

London, 15, March 2003

LONDON TRIP

It is morning - about 8:30 - and I want to put a few thoughts to paper concerning our trip, or for; especially may visit to the home of George Fredrick Handel at 25 Brook Street yesterday.

First of all - our trip here was smooth and pleasant. ~~And~~ We made a perfect connection with Goss and Pete at the Airport.

North Carolina. Don't, I can't think of the name of the town.

Quite honestly, we have been touring as fast and furiously that last few days that I am fairly tired. Even though I did manage some sleep on the plane - it certainly wasn't quality sleep.

Jim, our driver was there to meet us at Gatwick airport. His van a big Square thing was perfect for us. - Clean and comfortable. We loaded up and headed out to Stonehenge - with a first stop at Salisbury Cathedral.

The Country side - or what I could see of it from the freeway - really did remind me of Pennsylvania and even parts of Texas. The trees are not as tall as I ~~was~~ expected certainly not as tall as they old growth forests on our east coast. We passed through wonderful little villages. Lots of Thatched roofs. The local Churches wonderful old piles of green moss-covered limestone.

most rather small, I guess steel
doors - all women don't you know.

Salisbury Cathedral was a disappointment!
It certainly must be one of the tallest
Cathedrals in Europe. Muring workmanship.
Most of the original stain glass had been
removed by James Wyatt in the 1780's
to bring in more light. Shame. The
great sculpture on the outside is
stunning.

We disembarked at one of the
gates of the old city a few blocks from
the church itself. The gate - a wonderful
old limestone half timbered decorated
haded windows - rather Elizabethan
or earlier in appearance - had a
sign on the nearby wall identifying
the gate as a place where Handel
often performed in the Roi-paloi of
Salisbury. Nearby was a lovely
limestone house where Charles II stayed
one year to avoid the plague in
Oxford. The nearby blocks of houses
had wonderful examples of medieval
halls and early 18th Century and
17th Century houses and small gardens.
The weather was cold, mostly cloudy,
but the narcissi, daffodils and plants
were nicely blooming.

After Salisbury we got back on the
road and finished the drive to Stonehenge.
A good number of people were there
but not the crowds of the high tourist
season. The Stones were really quite

wonderful The surrounding Country
somewhat hilly. The Henge itself
appears to be on a shallow rise
from the surrounding landscape.
The stones have that wonderful green
green (splashed with green moss)
that makes a color combination that
I love. I think I got some good photos
for a possible picture or two despite
the fact that ropes kept the crowd
at some distance.

After Stonehenge we drove to
the small town of Sarum and after
dinner at a pleasant roadside inn.
I had lunch drunk with peas. Had
my first beer in two years. Loved
it.

We finished our tour with a
late afternoon visit to Avebury, a
wonderful old village surrounded
by large, more or less circles - in fact
so large that it was difficult to
see the over all design from the
stones were really spread out over
many hills & acres. We visited the
nearby Church. Charming. Wonderful
floors of rooms already existing in
the bare branches of nearby trees.
The little church, quite ~~pleasant~~ inside
you could see dated back to Roman
times - the even the third century
it was full.

After the Church, we visited
a deep with ~~lots~~ of lots of new

A Grunk

were Salstackbooks offered for sale among the usual tourist stuff.

We had a long drive into London first & hardly noticed it. Tite and Jagg sat in back and noney sat in the front with the driver. This gave me a seat all to myself and surprisingly I fell asleep as soon as I reclined and woke up nearly an hour and a half. When I woke up we were already in downtown London.

It was dark when we reached our hotel - The Millennium Building - on Gloucester Street, fortunately just across from the train station. We were somewhat removed from down town London but Readington palace is not far, nor is Albert Hall which Jim pointed out as we passed our hotel.

Jim, by the way, is a Scotsman, grey haired, reminds me of the author of Anglia's Ashes. Seems to have led an interesting life. Was a missionary in Singapore at one time. Also an ex boxer player. Good sense of humor.

We ungrunk went out for a while to eat and returned to the hotel. Jagg was making plans to maximize our experience while in London. Both her knowledge and Tite's of London has proved invaluable. They are always fun to travel with.

Wednesday 13th March.

Had a fairly good sleep. None for. We were up and having coffee at a Starbucks across the street.

Starbucks are everywhere. After breakfast we walked several blocks to the Victoria and Albert Museum. A lovely museum.

Saw a number of famous miniatures there - the "port" in Holmes and the full figure of the young Courtenay (Elizabeth) in the Rose Garden. Sometimes thought to be The Earl of Essex.

Unfortunately, very few costumes on display. They were re-doing the display cases. Some 17th Century things. The Tudor Hall was incredible - and India too.

Also saw Rubens' famous statue of Handel - the one from Rembrandt Gardens. I found it. Got good photos. Nearly another Semelata portrait of Handel looking considerably younger.

Trip to England 11 March - 17 March

12 March ~~Tuesday~~ Wednesday

Found at Greenwich about 9:00 AM.
Picked up by Jim and Car. Drove to
Salisbury Cathedral, then to Stone Henge,
then to Avebury, old Stone Church and
nearby "old Sarum" mound. Return to
London to Millennium Railways Hotel
on Gloucester Street in Kensington. Had
a late meal at Nouvelle Cuisine
restaurant nearby. (Also near Stonehenge)
had a wonderful meal of lamb shank
at small roadside inn), and first
Ale.

13 March ~~Wednesday~~ Thursday

Had coffee and robe at
Starbucks near Hotel then walked
to Victoria and Albert Museum. Walked
past the Mus. of Natl. History. Dino-bird
exhibit at Museum. missed it. Jew
Costume on display at V & A. Beautiful
miniatures. Wonderful Islamic art.
Roubilliac's famous sculpture of G. F. Handel
and also a smaller terracotta portrait
of Handel much sparser portrait. Got
then later to the Late Show
at Burlington House for three hours. Nancy
and I later go for tea and cakes across the
street. Pete and Jozy went to get tickets
to Le Miserables for the next night.

All of us went to friends food
specialty show across from Royal Academy,
I was very tired. We finally walked back

to the tube station at Green Park and took the crowded subway back home. Funny for us, the subway exit was right across the street from our hotel. In dinner we went to a nearby Indian restaurant. Quite good! Back to room and to bed. Read quite late into the night. Tired as I was, just couldn't get to sleep.

14 March ~~Wednesday~~ Friday

Very full day. At 10:30 took the tube to the Titian Show at the National Gallery - just to the side of Trafalgar Square. The Square somewhat smaltish but being rebuilt at the time with new public platform. The Titian Show fantastic, crowded. At 12:30 walked over to St. Martin in the Fields, large "green" Church bordering Trafalgar Square. Had lunch in the crypt (crowded) then went up stairs to hear a 1:00 o'clock concert. Disappointing. Nancy left to photograph. Pete, Jozy and I waited a little longer and eventually took our leave. Jozy decided to wait for Nancy. Pete and I decided to walk to Brook Street to find Mondeli's house.

Wonderful experience at Handel House. Everything I hoped for. Stayed for a Telemann concert - Haydn's Violin & Viola, Recorder and female soloist. Lovely. Nancy and Jozy showed up. Watched in Paper Store near the British Museum. Felkims. Very tired and

Really not looking forward to Les Miz at all, that evening. Getting dark as we walked over to the British Museum. Mainly went to see the Elgin Marbles. Jazz wasn't to get some tea. Nancy to a Pub. Pete and I were the only ones in the room with the Marbles. Very beautiful. More finely detailed than I somehow expected.

We met Jazz and found many at a crowded Pub. We sat for a few minutes to have a beer. Bill talked to a Colonel of Old men, toothless about Bush and the impending war.

We left the pub at 7:00 and walked to the theatre - a once exotic looking place with rusted & tiled, worn signs and chain. Clearly past its prime. The musical was wonderfully done. Nancy left at half time. Second half we're all up. I was glad I did it. Theatre crowded.

After the show we walked to a nearby Italian restaurant (founded 1901), lots of mirror. Nice atmosphere. Was one like not too good.

We took a cab home. Nancy was in bed reading.

15 March Saturday

Took cab instead of subway to Museum of London - a modern museum not far from Saint Paul's Cathedral. Spent three hours - especially in the Roman section but all the other exhibits as well. Peter, Jazz and I walked later

to Saint Pauls. Nancy frustratingly
Anger, being to help Mother. Peter,
Jazz and to found Saint Pauls, went
to the crypt to see Nelson's Cenotaph.
Ain into Nancy as we left the
Church. Walked down to old
Dickenson Tower + the "Chensar(?) Cheese",
Belmont in 1667 after the fire. Too late
for food. Drink ale and bite peanuts.
Then we walked through old Alley's
past Samuel Pepys house (now no longer)
Hondury then to Dr Johnson's house
situated in a wonderful wicket in
Court yard off the busy street.

Began our walk to the river, past
Armerst House. Got stalled in the
several closed off Courtyards of the
Temple - the area of legal offices.
Finally lost Nancy for good.

We walked down to the river, crossed
on the foot bridge to the Great new
Groselle (sp) Ferry wheel near the opposite
Bank. Weather getting colder, windy.
Simply too many people. Time to leave
wheel to long. Finally gave up on finding
Nancy. We then walked down to bridge
by Big Ben. Too late in the afternoon
to find nearly Westminster. Our walk
that afternoon was our longest. Tired.

We caught a cab near the Abbey and
rode back to our hotel. Nancy arrived
a half hour later. We dined in the
Hotel dining room and retired to our
rooms to read.

(over)

16 March Sunday

Succeeded in getting an early start. Took the train to Richmond. Then a cab to Hampton Court. Beautiful day. Daffodils blooming in a carefully planned casual field near the Palace. Few people at first. In the old courtyards and kitchen areas the smell of woodsmoke was wonderful. Toured the grand rooms of Henry VIII's part of the Palace. Not much of Henry's apartments survives.

Nowy and I toured the Willoughby and Mary rooms as well as given angles. Walked around the Palace. Again the weather was perfect. Visited the more formal gardens. Also the "Great Vine" of 1765 planted by Capability Brown. Then to a long Hall with the Great Montagna series of paintings on the Triumph of Caesar. Wonderful but dark.

We could not get a cab on the roads outside of Hampton Court. All walked by the house of Christopher Wren and David Fairclough. Finally got a bus to the train station to take us to Baker Street in time to tour Madame Tassard's Wax Museum.

We did make it in time. The place was jammed packed but rather fun. Very Glibby and Gumpy. + wanted to see her (modest to) Smash of Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI, and Robespierre which I did not know

she had done. The head looked good, and it is ~~probably~~ an authentic likeness. We went through a "Den of Terror" very disorienting. Nona saved me. Saw the Quillotine blade. The museum claimer was the blade that dispatched Marie Antoinette. I'm glad I went.

We took the Subway back to our hotel. Peter as I found were really helpful in planning our subway route. We got back to the hotel and washed up. Cate and I wanted to go to a fish and chips place across from the hotel. It was packed and noisy. A large TV screen showing a soccer match was on and loud music was blaring. I really was tired and would like to have been in a quieter place.

Cate ordered fish and chips for all of us and it was wonderful. Very light, not greasy. Excellent french fries. I'm glad I went.

We all returned to our hotel rooms for a well-deserved rest.

17 March Sunday

Got up early. Packed in two hours. Jim was at the hotel at 9:30 to pick us up for the trip to the airport. A long ride to Gatwick. Heavy traffic. Got there in time.

The trip home was uneventful. The airplane was full. Unable to say a

Proper goodbye to Pete and Jazzy at the
Charlotte Airport after we had gone
through Customs.

At D.F.W. we got our bags without
much trouble, found Nancy's car and
drove home. Am glad to see Scatty and
Elizabeth. And glad to be home.

The trip had been very fruitful and
successful. We certainly wasted no time,
but it was frustrating not to have
been able to do more. Even if we
had had several more days it
doubt we could have done better.
Pete and Jazzy helped wonderfully and
~~over~~ are always fun to be with.