michaelmas Daisies. Along autobahn through monotonous countryside; potatoes, sugar beet, woods and pastures. A rain shower, the first for some time, just allowed us to clean the windscreen. Bi-passed Stuttgart and other towns. Crossed river Rhine to Strasbourg and France, last but one frontier. Discovered my green card insurance had expired so forced to spend 15/- on special two day insurance, a detail that I had overlooked. Found Youth Hostel fairly easily; a modern building with the best facilities we have met yet. Excellent gas rings for cooking, hot showers! and rooms not overcrowded. Met Japanese family walking through Europe!, ex-judo teacher and wife with boy and girl aged around 7-9. Also African-American and English chap staying with French family, all very cosy. Ate enormous curry, it was painful being so full.

Monday 23rd September

Acquired some excellent croissants and butter first time for breakfast. Had to sweep the floor in lounge for hostel duty but only took 5 minutes. Heavy mist all round bordering on fog which hindered our progress with fairly heavy traffic as well; hops, green maize, and sugar beet. Road led through valley of the Rhine, Moselle and Meuse but it was too misty to see anything. Mist cleared at Sarrebourg, woods and meadows very pleasant but US Army in great evidence everywhere. Luneville. Vines and orchards, Friesian cattle. Had lunch near Lingo en Bravos; Charolais cattle herd and mistletoe on crab apple trees.

Rheims. Our first stop was to see the champagne factory of Pommery; saw stages of process. After fermenting grapes and squeezing out juice, wine is bottled and stored for four years horizontally at 50 degrees F in cellars. There were 120 cellars of this stage alone. Apparently about 2% break due to internal combustion. Then bottles stored half-vertically for six weeks, being turned slightly everyday by one man (30,000 bottles per day), until sediment falls to bottom. Then the bottles are stored upside down until the sediment settles on the cork (period varies). The bottles are then put in a freezing water bath and sediment frozen to cork, after which the cork is removed by a man who replaces it with a new cork and bottle topped up with more wine and contents sniffed. Cork then secured with wire. Sugar is added according to desired sweetness from 2-7%. Ordinary sucrose dry champagne has no sugar added. Bottles again stored horizontally for varying periods depending on fate of champagne. Tasted and tested against the light at varying intervals. Hoisted up to daylight on basket pulley. Bottles in nearly 2 million batches. The cellars were about 180ft below ground and the temperature was kept at natural 50 F. 12 miles of underground tunnels are named after the world's capital cities. Fungus growing over all the walls, high humidity. Several sculptures done in chalk on walls. Walked upstairs again to see packaging and labelling of bottles which ranged from half-pint to two gallon in size. No free samples unfortunately!

Found tourist information near cathedral; met friendly woman who wanted to go on cargo ship to Istanbul. Went round cathedral, rather disappointing; Gothic structures, high vaulting and arches. Superb windows at west end of nave, tapestries depicting New Testament scenes. Group of very English tourists from Devon in tourist shop; really Women's Institute types on two day outing, we really are near home! Found Youth Hostel in poor area but friendly warden, who helped unload car roof; not very full as hostels go but could have done with a coat of paint! Cooked eggs and beans. Met Scottish chap, ex-Merchant Navy, going to work in Switzerland.

Tuesday 24th September

Left Rheims. Undulating country to Soissons; mustard, sugar beet, green maize and potatoes. Lovely woods of beech which are so characteristic of this part of France. Stopped in Beauvais to look at cathedral; nice carved door but building under cleaning and reconstruction; large clock significant but looked out of place, several tapestries of hunting scenes. Beauvais was the centre of the tapestry industry. Cathedral of St.Pierre (1247-1272) reputed to be the loftiest in France; very lovely stained glass windows, blue predominating. Passed through Rouen and over river Seine. Stopped to post Marcel's parcel. Industrial valley, several chateaux. Took photos of Charollais and other cattle, mainly Normandie types. Cider orchards. it started to rain before Caen, quite heavily and the car leaked in places, obviously the sun has dried up rubber parts. Bi-passed Bateaux, although we had intended to visit the Tapestry. Arrived Cherbourg; rain stopped, lovely sunset. The Youth Hostel had been closed so we went to a Maison de Jeune where they found us a room for about 9/- bed and breakfast, very clean at Hotel Renaissance. We felt like tramps going in. Shared a bed in the attic, far better than it sounds !

Wednesday 25th September

Left hotel in good time after delicious coffee and rolls. Arrived at airport with the car a little sick. had played wait but got off about 12 with one other family. No trouble either side with customs. It was marvelous to be driving on the left again. home on terra firma again. Reached Three Gables about 1 pm, the end of an exhausting 11 weeks and over 11,200 miles !!!