

# **KATHMANDU THERE AND BACK AGAIN**

**The Illustrated Diary of a Student's  
Adventures on the Hippie Trail,  
Summer 1971**

**by**

**Peter D. Phillips**



**A Portrait of the Author as a Young Man (1970)**

**Revised Version with Additional Graphical Material**

DRAFT

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this diary to the memory of my parents David (1910-1987) and Gladys Phillips (1912-1993) who supported me in my plans to go on "the Hippy Trail" during the college holidays in summer 1971. My father, with whom I had a very ambivalent relationship, openly encouraged me and promised financial and other support should I get into "difficulties".

His father, 1479 Pte D Phillips (1868-1946), served in India with the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He took part in the Second Hazara Expedition to the NW Frontier – modern day Pakistan – from 1 March to 29 May 1891, a region I passed through 80 years later.

## **Acknowledgements**

In addition, I am indebted to Dick Gilbert who encouraged me with his constructive criticism to complete this work, gave excellent advice, proof-read and finally hosted this diary on his web site. Thanks also go to my cousin, John Skinner, for the loan of his rucksack, my constant companion during my 3 months "on the road". My good friend, Philipp Bachmann, generously allowed me to use previously unpublished photos of Northern India and Nepal which he took in that area during winter 1974/5, thus filling the large pictorial gap which resulted from the theft of my own camera. And last but not least the many tens, if not hundreds of fellow travellers, named and unnamed, who crossed my path in the Summer of 71.

## Foreword

Brought up in Hampshire I was a Physics undergraduate at Imperial College, London from 1969-72. Having spent the long vacation 1970 in the USA, I looked around for a "meaningful experience" for the following summer. A fellow student was going to New Delhi to visit his family and invited me along. Rather than fly Aeroflot via Moscow with him, I suggested I would travel overland and meet him in India.

So, equipped with a borrowed largish A-frame rucksack, a train ticket to Aachen to get me going, and a ticket for a student flight Mumbai-London to get me home, I set off from London's Victoria Station on Midsummer's Eve (20 June) 1971, and arrived back at Gatwick three months later, on September 1971. Incredibly badly prepared – looking back I am shocked at my naivety – but full of youthful enthusiasm (at least initially), my aim was to hitch, travel by bus or train (or whatever) to Kathmandu and get back to Mumbai in time for my flight home. What is more, I kept a diary, at first merely a few lines per day, later more detailed. I had never kept a diary before and never done so since.

Clearing out a lot of accumulated rubbish during the Covid lockdown, I came across the original two part diary. During the trip I had become such an avid writer, that the first diary was already full by Raxaul (August 26<sup>th</sup>) and I had to buy a "Sandhna Note Book" to cover the events of the last three weeks. I had digitised the whole of the diary whilst trying out my newly acquired "Atari" computer in 1986, and having given up any hope of converting the digital text into MS format, I printed it out on my dot matrix printer. I was able to scan the printout and using OCR save the text in Word format on my present computer. I also came across about 80 slides, 30 of which I decided were worth being professionally digitised.

I contacted Jonathan Benyon, owner of the "[Road to Goa](#)" [website](#) who suggested that I should "put it in order". Further encouragement came from Dick Gilbert who has published his [experiences driving to Tehran and back in a VW bus in 1970](#) .

So that gave me quite a bit of work. My aims were to:

1. Correct the OCR induced errors in the Word document
2. Correct obvious mistakes and replace old names with new (e.g.: Benares>Varanasi, Bombay>Mumbai)
3. Add a few pertinent comments from the letters I wrote home to my parents, 6 of which still exist (e.g. "toilet arrangements in the desert", and "the shower on the roof of the Palm Springs Hotel in Varanasi")
4. Add an account of the last few days, something I had always intended to do as soon as I got home. Amongst other things I checked whether the aircraft used on the Dan-Air flight from Copenhagen to Gatwick was a Comet. Adam from "[Dan-Air Remembered](#)" informed me that that was almost certainly the case.
5. Produce maps of the route indicating the transport used (thanks to Google)
6. Add a couple of Appendices about currencies, equipment, etc.
7. Anonymise various persons including my sister, who would not like to see her name in print.
8. Tone down certain comments which, acceptable as they were in 1971, are no longer appropriate
9. **What I did not want to do was alter the original style (e.g. phrases instead of sentences, mixture of past and present tenses). I wanted to reflect the "zeitgeist" (spirit of the age). This is definitely not a literary work.**

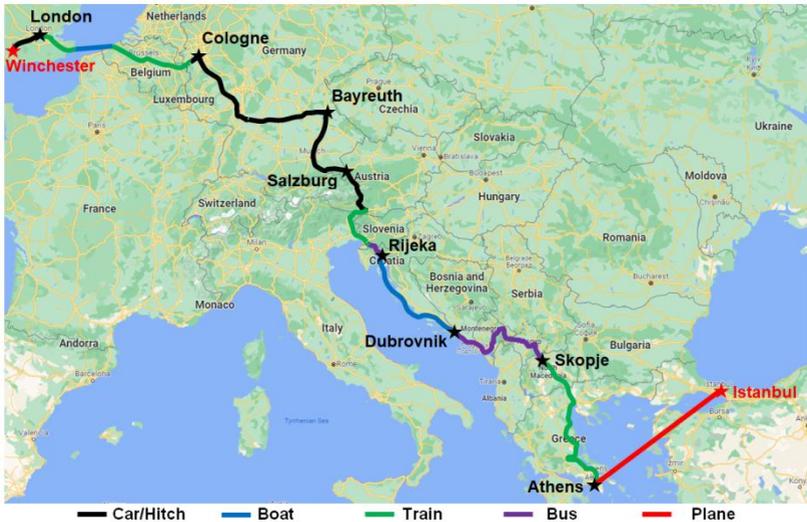
I used a rudimentary Kodak Instamatic (format 126, hence the square pictures). The original slides have stood the ravages of time remarkably well and I had them only recently [professionally digitised](#).

I would be delighted to hear from any person who may be able to identify themselves in the narrative.

Due to the fact that my camera was stolen, I have no photos after Srinagar. Since this diary was originally published, my good friend, Philipp Bachmann, has provided me with many personal photos taken in 1974/75. All pictures "East of Kashmir" are his property and reproduced here with his permission. Most of the views are of sites explicitly mentioned in the text. He also let me have the photo of a "Nepalese Double-Decker Bus" (page 81) which he took much later (2013). Whilst not being authentic to the time of my travels, TATA buses were omnipresent in the 1970s. Designs – and mode of travel – do not appear to have changed much in the meantime.

[Peter Phillips](#) March 2022

# PART I: Winchester – Istanbul



## Sunday 20 June 1971

Up at 6 a.m. and drove up to London in the pouring rain. Parents – and my sister (who is three years older than me) saw me off from Victoria. Sat next to a Scots girl from Glasgow and stayed with her to Ostend where she caught a different train. Boat crossing was not too bad but the train left Ostend 40 minutes late. Weather which had improved broke and it poured with rain. When I got to Aachen it was cold and wet. Comforted by the Germans in the compartment. Got to the Youth Hostel (in Aachen) very much relieved and shared room with 6 other English speakers. Rather noisy but slept well.

## Monday 21 June 1971

First drawback. Woke up to find my watch had had a fit and broken its spring. Hitched to Köln (Cologne) where I arrived about midday. Now times are only approximate. After seeing the *Dom*

(Cathedral), smelling the Rhine and buying some food. I met a young American boy who turned out to be a rather extrovert, capitalist, fascist etc. on holiday with his parents. Still he paid for me to climb the cathedral steps. Then went to Köln/Deutz J.H. (*Jugendherberge*: Youth Hostel) which was full and so I traipsed to the other one which is within smelling distance of the Rhine. Talk about Eau de Cologne. Met a guy from Bournemouth.

**Tuesday 22 June 1971**



**First night on the road. Youth Hostel Aachen**

Left Köln Youth Hostel in pouring rain and soon got a lift to the *Autobahn*. Stood there for 90 mins (during which time two other hitchers gave up) and was picked up by a van which dropped me on

the outskirts of Bonn. After a short detour via the British Embassy (reason is unclear) and a longish wait the other side of Bonn travelled by lorry. Unfortunately, this dropped me well away from the *Autobahn* but after two other short lifts made Koblenz around 3 p.m. Here again I met misfortune as the J.H. was full. So I crawled into a (not so) cheap hotel for bed and *Frihstück*. Visited the *Schloss* and relaxed in the beautifully sunny evening.

### **Wednesday 23 June 1971**

Up early, went for walk before breakfast. Paid for room 10 DM and hitched south towards Wiesbaden. Here there was no traffic so I hitched back North to Koblenz and took *Autobahn* south past Frankfurt (traffic jam) to Wurzburg, most of the way in an Ford Anglia van driven by a man from Coventry. I liked the look of Wurzburg so I made for the J.H. which was full. I took a tram out to Heidingsfeld and booked in at the J.H. which was full of school kids from Frankfurt. Monotony of company was relieved by the arrival of a Swede who spoke good English and German.

### **Thursday 24 June 1971**

Longest Day! Went into Wurzburg with the Swede and spent the day looking around, photographing and generally relaxing/sunbathing. Very hot day — thank goodness I'm not hitching today. Returned to the J.H. for tea at 6 p.m. and had the evening to myself as everyone else (practically) had disappeared into Wurzburg for a disco.

### **Friday 25 June 1971**

I hitched across country to Bayreuth. It took me 5 lifts, one in an American G.I.'s car. He was very kind and took me on a conducted tour of Bamberg. The last hitch into Bayreuth brought me to Dorle's door where, despite the fact they had not received my letter, I was well received. (Dorle had shared a room with my sister during her stay at the University of Erlangen. We had last met in Miami a year earlier when I was Greyhounding around the USA)

I like non-Autobahn hitching – you can see Germany as it really is. I was particularly struck by a) women driving tractors and that b) the use of horses instead of tractors is not uncommon. Went on a short tour of Bayreuth, cashed a traveller's cheque and had a bath, which was very welcome.

**Saturday 26 June 1971**



**Western civilisation. Eremitage, Bayreuth**

Got up at 9 a.m., my latest yet and tried to hitch to Berlin. (I am no longer sure why I wanted to go to Berlin at all. In fact it was in the wrong direction completely. Maybe it was because, not for the last time, I was wondering if I really wanted to go to India at all.) Hoping for a lift right through I turned down several shorter ones and

in the end after three hours, sometimes in the rain, I got nowhere and so I hitched back to Bayreuth. Went sightseeing with Dorle around Bayreuth and climbed a tower to the north of the city. Visited the *Festspielhaus* and other noteworthy buildings. Watched German television in the evening and I was impressed only by the efficient dubbing of Yankee material.

### **Sunday 27 June 1971**

It rained. Good day food wise. Visited the *Eremitage* in the afternoon – with everyone. Again, I watched television which was not particularly interesting.

### **Monday 28 June 1971**

Left Bayreuth and soon got a lift, unfortunately to a deserted exit on the Berlin-München (Munich) motorway. Then I got a lift with a student to the middle of Erlangen where I met some Americans. After looking around and writing to my sister, got a lift with 2 Cambridge students into Nuremburg. Found the Youth Hostel and got in with a good crowd with whom I went around in the evening. They comprised 2 Americans, 2 Austrians, a Norwegian, the Swede I had met in Wurzburg and myself.

### **Tuesday 29 June 1971**

Left Nuremburg with Mark, an American and in 5 mins got a lift all the way to München. Booked in at the Youth Hostel and departed for city centre. Bought myself a watch for 12.50 DM (about £1.50). In the evening stayed around with 2 Americans, Robert, a Kiwi bound for India and two Swedish girls. [Robert was a mine of information and I was later grateful for the tips he gave me. I realised how badly prepared I was.]

The room that night had 6 British in which must have been hell for the others in the room, an assorted collection of Yanks, Canadians and Aussies.

## **Wednesday 30 June 1971**

I left München for Salzburg in the pouring rain. Lucky to get a lift together with a German girl in a van. We were dropped on the Autobahn at a smallish *Tankstelle* (petrol station). The rain had eased off by then but it took over an hour to get a lift – in a large lorry, which took me off the Autobahn and through some beautiful mountain scenery (I expect, had the weather been better). Got picked up in a Cortina about 15 km from Salzburg and taken over the border.

Now the rain was torrential and after finding the Youth Hostels full, he ran me around to find somewhere to stay. Eventually got an address from a Canadian at the railway station and proceeded there (*Blaue Gans*); 40 Sch. for the night (70p). A bit of a hole but full of English speakers. Met up with two Australian girls who live off the Fulham Road in London (sic) and went out for supper with them. Picked up by a German fellow who took us up a mountain but the restaurant was closed. So we returned to the hotel about midnight.

## **Thursday 1 July 1971**

Hell! What weather! Wandered around Salzburg in the pouring rain and, having nothing better to do, I returned to the hotel, read and wrote a letter home – also postcards. Spent much of the afternoon talking with 3 Canadian girls and then met up with 2 Norwegians. Went out to a café with them and an assortment of Americans/Canadians. The weather was still foul but the castle looked tremendous, floodlit in white and red lights in the very misty rain.

## **Friday 2 July 1971**

Weather better so I decided to hitch to Graz. What a hope! Did 55 km to Bad Ischl in about 5 hours so when I met up with 2 English guys going back to Salzburg in a car, I went with them. I slept in a Catholic Shelter near *Bahnhof*. One room (12 beds) was given over to travellers like me and there was another English guy, an American and a Dutch guy (Henry) sharing it. At least we were away from the alcoholics who frequent the place and at 10 Sch. (16p) a night, it was great value. Ate out with the English fellow and his two girl travelling companions. Got to bed soon after 10 p.m.

## **Saturday 3 July 1971**

Up at 6 a.m. and chucked out at 6:34 a.m.! Caught a bus to Hallein to hitch to Klagenfurt. Hardly any traffic so I travelled by train with Henry (the Dutch guy) to Bischofshofen and started to hitch from there. It took 90 min to get a lift, but this took us the 145 km to Villach. It was a good ride in a BMW 2000, which managed to boil its radiator water early on.

We arrived in Villach around 7:45 p.m. and wandered to the Youth Hostel, which was full. However, the woman felt sorry for us and gave us two beds which had been reserved and not claimed. Had they been claimed we would have had air mattresses on the floor. Had a well needed shower (cold) and rub down. The bed was the most comfortable in any Youth Hostel I have seen.

## **Sunday 4 July 1971**

Spent the day lazing around in Villach, basking in the sun. The weather is a lot better now. Not much really happened. Things only start to move when one starts to move.

## **Monday 5 July 1971**

Took bus to Warmbad on the outskirts of Villach and soon got a lift with Henry to the Italian border. This was a bit of a surprise as I had not intended going to Italy. The hitching was very bad and we soon gave it up as a bad job. Caught a train down to Trieste (The

Trieste Express – if that was an express, heaven help the non-express trains). Arrived in Trieste an hour late (around nine o'clock) with two Americans. The Youth Hostel was closed and after wandering around for an hour or so, Henry and we resigned ourselves to the prospect of sleeping in the station. We arrived just in time to see the others being turned out. Amongst them was Malcolm Freeman, a fellow student from my college in London. I was surprised (naturally) to see him! All in all about 8 of us slept in the park on the grass. I did not do too well for sleep, 2 hours maybe.



**Rijeka bus station**

## **Tuesday 6 July 1971**

Got up early (around 5:30 a.m.) with a back ache. First impressions of Italians. They tend to be scruffy (hark who's talking) and one must be check one's change carefully. After much deliberation, we decide to catch a bus (not a train) to Rijeka with two other English guys. At the Yugoslav border our passports were taken and baggage checked (not ours – for some reason the border guards forgot to look in the side luggage containers of the bus). All went smoothly and the scenery the other side of the border (i.e. in Yugoslavia) was not radically different from Italy. The roads were about as bad and, although there are not so many cars, those which are around are bigger and better maintained than in Italy. The buses are Mercedes Benz and there are many British cars around, especially Ford Capris.



**Adriatic coast, Dubrovnik**

On the sea front at Rijeka, the place is very Western and touristy. There is a fair amount of *Militaria* around and the house of the consort is guarded by a machine-gun carrying guard (who didn't appear to want his photo taken!). After wandering around and buying food, we boarded the boat ("Osijek") for the trip down to Dubrovnik. The first part of the journey was very pleasant but trying to sleep on deck proved more than a little difficult. My three companions, having sampled the local wines to excess, however, had no difficulty. Cold.

**Wednesday 7 July 1971**



**City Gates, Dubrovnik**

Having had little sleep, and being rather sore, the light/heat of day brought considerable relief. The coast and the islands were barren and monotonous. Saw my first hydrofoil in Split Harbour.

The villages/ports *en route* were pleasant and I took several photos of Split and Hvar. We got into Dubrovnik around 4 p.m. Henry, I and two other British kids, Tony and Julia, set off for the Youth Hostel which was full. We decided to get cheap rooms and we are paying 20 Din (Dinar) for bed and ? Din for breakfast. Wandered around Dubrovnik in the evening and met two English girls, Brenda and Sally, whom I last saw in München, and Henry I last saw in Trieste. Fairly tired, so we went to bed early.

### **Thursday 8 July 1971**

Up soon after 8 for breakfast – two eggs, bread and marmalade. Really filling. Went to see about a bus to Skopje and then met up with the abovementioned English girls and we went to the beach to sunbathe and enjoy the water. The water was fairly cold, the weather fairly hot and we only had dirty water to drink. Went to the old town in the afternoon and evening which was very interesting. Returned to the harbour and came home (the cheap room) around 10 p.m. to finish writing letter home and this diary

### **Friday 9 July 1971**

Paid for room and attempted to hitch out of Dubrovnik. This seemed impossible, so after a couple of hours we retired to the park to sunbathe. Bought tickets for bus to Skopje. I left my wallet in a "sub post office" and was relieved to reclaim it intact. Left Dubrovnik at 5:10 p.m. The climb out of that city is really fantastic. A number of steep roads, each carrying one-way traffic, cling to the mountain/cliff-side before converging on the plateau 4 or 5 miles south of the city. The road surfaces were pretty poor making sleeping difficult. Dubrovnik Airport is another "wonder of the world", sunk deep into the valley with high mountains all around.

The road south is, I suppose, similar to a narrow country lane. We seemed to spend half our time backing to get out of the way of oncoming vehicles. The road follows the coast, "fjords" and all, and the meanderings must increase the length of the road by at least

50%. The villages are really picturesque. We headed for Titograd (only a few miles from the Albanian border). Despite rather fitful sleep, I could tell that the road was modern with numerous tunnels through mountainous country.

### **Saturday 10 July 1971**

I awoke to find the bus descending a rather steep gravel road which twisted around the undulating land. 90 min later we were still descending the same hill (!) at I imagine a good 20 mph. The scenery was magnificent in the early morning. There was very little traffic (just as well) apart from two buses of the same line (Tara). The only other living things were the sheep dotted around the hills. Changed buses in Pec and took a Mercedes bus through extremely poor country – mule waggons and the like. The people seem to be dark-skinned, resembling Indians – or gipsies.

The "Autobahn" from Beograd to Skopje is a 16ft wide simple highway although graded well, with its full complement of mule/bullock waggons. In Skopje, the weather was pleasant, cooled by the breeze. Many signs of the earthquake (1962) remain although much has been replaced by modern blocks of flats. The Cyrillic alphabet (Russian) seems to predominate here. Still as the saying goes: in Yugoslavia there are 4 religions (Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Jewish and Moslem), 3 languages (Serbocroat, Slavian and Russian) and two alphabets (Cyrillic and Roman) ... and one Party.

Feeling a little depressed at leaving the present company and so I decided at the last moment to go to Athens. The train, three hours late due to a derailment in Zagreb, was packed full and it took us an hour to find a free compartment. Others (there are many Americans and the like) were not so lucky. Had it not been for the fact that I was woken three times for my passport and five times for my ticket, I might have slept fairly well.

### **Sunday 11 July 1971**

Crossed the border at about 2 a.m. and continued south. I realized (being not so exhausted) that I had made mistake in coming south to Athens. I had worried about this happening. When one is tired and rather cut off from intelligible society, one is likely to make

wrong decisions. Dozed during the morning and got to Athens about 2 p.m. The "Tourist Police" here are very helpful. The first Youth Hostel was full and the second one only had roof space. Took a well needed shower. My money has gone fast in the last couple of days so maybe I will rest here a few days to see Athens and save money.

Went to the Acropolis, Parthenon or whatever in the evening. Pleasantly cool and really beautiful, except for the overabundance of Americans who seem to think they own the place. Rather a pathetic touristy national costume/music display before closing time. Then wandered around the night club/life area. Returned earlyish to the Youth Hostel. The roof was really pleasant (though hard) and I slept



**Acropolis, Athens**

well until after 7 a.m. I seem to be keeping very strange hours, bed by 10:30 p.m., up at 7 a.m. It would shock everyone at home.

### **Monday 12 July 1971**

Went into central Athens to see about a flight to Istanbul. It is cheating really, but £1 cheaper than by train. I'm not suicidal enough to hitch in this weather. Anyway, it would take me 4 or 5 days and the sooner I get to Asia, the better. Then we wandered around the flea market, but there was nothing I really wanted, my bag is full already. Visited the Agora area below the Acropolis. We are not mad enough to climb there today in the mid-day sun. Then I went through the central park, talking to an elderly couple from Portsmouth on the way. Had a look at King Constantine's Palace and "the changing of the guard". Returned to the Youth Hostel fairly early because I was tired. Spent some time talking to an American guy.

### **Tuesday 13 July 1971**

Went into the town early to book ticket to Istanbul, having picked up a book which I had left at American Express the previous day. After booking, I took a bus to Piraeus. I was now by myself, Henry having set out to hitch home earlier in the day. (He had decided to return to start his military service in Holland after all.) Many boats around going to various Greek Isles. After wandering around, I returned to Athens (3 Dr (Drachma) for 11 km – 4p). Visited the main Greek Orthodox Church – Athens Cathedral. This is one of the most beautiful churches I have ever seen. A funeral was in progress (judging by the dark dress/veils of the assembled congregation). Outside there was the most beautiful array of flowers I have ever seen – about 30 wreaths each 4 ft. or so in diameter and full of blooms.

Wandered around the park and talked to two longish-haired English guys who had been pavement artists. Returned to collect ticket from the German Student Travel Service and was kept waiting for an hour. Having collected it, I had a souvlaki (a sort of pancake filled with meat, tomatoes, cress etc. costing 4 Dr – 5p) for two. Returned to the Youth Hostel again early.

**Wednesday 14 July 1971**

Packed kit and left for THY (Turkish Airlines) in Filemon Street. Checked stuff in and went to buy film. I bought Ektachrome at 85 Dr (£1.20) without developing (1 roll). Things will get more expensive as I progress east (film-wise). Met an American girl whose boyfriend was due to fly out later in the day and was instructed to



**Hagia Sofia from Old Gate Istanbul, and me!**

look after her. Boarded the aircraft at 12:40 p.m. (DC9 reg. TC-JAA). Lifted off at 12:50 and after a fairly turbulent flight (to be expected in such terrain and in such a small airliner) and a snack lunch provided, we landed at Istanbul airport at 1:40 p.m.

Soon through customs – although a porter got it into his head that a coke bottle of water I was carrying was really whisky and should have been declared. Ann (the American girl) and I were rather hustled around by a Turkish Cabbie who wanted to charge us T£40



**Bosporus from tower, Istanbul University**

(Turkish Lira) (£1.25) to take us to the Blue Mosque area. I am ashamed to say, we were almost persuaded! Boarded a bus with 5 other Americans and an English girl. Got to the centre of Istanbul and debussed. Grabbed by a clandestine "taxi driver" whom we managed to persuade to take us to the Blue Mosque area for T£30.

So with Ann in the front and 7 of us cramped in the back of a small 3-wheeled pick-up we set off for the Hotel Gungar which we had been told catered for Westerners like ourselves. I don't think there could be a more fitting or enjoyable way to arrive at one's hotel than the above-mentioned. So we all contributed our T£4 (12p) and



**Galata Bridge, water carrier, girls (sailor in way)**

gave the driver T£32 (a T£2 tip at which he seemed pleasantly surprised. The hotel was full, but we were offered the roof at T£5. This was O.K. except that Ann and one of the American guys didn't have sleeping bags. These were soon borrowed. Wandered down to the post office with Ann, who wanted company, to collect *poste restante*. A letter from my parents, one from my sister (*who was to*

*follow to Istanbul a few weeks later – she also stayed in the Hotel Gungar and was surprised to find my name in the visitors' book) and one from Robert Scott, last seen in Munich, saying he was to leave yesterday. Unfortunately Ann was wearing a mini-skirt and we were mobbed by the locals (males) much of the time.*



**First view of Asian Side of the Bosphorus**

Went to the harbour, met up with a Scots guy, and later a Dane who was living in our hotel. We went for food in a sort of Beer Hall which was rather expensive for Turkey (I thought). Met up with yet another English guy on a minibus holiday. He seemed a bit fed up with it. The Turks are a strange lot. They are friendly, curious of foreigners and seem to delight in "accidentally" knocking into one (gently). However the greetings of "Hallo" and the more ominous

"Change money?" (black market Sterling/Dollars) and "Want some stuff?" become monotonous after a short while. Relieved when Ann's boyfriend turned up and I could relinquish my responsibility.

### **Thursday 15 July 1971**

Met up with a French Swiss guy over breakfast and having nothing better to do, decided to visit the Topkapi Museum. Wandered around looking at the thrones and other relics of the Sultans who had occupied the palace at one time or another. Slight beginnings of a sore throat (sleeping on the roof?). Went to Istanbul University and climbed the tower which gave excellent views of the city. Visited the bazaar and got a shirt for T£20 (having knocked it down from T£45). Rather nice. Wandered around the harbour in the evening after a reasonable meal (I suppose) but returned earlyish to try to sleep off my sore throat.

### **Friday 16 July 1971**

Met Tom, an American from Phoenix, Arizona, whom I had seen in Athens, and who is intending to go East, while eating breakfast in the Pudding Shop. Also met an English guy and we decided to take the 10:15 a: boat to Sariyer. The weather was a bit overcast and soon it was pouring with rain. Saw the old imperial palace, of which only the ends were still standing – the rest having been destroyed in a fire many years ago. It was the longest building in the world. Also saw the beginnings of the Bosphorus suspension bridge.

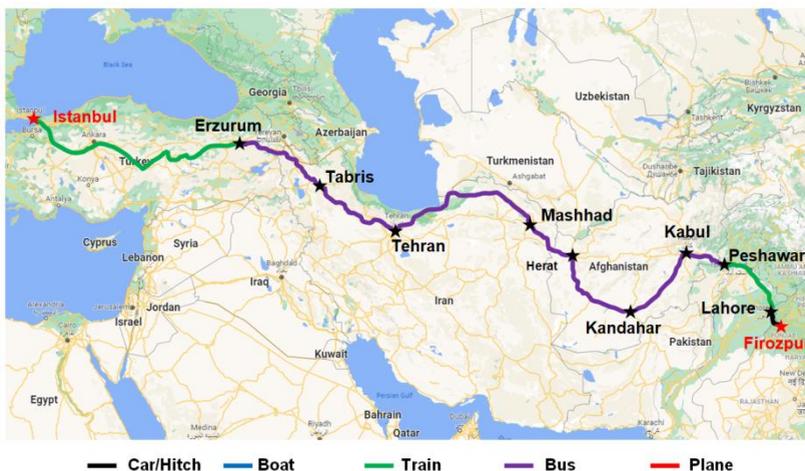
Got into conversation with a couple of young Turkish girls who seemed to think it was a great honour to talk to an English guy. Must admit that I was chuffed even though their English was atrocious. Bought a melon with the aid of a German speaking Turk and wandered along the coast picking up a couple of local urchins *en route*. Returned to Sariyer and took 3 hours to get back to Istanbul, stopping many times on both the Asian and the European sides on the way. The weather had improved beyond recognition and the journey home was very pleasant. Went to eat in a cheap restaurant where the waiter did somersaults for our amusement!

## **Saturday 17 July 1971**

Met up with Tom and we decided to move out tomorrow evening, a day early. Went to the archaeological Museum which had a lot of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Byzantine and Ottoman relics. Wrote a card to Cilla (a university friend of my sister's, who was teaching English in Turkey) informing her that I would be unable to visit her time-wise. No doubt she will be relieved. My throat is worse, curse it. Went to see about ferries to the Asian side railway station (Scutari). On returning to the Blue Mosque we met a German-Turk, a mechanical engineer working for the Turkish subsidiary of Reliant Motors. He looked very western and caused quite considerable amusement in the bazaar. Because of his tourist appearance he was approached by many stall holders with whom he proceeded to barter with (in English). At a suitable point in the proceedings, he would suddenly break into fluent Turkish (his mother tongue).

We found a supermarket and stocked up with food for the journey. Returned to the hotel to do my washing. I wish I hadn't brought half the stuff I've got, but I don't have the heart to throw it out (see appendix). So I will have to carry it on. My cold is now bad – snuffly. So I took aspirins for it.

## PART II: Istanbul – Firozpur



### Sunday 18 July 1971

Got up at 8:30 a.m. to collect my washing and met up with Tom in the Pudding Shop. Packed and then went to the harbour to watch the boats and pass the time. Very interesting. We then walked back to the Blue Mosque area where we had an interesting sign language "conversation" with a young Turkish guy. After having a reasonable meal we collected our stuff and set out for Haydarpasa by boat. Met up with an English couple from Sussex University also travelling to Erzurum and so we decided to stick together.

Got in compartment with three "friendly" Turks who were to come in useful later on. Only two other non-Turks on the train as far as we know. 1500 km for T£38 (£1.20) with student discount (on slatted seats for two days)! Not much room. Did not sleep too well. Very uncomfortable.

### Monday 19 July 1971

Woke up (did I sleep?) early. The train journey would be pleasant if it were not for all these Turks, who congregate around the carriage door and gape. They are not particularly cooperative when

asked to move. Anyone would think that they have never seen a Westerner before (maybe they haven't). Thank god I'm not travelling alone; things could be unpleasant(er). The land seems surprisingly fertile. Wheat is grown in abundance, but if it wasn't for the railway and the occasional Massey Ferguson tractor/combine harvester, we could almost be in Biblical times. There are no good roads between the settlements as far as I can see: just the railway. The land climbs continuously.

I have seen many large black/white birds (storks or cranes perhaps) and a smaller bright kingfisher-coloured bird. We have seen one or two unidentifiable creatures (apart from the Turks!). After Ankara, the land becomes more barren, with the railroad twisting back and forth to gain height. Only the valleys are green (olive trees?); the remainder of the hillsides are covered with dry grass and scrub. Towards afternoon the scenery becomes monotonous and we try to catch up on sleep – being continuously harassed by the Turks.

Notes about the trains: 1) The toilets really are literally holes in the floor. 2) Just because the whistle blows and the train has started to move does not indicate that you are about to be left at the station. This does provoke a mad rush (back from the water tap) but the train ambles along at a happy 1-2 mph for about 15 sec. Only then does it pick up speed – and you have missed the train if you're not on board...

## **Tuesday 20 July 1971**

Did not sleep too well again. The countryside remains similar to yesterday. We climb higher and at one railway station (all of which appear to be no more than a medium sized house by a railway passing loop) I noticed we are 1600 metres (over 5000 ft) above sea level. We arrived in Erzurum at 2:30 p.m. and were relieved to get off the train. The "travellers" assembled outside and eleven of us departed for a cheap hotel. Using a "strength in numbers" technique (demand your price and if they don't accept, walk out) we got beds at T£5 (15p) at our second attempt. Had a wash, meal and sent a postcard to my sister asking for more films.



**Street scene in Erzurum**

Went to bed at 8:30 p.m. as we are leaving for Tehran at 6 a.m. tomorrow.

### **Wednesday 21 July 1971**

The so-and-so hotel manager did not wake us at 4 a.m. as agreed. Tom woke me (he hasn't a watch) just before 5 a.m. and I went round banging on everyone's doors. Got to the bus (100 yds. from hotel) at 5:40 a.m. and found that, with a couple of exceptions, everyone was Western. The bus (Mercedes-Benz O302) left just after 6 a.m. and soon we were riding through similar terrain to yesterday

(and the day before and...). The horse taxis were around even at that early hour. The roads started reasonably enough tarmacked, with occasional bare rocky patches (to slow the traffic down?). The road was still climbing for some way. The land is fertile, hay-



**Stop on the road from Erzurum to the Iranian Border**

making was progressing on the lower slopes, but higher up the land is similar in colour, appearance and vegetation to the upper slopes of Dartmoor.

The breeze is pleasantly cool. Further on we reached the wide open plains with Mount Ararat (Noah's Ark's resting place) standing out from the rest of the mountains. It has much snow on it and I believe the top is flattish (although I am not certain because there is cloud around it). Then we reached the Iranian border at around 11:45 a.m. This is the worst one yet. Having shown our

passports/visas half a dozen times (and moving our watches on 90 minutes) we eventually left at 3 p.m. This was due to the fact that an



**View of Mt Ararat near Iranian Border**

Iranian in the party had the same name as a wanted criminal and hence enquiries took place. Continued through Iran. We were all very hungry, having eaten nothing for the last 26 hours except a couple of rolls. Stopped at a café and had a big meal. That is where the trouble started. Reached Tabriz at 9 p.m., too late for the relief driver and we were going to be dumped in a fairly expensive hotel. So about half of us complained and eventually we were permitted to sleep on the bus.

## **Thursday 22 July 1971**

Woke up at 2 a.m. feeling very ill and was violently sick. (Luckily the buses have buckets along the gangway provided for this very purpose.) Drank a little water and went back to sleep. Was sick again two hours later. The others returned to the bus at 4:30 a.m. and I managed 2 cups of tea to settle my stomach. Ate very little all day, drank a fair amount of iced water and the like. Got into Tehran at 3 p.m. and went to bed fairly early in a cheapish hotel. The entrance was concealed by piles of scrap tyres. Unfortunately I am now suffering from acute diarrhoea.

## **Friday 23 July 1971**

Got up earlyish. There are many red AEC Regent double-decker buses (with the cabs on the "wrong" sides making them look very peculiar). The majority of the cars (and vans for that matter) are based on the Hillman Hunter (built under licence presumably). Visited the chief Mosque-cum-dropout-centre but being Friday (the Moslem Sabbath), the bazaar was closed. Wandered around and came across a most peculiar spectacle. The drains are about 2 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep, and full of running, fairly clean water. The kids have the habit of damming these gullies and allowing them to fill to the top – which only takes a few seconds. Then they take turns diving into the torrent and seem to enjoy and thrive on it.

Tom, Dave and Barbara left in the morning to get visas for Esfahan. Paul and Mike left in the afternoon and as I did not feel up to it, I went back to the hotel. One does not feel at one's best sick, alone 3½ thousand miles from home with only one's guts and determination to see one through. The French guys in my room were fantastic at cheering me up, but I still felt homesick. So I went to sleep.



**Tehran Bus**

**© Dick Gilbert**

### **Saturday 24 July 1971**

Seriously contemplating returning to Istanbul and home. But what the hell! Met a group of Brits who are going to Mashhad tomorrow and they invited me to join them. One is a medic student so I feel fairly happy about it. Went to American Express and the British Embassy to "register" with a Canadian guy I had met and who is going to Istanbul.

Wandered around the plusher areas of town. Prices are dearer than Turkey – Milk (quarter litre) (delicious) 5 rials (3p), Yoghurt (big bowl) (delicious) 6 rials, Cokes (foul), 7-up, Canada Dry 7 rials (4p). Bought salt for sweating and *Enterovioforme* for my bowels. Wandered around the bazaar and sampled the carrot juice and apple juice (made on the spot, pure and iced) at 5 rials.

It is a pity that whilst the drinks (except Coca Cola) are so good, the food is so bad. Went to bed early. I go to bed early now while I have the chance to catch up on sleep, or to have as a reserve for the future.



**Sepahsalar Mosque, Tehran Entrance**

**Sunday 25 July 1971**

Finished writing a letter to the parents. I went to the post office with David, one of my present travelling companions. Spent ages trying to get stamps for him and in the end we were too late to get a ticket to Mashhad from Mihan (Bus Company). Returned to hotel with the sad news. Found another bus company – PMT – and we are due to leave for Mashhad 6 a.m. tomorrow.

Had egg and chips for dinner. Went sightseeing with David and found this fantastic mosque. Spent some time wandering around it and photographing it. Sat around in the evening singing (Mike has a guitar) and talking.



**Sepahsalar Mosque, Tehran Interior**

### **Monday 26 July 1971**

Up 5 a.m. and after a hurried wash and tooth clean, made the bus station by 5:30 a.m. I must say, I am not feeling my best. I have a slight recurrence of my cold which is a nuisance. Bus crowded, but we had reserved seats. We were the only westerners on the bus. Headed through the mountains north to Sari on the Caspian Sea. Land very fertile again, but the bus gets so hot. The locals don't believe in opening windows! Tried some roasted sweet corn, but not very impressed – too dry.

By mid-afternoon, the road had deteriorated into a stony track. This continued on and off (mostly on) for the next six hours. All one can do is sit and enjoy the punishment. With monotonous

scenery, and the ride too shaky to sleep or read, what can one do? Owing to a half hour wait while some rock-blasting was done, and various other inconveniences, we eventually arrived in Mashhad at 1:30 a.m. we had nowhere to go but were offered the bus station waiting room with cushioned seats and fell asleep promptly.



**Goharshad Mosque, Mashhad**

**Tuesday 27 July 1971**

Woke up at 5 a.m. with a stomach ache, and decided that the only thing for me was to take some exercise. So walked the 3 miles or so to the centre of Mashhad, arriving there at about 6:30 a.m. Having been nearly chucked out of the mosque three times, I eventually found an English speaking student from the University. He said that Mashhad is rated by Moslems to be the second most Holy City after Mecca. Tourists were not allowed into the holy places. He took me to areas open to the public from where I could photograph the holy buildings.



**Imam Reza Shrine, Mashhad**

My cold is erupting again – I feel a bit rough on that, let alone my stomach. So I took some *chai* (tea), yoghurt and in all 2

pints of milk which I fear will be my last of that delicacy until I get home. Returned to our "hotel" (the bus station). Then went sightseeing again with Dave, this time by taxi – flat rate of 5 rials (2p). As a result, the bus service is non-existent.

After another dose of liver salts, I felt much better. Had a delicious egg/gherkin/tomato sandwich for 6p. Left Mashhad at 3 p.m. in company with many Europeans. Reached Iranian border (Taibad) at around 7:30 p.m. This is a little village out in the back of beyond. Reached the Afghan border (15 km further on) about 8:30 p.m. and found it had closed. This was a nuisance because it wasn't supposed to close until 8 p.m. (i.e. 9 p.m. Iranian time). Had chai and eggs and went to sleep under the sky. I was a bit worried, especially with my cold.

### **Wednesday 28 July 1971**

Woke up about 6 a.m. (Iranian time) and had a good wash and tooth-brush. Then went to check in our visas. This took hours and the officials seemed to have no idea about what they should be doing. Caught a bus to Herat. This was expensive (50p) because one company holds the monopoly. It was an uncomfortable ride, through a sand storm much of the time. Decided not to leave for Kabul today, so as to get some rest and anyway, why the rush? Suffered from nose bleed (second in a week) but tummy and cold both a lot better. Had fried eggs for tea (nicely cooked) *chai*, and later some yoghurt (2½p per ½ kilo!) – delicious. Got back to the hotel where they were playing "Fairport Convention" - the first good music I have heard since Germany. I like Afghanistan; it is cheap, but it has squalor and beauty (mosques) next to each other. Cannabis is legal and hence there is a lot of it around and it is smoked quite openly. None of my group (of travelling companions) uses drugs, though.

### **Thursday 29 July 1971**

Wandered around Herat in the morning. The others had gone to the bank and left me alone. Back at the hotel, I was pestered by the



**Blue Mosque, Herat**

bus company, who wanted the money for the tickets, and the hotel manager who wanted the room by 12 noon as we were leaving. Luckily, we were out by 12:30 p.m. and not charged extra. Went to have a meal of chicken (the meat fell off the bone, not due to the tenderness of the flesh!). Gordon bought an Afghan coat for \$9. Got to the bus (tin can on wheels) at 4 p.m. Luckily, there were many other Westerners on board. Left Herat at 5 p.m. Herat boasts dual carriageways (one of which is mere foundations, and the other only 12 ft. wide!). Bus cramped – 2 and 3 seating and no head rests. Stopped for *chai* once or twice. The rice here turns my stomach.

**Friday 30 July 1971**

Midnight saw us still travelling south towards Kandahar. Managed to get a little sleep. The road into Kandahar (about 15-20 miles long) is lined by an avenue of trees. There must have been many thousands of trees in it, despite a couple of breaks.



**Street in Herat**



**Behzad Square, Herat**

*Bogstops: Most bus stations have toilets (of sorts) or an area set aside. On long overland stretches – as was the case between Herat and Kandahar – the bus stopped on an embankment in the middle of the desert. Men and women are strictly segregated (in accordance with Moslem tradition), the men being sent to one side of the embankment, the women to the other. These "bogstops" are well established and used by several busloads simultaneously.*

Slept on bus for a couple of hours in Kandahar and when I awoke, I found that Mike had kindly lost my penknife. Travelled north during the day and arrived in Kabul, a veritable hole, at 3 p.m.

Offered beds at 20 Afs (Afghans) a night and accepted. After we had settled we decided to eat at a Helal Restaurant. Good meals and very cheap. Returned to hotel where they played bridge and I slept.



**Asmayi Road, Kabul**

**Saturday 31 July 1971**

Spent most of the day wandering around the town, bought a new penknife for 25 Afs. Bumped into Tom in the Khyber Restaurant while talking to an Italian motorcyclist. Had some strawberry ice-cream. Met some Danes driving an ex-London Transport RT (3238) bus. According to its fare chart, it used to operate the 161/161A routes! (These routes serve Chislehurst in Kent

where I had spent the first few months of my life!) They are trying to sell it for \$5000, having been turned back at the Indian border. Collected a letter from my parents at the *poste restante* and wrote an airmail home. Met Tom for a meal in the evening, (he is returning to Istanbul), before going home to bed.

### **Sunday 1 August 1971**

Six weeks since I left England: It seems like six years. Still, I am almost halfway through my time and think what I have achieved! Up 6:15 a.m. to celebrate and wandered over to the Khyber Restaurant in the hope of photographing the fountains playing – no luck. Wandered around the bazaar to enjoy the sights and sounds (though not the smells). Had dinner around 2 p.m. and then went to book passage to Peshawar. Went via the BOAC office to pick up a newsletter in English. Eventually got 5 seats for Tuesday morning at 100 Afs each. Had a banana-milk shake, some pears and later some tomato soup. Mike and Gordon had gone to the zoo. Suffering from diarrhoea again, curse it.

### **Monday 2 August 1971**

Woke up early with stomach ache, but then managed to sleep through to 9 a.m. Felt rotten. Walked four miles to the British Embassy – well worth it: It is a fantastic place – built in traditional Raj style (white). Caught bus back for 1Af and had lunch in the Khyber Restaurant. Went pharmacy hunting in the afternoon but couldn't get the drugs (anti-diarrhoea and water purifying) we wanted. Returned to hotel and had a warm shower – first (warm one) since Dorle's (in Bayreuth). Spent evening trying in vain to change traveller's cheques on the black market. No-one wanted American Express. Wrote a letter to Sham (the College friend whom I was to visit in New Delhi) and went to bed around 9:30 p.m. Bad cough.



**Bus Station, Kabul**

**Tuesday 3 August 1971**

Up 5:30 a.m. and made for bus station. Three of us were feeling bad with diarrhoea. Left Kabul at 7:30 a.m. and went through the magnificent Kabul Gorge. Rich, Mike and Gordon had got chucked off our "bus" and we were worried about getting their stuff through customs, as our maniac driver had left the relief bus miles behind.



### **Kabul Gorge**

Pakistan border was a terrific nuisance and it took us ages to get through (watch change ½ hour). Once through, we started the ascent of the Khyber Pass. The road was very difficult from a driving point of view. We felt happier because the "rule of the road" is on the left. Unofficially, one drives in the middle of the road and moves to left or right depending on which way the oncoming vehicle seems to be moving! The Khyber Pass, spectacular though it is, was considerably less impressive than the Kabul Gorge. The pass road is a military installation and hence no photography allowed!

In Peshawar we waited for the rest of the group and met up with Rich's friends including "Noddy", an African Asian at present resident in Chelsea. Booked train, student concession, and had a



**Khyber Pass**

rather poor meal. The train left at 10 p.m. with Europeans in two neighbouring compartments. I slept on the floor (quite well), others on the seats, in the corridors and on the luggage racks. Various people seem to be suffering from the same cough which is plaguing me at the moment.

**Wednesday 4 August 1971**

Arrived in Lahore at 9 a.m. and went to get road passes. Then took taxis to the border – 40 miles south of Lahore – for 50p (



**Peshawar horse taxis**

officially). The three taxis carrying us raced each other – rather dangerous. Pakistan is a green if not so pleasant land. Very flat and swampy (rice growing area) but green and not too hot. Bullock carts abound and the bullocks themselves seem unworried by buses tearing around. It seems that all marks of civilization (British or otherwise) are crumbling. Soon, rural Pakistan will be back in the middle ages.

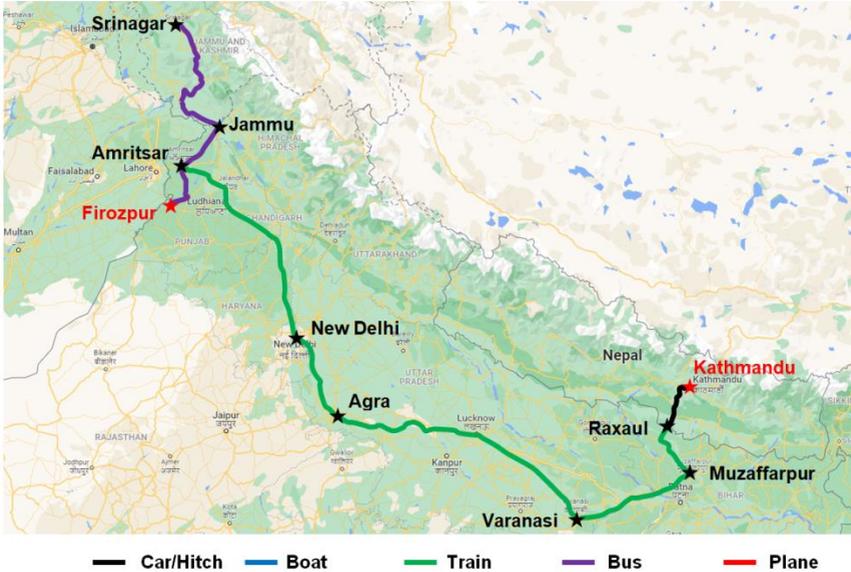
It took 4 hours to get over the border (Ganda Singh Wala) – there are only two land crossing points between the two countries. The Pakistanis wondered why on earth we wanted to leave so soon, whilst India welcomed us with open arms. Sat around until we got a room and transport for PRs 4/- (Pakistani Rupees: too much) and then went by rickshaw – 4 of us on it (Dave opted out). The Indian

was not very strong and so we took it in turns pedalling. I got a ride on a camel. Hotel is in the middle of nowhere – exorbitant but it has the monopoly. Very pleasant evening. Had a forced "shower" under a pump. Good. I needed it. I don't get tired travelling, just unbelievably dirty. Early to bed.



**Lahore Oxcart**

## PART III: Firozpur – Kathmandu



### Thursday 5 August 1971

Up earlyish. Dave arrived about 7 a.m. having slept in a shelter with two other British guys. Walked towards Firozpur and in the end we got a lorry ride. Only just caught the bus to Amritsar (IRs 4/20; 4 Indian Rupees and 20 pice). Enjoyable journey. Nibbled local food and drank the tea – beautiful. Arrived in Amritsar at 2 p.m. where Dave split to see a friend who is chief of Amritsar Fire Brigade.

Left Amritsar for Jammu at 3 p.m. (Ticket IRs 6/60). Pleasant journey – coolish, nice scenery. Got to Jammu at 7:30 p.m. Met a guy who took us to a hotel. His story turned out to be a pack of lies. We left on principle with the idea of sleeping out. It started to rain and so Rich and I guarded the luggage while the other three went cheap hotel hunting. They returned and we slept in a *Krishna Darmsala*, a sort of doss house (with holy cows, the lot – great experience).

## **Friday 6 August 1971**

Woke up at 6 a.m. covered with bites. I am the least fussy about my food/drink, yet up to now, I have had less stomach trouble than the rest of the group. Left Jammu at 7 a.m., all in separate buses, which was a bit of a nuisance. The buses were not very full and I sat behind the driver, next to an English speaking engineer. The road to Srinagar is unbelievable. It makes the Khyber Pass look like a mole hill (a hot one at that!). The 294 km takes 12 hours plus. The scenery is fantastic, when not shrouded in low cloud like during the first 4-5 hours.

Around 1:30 p.m. the clouds broke and we continued through the tree covered mountains in broad sunlight. The road was very sore on the bottom and I was relieved to get to Srinagar. Picked up by an American guy who recommended us a houseboat, Gordon and I split with the rest after being offered a boat free for the night and IRs 2/- subsequently. Not a bad place really. A bit of haggling, but after tea it soon settled down, so we had a shower and went to bed.

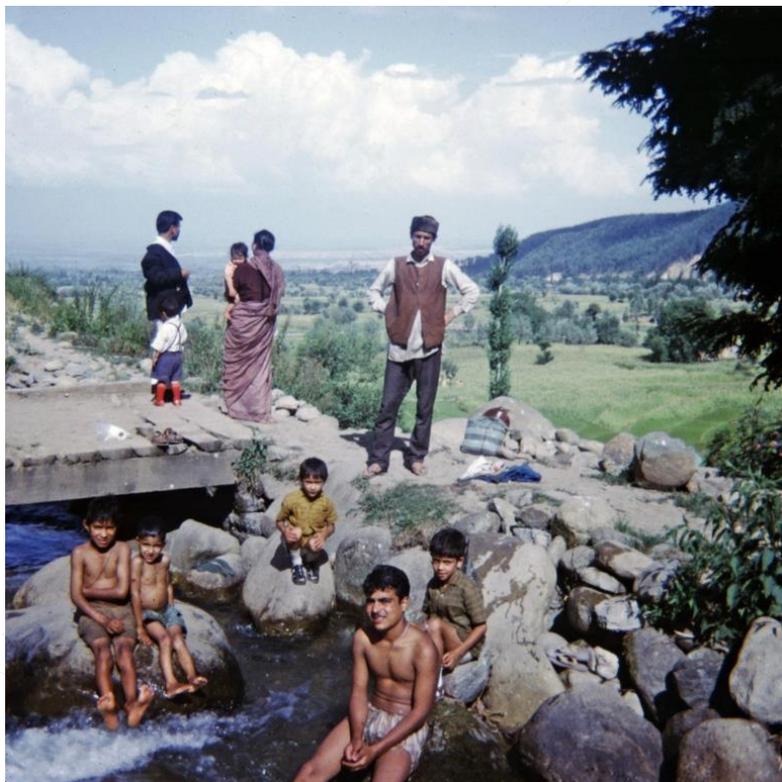
## **Saturday 7 August 1971**

Rather tired. Met up with the others and started climbing one of the hills to see the temple. Mike and Rich were in pretty bad shape, and I was disgusted by their hurry so I sat down on a rock and watched all the eagles (or are they vultures?) flying around. Returned to the boat via the post office and bought a delicious orange ice lolly for 40 pice. Got back to the boat around 2:30 p.m. and went to sleep for the afternoon. Gordon returned around 5 p.m. and after a shower and dinner, I got down to writing home. This week has been pretty busy really – all rush.

## **Sunday 8 August 1971**

Went to Tangmarg by bus. Feeling not too good when I arrived, so I left the others to hire horses, and went and had a pineapple juice. Afterwards I went for a walk. I sat by the village stream, feet in the cool water, watching people coming and going, doing their washing, bathing, etc. The visitors included many

children and I had a great time splashing, and being splashed by, them. I talked to the older ones and some of the adults in broken English. Managed to photograph them a couple of times – really great. Returned to the hotel, squashed in a bus, having really enjoyed mixing with the locals.



**Tangmarg Kashmir**

**Monday 9 August 1971**

Rained hard. I asked the owner if he had any books, and to my surprise he did. I picked up “The Mayor of Casterbridge” (Thomas Hardy) and curled up and read it for most of the day, as the weather made venturing out undesirable. It is pleasant to relax for a

change. Reading about Wessex helped to fulfil the need I had to read about home, whilst at the same time inducing a little homesickness. Went for a paddle in the *shikara* (a sort of canoe) after dark which was pleasant as the sky had cleared.



**Srinagar old town from river**

**Tuesday 10 August 1971**

Took a bus to Nehru Park, but finding it boring, decided to return earlyish. Spent the afternoon sunbathing, reading and generally relaxing. Wrote a letter to Jane (a long standing penfriend), asking why I hadn't heard from her. In the evening, I said goodbye to Gordon and Dave, and Ben who had joined us on the boat as they are leaving early tomorrow morning. I have decided to stay on until

Sunday, because a) I have plenty of time and I like Kashmir, and b) I want to leave them – we have been travelling together for three weeks, which is long enough I think.

### **Wednesday 11 August 1971**

They left (and woke me up) at 5:30 a.m. I went back to sleep. Got up soon after nine and decided the time had come to buy some silk. So I went to a silk factory to look around. I wanted some sari material for my sister, and after discarding the heavily (but not too nicely) patterned material, I decide on the plain turquoise length 6 m at Rs 55/-. Also while I was there, i bought two shirt pieces at IRs 22/-each, and after a bit of haggling, I paid for it with a \$10 Traveller's Cheque. So I got good value for just over £4. Also bought a papier-mâché pin box for my: after all she will have to make them up. Met Bill, an English steel fixer, living on the neighbouring boat in the evening. It is nice to have another Englishman around for company.

### **Thursday 12 August 1971**

Woke up today and felt as fit as I have done in a long while – slept a long time and felt well rested. Bill and I decided to visit the temple I had failed to visit on Saturday morning. It was a long climb but well worth it – the view from the top was magnificent. Returned to the tourist centre and got permits to visit the fort. Took a bus out and it was a long climb in the heat up the steep winding path. Found a nice cool opening in the wall and sat there for an hour, admiring the scenery and watching and photographing the ever circling eagles/vultures. Returned to the boat and after the evening meal, I did up the stuff I bought yesterday plus the Afghan hat I had bought for my Dad in Kabul, ready to send home. Went to bed early again.

### **Friday 13 August 1971**

Woke up in the middle of the night and was very sick – it was probably due to the Kashmiri salt tea I had tried but didn't like in the afternoon. Annoyed when I was brought an omelette for breakfast, having ordered fried eggs. Anyway, I didn't feel like

eating and sent it back. After resting some of the morning, I went to post home the parcel but found that today is a public holiday so the post office was closed. Went to have a milk shake and hear some pop music. Old "Who" records – "Happy Jack", "I'm a boy". "I can see for miles", etc. Really good to listen to after so long. My left eye is



**Dal Lake from fort**

rather red, has been for a couple of days, so I bought some eye ointment and applied it when I got home. Not feeling 100% but must do some washing this evening.

## **Saturday 14 August 1971**

Last day in Srinagar. Wrote another letter to parents before getting a bus ticket back to Jammu. To send the silk would cost IRs 20/-, so I decided to carry it with me. Lazed around, reading and talking to Bill. Wanted to settle up with the boat owner, but he could not be found. Went out to post letter, and afterwards went to bed early in anticipation of an early start tomorrow.

## **Sunday 15 August 1971**

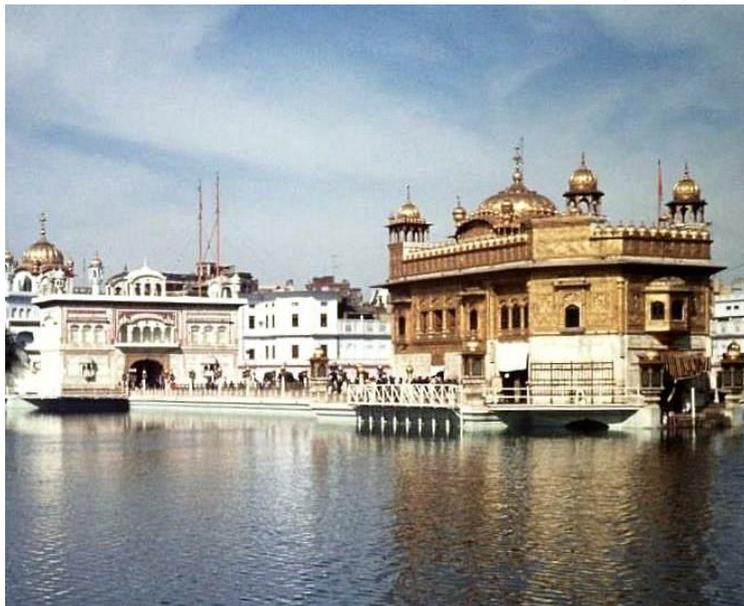
Up at 5:30, a.m. to fried eggs and a hassle with the boat owner. In the end, I had to accept his reasoning and "paid" with a pair of pyjamas and a pullover (which I was more than happy to get rid of!). Bus left at 7:30 a.m. (30 mins late) and we returned south, making good time all the way. Only complaints: I had a back seat – no head rest and the bumps in the road are amplified, so I had a very sore journey. Arrived in Jammu at 6 p.m. and after a bit of hassling, got a room for IRs 3/-. Didn't like the guy who took me there – insisted on taking a taxi although it was "only 10 mins walk away". I told him I could walk that far all right, so he paid for the taxi – I can't grumble.

The room again I was a bit of a hassle and it took time to persuade the owner I had agreed to take a room at IRs 3/-. Got it eventually and took a "shower" (bucket of water over my head). An Irish hippie-guy turned up and in the end he also got a room for IRs 3/-. Having nothing better to do, we went to have a chicken curry with bread – the rice here still turns my stomach. Give me the British stuff any time!

## **Monday 16 August 1971**

Went to bus station on foot (about 15 mins!) and caught the 8 a.m. bus to Pathankot (it left at 8:35 a.m.). Arrived in Pathankot at 12:30 p.m. after a run through fields of sweet corn, and then down the Grand Trunk Road National Highway No. 1A. Walked from the bus station to the railway station and found that I could only get a reduction from Amritsar. So I got a train (late leaving again) and only just made Amritsar in time to see the Assistant Traffic Control

Manager. Pleasant time spent in his office (you have to humour him!) with servants bringing water – the whole shop. Still it took an hour and saved me IRs 7/50. Went onto the platform and got talking to an Indian sailor.



**The Sikhs' Golden Temple Amritsar**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

Boarded the train at 7:30 p.m. and got a window seat. The train left at 8:30 p.m. (Frontier Mail – on time!) It was pulled by a steam engine – still very common in India. More and more people crowded on at the various stations. I bought tea to calm my stomach once or twice, but I was still very sore from the night before. The night was spent painfully cramped, either with the window open (soot coming in) or closed (frying in the heat). Now I understand why long-distance travel is undertaken at night: The occupants, crammed so tight, would suffocate during the day.

### **Tuesday 17 August 1971**

My Mother's Birthday! Midnight saw me cramped in the railway compartment – sleepless. I carried a little girl on my lap for 3

hours, while her mother attended to two other kids. All I got were stares of surprise from the Indians around – no offer of relief while my bottom suffered. Around 4 a.m. I got some sleep – due to exhaustion. I got off the train in New Delhi at 7 a.m. and caught a bus straight to Sham's brother's, arriving around 9 a.m., tired, hot, but most of all dirty. It was good to be welcomed somewhere, to meet an old friend, rather than be discriminated against as an American tourist. Had a much needed shower and change of clothes, before going out to the shop – the retail outlet of Sham's brother's clothing factory

In Delhi, soft drinks: Coke, 7-up, Fanta – are at 45 pice (2½ p) somewhat cheaper than in Srinagar (IRs 1/-) and Jammu (75 pice). Didn't like the dinner so I went to bed at 2 p.m. Except for waking at 11 p.m. I slept practically non-stop through to 9 a.m. the next morning. Suffering again from diarrhoea. Letter from my parents (but the films I asked her to send haven't arrived). This didn't seem to have much effect on my state of morale. I don't know; this journey has been fantastic – memorable, even enjoyable – but I am worried about my dislike of the local food and my continuous stomach disorders. I have lost weight.

### **Wednesday 18 August 1971**

I leave from Mumbai 4 weeks tonight. Went into Delhi with Sham and saw the magnificent Jantar-Mantar, an observatory for measuring the orbits of the earth and other celestial bodies around the sun. Really interesting – old (350 years) – but in remarkably good condition.

Went to the tourist bureau and then to get a Nepalese Visa (IRs 16/-). Returned to tourist place to see films and then went to catch a bus home – what a hope. Gave up after 1½ hours and caught a scooter taxi for IRs 2/90. Went round a market in the evening and saw a snake charmer. Returned to the house where I only felt mediocre all evening.

## **Thursday 19 August 1971**

Went to Connaught Place and booked ticket for sightseeing. Changed \$30 at IRs 10/50 despite the dollar crisis. Then went to get a student concession form to go to Patna. Had a long interesting discussion on many subjects over lunch and then met up with a Civil Engineer with whom I shared a taxi home. The buses are IMPOSSIBLE! Went to bed early after a day in which much business has been settled.



**Humayun's Tomb, Delhi in the morning sun**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

## **Friday 20 August 1971**

I am very annoyed as I write this after being cheated out of IRs 9/- as well as being misled by a ticket clerk. Up at 5:30 a.m. and caught a bus to Connaught Place. Started sightseeing tour which was a bit of a bore really. It was too much like a school outing – a five minute lecture followed by "You have 10 minutes to see all this starting from ... now!". Still, I wouldn't have got round half the

places had I not taken the tour. The second half was late leaving, and whilst visiting the sites of Gandhi's and Nehru's cremations, being barred from the Great Mosque (being Friday), and looking round the Red Fort, the bus broke down about six times and the commentary was sparse and even then barely audible. This doesn't say much for the nation's capital.



**Jantar-Mantar Observatory, Delhi    © Philipp Bachmann**

Had two lots of fried egg and chips because I was hungry, not because I liked them although I could have done a lot worse. Then I celebrated my departure (from Delhi) with a glass of (watered-down) milk. Caught bus home from the railway station.



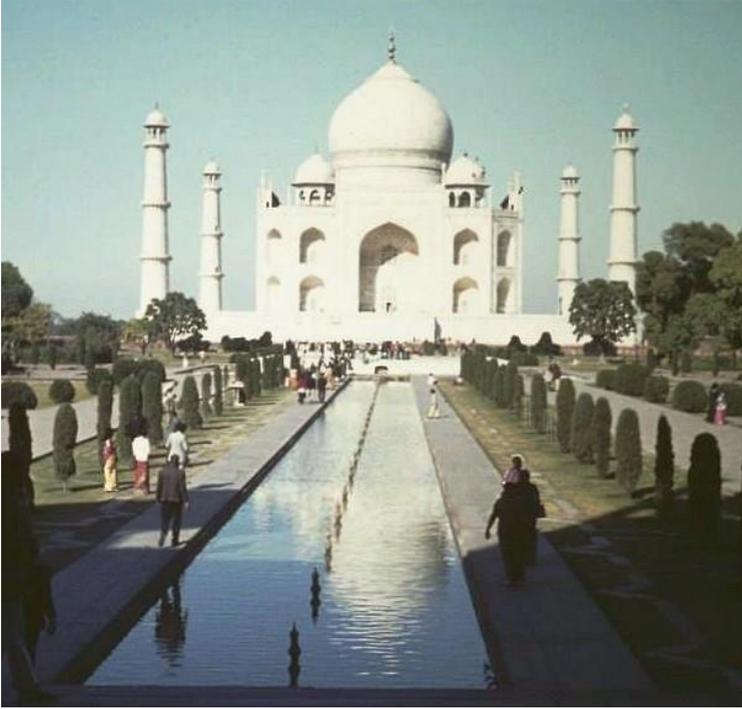
**Raj Ghat - Mahatma Gandhi's Tomb, Delhi**

© Philipp Bachmann

Even the ticket I had did not entitle me to go by the Taj Express. The family went out on a night of sightseeing (the lights of Delhi), but because of my early departure tomorrow, I didn't go with them.

### **Saturday 21 August 1971**

Up at 6 a.m., packed and caught a scooter to the railway station where I met up with the two guys whom I had seen yesterday to travel by the Taj Express to Agra. I had no reservation (required) but as there was plenty of room, it didn't matter. I had a little difficulty convincing the ticket collector, but as I had a valid ticket, there was nothing he could do. Got to Agra at 10:15 a.m. and we hired a rickshaw for the day. Went first of all to the Red Fort (it seems there are Red Forts everywhere) which was not that much different from the one at Delhi, and then to the Taj Mahal. This is unimpressive from a distance, but when you get near it, it really shapes up. Crowded with tourists, it was beautifully cool inside, so we rested there for some time. Then went to eat – terrible food, only



**Taj Mahal (Tomb), Agra**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

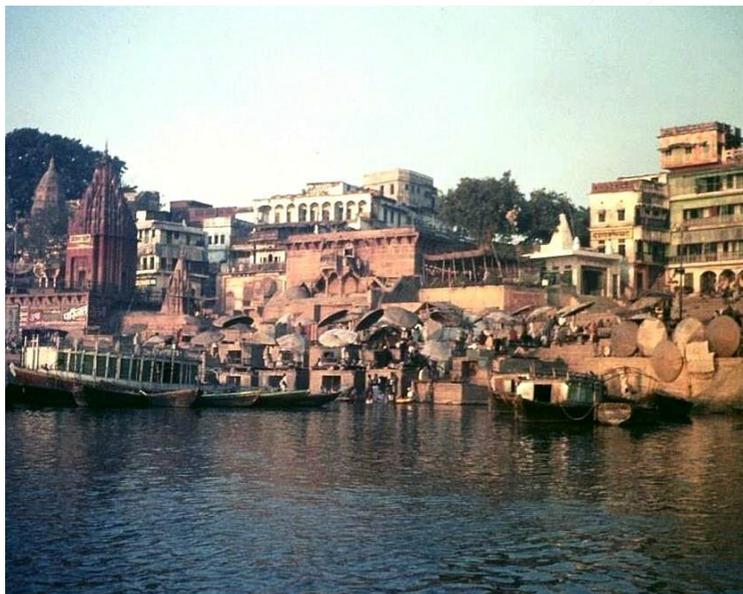
lukewarm, not much of it, and spicy rather than tasty. Then wandered around before taking a train to Tundla.

### **Sunday 22 August 1971**

Boarded the Varanasi (Benares) train with difficulty but at least had somewhere to sit. Uncomfortable. Things improved as time went on and eventually I got a seat to spread out on. Got to Varanasi at 1:30 p.m. and found a cheapish hotel with a Canadian and a Dutchman. Had a shower, slept a bit and then went shopping for fruit (not too good) and later had some fried eggs and milk (hot). This seems to be the best food for me. It seems that Kathmandu will be cooler, cleaner and better food-wise, judging from people coming out.

**Monday 23 August 1971**

Got up about 9 a.m. and after declining breakfast, took a rickshaw into the centre. Old Varanasi is a small dirty ancient holy town on the Holy River Ganges. The Ganges is foul (c.f. the Rhine),



**Ghats with priests' sunshades, Varanasi**      © Philipp Bachmann

a brown colour, deep (6 ft. from the bank you are up to your neck) and about a mile (I guess) wide. They sell everything in this area from Joss sticks to sandalwood necklaces. Visited the Golden Temple (we were not allowed in but could look through a "squin" – it was filthy dirty inside).

Then went to the Manikarnika Ghat, the burning place, where bodies are cremated in the open air on pyres by the river itself. It is rather a gruesome sight – no photography allowed – any way who would want photographs of such things. Strangely enough, the sight of dead bodies lying around (shrouded) did not have much effect on me emotionally as I had expected. Then we visited a silk factory (sic) and bought nothing (although we got free Cokes). Then we checked on trains out of here and returned to the hotel.

## **Tuesday 24 August 1971**

Went to get student concessions in the morning and buy tickets. The train is to leave at 9 p.m. There being nothing else to do, and reckoning on the train being full, we slept most of the afternoon and early evening (and bemoaned the lack of water). In the evening came the biggest blow to my holiday (troubles never come singly). Somehow I had my camera stolen. I was asleep on my sleeping bag and it was under the wall side of the bag on the luggage rack. Whoever took it must have leant over and taken it very carefully. This is a great disappointment. Not only is the camera valuable in itself, but I had taken 19 photos on the film of Delhi, Taj Mahal and Varanasi. I also lost two unexposed films and the case. Thank god my other exposed films are safe. Now I will not be able to photograph Kathmandu, Ajanta or Mumbai. It makes you sick.

This train journey is notoriously bad and I took precautions. Still, what can I do now but forget it. It had nearly been stolen on several occasions and I had been lucky. But now my luck has run out.

## **Wednesday 25 August 1971**

Did not sleep as well as I should have done because my camera was on my mind. John, with whom I am travelling at present, was a great consolation. The land was a non-stop swamp and we were late (and hence missed our connection at Muzaffarpur). At Muzaffarpur we met up with various other travellers and proceeded (again through swamp) to Sugauli. Here we had a two hour wait and we occupied ourselves drinking tea and eating the local delicacies. We eventually arrived at Raxaul at 8:30 p.m. and stayed overnight in the Tourist Lodge. We had a welcome shower and went to bed early (we even had mosquito nets!). Had an interesting conversation with a Danish guy who had turned Buddhist – never again to return to his native Northern Europe (apparently).

## **Thursday 26 August 1971**

Crossed the Nepalese border fairly quickly, although we were late starting (and hence missed the lorry convoy). So we had to

ask around for a lift and 5 of us got one in a jeep for 35 miles. This left us in a small town where the traffic flow was zero. After asking around, we eventually found a lorry for NRs 6/- (Nepalese Rupees) and after much delay, we left at 2 p.m. All five of us sat on the roof of the cab, which, while being uncomfortable, afforded a fine view.



**Landscape near Sugauli (Bihar)**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

The journey was very slow and as we progressed, the cloud got lower and lower. Around 5 p.m. it began to drizzle and then half an hour later we were suddenly drenched in an almighty downpour. Luckily our lorry had a tarpaulin cover so we took refuge under it, sitting rather uncomfortably on the sacks of maize in the back. We travelled on like this through the evening, often stopping to top up the radiator. The condition of the lorry's engine was abysmal. Clouds of black smoke issued uninterruptedly from its exhaust pipe. After stops for unloading and refreshment, the driver (apparently) decided to go no further that night and so we were left to bed down as best we could on the abovementioned sacks. I slept fairly well, bar the occasional shake of the arm or leg to get rid of "pins and needles".

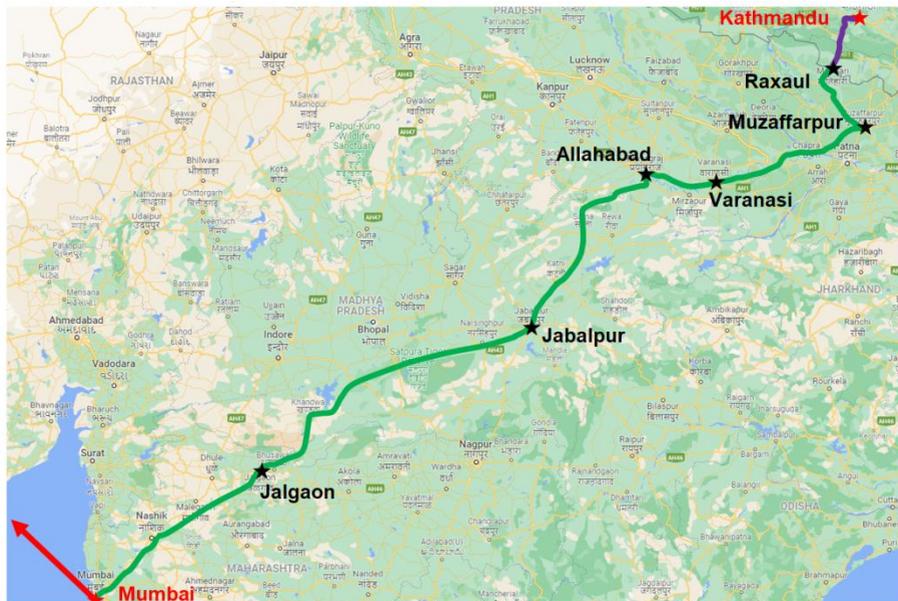
## Friday 27 August 1971

Woken by the jarring of the lorry (to bump-start the engine) at around 5:15 a.m. The morning was crisp and clear so, heavily coated against the morning chill, we climbed back onto the roof of the lorry to witness the sunrise over the surrounding hills. In the distance we could make out quite clearly the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas-proper and with a bit of help from the locals, that of Sagarmatha (Everest). We eventually reached Kathmandu at 8:30 a.m. and, being set down near the post office some distance from the centre, we proceeded into the town.

Three of us decided on a cheap hotel mainly because it had room available and we couldn't be bothered to look further, due to tiredness. I slept for a couple of hours before proceeding to American Express and the post office, but there was no post for me at either. So I returned to the hotel to write an aerogramme home. Most people seem to come here to get stoned and hence miss the beauty of the place. The smell of burning "ganga" (a not unpleasant though sickly-sweet smell) permeates everything and in one "hotel" here one can buy anything from hash cakes to fried eggs with hash essence! For this reason I have decided to switch to a more expensive hotel. The Nepalese must get a much distorted view of the youth of the Free West. No wonder this country is Sino-Russian orientated.

The restaurant where I eat serves rather tough water buffalo steaks amongst other things, to a background of Beatles, Stones and Creedence Clearwater music. This is a pleasant change from the Eastern only music of India.

## PART IV: Kathmandu – Mumbai



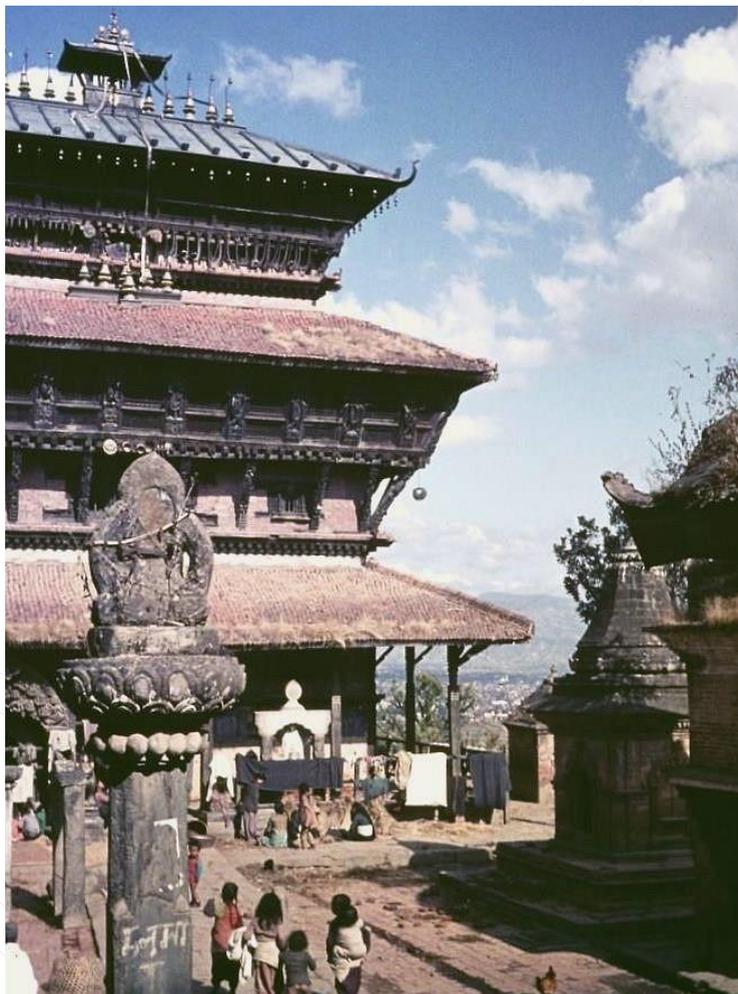
— Car/Hitch    — Boat    — Train    — Bus    — Plane

### Saturday 28 August 1971

Moved to the "Oriental Lodge" after breakfast which costs NRs 3/- (about 10p) a night. It has good showers and English style sit-down toilets (generally known as "sit'n'shits"). God, is that all I care about these days?! There are several non-smokers around here so I am in good company. Bought some milk (2½p a half litre and not bad at that!) and wandered down to the post office to post letter home and bought some postcards and stamps, despite my resolve not to. At the exchange rate I get (NRs 13/75 for \$1), it means that to buy a card and post it to England costs all in all 5p. So I can't complain. I decided to read in the afternoon and so I borrowed "Return of the Native" by Thomas Hardy from the hotel library. He goes down well when one is so far from home (see August 9).

Around 5 p.m. I decided to "wander the streets", go down the alleyways and generally pry into the lives of the locals. Spent some

time at one of the temples sitting (unnoticed), watching the children playing in the streets. It seems that the common way of greeting people around here is "bye-bye" rather than "hello". The clouds hung very low over the hills this evening and the sky was quite threatening. I am suffering from a sore throat again which is a bit of



**Kirtipur Temple**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

a nuisance. In Kathmandu the Hindu and Buddhist religions seem to co-exist quite happily. Returned to sleep early as I am still a bit tired.

### **Sunday 29 August 1971**

Ten weeks out of London and alas, suffering from diarrhoea again. Still, I had been clear for 10 days. Went to buy some milk from the dairy, but it had all gone. So I wandered on to the park where I lazed in the sun for a couple of hours. Came back via a Swiss-run dairy and got some milk (second delivery) and cheese. It clouded over and so I wrote some seven postcards despite my intention not to. I am surprised that I haven't heard from parents, but they say it takes 10 days airmail to England, compared with 5 days from Delhi to England.

I ate three fair sized meals today which is quite a change from my normal diet! I haven't weighed myself recently, but I think I have lost even more weight since Srinagar. I'm going to have to go on a crash revival course when I get home! Read quite a bit in the evening and those tablets seem to have done a bit of good to my stomach.

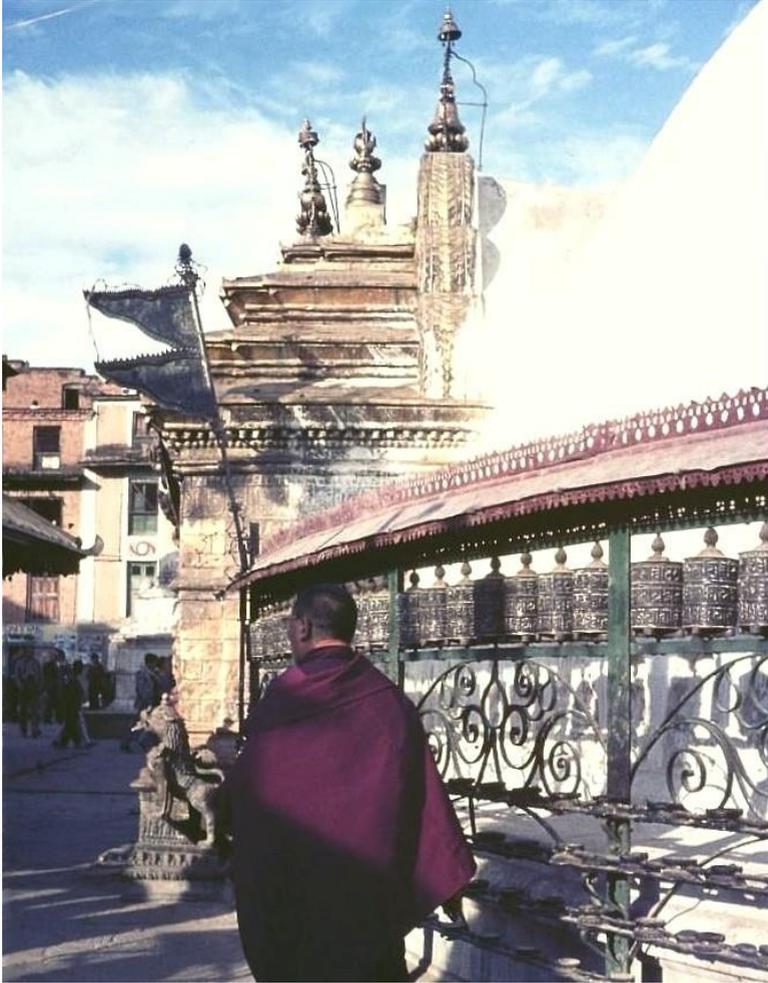
### **Monday 30 August 1971**

Went to the post office to get the postcards franked. (Postal workers in all countries East of Turkey are reputed to remove stamps from overseas mail before it is franked and sell them because 75 p – the cost of sending a letter abroad from Nepal – is quite a lot of money to them. To guard against this, we hand over the letters in the post office and watch while the stamps are cancelled, thus ensuring that they are not removed and the cards actually do get sent on their way). I went to catch a bus to Patan. 4 miles SE of Kathmandu (fare 30 pice – 1p). Wandered through the narrow streets to Durbar Square, reputedly the most beautiful in Nepal. The Krishna Mandir – Temple to the Lord (Hari) Krishna of Beatles fame – and the Palace certainly were worth seeing.



**Swayambhunath Stupa**

**© Philipp Bachmann**



**Swayambhunath Prayer Wheels and Priest      © Philipp Bachmann**

Picked up a local guy as guide and he saved me much time by escorting me to the various other places of interest including the Mahabouddha which has over 9000 figures of Buddha – one on each surface brick. Also of interest, the Jagat Narayan to the Lord Vishnu. This had hand painted bronze statue pairs of various mythological creatures and a lock made in London. After giving my guide tea in a

tea shop and a 20 pice tip (the only change I had) I returned to the Durbar Square to watch the world go by.

Met Bob, another English guy from Whiteparish, who had also been looking around Patan and as he was going on to Bhadgaon and had a VW bus, he invited me along together with another local guide. We then visited a Tibetan Refugee Camp where they make the most superb carpets. They sang as they worked and the singing was sadly beautiful, so much different from the Nepalese. The Tibetan Culture is unique. Bob made recordings and took several photos of the scene. We then went on to Bhadgaon which again is an interesting city with its Golden Gate, Palace of 55 windows, and the Nyatapola, the tallest temple in the Kathmandu valley. It is a pity that, not being Hindu, Moslem nor Buddhist, I have trouble entering these fine temples.



**Swayambhunath, the climb**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

We then went back to Patan to drop our guide and then to the Nepalese National Museum, which was closed. So we continued on to what I consider the highlight of the day – Swayambhu Nath. This is a 2500 year old Buddhist Monastery on top of a hill 3 miles west of Kathmandu. Each face of the four—faced tower has the big all-seeing eyes and "question mark" nose of Buddha painted on it, watching every movement of the world. A little boy, training to become a monk, was just finishing chanting his prayers, but for a small fee, was more than willing to repeat them and be taped and photographed. Judging by the way he kept bursting into laughter, his sincerity must surely be somewhat in doubt. We then met up with two other English guys and went for a meal in Tashi's which I thought was pretty bad.

### **Tuesday 31 August 1971**

After yesterday, today was rather an anticlimax. I read a bit early on because it was pouring with rain. When it eased off, I went to post some cards, including one to my sister. Returned and read until 2 p.m. when, feeling hungry, I went to have some food. On my way home, I passed a cobbler's and, never having had the opportunity to see a shoe being made before, I stayed there for 3½ hours to do just that. It was really fascinating. I didn't realize so much was involved. The styles were Western and they were being made for an American.

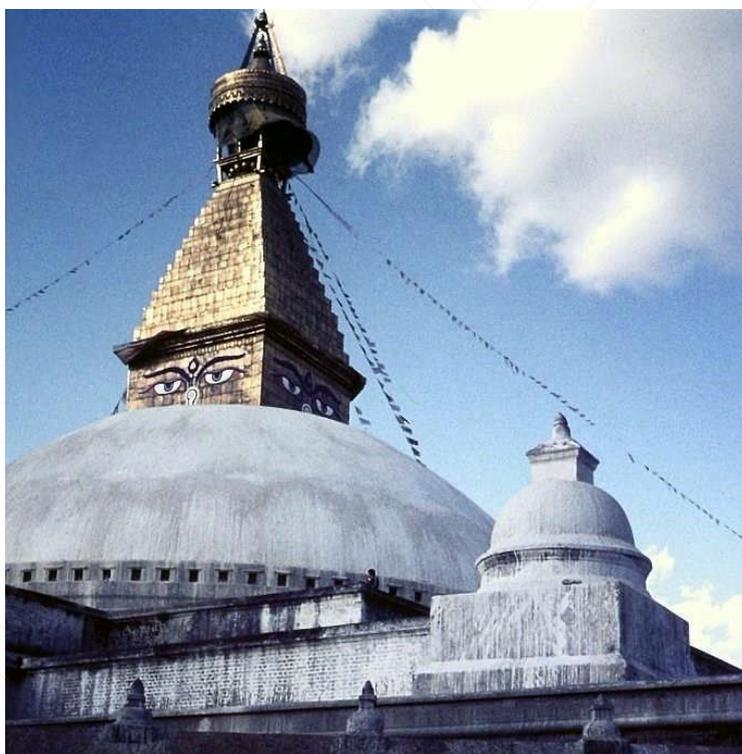
### **Wednesday 1 September 1971**

After a late breakfast, I wandered up to the Nepalese National Museum which is about 2 hours away. Weather was rather bad, intermittent showers. The museum was rather pathetic really – British and American industry display stands taking up much of the ground floor, along with Indian Aid and children's' paintings, and a picture (complete with flashing lights) of Queen Ratna of Nepal. In the military section on the first floor, there was a display of guns and a few cannon, and the entire weaponry of about 15 national heroes of the last few centuries.

The third floor was a picture gallery and natural history museum. The portraits were of Prime Ministers, National Heroes and

Kings, and quite unexpectedly George V, Victoria and Albert were also represented. The Natural History section contained about 30 stuffed animals and 40 birds or so plus a rhinoceros head! Unfortunately, everything was poorly labelled or completely unmarked – even in Nepalese. The archaeological museum was perhaps better, containing terracotta, bronze and marble statuettes, pictures (frescos) and one or two excellent models. The museum as a whole was crawling with screaming school children, who, like the many kids I have seen visiting the Museum Complex in South Kensington, seemed more eager to be out of school for the day than interested in the museum.

It started raining as I left and so I took refuge in a tea house (with a holey corrugated iron roof). While there, I met an English-



**Boudhanath, Buddha Stupa**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

couple returning to England after 4 years teaching in Kenya. They were as eager to learn how things were in England as I was to learn about Africa. The woman had been suffering from amoebic dysentery for over two years and didn't seem unduly worried. "Oh, they'll clear it up in a week when I get back to London." Weather worse in the afternoon, so I stayed in and finished "Return of the Native". Early to bed as everyone was out and I was tired.

### **Thursday 2 September 1971**

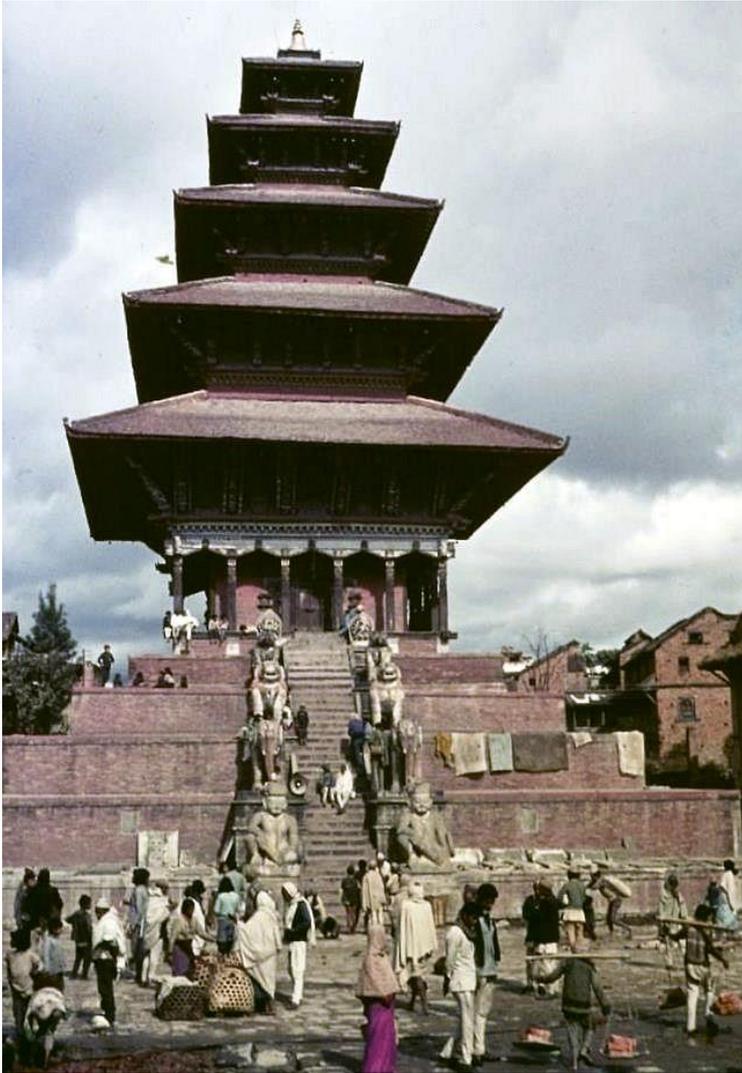
Went jewellery hunting after breakfast. I wanted smoky topaz mounted in a silver ring. Went into about 12 jewellers before selecting one for NRs 30/- but owing to my money being in the hotel safe, I haven't purchased it yet. Bought postcards for 50p (cheapest yet) and went to the post office to procure stamps and an aerogramme. I wrote the cards to various people including the Chadas in Delhi. Then I wrote the aerogramme to parents. As I explained, I was a day earlier, but they probably had to wait some time for the last one, Nepalese airmail being what it is. In my letter, I ordered my meals for the day I return and boy, it made my mouth water.

The weather then cooled down a bit so I wandered around to a few more temples and places of interest. I then took my rucksack to a cycle shop and managed to get bolts to repair it at 10 pice each. On my way back, I bumped into one of the girls I had last seen in Delhi, and while I was talking to her, the guy from Kenya wandered up to inform us of a happening rumoured for that evening. I had supper and returned to the appointed spot a little before the appointed time but alas, nothing happened except a little dancing – a prelude to tomorrow. Despite my time running out, I have decided to delay my departure until Sunday as Saturday is a big festival day.

### **Friday 3 September 1971**

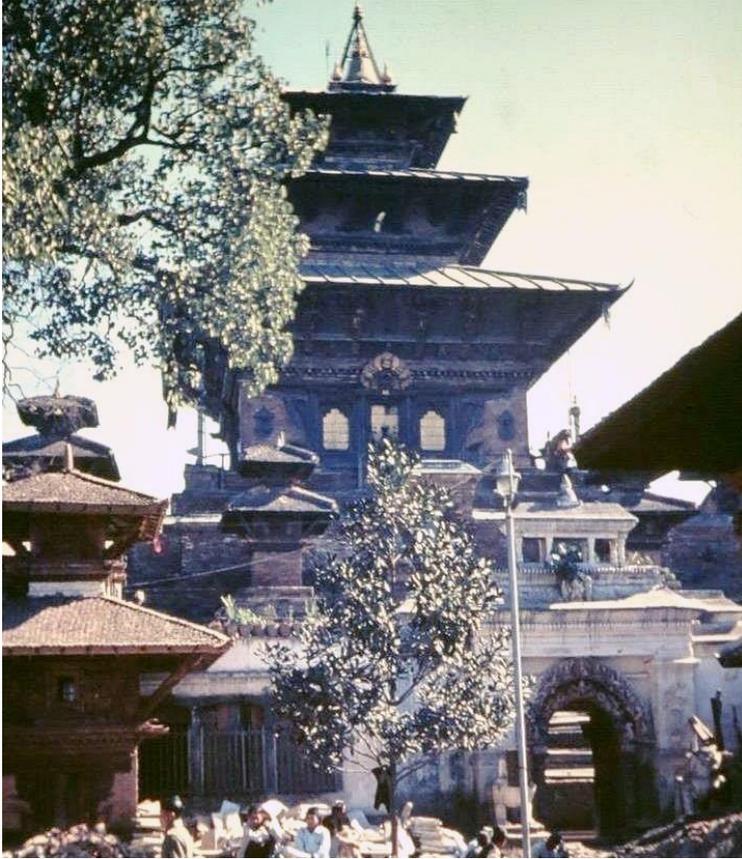
Busy day. Went to see about the ring and having it enlarged and then via the post office to the Government Arts Emporium which was closed. I went back to the hotel and luckily got my washing in before it started raining. In the afternoon I went by way of the dairy (it is strange how the hippy population gravitate between the hash

shop and the dairy, but there it was full of them waiting for the 2 p.m. delivery) to American Express to pick up mail, but there wasn't any. I am worried that the last news I have from home is dated July 31 – 5 weeks ago. I hope my aerogrammes have been getting through



**5-Storey Pagoda, Bhaktapur**

**© Philipp Bachmann**



O.K. Well that was my last chance to pick up any here, so it all depends on Mumbai now to let me know of their plans for picking me up.

Then I proceeded to the Royal Palace which is extremely modern – 10 years old maybe – and thence to the British Embassy which was closed. I then returned to pick up ring, but it still wasn't large enough and so I returned to the hotel. I had tea and went back again to get ring – this time a trifle large, but I will put on weight again when I get home so it should be O.K. Then I went out to see what was happening but my stomach was not behaving itself too well and went to bed early.

## Saturday 4 September 1971

Looking through my passport, I see that on Friday 4th September 1970 (exactly a year ago), I crossed back into the U.S. from Vancouver. I was then as far west as I have ever been. Today I am in Kathmandu, the furthest east I have ever been, there being approximately 200 degrees of longitude between them! Well, it's not really news, but interesting all the same. Looking back, it doesn't really seem that long ago or that far away.

However, back to today. It was pouring with rain when I awoke and eventually I got up at 9:30 a.m. and went to have breakfast in the "Snowman". Stayed there for two hours, talking to the "Kenya Couple" about their time in Kenya and when we eventually emerged, the rain had stopped and although the sun wasn't actually shining, there were hopes that it might. Went back to pay my hotel bill and then purchase a ticket to Birganj on the Indian border, bumping into the two girls I had seen in Delhi (Helen and Sue) on the way. They booked tickets for Monday. Then we proceeded with an American guy called Steve to the central square, buying some ginger biscuits on the way!

The events of the afternoon are going to be a little difficult to describe. Tonight the moon is full and hence today a festival is celebrated. In one of the houses in the square lives a girl known as the "Living Durga" (Goddess - Kumari). She is chosen at the age of 5 and reigns through to the age of 11-12 when she is replaced by another 5 year old girl. She is a symbol of purity and goodness – and is waited on like a queen. She is supposed to become a goddess during this time and is worshipped like one. Three times each year, she makes an appearance when she and two of her maids (also little girls) are drawn through the streets on three decorated floats. Today happened to be one of those occasions and the music and dancing of the last two nights were in preparation for this big day (or just an excuse for letting off steam as the case may be).

Crowds had assembled in the square by 2 p.m., the women and younger children standing on the steps of the various temples in their best clothes, while the men and boys generally ran riot on the floor of the square. At 2:30 p.m. a group of westerners including myself and Americans were sitting in what was probably an ideal position. Gradually the police, batons at the ready, drove us and a

couple of hundred natives back in three or four waves, the final being nearly disastrous when one or two people fell in the heaving mass. In the end, it became clear that the police were trying to clear the square of these hooligans while at the same time dragging out us Westerners.



**Kumari Ghar Residence, Kathmandu**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

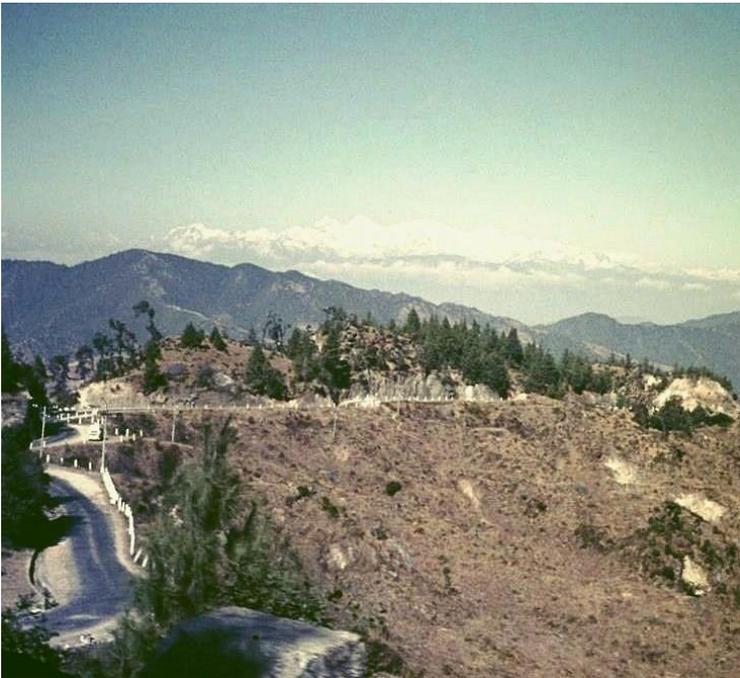
We were sent over to the other side of the square to a small area which had been reserved for us. This, we were informed, was for our own safety, as near riots were half expected. This area was, at the same time, kept free of Nepalese by the police who made sudden swoops on the area to pick out the locals. Had a riot broken out, the police would have pulled no punches where the trouble would have been – amongst the local crowds. From this unsquashed "compound", those who so wished, could wander around unhindered to photograph, only to be sent back if they were out of the reserved area for more than a minute or two. At one time, a water buffalo emerged from one part of the crowd, only to be deftly turned round by a tug on the horns and sent back whence he had come. The army band comprised normal brass and woodwind instruments plus a couple of sousaphones. The national anthem and the other pieces (including a Sousa march) were often played in competition with the tribal dance music and at one time with the bugles as well. The bandsmen were quite smart up to the waist, but their white coats were often stained and ragged.

The foreign diplomats arrived about 3:45 p.m. with cameras at the ready and finally at 4 p.m. the King arrived without any show of emotion from the crowd. All this time, the dance music (two symbols and a drum) had been playing non-stop, while two masked dancers gyrated in time. The unveiling of the living goddess was marked by fire crackers, and the three girls, covered in make-up and with large headdresses were set on their floats to be drawn along by many men and boys in long robes. The floats were covered with men so that the public could only get the occasional glimpse of the girls inside. Four minutes later it was all over and after the hasty departure of the king, the crowd closed in, heaving and surging. After 10 minutes hard work, I had escaped to the safety of a back alley, from where I returned to the hotel.

Like football crowds, everyone was struggling to get somewhere and far too many were using their elbows, fists and feet to help. Relieved to get out alive, I retired to sleep. I did not feel like going out, but went to have some porridge and pay my last respects to the "Snowman" and staff. My tummy is still funny and I am apprehensive about travelling to Varanasi in this condition.

## **Sunday 5 September 1971**

Woke up before the time I had arranged to be woken (6 a.m.) to find my general health good. Packed my stuff and got out by 6:30 a.m. and wandered down to the post office where I was to catch the bus at 7:30 a.m. Also on my bus were an Italian girl and Indian guy; both of whom are going to Varanasi, so I will have some sort of company throughout. The bus journey started in bright sunlight, but due to low clouds on the northern hills, there was no chance of seeing the giant Himalayas as I had done on my arrival in Kathmandu.



**Road Kathmandu Valley to Raxaul**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

The weather continued good (and the journey bumpy) all the way up, though near the summit (8162 ft.) misty clouds enclosed us and we stayed in this blanket right down to 4000 ft. where the sun started to break through. The last part of the Journey was undertaken

in bright sunlight under the typical Indian skyscape of white fluffy cotton-wool clouds. Got into Birganj at 4 p.m. and crossed the border easily enough for NRs 1/-. I purposely split with the other two as I suspected they were carrying drugs. I later found this out to be true. They were searched, I wasn't (appearances I suppose) but nothing was found and they joined me later at the station. As I said, they provided some sort of company. The girl, it appears, is travelling with little or no money and relying on the stupid, rather over-generous guy. I had an omelette in the station restaurant while waiting for the train, due at 8:30 p.m. Left Sugauli about on time and got to Muzaffarpur about 1:30 a.m.



**Nepalese “Double-Decker” n.b. This picture was taken much later in 2013. The bus styles had not changed much since the 1970s.**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

## Monday 6 September 1971

We could not get a through train to Varanasi and so we took the mail train to Chapra. Due to leave at 4 a.m., it left in fact 3 hours late. Slept a bit of the way in the luggage rack. The scenery is not too interesting – floods and yet more floods. In Chapra Junction I had a reasonable meal and afterwards we waited on the platform. In two minutes we had collected a crowd of wide-eyed, open-mouthed, inquisitive locals. I counted about a third of the circle and it contained 60 locals which means that we had attracted the attention of about 200. If you stare back they just look the other way – I guess it is their culture.

The train started at 3:20 p.m. and took one hour – yes 60 minutes – to get out of the station. The journey was slow, but we had the company of some Nepalese guys which was fun. We eventually arrived in Varanasi at midnight – 4½ hours late. We struggled back to the hole where I had stayed on my way up: "Palm Springs Hotel". Still no water!

## Tuesday 7 September 1971

Went to get a student concession at the railway headquarters and this proved to be as long a job as last time. The Indians in this area are so irritating I find and I easily get annoyed with them. They seem to go out of their way to be nauseating. Got a sleeper reservation for Thursday and should get to Mumbai late Friday evening and hence have five days there before my flight. In the afternoon I went to the police station to clear up about my camera, etc. and after about 2 hours I eventually got what I wanted – a statement for the insurance company. We ate in the Chinese Restaurant and it was a pretty good meal.

In the evening we went to a Hindu film "*Mera Gaon, Mera Desh*". It was really weird. The cinema was enormous and nearly full. The film was a mixture of slapstick comedy, music, mild eroticism and bloody violence – much worse than I have seen in British films – it would be highly censored in England. The theme was, as always in Indian films so I am told, a struggle between the "Goodies" and the "Baddies". During it, the "Goodies" suffered many losses, but in the end they won through. Scenes of point blank

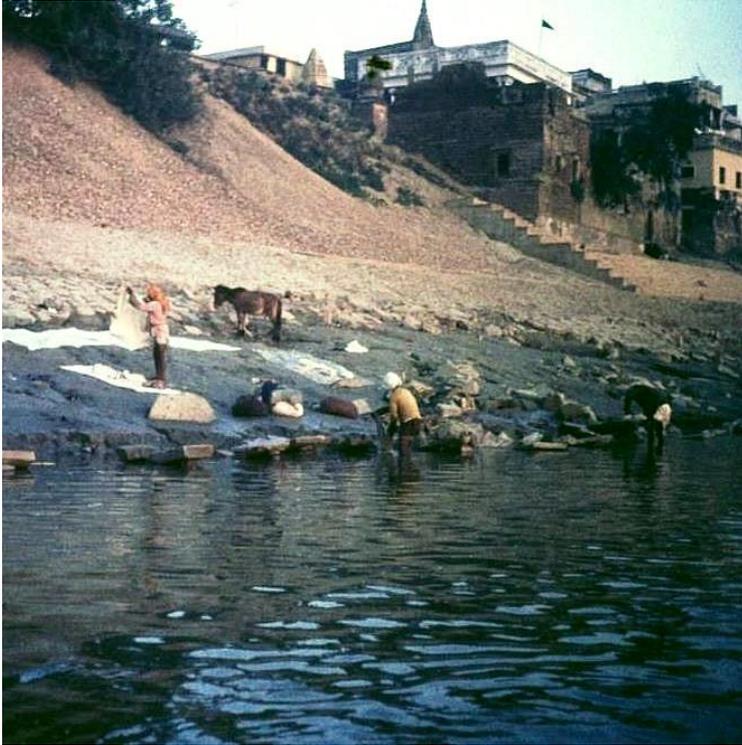
shootings and beatings to death with sticks comprised the last five minutes. One could not help thinking that this was political propaganda – the "goodies" being the Indians and the "baddies" the Pakistanis. The reaction of the Indians in the cinema was extreme, especially as the national anthem followed the film. I found myself quite carried away and so one must expect more from the Indians who actually understood the dialogue. It was well worth the visit despite the blood and the gore.

I returned to the hotel and met the girl I had last seen in Muzaffarpur when I was going to Kathmandu and had a long talk with her. She is really weird it seems but hopes to work amongst the refugees in the Calcutta area, being a qualified doctor.

### **Wednesday 8 September 1971**

I decided that today I must buy a sitar, and so with that in mind I set out with Patrick as a second opinion for the workshop of Ravi Shankar's sitar maker. He only had two on offer – an old one which had been carefully made up again for IRs 275/- and a new 18 string effort for IRs 375/-, clearly above my means. After a lot of haggling, I found out that he wouldn't take my traveller's cheques and so I went round to his brother's. After several cups of tea and a lot of haggling again, I eventually got a rather nice example for \$20 in traveller's cheques and IRs 10/- for the cloth cover. I gave it into the "safe" keeping of an Indian from the hotel, who had been with us, and set out to revisit the Golden Temple – and the watering place, carefully avoiding the pyres.

Had a *Lassi* in a restaurant which I had visited two weeks previously and where I was remembered. (*Lassi* is a mixture of yoghurt, milk and sugar and is delicious.) Then I returned to the hotel where I was annoyed to find that the sitar had been out of its case. No damage done though, or I would have been mad. Deciding that I was never going to get a shower and that as it was pouring with rain, I shouldn't miss the opportunity, Along with Patrick, the two French guys and any number of other travellers I stripped off and had a shower on the roof to the audio-visual effects of the atmospheric discharge – thunder and lightning. The storm ceased as suddenly as it had begun, leaving us half soaped-up. All the same, I retired to bed much refreshed and somewhat cleaner!



**Washing by the Ganges, Varanasi**

**© Philipp Bachmann**

### **Thursday 9 September 1971**

Up at 8 a.m., I went to have breakfast in a little eating house some way from the hotel. I had become quite a regular customer there during my two stays in Varanasi and the little owner was sad that we were leaving. His food was really cheap and hot, unlike that available at the hotel. Left at 10 a.m. and made for the railway station, where we found our reservations and went to have a cup of coffee. The carriage was practically empty and we could spread out how we liked. My sleeping bag certainly comes in useful when it comes to sitting on hard seats for hours on end.

We retraced our steps to Allahabad which we reached at 3 p.m. We then started on the south-westerly course which would take

us to Mumbai. The scenery was pretty monotonous although broken sometimes by stark hills. I settled down to sleep earlyish, my sitar under my seat, suspended from the slats, I am not worried about its being stolen – it is too awkward for a thief to conceal and there was a sleeper superintendent in our coach. My main worry was, and continued to be that the gourd might get broken accidentally. Reached Jabalpur at 2 a.m., when I was suffering from the effects of too many bananas eaten in a horizontal attitude (chronic stomach ache).

### **Friday 10 September 1971**

"Got up" at 8 a.m. after a fairly comfortable night's rest. Crossed into Maharashtra State around 10 a.m., and I suppose I entered the tropics (and hence attained my "furthest south") about the same time. The countryside is now very green and English, like low moorland, wooded in places. Here and there, there are banana plantations (rather un-English) with all the paraphernalia which goes with them – warehouses, railway trucks and sidings. Weighed myself and found I was 60.5kg (9st 7lb) which is not quite as horrific as the 8st 12lb recorded in Kathmandu. Lived off bananas, pakoras (vegetables and meat covered in pastry and doused with chutney) and tea supplied by vendors at the stations all the way.

In mid-afternoon, our carriage was filled with about 20 prisoners (!), handcuffed and roped together. They sat or squatted on the seats or floor under the eagle eyes of the 8 or so warders in charge, and also regarded with interest by myself, sprawled on a comfortable sleeping bag in the roost of a luggage rack. Absolute silence pervaded the atmosphere until they disembarked two hours later. Their manner was similar to that of a group of sheep. At Nasik (I think), our steam locomotive was replaced by an electric one for the descent into Mumbai, through tunnels and over ravines, which gradually faded with the daylight.

On drawing near to Mumbai, we realized that we had left India. The outskirts were more like London than the East. The suburban railways had signs similar to those on the London Underground, with obviously western named stations – Sandhurst Avenue and yes, even Finchley Road! The rolling stock even looked like London Transport. We reached Victoria Terminus station at

around 10 p.m. and finding the retiring rooms full, we eventually got permission to sleep in the second class waiting room, and had a well needed shower into the bargain. After talking to a couple of Indians for some time, we settled down to sleep.

### **Saturday 11 September 1971**

Had breakfast in the cafeteria and then split with Patrick who was going to stay with friends. Visited one puny hotel and eventually took a room with the two French guys in a second, not much better. I then set out for American Express and, finding that the client's mail section had moved, wandered over to pick up letters – one from my parents and 2 from my sister. Then I wandered up to the post office (*poste restante*), where three more awaited me, not carrying particularly good news. Still to cheer myself up, I went to buy some oranges - yellowy-green but delicious. Got IRs 11/- for my traveller's cheques – that ought to see me through, barring the buying of too many trinkets.

Went to the Salvation Army and hope to move in at IRs 12/- full board tomorrow. Wrote three more postcards – positively my last, and then went in search of the Nataraj Hotel, where the GSTS (German Student Travel Service) agent was to be found. They were closed, but my journey was not totally in vain. I saw some cricket and got into a discussion with locals about it. Forced to admit that England had slipped from second to third place in world ratings. Got back to the hotel and caught up with these notes in the evening.

### **Sunday 12 September 1971**

Moved, as I had hoped, into the Salvation Army Hotel soon after 10 a.m. It certainly is a fine place, the food is really good, the service excellent. Talk about going from the sublime to the ridiculous. I am in a room with two Germans and a Japanese, who are all very friendly, even if they are a bit richer than I am (they are flying everywhere). I am a bit tired, and so after a wander around, I settled down to read in the afternoon, with bread, butter, jam and biscuits for "tea" at 4 p.m.

The meals are as follows:

- Breakfast 7:30 -> 9:30 a.m.: eggs on toast, 2 slices of marmalade on toast, banana and pot of tea.
- Lunch 12 -> 1:30 p.m.: soup, roast pork, peas, carrots, roast potatoes, jelly and custard.
- Tea 3:30 -> 5:30 p.m.: as above.
- Supper: soup, meat casserole, vegetables and potatoes, chocolate pudding.

That and a reasonable bed for IRs 12/-. I think it is incredible cheap for India, let alone Mumbai which, as I have said, I hardly consider to be India. Being Sunday, I went to the Wesleyan Methodist Church, about 100 yards from the Salvation Army in the evening. There was a united service with the Afghan Memorial Church (Anglican, I think). The church held about 200 but the congregation was only 30 strong. There are many churches in Mumbai, and during the British domination of India they were full. Since Independence in 1947, the number of Westerners has dwindled and the number of churches has dropped as a consequence. The service, I thought, was poor, taken from a book of services, with hymns taken from "Hymns Ancient and Modern". The "sermon" was a 15 minute affair retelling in expanded form a simple story from the Old Testament.

### ***Addendum 2021***

*And there my diary ends! I had intended writing up the events of the last few days of my journey on getting home to England. I kept on putting it off, with the result, that only now, 50 years later, I continue from memory.*

### ***Monday 13 September – Wednesday 15 September 1971***

*I spent the last few days in India in Mumbai. I think I did a lot of sight-seeing in the city itself – there is plenty to see – and tried to get used to the idea of going home. On one of the 3 days (probably Tuesday, September 14, I made the hour-long journey by ferry from the "Gateway of India" to Elephanta Island to visit the caves.*

*Impressive as they are, more memorable still was the culture shock of suddenly being surrounded by (rich) European tourists.*



**Mumbai, Pick's Tower to Marine Drive      © Philipp Bachmann**

*On Wednesday I remember buying bought sandals. I was able to leave my luggage (including sitar) in the Salvation Army Hotel. About 9 p.m. I picked it up and made my way to the Nataraj Hotel to catch the GSTS to Mumbai Airport for check-in "before midnight 15/16". Arriving there I was told that my name was not on the passenger-list! The young German overseeing the check-in process looked at my ticket, said "shit happens" (or similar). Due to the fact that there were a few empty seats on the plane, I was allowed to board.*

*We boarded the plane after midnight on Thursday. I managed to get a seat where I could stow my sitar safely. We*

departed Mumbai about 1 a.m. I remember looking down to the ground a couple of hours later and compared the journey from England to India had undertaken, the 6 weeks of, at times, uncomfortable – even painful – travel. The flight home took a matter of hours. The longer stretch (BK908: Mumbai-Copenhagen) was flown by an Air Commerz (a German charter airline that operated for a short time between 1970 and 1972) Boeing 707. We landed unexpectedly in the grey light of dawn to refuel. On the terminal building stood "Welcome to Istanbul", an airport I previously visited on July 14th. After refuelling (during which time we did not leave the aircraft) the journey continued to Copenhagen from where the passengers dispersed in all directions.



### **“Homeward Bound”**

I got my connecting flight BK905 (Dan-Air Copenhagen-London Gatwick) with plenty of time to spare – obviously I was on the passenger list this time. Space in the Comet was rather more cramped than in the 707 and I was relieved to arrive at around 1 p.m. with my sitar still in one piece and get it through customs without further ado.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Currencies

In the days of cash and travellers' cheques local currencies were always a bit of a worry, especially east of Istanbul. During my journey I used the following currencies

<u>Country</u>	<u>Currency</u>	<u>Rate (1971)</u>
Germany	Deutschmark	9 DM = £1
Austria	Schilling	60 Sch = £1
Yugoslavia	Dinar	40 Din = £1
Greece	Drachma	75 Dr = £1
Turkey	Turkish Lira	T£32 = £1
Iran	Rial	140 rials = £1
Afghanistan	Afghani	150 Afs = £1
Pakistan*)	Pakistani Rupee	PRs 11/- = £1
India*)	Indian Rupee	IRs 18/- = £1
Nepal*)	Nepalese Rupee	NRs 30/- = £1

\*) Pakistan, India and Nepal all used Rupees (Rs) which were divided into 100 pice (or piasas). I have used the abbreviations PRs, IRs and NRs for clarity.

The rates are approximate. On the black market they were liable to large fluctuation.

In the original diary I used both "old" and "new" British currency (£sd and £p respectively). "Decimal Day" was 15<sup>th</sup> February 1971 and many people in Summer 1971 still thought in the "old money".

**n.b.: Total cost of the trip was ~£140, incl. the train ticket to Aachen (£4) and flight home (£65)**

## Appendix B: What I took with me

Prior to my departure my mother listed my belongings neatly in her own handwriting at the back of the diary. Many items did not survive the trip, being lost or disposed of on the way.

### Rucksack borrowed from my cousin, John Skinner

<b>Clothes</b>	<b>lost/etc.</b>	<b>Toiletries, etc.</b>	<b>lost/etc.</b>
2 pairs of trousers	1	2 bars of soap	2
1 pair of shorts		Razor and blades	1
3 pairs of underpants	1	comb	1
1 vest		toothbrush and paste	
3 shirts	1	patches	
light pullover		pack of aspirin	
heavy pullover		pack of deraprim	
face flannel		2 rolls of glucose (dextrose)	
2 towels	1	penknife	1
swimming trunks		scissors in case	
6 pairs socks	most	mending set with pins	1
2 pyjamas	1	torch	1
6 handkerchiefs	most	camera (Instamatic)	1
2 towels	1	7 rolls of film (126)	3
plastic mac		water bottle	1
jacket		cup	
hat		plate	
desert boots		knife	
sandals		fork	
sleeping bag		spoon	
sheet sleeping bag		sunglasses	1
roll of heavy duty		watch	broke first night!
plastic (3ftx6ft) *)			

\*) as underlay for my sleeping bag to prevent water, bedbugs etc. from entering my sleeping bag

### Documents

- British Passport N400607
- Ticket 712/722868 Mumbai-London for charter flight (GSTS)
- Travellers Cheques (\$150: American Express, £11: NatWest)
- Cash

## **Appendix C: Anonymous “Words of Wisdom” on a toilet wall in Tehran**

“When you are on the road, there are two things to worry about:  
Either you are well or you are ill.  
If you are well, you have nothing to worry about.

If you are ill, there are two things to worry about:  
Either you will get better, or you will get worse.  
If you get better, you have nothing to worry about.

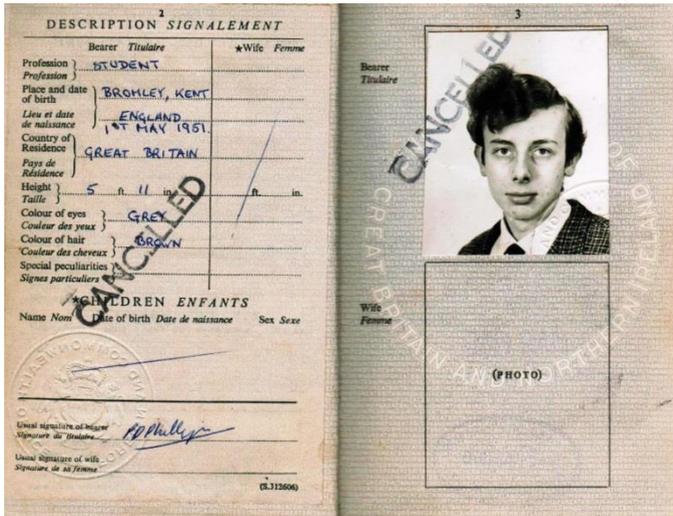
If you get worse, there are two things to worry about:  
Either you will live, or you will die.  
If you live, you have nothing to worry about.

If you die, there are two things to worry about:  
Either you will go to heaven, or you will go to hell.  
If you go to heaven, you have nothing to worry about.

And if you got hell, you will be so busy greeting all your friends, you  
will have no time to worry.  
**SO WHY WORRY?”**

# Appendix D: Odds and Ends

## Passport/Visas



Passport



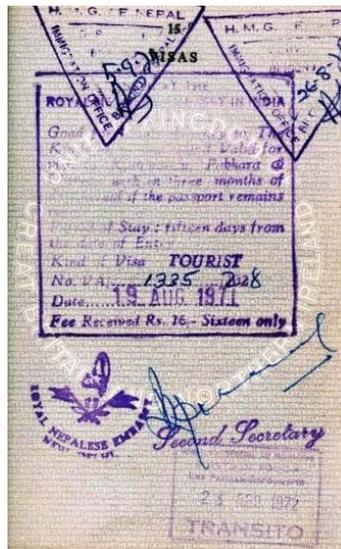
Passport



Iranian Visa



Afghan Visa



Nepalese Visa

The original diaries

hela, bought a new parkerjfe for 25/4.  
 Bumped into Tom in the Khyber  
 Restaurant while talking to a Italian  
 motor cyclist. Had some strawberry  
 & cream. Met some Danes driving  
 an ex London Transport RT (3238)  
 bus. According to its fare chart, it  
 used to operate 161/161A routes! They  
 are trying to sell it for \$5000, having  
 been turned back from the Indian  
 border. Collected a letter from Sam  
 from Poste Restante, & wrote Aerial  
 Home Met Tom for meal in the  
 evening, (he is returning to Istanbul)  
 before going home to bed.  
 Sunday 1st August onwards since  
 I left England, seems like suc

Diary 1

Sat 4th Sept. Looking through my passport  
 I see that on Fri 4th Sept. 1970, I crossed  
 back into the U.S. from Vancouver. I was  
 then at my furthest. Went over. Today I  
 am in Kathmandu, my furthest ever. But  
 over, there being approx. 2000 of longhairs  
 between then & I! Well, it's not really news  
 but interesting nevertheless. Looking back,  
 it doesn't really seem that long ago or  
 that far away. However, back to today.  
 It was pouring with rain when I awoke  
 & eventually got up at 9:30 & went to  
 breakfast in Sheraton. Stayed there 2  
 hours talking to the Kenya couple about  
 their time in Kenya & what we could

Diary 2

**CASH MEMO**

**KEMP & CO., LTD.** Regd. Office  
60C, Old Presidency  
Road, Bazaar St.  
BOMBAY DELHI NEW DELHI CALCUTTA MADRAS

DATE 1/8/8 19 19 NEW DELHI

Rs 50 Kemp's

Sybil's Apt 2/87

N.D. 27228

Goods once sold are not returnable.  
Dispensary open Day & Night

Prescription, New Delhi

A No 9822

**THE SALVATION ARMY.**  
RED SHIELD HOUSE  
30, Mirzawadar Road, Fort, BOMBAY I.

Tel. 211694 Date 15/9- 1971.

Mr./Mrs. Phillips Room No. \_\_\_\_\_

	Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.
Board @ <i>1 Person</i>	6	-	3 days	18 -
( Breakfast 1.25 Lunch 1.75 Tax .75 Dinner 2.25 )				
Guest Meals				
Lodging @	6	-	3 days	18 -
General and Sales Tax				75
Total Rs.				36 75

Received with thanks Girvanthi  
Manager.

12-15/9-71  
10 am.

A.F.-55 Bk.-1-2-1970

Salvation Army Hotel, Mumbai



Varanasi Sitar (2012)