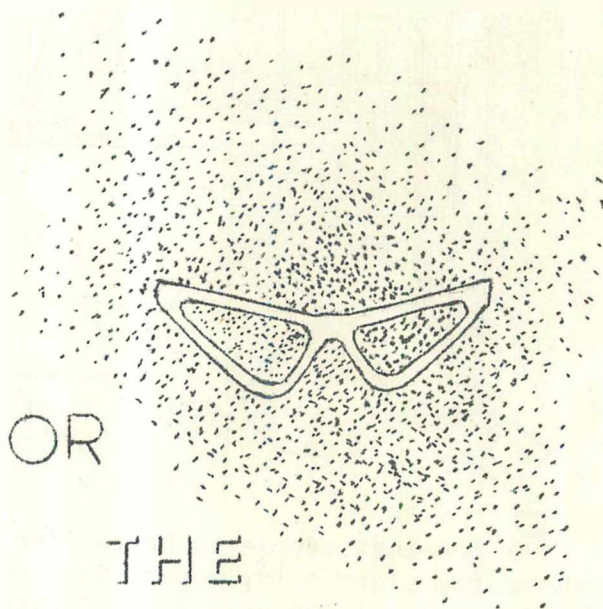


PARKER'S
PEREGRINATIONS



OR

THE
HARPY
STATESIDE

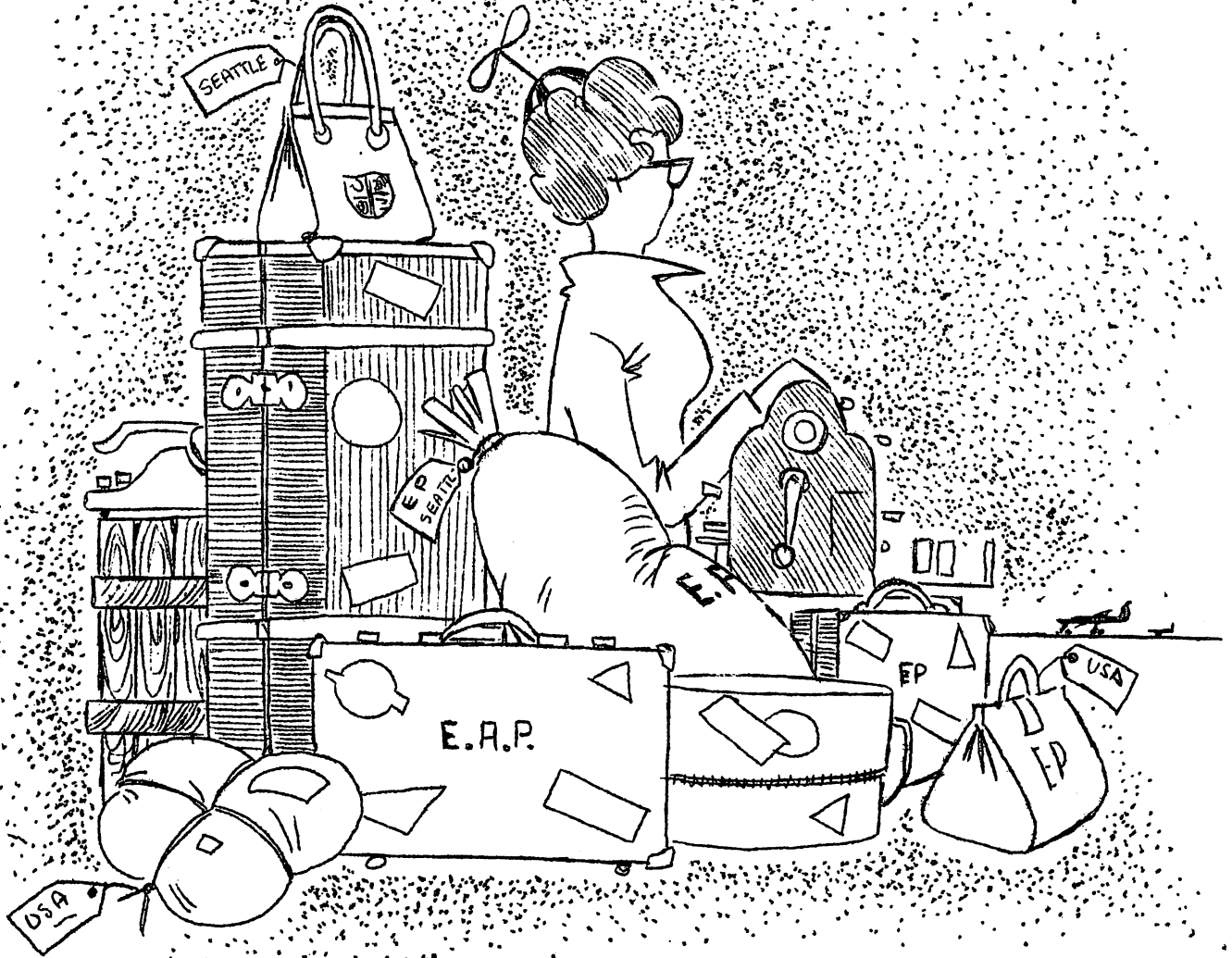
This is copy number

.....7.....

and is inscribed to:-

Lem. & Anna Moffatt.
With thanks & love
E. H. M.

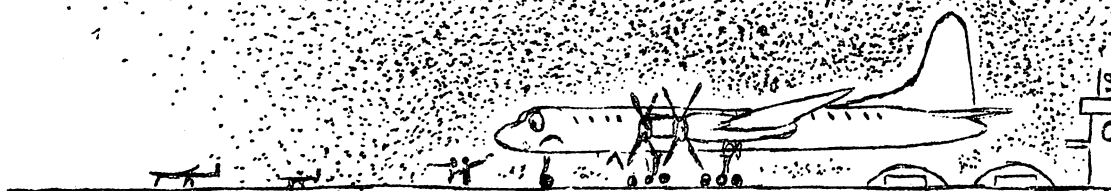
INTRODUCTION



For the last couple of hours I've been sitting here looking through my collection of souvenirs, place mats, menus, maps and the like, that I acquired on my recent visit to America and, at the same time, listening again to the tape of all those voices I brought back for company. This, as you can imagine, has induced in me a feeling of nostalgia so now seems as good a time as any to try and share with you what was The Most Wonderful Experience of my Life.

Some people seem to feel that a thing of this sort needs some kind of Dedication. Alright then; as so many of you had a hand in making this trip possible for me I pronounce it Dedicated to Fandom...and that isn't meant as facetiously as it sounds.....

To YOU.....



I don't know if you are like me but, when something Very Special is planned, I exist for days beforehand in a mist of disbelief that it really will happen. It was in this mood I woke on the day I was due to leave London en route for Los Angeles. Even now I was wary of too much anticipation in case the fates should be tempted to try and upset things, here, at the last minute. I was met at the London Terminal by those of the bunch who could get there. Joe Patrizio, Ted Forsyth, Jimmy Groves, Bruce Burn, Ron Bennett (who had been staying at the Pen the preceding days), ATom and my brother Fred. ATom had made and brought with him some posters advertising in his usual way what was going on. Passengers on the airport bus were interested spectators to what was happening. Matters were by no means improved when, on boarding the bus myself, he called out in a loud voice, "We're all her husbands, you know. She's going to make

lots of money for us doing a strip-tease act in a Las Vegas night club." How to describe a vocal leer? That was how he managed to make it sound. Considering I had been soundly kissed by most of the lads before boarding the bus, I could see from the expressions on their faces, that the other passengers were none too sure he was only joking and, it was mid elbow nudgings and sideways smiles that I slid into my seat muttering threats of mayhem on the person of our Best British Fanartist, ATOM. Fred, who was coming to the air-port with me, sat there trying to look as if he were alone.

((To explain/excuse why a lot of what I am going to say might sound terribly goshwow; for me it was, just that. I had never been on holiday before in my life and now, here I was doing something as daring and wonderful as going across the world. Everything, no matter how small or insignificant, was new, strange, and marvellous to me.))

We arrived at Idlewild early in the morning. I didn't see much of that famous air-port because I had to get to Newark to catch the plane going to Los Angeles, and I wasn't sure how much time I had to spare for gawking. It was raining. During the flight we had been given customs-declaration forms to fill in so I got through that detail in no time flat. I had to open all my bags but the officer hardly riffled the contents. Now I had to face the immigration authorities in the shape of one bored looking man at a desk. When I had gone for my visa in London, I had remarked long and loudly how easy they made it to go to America. I'd heard all sorts of tales about the grilling to which I would be subjected but there was nothing of the sort. Maybe it differs according to the type of visa you want. They asked me the purpose of my trip. I told them, to attend a Convention, tour the country and visit friends. How long would I be there? 2-3 months, thinking it likely I'd be back within six weeks but not wanting to run out of time, just in case. Stamp, bang, thank you, and it was done. Ron Bennett pointed out that the visa only entitled me to visit the country and nothing was said about me being allowed to enter. He assured me that I would have lots more questions to answer on arrival. It was with all these thoughts going through my head I approached the desk. "For how long do you expect to be here?" he asked. I told him, maybe a couple of months, depending on how long my hearts could stand me. Smiling, he told me the Americans liked the British so he'd stamp it for Dec. 23rd. and would that be long enough? I was free!

Another treat was in store for me that I hadn't anticipated. I didn't have a clue how far from Idlewild, Newark was. My luggage was in the care of a 'Redcap' porter who led me into the main vestibule and up to the desk marked, TWA, the line on which I had travelled. Here it was I learned that to get to Newark I would be leaving Idlewild by helicopter. This was a thrill! The bus taking us to the machine was just about to go so, for a minute there, it was all mad bustle having my bags transferred and being given a voucher (free) for the flight. The bus was old, cold and draughty and the driver must have thought he had to get us there before we froze to death. He belted along, at what speed I dread to imagine, and drew up with a flourish beside the waiting machine. I got on board thinking, that after all that rush, take-off must be imminent. We sat there and waited. And waited. And waited. After half-an-hour our pilot deigned to come aboard and we were off.

As we became air-borne, right off in the distance, I could see a small speck that I identified as the Statue of Liberty. We were veering away from it and I almost fell out of my seat trying to crane round and see as much of it as possible. This was the final proof that I was actually in America. The windows of the 'copter were very thick almost like portholes in a ship, and I kept knocking my glasses against them as I peered out and down. I needn't have panicked. Our pilot was turning and we headed straight for the statue and circled it twice which gave me a wonderful view. The first shock I got was my discovery that it was green. To me it had the look of something that had been under water for years and then erected without first being cleaned off. It wasn't so much the statue itself that made an impact on me as where it was, off-shore from NEW YORK! It was just as well there were others on board the 'copter or I would have been

running from side to side like an idiot to make sure I didn't miss anything, because, before I properly realised it, we were flying over the famous New York skyline.



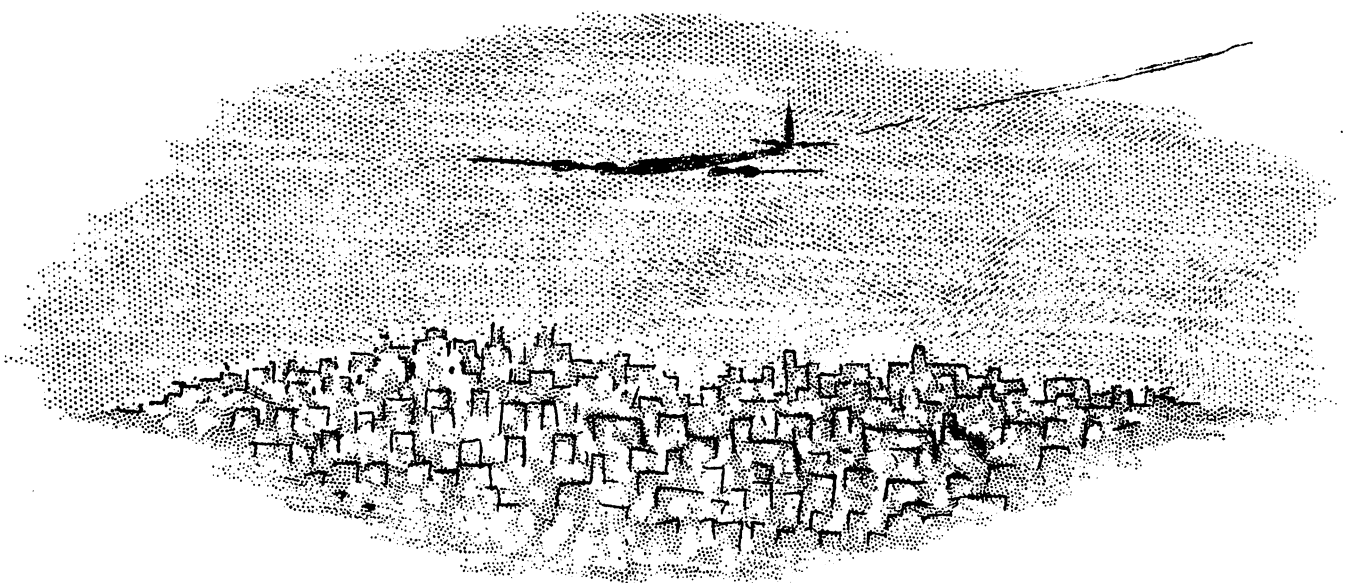
How to describe the way it affected me? All the old superlatives and cliches are so used up as to be almost meaningless. I was overwhelmed by it. I've often seen it in films and photographs without it touching me in the slightest. But to sit there and look at it, well, tell me, how the blazes can you get emotional about a skyline? I did. I was almost crying with all it meant to me at that moment. Apart from any feelings of sentiment about this being America and here I was at the beginning of the trip of a lifetime, there was the impact of the buildings themselves. Awe inspiring. I don't think I'll ever forget that first sight of them and I never tired of looking at them every chance I got while there. That is what makes the Staten Island ferry-ride into New York my favourite ride of all. You come into New York straight on and there it is, all laid out in front of you. Wonderful!

I had three hours to kill at Newark so, after sending a wire to the Moffat ~~to~~ confirming time of arrival, I had a wash and wandered round the large waiting hall. I was afflicted with a bad case of the jitters and couldn't settle to anything for more than a minute at a time. While handing over my luggage at the counter, I had noticed a young girl, obviously travelling alone, who was waiting for the same plane as I. To fill this awful waiting gap I had to concentrate on someone/thing other than myself and this seemed a good way to do it so, I sat by her on the bench and made conversation. Here I heard for the first time a phrase that was to haunt me for the next three months. "My, don't you talk funny!" I'll admit, I was a bit taken

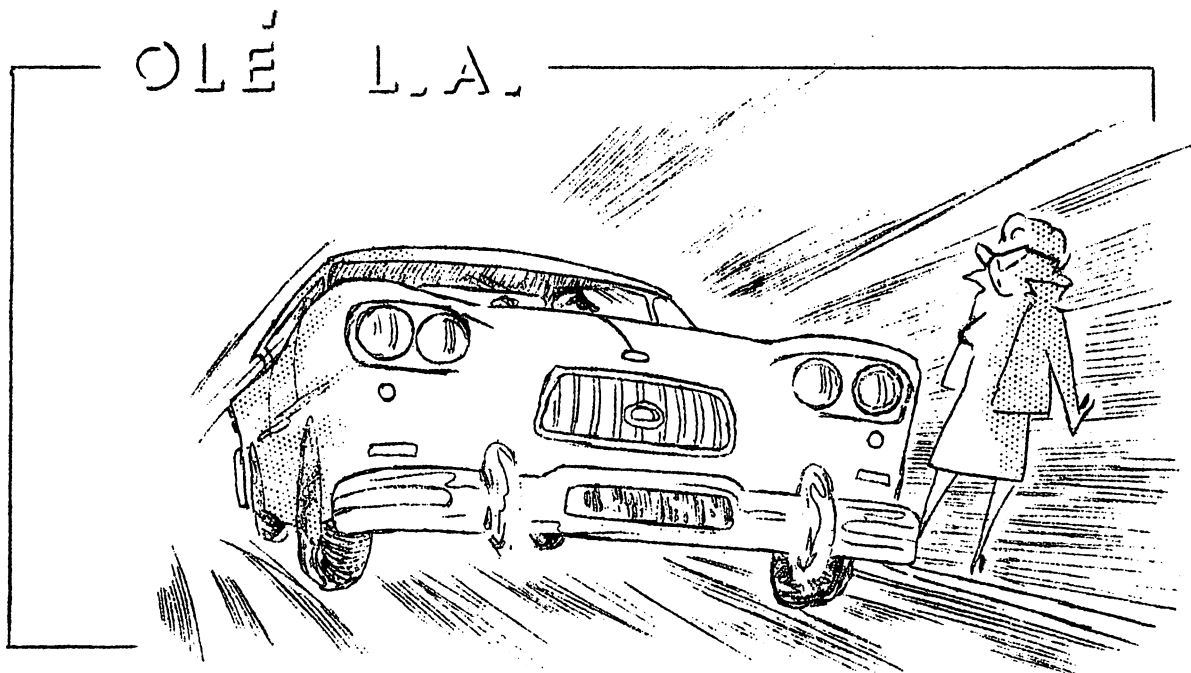
aback at this; I was speaking naturally and hadn't given it a thought that I was in a foreign land. Alright, I'd gone through 'immigration' but, it didn't make me feel a foreigner until this kid brought me up short. "I'm from London," and, thinking to myself, she probably imagines I mean Ontario, I added, "England." That did it! I know the rumour had got around that I was aged, I had helped foster that illusion myself in part but, this was ridiculous. "Have you seen your Queen? Do you know her mother, Queen Elizabeth the First?" !!!!!!! It seemed only logical to her that, as our present Queen is known as Elizabeth the Second, then, her mother, who was Queen before her, should have been Elizabeth the First. It just so happened, knowing her interest in things English, especially if they were ancient, I had brought with me a couple of books for Betty Kujawa describing in text and pictures the family, Accession, and Coronation of our Queen. One of the books had a gallery of pictures showing all our past Kings and Queens with dates of Accession and length of reign. I brought them out and, for the next couple of hours, gave her a history lesson. The time flew and, before we knew it, our flight was called. The girl - she was twelve - elected to sit with me and, as the plane wasn't anywhere near full, the stewardess allowed us our choice of seats. We took turns to have the one next the window. She got off at Denver, I think it was, so for the remainder of the trip I had the window seat all the time.

The hours were wearing on so now I took time out to think of the people towards whom I was hurtling at god knows how many miles per hour. Until now I had lived each moment as it came up, refusing to look forward too far. I suddenly felt scared. Would they like me? After coming all this way and having looked forward for so long to meeting with them for the first time, it would be dreadful if we just scuffed our feet and found we had nothing to say to each other. I had gone off into a day-dream and, without my noticing we were now banking ready to come in for our landing. It had been arranged that only Rick Sneary and Len & Anna Moffatt would meet me at the air-port. I feared I'd be ~~too~~tired after all that travelling to be able to keep track of too many people, especially fans. It was a wise decision. I was beat.

I looked out the window and down, straight onto Los Angeles. The impact made on me by New York had been tremendous, this was just as much so but in a different way. It was dark and all I could see was a kaleidoscope of lights. Every colour under the sun, and they were so bright. It was beautiful. I concentrated on filling my eyes with the sight presented to me underneath and, before I had had enough, we landed.



CHAPTER 1



Off the plane, I traversed the long dull passages on the hunt for my luggage. It became increasingly apparent that I'd be meeting Rick and Len before I found it so decided to let it go for the moment. I walked up a ramp which led to the main hall of the air-port and found myself in a constantly moving crowd. How in hell was I going to find anyone in here? More to the point, how were they going to find me? I gave a quick glance round and my gaze lighted on a bench where some people were sitting as if prepared to stay there either until called or the crack of doom, whichever should come first. Among them I saw Rick. I stood looking at him waiting for him to look up and recognise me. Now! Surely he was looking straight at me? No, he was gazing over my shoulder. Now, his eyes dropped to my face, moved, glanced back and....yes, he'd seen me! He came over, smiling and we were talking both together at a great rate. I realised there was a woman standing at his shoulder and he introduced her as Anna. This was Anna; where then was Len? Len was over by the ramp, camera in hand, waiting for me to appear. Just as I turned to look at him, he glanced over his shoulder to tell Rick he hadn't seen me yet....and there I was, laughing at him. I was to be in Los Angeles for four days but, at the rate we were talking, you would think I had to leave within four minutes. Amid a welter of talk and laughter which, on my part was, I suspect, a slight case of hysteria, we went to find my traps. Rick and Anna stayed by the barrier while Len came to give me a hand. We were all well laden by the time we went to look for the car and, this is where I learned my first lesson: TRAVEL LIGHT!

To this day I couldn't tell you how to get out of the Los Angeles air-port. I was too busy feasting my eyes on them and talking to take any notice of my surroundings. We stopped outside while I wrote and mailed the card to Fred, saying I had arrived safely, which Len had brought out with him. Rick, I think it was, said the car was across the street so I, remembering that I was in America and that the traffic runs the wrong way there, looked carefully up and down the road. Nothing in sight. I stepped off the kerb only to find myself being hauled, ignominiously, back again. Just as I landed safely, a car swished past, right under my nose. I don't know where it came from. From then until I came back home, I made a practice of looking both ways, twice and then staying where I was. It was safer. I don't remember much

of what we saw on that first drive through L.A. Anna pointed out things she thought would be of interest to me; in other circumstances I suppose they would have been but, right then I could only sit and gloat over the fact that I had 'made it' and that really was Sneary and Moffatt there in the back seat. Also, I had engine noises still ringing in my ears and, despite my seeming energy, was nearly dropping after 30 hours without sleep. I can't remember a word of what was said on that drive. I do recall forming an opinion there and then that I never found cause to revise. I am filled with admiration for American women drivers. The size of those cars, the amount of traffic with which they have to contend, to say nothing of the speeds at which they travel, is frightening, and yet, they handle those monsters with an elan I found a bit intimidating. We arrived at Belcher, with me punch drunk, but happy.

Once indoors, guess what? That's right, the kettle went on and I made a pot of tea. Anna, who was, and still is, under the care of her doctor, retired to her room and Len, Rick and I, sat around drinking tea, talking and looking at pictures of Britfen I had brought with me. That was an odd evening and one I don't like to talk about too much in case it falls to pieces. There was an air of enchantment about the place. We looked at some pics, talked a bit and then just stopped; looking at each other, savoring this first wonderful night of our get together. I could see it in the eyes of the other two that they were having the same difficulty as I in realising that all our planning and letter-writing was over and, here we were, all in the same room, talking our fool heads off.

All the time I was there, we only had semi-type Parker Early Nights; seldom did we stay up later than 2.am. This had to be, as Rick had to drive home each night and it's quite a way, judging from my standards. When I went to bed in 'Len's Den' I didn't know if I would sleep. I didn't feel particularly drowsy but the body was weary. I lay there listening to the cheerful sound of the crickets...and, I was away.

I have no idea what time it was when I woke next morning. I lay in bed listening to Len moving round the house, relishing the thought that to talk to him, all I had to do was go through that door. I couldn't stand to waste any more of my precious time and was up and out like a shot. Every morning went pretty well the same way. When I came out to the kitchen, Len would have the kettle boiling for my tea. He with his coffee and I with my tea would wander round the house holding wild conversations. Mostly our plans for next day would be made each night before we went to bed, it usually was planned for an early start. This was fatal as anyone who knows me will tell you. On that first morning, I had gone to my room to dress, I heard the phone ring and had a presentiment it was for me and yet, reason said it couldn't be. It was. Long distance, Len told me. Long distance! Betty!!!! She hadn't wasted any time. I took the phone and a quiet male voice said: "Hello, Ella." Donaho! On arriving at Len's the night before I had found among my mail a letter from Roy Tackett welcoming me to the country. That was a gesture I really appreciated; made me feel warm and welcome. Now, here was Bill with the same idea....I thought. After twittering into his ear for some time, it struck me I hadn't given him much chance to say anything. I indicated as much but he nobly demurred and said he liked to listen to my funny accent. Now, really! This was too much. I could wish he hadn't phoned me because he told me he wouldn't be coming over that week end after all. I hadn't the time to make even a flying visit to Berkeley so, that was definitely that. I never did get to meet Bill which was a bitter pill for me. I had put in a lot of anticipating and all for naught. Next time, I hope.

Anna drove Len and I out to a supermarket. En route we stopped at a garage for petrol and I had my first chance to see those credit cards at work. I must admit it's an extremely efficient way of doing things but, while it might save the customer the bother of carting cash around with him/her, I think honestly, that by the time the card has been stamped, the receipt book filled in and signed, it takes more time than if you handed him a bill and had to get change. I do appreciate it also lessens his chances of being held up and robbed as he hasn't taken any cash, or at most, very little.

Being an unrepentant city-dweller, I found it unusual, to say the least, to hear myself being introduced to the garage attendant. Is this customary or was the fact that I came from England sufficiently unusual to be of interest to him? I'm asking because this wasn't the only occasion when it was done. Being used to the anonymity one gains from city living, I found this friendly interest on the part of local shop-keepers refreshing.

We drove off to the super-market where my first, most necessary purchase was a pair of sunglasses. To go to America I had, before leaving home, bought an entirely new wardrobe of clothes. Something any woman dreams of doing. One thing I'd bought that I thought would be much used in a warm climate was a pair of cool slacks. I was wearing them that morning and, already, I was too hot. Obviously, I needed shorts. I was a bit dubious about this but, on looking round and seeing some of the shapes wearing them, I knew I couldn't look any worse, if as bad. I made my choice and wore them practically all the time I was in L.A. After looking round to see the kind of goods for sale, we were free to do some sight-seeing.

To give me a panoramic view of L.A. They took me to the Griffith's Observatory. That is another drive I would like to take again. The air is clear and the sun warm and bright which, with all those white buildings causes quite a glare. You don't consciously notice it until you turn into the shade. I was surprised to note how relieved I was when we turned into the park that leads along roads that twist and turn interestingly up to the observatory. The only claim to fame this place seems to have left is that it was here the shots were taken for a James Dean film. Griffith must be turning in his grave. Maybe not tho', he had quite an interest in films himself. We stopped half-way and went for a walk among the trees. Unfortunately, we couldn't linger for as long as I'd have liked. We had a lot to do and already we were far behind our schedule for the day. Los Angeles being my first stop in the country, I was seeing a lot of things that, unknown to me, were quite usual. For instance, those picnic tables and benches set out under the trees in all public parks or beauty spots, and that all Museums and art gallerys are sited in the public parks which, in every case I saw, were well-kept. The surroundings put you in the mood for sauntering round, looking your fill.

We didn't actually go into the observatory. As we walked the ramparts I felt like someone from Macbeth, tho' not quite dressed for the part, as I paced the walk looking out over the country.....for enemies? Len and I took turns at clicking our cameras at each other. After about an hour there, we turned our faces towards the domain of Forry Ackerman. We were late, very late.

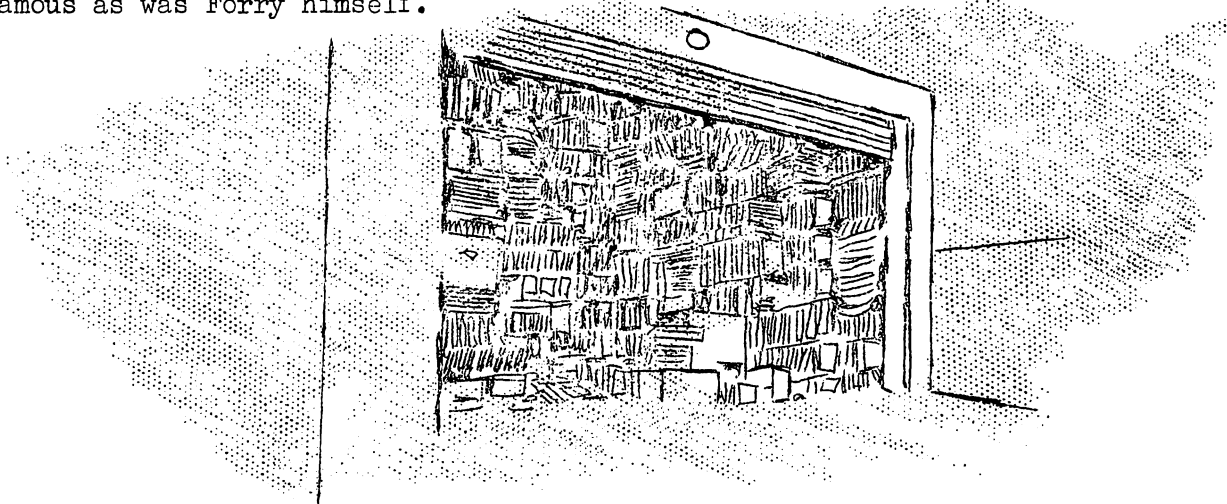
I had known of Forry for ages. From all I had heard of him he had been in and around fandom since the beginning of time. I can't remember where but I had seen some photos of him and had the idea he was tall, well built, and had white hair. I wasn't too surprised at this because, the way I had it figured, he must be an old man. Consequently, I was doubtful when Len first told me in a letter, that he'd made arrangements for me to visit him. I knew of Forry but, I was equally sure, he could never have heard of me so I was over whelmed at thoughts of actually meeting him. In this dithering mood, I approached his house. From somewhere up in the air a voice floated down saying: "that wouldn't be the young lady from England, Ella Parker? The door's open, go on in, I'll be down in a minute." I liked the sound of that voice.

We walked in and, well! Take a look at the next page, it might give you some idea of my first impressions. The longer I was there the stronger I got the feeling that this was a 'cottagey' house. The exterior was modern enough but, the furniture, what one could see of it, (all flat surfaces are covered with magazines, books, and robotic toys,) as I said, the furniture was solid and old. None of this contemporary stuff. The place could have been cosy but you had to be circumspect about where you placed your feet. Chances were you would walk on an item for which a collector would give his eye-teeth. I wandered round restlessly, it was difficult to know what to



look at first. I wandered round with my hands determinedly behind my back in case I was tempted to touch as well as look. I was standing admiring the large Monster which was in one corner, wearing all of Forry's cast-off watches, when I heard steps on the stairs. I whirled round to find a young, handsome, man coming towards me with hand out-stretched. I couldn't think who it was. Maybe it was a friend Forry had staying with him. Len formally introduced us and, before I could stop myself it was out: "My, aren't you young!" I exclaimed. I could have bitten my tongue out but I was a darn sight more embarrassed by my faux pas than was Forry. He took it in his stride like the gentleman he is and we were soon laughing and talking like old friends. In the short time I was there it is impossible to tell you of all the wonders; it is a veritable Alladin's cave for the s-f and fantasy lover. I could only mumble inadequately as each new wonder was displayed. I was much more interested in the man. Naturally, I was unaware then that I'd have other chances to talk with him or I would have paid more attention to what was being shown me. Forry is a remarkable man, he fascinated me. Every time I met him, this fascination increased. He has an ease of manner when meeting strangers that I envy him and is obviously accustomed to being asked to stand for a camera. He falls easily and naturally into the pose that will give the best picture. From the series of talks I had with him over the weeks, I got the impression that Forry no longer belongs to himself. His whole life has been given up to S.F. It is his hobby as well as his work. I have never before met someone who has taken steps to ensure their collection isn't broken up and scattered after their demise. I wouldn't say that Forry is morbid on the subject of his death but he has taken many realistic precautions to ensure that his collection won't be lost to fandom.

Forry and I dawdling all over the house, stopping here and there to talk, must have put Len's nerves on edge. We had been invited to dinner at the HQ of LASFAS and were late. As I went upstairs to change into the frock I'd brought with me, Len prevailed upon Forry to phone the club and tell them we'd be on our way...soon. I came down picking up my bits and pieces as I went when tragedy struck. I couldn't find my camera. I wasn't only concerned about it because of the half-used film it held; it wasn't even my camera. Ethel Lindsay had loaned it to me for the trip. In a frenzy, we all dashed round, lifting cushions, moving books and there it was, on the chair where I'd put it when we first came in. We made for the door when Forry hit his head with his wrist. "Len, she hasn't seen the garage!" We stopped and looked at each other. It only needed one voice to say we'd have to leave it and we'd have been on our way. Nobody spoke. I mean, all fen have books and magazines in their house; maybe not as many as Forry but there are some. Who keeps their car in the open-air because they have the garage full of books, rack upon rack of them? The garage was as famous as was Forry himself.



CHAPTER 2



It was only as we drove up to the steps of the LASFAS Club-room that I realised this would be my first large-scale meeting with US of Amerifen. I recall that Bjo, John Trimble and Ronel were out on the pavement as we pulled up. I lost sight of Len and Forry as I was herded up the steps, chattering all the way, into the house. Those who were dining there had already got half-way through the meal. So dazed and excited was I to be among them, I neglected to

offer any apologies for my lateness. Food was placed in front of me, greetings were being called from all parts of the room, or so it seemed but, on looking round there was only the one other table behind me. In that first mad whirl I can't for the life of me remember who was at it. Fen who weren't dining were roaming round, others were coming in from time to time, for the meeting to be held later. As they came in Bjo murmured their names to me and, while trying to talk to seven people at once, I tried to fix names and faces in my memory but it was useless. Don Franson was one name with which I was already familiar. Don came over to where I was sitting and, with a courtly gesture, proffered to me a package "in lieu of a LoC on the last ORION" as he put it.

It was a beautiful Parker Princess pen. Every time I use it I can see Don striding across the room towards me. He was one of the people I wanted to talk to but after the meeting was over I saw him leaving and, as he didn't come over to say Goodnight, I figured he'd be back later. I never saw him again.

Dinner was a noisy meal. Puns were flying fast and furiously. Ronel incurred the penalty of washing the dishes, tho he hadn't eaten the meal with us, for some infringement of the rules. I didn't do justice to the food; it proved impossible to talk and eat at the same time. After the table had been cleared, I followed into the kitchen to help gloat over Ron at the sink. There were fans scuttling all over the place. Tables were folded up and stacked out of the way, chairs were brought out and set in rows ready for the meeting to come. I managed to get a few words with Don Fitch and then we all went into the other room together.

The club's committee sat at the table, heavy with their responsibilities. Ronel wore a look that could only be described as fitting to a President, which was in fact, his post on the committee. Don Franson as secretary was mulling over his notes and John Trimble, who was filling in for the absent treasurer, was handling the money with an obvious affection. Once we were all fairly quiet, the meeting opened. The Minutes were read, various bits of business were attended to, reports were given by members of sub-committees. Put like that it all sounds slick, smooth and deadly efficient. It was, too, but how to get across to you the heckling, barracking and good natured chaffing that went on all the time? Once the meeting was over I was surprised to see how much had been done in spite of the seeming chaos. The room had been well filled before the meeting began, all the seats being taken. So attentive had I been to the proceedings, it came as a shock to discover how many more fans had turned up, quietly as mice, while the meeting was in progress. I had brought to the club with me a couple of items I wanted to present; I didn't particularly want to make a ceremony of it but I didn't want to miss this chance of handing them over. The Science Fiction Club of London had agreed to offer Hon. membership in our club to the LASFAS and ATom had illustrated the official notice of membership for them which we had all signed. I was aghast to find that I wasn't going to be allowed to attend their meeting as 'just another fan' but that they were going to give me the treatment reserved for Foreign Representatives. It was amid kidly cheers and handclaps I rose to present LASFAS with their new fate. Now the meeting broke up and I was able to move around renewing acquaintance with both the Turners and Julie Jardine. Paul and Ellie had been in London the previous year; it had been over two years since I last saw Julie. Apart from Paul's beard, they were all as I remembered them. Refreshments were being handed round and I took my drink out to the porch with me. This seems to be where I spent most of that evening. The company kept changing as people came and went. I do recall that entirely without help I successfully identified Steve Schultheis...believe it or not, from an ATomillo of him! Virginia, his wife, was one of the first I sat and talked to on the porch. After I don't know how many changes of company, I remember I discovered I was out of cigarettes. I'm sorry but I don't like any of the American brands; I'll smoke a mentholated one for a change but not for the entire evening. From sheer force of habit I looked at my watch, saw it was 11-10 pm. and muttered in my beard something about it being too late. I was really talking to myself but, Paul Turner over-heard me and asked, too late for what? I told him I needed cigarettes. He offered to run me down to a drugstore where we could get some. Mentally, I kicked myself for being a scow; here I was in the U.S. and I was thinking along the Home Rules. Julie said she'd come with us so, after telling Ellie wither we were bound, we got into one of the two cars Paul had by the kerb and drove off to the shops.

After travelling the rest of the country, I would have liked to return to Los Angeles and see if it struck me in quite the same way. L.A. was the first American city I had seen; their customs and behaviour I was accepting as the norm. We parked the car in an underground garage and surfaced to find we had to cross the road. I

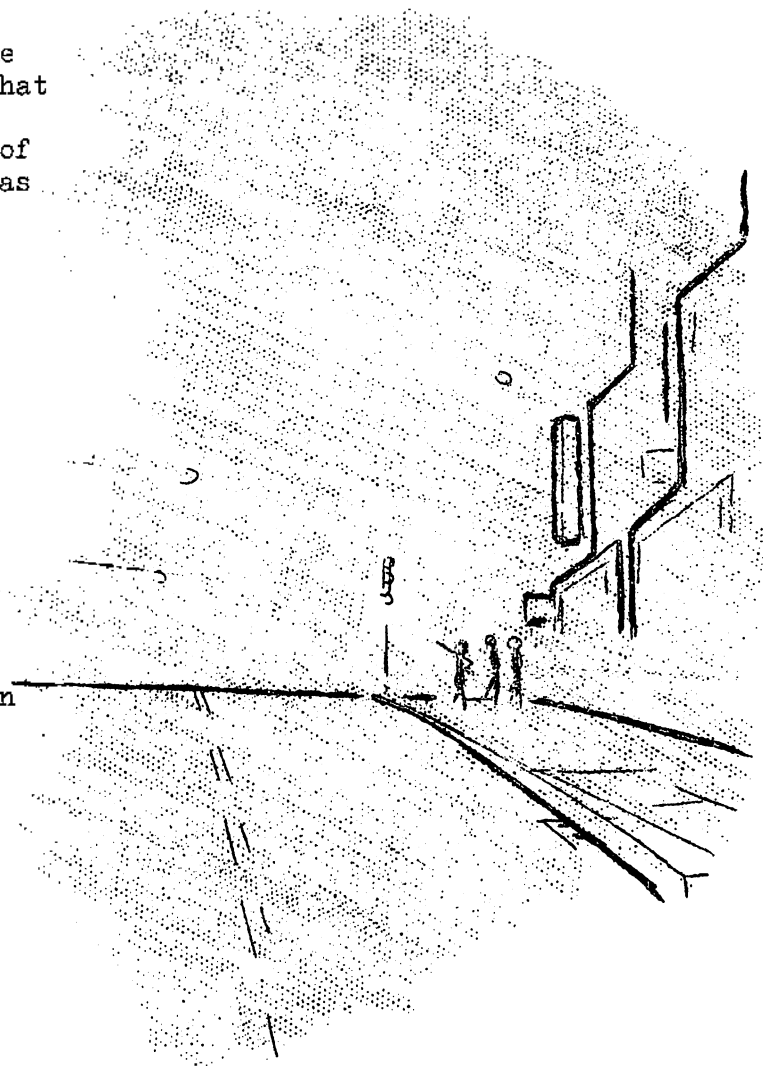
wasn't going to be caught again so, I stood still and looked both ways, thrice. Not a vehicle in sight. I blithely stepped off and was part way across when, again, I was hauled ignominiously back by the scruff of the neck. Hell and damnation! This was becoming a habit. I still couldn't see any traffic that would warrant this kind of treatment to my person. I twirled round on Paul and was going to blast him where he stood. Grimly determined not to back down an inch, he pointed a firm finger in the direction of the traffic lights.

In America the traffic lights are not, like here, placed on top of poles painted black and white; come to think of it, I don't remember what colour they are, green, I think.

Anyway, I hadn't taken any notice of them as it was so late and there was no traffic around. Just below the actual lights was an illuminated notice which said either: "CROSS", or: "DON'T CROSS." I leave you to guess what they were saying when Paul pointed them out to me.

I pointed out the lack of traffic in extenuation of my seeming carelessness. No excuse said Paul. We wait. And wait we did, with me dithering from one foot to the other impatiently. This was the occasion of my first lecture on American traffic laws as they applied to pedestrians. I know it has been under discussion in England that the police should have powers to enable them to fine 'jay walkers' on the spot. I haven't heard anything about it lately so, maybe like a lot of other good ideas, it's been shelved. Not so in America. If you want to take the chance, it's no good whining if you get caught, you might as well pay up and look pleasant about it.

At last, with a sweeping bow, Paul waved me across the road. We didn't have far to go to the shop and I soon forgot my wounded dignity going round the counters turning over the things for sale and making comparisons with home goods. With so much Americanised stuff being sold here now, it wasn't as different as I'd expected. It was a bit odd, mind you, to ask for a chemist's shop and get in return a blank stare. Julie suggested that I'd be needing a pair of sandals, that's not what she called them and I've forgotten the name she used for them. I know I wore them pretty constantly after that and found them most comfortable and cool. We riffled through the pb rack but didn't see anything we wanted. I got my cigarettes and then Paul asked me if I'd had an ice-cream soda yet. I hadn't so we sat ourselves up to the counter and talked while eating them. We had been gone an hour so went to collect the car and

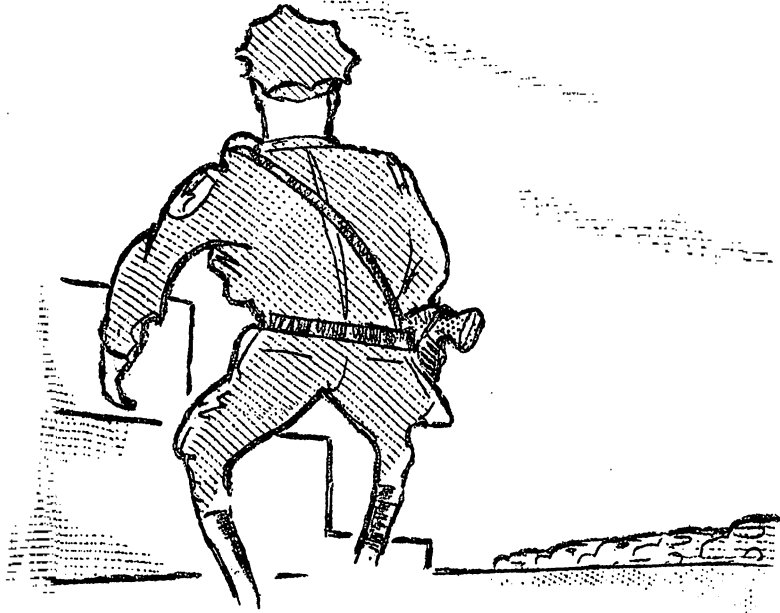


returned to the club. During the evening I had heard remarks like: "It's a pity Mike hasn't come, you'd like him." "Mike" being, Mike Hinge who had moved from New Zealand to Los Angeles three years before. Consequently, I wasn't too surprised when someone called, oh, here's Mike. As he came up the steps, I was still sitting there with some fen, Virginia Schultheis stopped him and introduced us. He barely broke his stride, gave a curt nod in my direction and went on into the club-room. I thought his manners peculiar but refrained from comment. Ellie Turner came out to return my autograph book. She had noticed I wasn't getting round very much because I was trying to collect the signatures of all who were there and she offered to take the book round for me. Really this defeated the purpose of the book. I had worked it out that if I asked them for their autographs it meant I could talk to them all for at least a second or so. It wouldn't have worked anyway, so many of them had already left.

As these things do, the circle broke up, shifted and reformed with different folk around. Now it was Bjo, her husband, John, Don Fitch and Mike Hinge. We talked about WAFF, Conventions and other fannish topics. A couple of the lads came out to say good-night. I'd be seeing them in Seattle so they didn't linger over it. We shook hands and they left. A couple of seconds after, Mike looked at me and asked: "Is that a habit you've picked up since you came here or have you always done it?" I was dumb-founded! What on earth had I done that he could have misconstrued? "Always done what?" I asked him. "Shaken hands with men," he said. Honestly, I thought he was joking. He had to be. Even so, it was still with a straight face he declared: "In New Zealand no respectable woman shakes hands with men." If this was deadpan humour, it was of the best. Not wanting to spoil his joke, I let it ride.

We all wandered indoors and, as it was getting late, we didn't feel like doing anything very active so we just sat around and talked comfortably. It was now I once again met up with Rick and Len. Rick I hadn't seen all day and Len I hadn't seen since the car had driven up to the club, with the exception of sitting next him during the meeting. It was gone 2.am. and time for home. We collected our gear and with cries of See you in Seattle, we made for the door. Here I discovered we were giving Mike Hinge a lift home. As I hadn't seen Rick all day, I shoved Len and Mike into the back and I sat up front with Rick. As we dropped Mike off first, it meant I had to alight in order to let him out. He wasn't coming to Seattle and I knew I wouldn't be seeing him again so, mistakenly, held out my hand to shake his. He quite deliberately put this in his pockets and, nodding casually overin my general direction, strolled away. I stood there fuming. I would almost sooner he had slapped my face. We have in our midst, here in London, a New Zealander, Bruce Burn. I queried him about this alleged custom and he's never heard of it before. Ehuff said.

In spite of the late night we'd had the night before, I was up betimes next morning. Lying late in bed was a crime I found impossible to committ when the sun was shining every day and there was so much to do and see. It was wonderful to get out of bed without having to worry what to wear, or wonder whether it would rain before lunch time. Invariably I wore shirt, shorts and sandals and, compared with what I'd been wearing at home, I felt almost naked! We didn't have any great plans for that morning; Anna had some library books to change which meant we went to the same district that held the local police station. Apart from the police cars in the car park - there was no clear division for police or private cars, they all shared what space there was, which was plenty - I couldn't see anything that would tell a stranger that this was the police station. I think I've got it whipped. They have the American flag outside, is that right? All law offices, police, sheriffs, and the Highway Patrol, seem to have flags on the front lawn. At least, outside the cities. I don't recall seeing a police station in any of the cities I visited. Of course, my first sight of an American policeman amused me. For as long as I was over



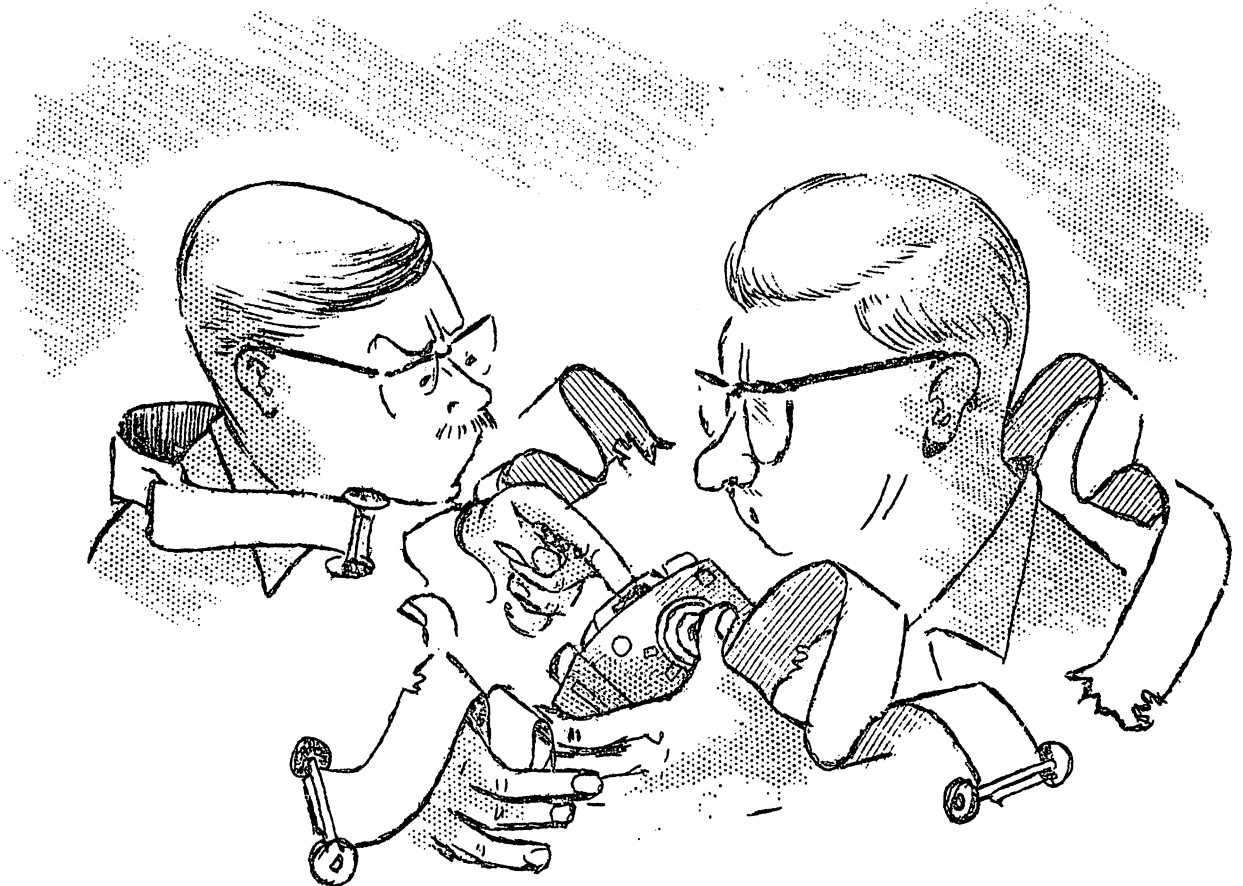
there, I could never take the police seriously. I had seen too many of them in films and on TV for them to look like anything other than actors playing a part. It was in this mood I watched him get off his motorbike and swagger into the police station. I craned my neck to see what I could see but, he was only in there for a moment and came out before I could focus on anything. He walked away from where I was standing and, I can still see that back view. It was precious! At any moment I expected him to swivel round quickly on his feet, drawing his gun as he turned but, he did nothing of the sort. He got back onto his bike and roared off into the distance. I stood there feeling a bit let-down. I always found it difficult to indentify an American policeman readily. There is nothing distinctive about their uniform, not to my London accustomed eyes, at any rate. Dark navy blue uniforms with silver buttons, plus the unmistakable helmets make ours easy to spot.

After that little episode, we sauntered across the car-park and into the library. It was to be expected that all the libraries visited in America would be compared with my own local one. It would be a pleasure to join the Downey library! It was housed in a beautiful building, it was light, airy and, tastefully decorated. I got the impression that those who read books are not ashamed of the fact but do all in their power to advertise the fact. My local one hides furtively next door to the local fire-station. The building is old, which is no fault of theirs but, I am convinced they could make it more of a pleasure to go in than they do. It has a distinctly musty atmosphere and the rooms are painted in the normal drab 'council' colours of dark green and brown. Next time I'm over there, I must spend more time in the libraries. The rooms are comfortably furnished for browsers with plenty of tables and comfy chairs; there are ornaments placed here and there, purely for decoration which gives the impression of, well, opulence is the word that comes most readily to mind. One feels that money is no object but it has been spent for the benefit of the readers and to good effect.

We drove from there to Rick's house; we were going sight-seeing. Anna dropped Len and I off there and went back home for some well earned rest and solitude. I was introduced to Rick's parents who made me welcome. We stayed to have some light refreshments with them and, while we were at table I'm afraid I monopolised the conversation. The house was dimly lighted and cool which was a relief after the glare

outside. Rick took us into his own room and showed with pride his collection of swords, including the one sent to him by Bob Richardson of Cheltenham. Rick was especially proud of this one.

From the house we moved our exploration to the gardens and what, to me, looked like a garage but turned out to be full of books, bric-a-brac and a very comfortable sofa bed. We admired and sniffed the flowers on show, I particularly remember the ginger plant; it smelled good enough to eat. We had been clicking cameras madly at each other all this time. I got one of Rick with his parents, he got one of me with his parents and so it went on. Now my camera was empty and I had to change films. Remember, this was Ethel Lindsay's camera, I've never owned one so, I was a bit doubtful about messing it about. Knowing that Rick and Len were both capable people in this sphere, I asked them to do the job for me. Len took the camera. There was much turning of the various mechanisms and much more muttering sotto voce. Rick didn't agree with the way Len was going about it so he took over. This wasn't much of an improvement. Every time either of them tried to roll the film on, it tore. Even I could see this shouldn't be. I dare say we wasted half-an-hour trying to get it re-loaded. Finally, Rick said we'd be going near a camera shop downtown so we'd better take it in there and see what we'd done wrong.



We pulled up to the camera shop. I was only tagging along to keep the boys company; after all, I hadn't done anything to it. We leaned nonchalantly on the counter and a most genial man came out the back and asked what he could do for us. Wordlessly, Rick handed him the camera with the film half in and half out. The man looked at it, wrinkled his forehead at it and asked, what's wrong? Rick told him we had been trying to re-load the thing but couldn't prevent the film tearing which was obviously wrong. He took one look and, disdainfully, removed the film, turned the camera over the other way and loaded it. He wouldn't charge us but, as we walked

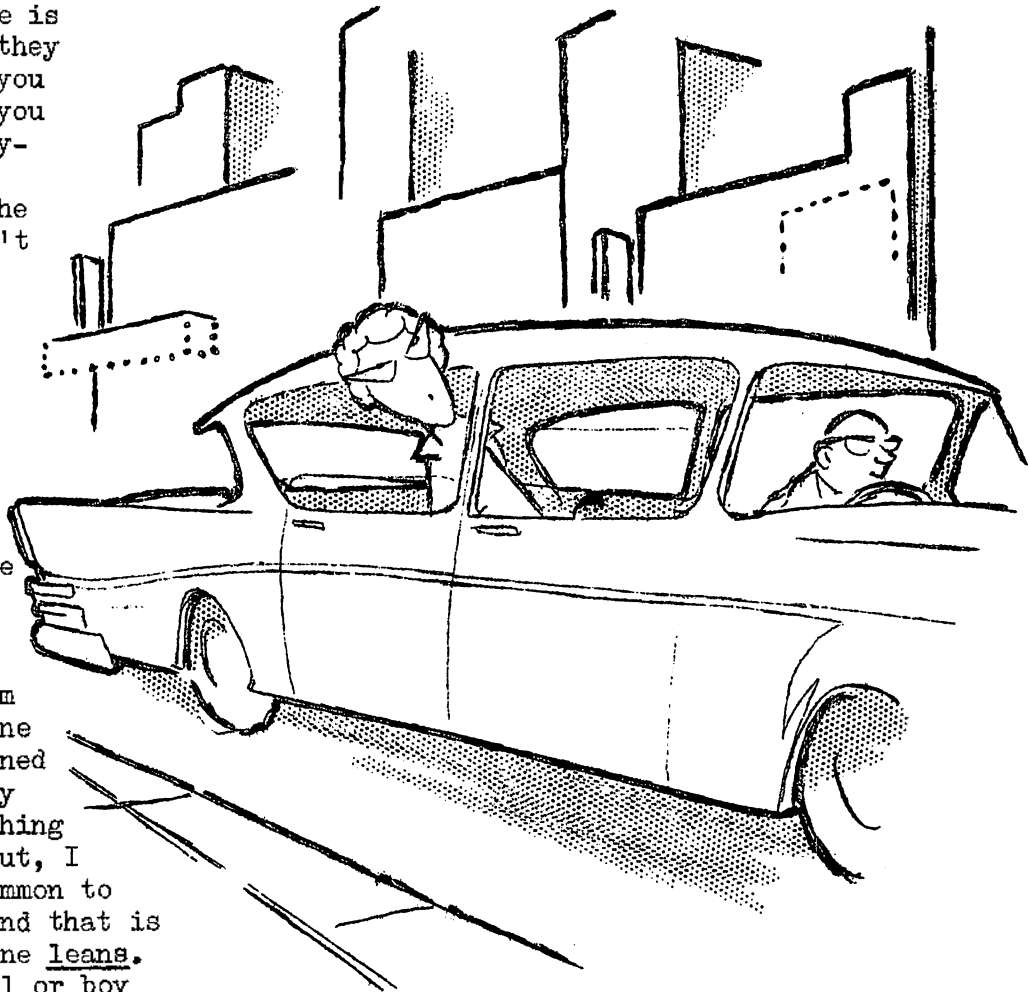
sheepishly out to the car we were followed by the sound of his laughing. From then on when the camera needed a new film I would jeeringly invite either Len or Rick to do it for me.

Now we were free to go sight-seeing in downtown Los Angeles. Previously, Anna had been somewhat surprised that I hadn't commented on the amount of traffic we were passing on either side. Candidly, it hadn't struck me as being all that heavy. It seems that this was the first thing on which Mike Hinge commented after his arrival. Maybe it's because I'm from a city myself and the roads in America, let's face it, are built to take a tremendous amount of traffic. Put the L.A. or any U.S. type traffic into the small narrow roads in London or anywhere else in Britain, it would be noticeably overcrowded. We hit the city right in the middle of the rush hour so I had plenty of opportunity to lean out of the windows and gawk to my heart's content. This I did at every chance. It is a most impressive sight to lean out of a car window or stand on the kerb and lean right back to look up at the towering buildings.

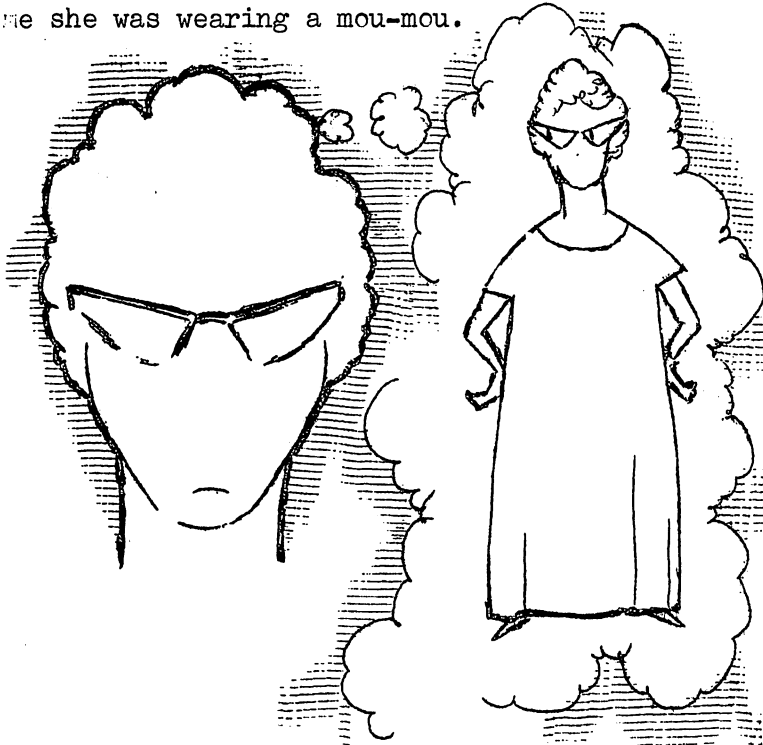
An American city skyline is unmistakable. I know they vary in detail but, as you gaze upwards, you know you couldn't possibly be anywhere else in the world than America. Due to the heavy traffic we couldn't move at anything faster than a crawl. This may have been hard on the nerves of Rick, who was driving but, to me it was a blessing. I sat there soaking up the noise and atmosphere. I was fascinated by the police and couldn't take my eyes off them if we happened to stop anywhere near one. By my constant staring at them I collected more than one cheeky wink as they turned to wave us on and met my interested gaze. One thing in particular I noted but, I don't know if it's uncommon to other American cities and that is the way in which everyone leans.

No matter if it's a girl or boy waiting for a date to arrive, or someone standing waiting for a bus, they don't just stand there, upright, they find the nearest wall and lean on it. I began to wonder what held them up as they walked along the road. Generally, for the part of the world we were in, the women were drab. There didn't seem to be any happy medium. Either their skirts were too long or too short and it was usually the ones who could least afford to do it who wore the very short ones.

Rick parked the car and we went to that Fannishly Historical spot, the Alexander Hotel for a drink. We sat in the dimly lit bar talking over what "SOUTHGATE" had meant to him and then we went over as much of the place as was open to public inspection.



Having strolled the streets of downtown Los Angeles for a while, we picked up the car and were off to, I didn't know where. I never did ask Rick if he kept our destination a secret deliberately, just to see how I reacted to it, or not. All I know is, it fair took my breath away. We were driving along another of those long, glaring white modern roads. Rick and Len were pointing out places of interest as we passed them but at the speed we were going, I could only glance at them. We pulled into another garage and got out. I waited for Rick to get his ticket as I hadn't a clue in which direction we were headed. As he came out of the garage he pointed out the main post office building while we strolled, unnoticed by me, down a narrow street. As we walked I noticed a couple of women pass, well one of them was really only a girl but, she was wearing something that fitted her like a sack and it looked terrible on her. So bad was it I pointed her out to Rick who informed me she was wearing a mou-mou.



I looked back with renewed interest and horror. Betty Kujawa had written asking me my size as she wanted to get me a mou-mou for a souvenir of my visit to the country. This was a mou-mou!! I am reliably informed they are very comfortable and cool to wear in the hot weather. I have the garment but, so far, we haven't had the weather that goes with them. First chance I get I'll try it out.

Suddenly, I took note of where we were. It was a loud blast of colour, smells and noise. My first impression was of a fair or carnival. This was Olvera Street. I didn't know at what to look first, there was so much demanding my attention I could only wander up and then back down trying to take it all in. There were small pokey-

looking shops along both sides. Each shop had a stall or, if it was a cafe, there were tables outside. Down the middle of the street was a double row of stalls, each one seemingly more colourful than its neighbor. Rick told me, warningly, that it was a well known tourist trap. I can't think of a nicer place in which to be rooked. Food that smelled delicious was being cooked over open fires, there were jars of sweets and packets of nuts...so many different kinds of nuts, I would have loved to sample them all. Stalls laden with tooled leather shoes, sandals and handbags. I picked over mounds of stuff just feeling and looking my fill. I lost all count of time as I dragged Len and Rick back and forth with me. The whole length of the street you could hear the musicians playing to the customers at their tables. They were dressed in bright coloured costumes and seemed to be enjoying themselves as much as the spectators. To enter some of the shops we had to go down steep steps and, once in the shop, it was surprising how large they were. Mostly they were sadly disappointing as the stuff they sold could be bought in any Woolworths. These were too obviously tourist traps and they weren't very clever about it either. Fair put me off, it did. I much preferred the shops selling the leather work and it was going for a most reasonable price. I kept looking and faunching for one of the handbags I saw there. Staunchly, I resisted the temptation. We wandered on.

At one end of Olvera Street there's a tree with a bench under it. This struck me as a good spot in which to sit and catch my breath. I discovered I didn't have any cigarettes on me. I glanced around and dismissed the thought that it would be possible to get Players here. Rick said he thought we could. We approached a stall and asked him if he sold English cigarettes, Players especially. Watching the man, you could see him translating what you said to him back into his own tongue, think of his answer, translate that into English, then it came out understandably. It looked like being a long job. What it boiled down to was, yes, he sold Players. "I'll have 40 please," I told him. His brown face crinkled into a smile and he disappeared into the back of the shop to come back seconds later with his arms laden. I thought no more of it than that his shelves needed refilling. Rick it was who caught on. "No, the lady only wants two packs." His face fell. Damn! I'd forgotten that in America you order your cigarettes by the number of packets you want. Back home if you want 40 cigarettes(2 packs), you say 40 cigarettes. That chap must have thought he was getting a shipping order. We mooched back to the bench and I enjoyed my smoke.

By now it was getting late and the boys were taking me to dinner. We reclaimed the car and were off again. The only food I have ever eaten in my life has been good plain English or Scottish food and, on occasion, Chinese. I don't know what was served to us that night, I tried it all but found most of it too spicy for me. I made my apologies to them for not being able to finish it and they understood that I didn't want to take any chances so soon in my travels. I do recall there was a small dish of what looked like watery tomatoe soup on the table. Len told me it was sauce and that it was HOT. I remembered Ken Bulmer being told about some mustard being very hot that he had found to be fairly mild. I played it safe just the same and only tried a spot on the tip of a teaspoon. It almost burned out my tonsils! We dawdled over the meal talking and then, having remembered that on Thursday I had left my camera case at IASFAS we went back there for it. We discovered on arrival that Bjo and John had already left for Seattle as they were visiting relatives on the way. Bruce Pelz, Ted Johnstone and some others were around and hosted us very capably. They showed me round the house and Bruce showed me some of his fanzines including SAPSazines he's had handsomely bound. I must admit they looked gorgeous but I don't think I could spend that amount of money on my fanzine collection no matter how highly I prize it. Still, that's his business and they did look beautiful. We were invited to try our hands at identifying some drinks Bruce had cooked up. I hadn't a clue but they turned out to be harmless apple. They were refreshing at any rate. We sat there for a while nattering while all sorts of things were going on. I mean, someone was on the floor with a large piece of paper on which weird symbols were being drawn, this, I believe, was for the art-show. All sorts of fanac was being neglected until after the SEACON, but other, more domestic pursuits were being followed. Clothes were being mended and pressed, costumes for the dance were being finished off and the like. Made me feel quite idle.

We were too tired to stay out late so Rick drove us home and we sat talking and drinking tea for a while. Then broke it up and went our several ways to bed.

Saturday morning was a lazy one. Rick was coming over to lunch with us so we drifted round the house, me with my usual cup of tea, talking and looking over some of Len's fanzines. It made a nice change from having to dash around getting ready to go out. I also took this chance to write some letters to England, just in case they thought they'd heard the last of me. I had already packed a small case as we were going over to see Rory Faulkner and I was to stay the night there. I'd been writing to Rory for a while and she was doing a column for ORION right then. I hadn't met her when she came to London in '57 and we were curious about each other as was to be expected. First tho' we were going to collect another old timer, Stan Woolston. I don't mean that Stan is an old man, just that he was around fandom some years ago.

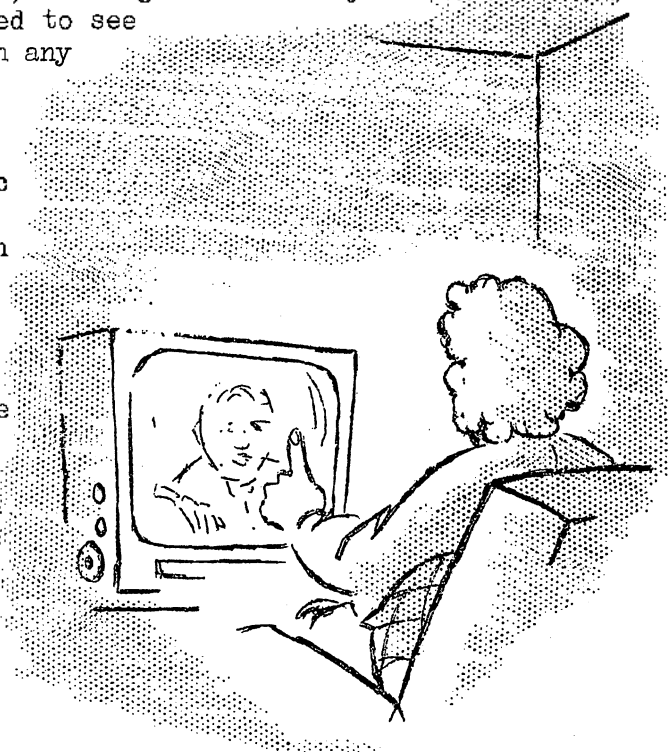
It was a pleasant drive in the sunshine and I remember at one point in the road

we saw a hitch-hiker with bare feet! According to Rick, all he wanted was a lift to the beach and, when he was ready to come home in the evening, he'd hitch a ride back.

Having picked up Stan Woolston we arrived at Rory's to be met with open arms. For the next hour or so it was a cacophony of plates, cutlery and voices. Everybody talked at once and all was merry confusion. At last we settled down together and began to take things a bit easier. As it was so nice outside we took our chairs and sat in the shade, exchanging jokes, information and small talk. To tell the truth, mostly we were content just to sit basking in the fact of the company of each other. It was a comfortable matey session. In snippets I was getting the history of the OUTLANDERS and, as so many of the members were there that day, I'm not sure that I'm not now an Hon. member of that august body. Rick had on his 'OUTLANDER' shirt. An eye-catching garment of black and white zebra stripes. Reluctantly the group broke up and Rick drove Len and Stan to their homes, leaving me with Rory.

We had moved indoors and I was surprised to see Rory switch on the TV. To date I hadn't seen any programmes in the States so I waited in some curiosity to see what it would be like. Of course, as it is with those things, we heard sound before we got the picture and the music sounded somewhat familiar. It should have. DIAL 999, was the first TV programme I saw in America, featuring Robert Beatty. It was an episode I'd already seen too. Rory, having been in London in '57 was busy picking out the things she remembered having seen over here and now I know how she felt. Every time I see New York or something equally known to me I have the job of pointing it out and describing it to my brother. It does give you a tremendous lift to see places one has visited in this way. After DIAL 999 there was a political speech by some local bod. It was fun to sit listening to and watching Rory get all worked up with him. She'd point her finger at him and, wagging it in his face, argue with the points he made, usually she disagreed with him.

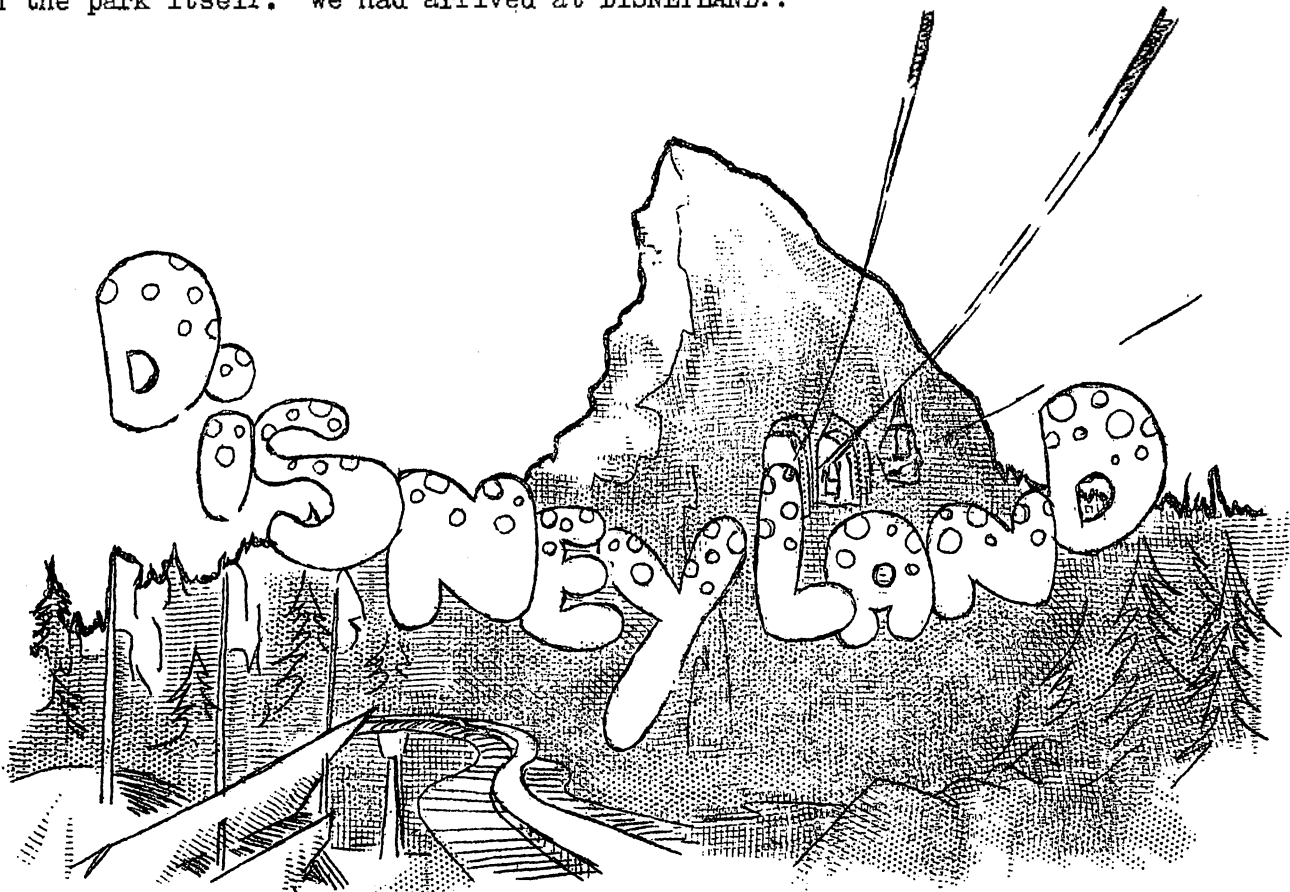
It was time for bed before we knew where we were. I had a gang of them coming round next day to take me out so we couldn't afford to stay up longer. Too late to be able to do anything about it, she would brook no argument, I discovered that Rory was giving up her bed to me and she was going to sleep on the sofa. She has a beautifully compact house all to herself and after making myself free of her bathroom I climbed into her large comfortable bed and was soon fast asleep. Next morning I intended to be up and give Rory a cup of tea in bed but, when I came out of the bedroom it was to find her already up and dressed with the kettle boiling ready for me. I dashed off a quick letter to London and then we realised that my visit was fast coming to an end and tried to get in all the talking we hadn't been able to manage the night before. I was stuffing things into my case, discovering that I'd packed what I'd be wearing that day and out it all had to come again. I was still not washed or dressed when the first of the bunch arrived, Len and Anna. Hard on their heels came the Turners and Ron Ellik. I had to get dressed, but it was so hard to break off the talk for long enough to shut myself away and get ready. I managed it after many threats of being taken as I was and exhibited to the public gaze. Spirits were high and the sun was shining as we drove off with Rory waving furiously after the receding cars. It was a wonderful visit but, like the others I was yet to make, annoyingly brief.



Sad as I was to part from Rory, it wasn't a mood that could last all day. It was a glorious day, I was on holiday, in wonderful company and off on a spree. My spirits soon rose to match those of the others and we drove along in gay, good humour.

We were bowling merrily along when Anna thought to ask who knew the way we should take. We drew up to the side of the road for a hurried consultation and Paul Turner who was driving the other car, said he thought he knew the route. Having given us directions, off he went with us tailing after. We came to a turning that Anna thought she recognised as being one that Paul had mentioned. Should we take it? The other car was nowhere in sight so we chanced it. It must have been the wrong one because we couldn't see Paul anywhere in front of us. We doodled along and just in front of us we saw Paul's car coming out of another turning. We were lost. Well, not altogether lost but we didn't know which was the most direct road to take. We knew we were headed vaguely in the general direction we wanted to go but that was all. We came out on a main road and there was KNOTT'S BERRY FARM AND GHOST TOWN. Now Anna knew where she was and we picked up speed. On the way to Rory's the previous day we had passed this place and Rick had told me a bit about it. From what I could see of it as we passed it was a fascinating place. Acres and acres of land, tree-lined, and cars seemed to be packed like sardines for miles. At the time I couldn't understand its obvious popularity.

By now Anna was getting really anxious. We should have seen before now the landmark which would tell us we were near our destination. Suddenly, we saw it. The sun was striking it at a slant and it looked most impressive way off in the distance. Disney's version of the Matterhorn. It didn't take long from then to reach the park itself. We had arrived at DISNEYLAND!!



As we drove into the tremendous car-park I didn't realise just how far away we still were from the fun-fair. We were given a parking ticket for 25¢ which, if you read it, only admits to be a license for space. No responsibility is accepted for

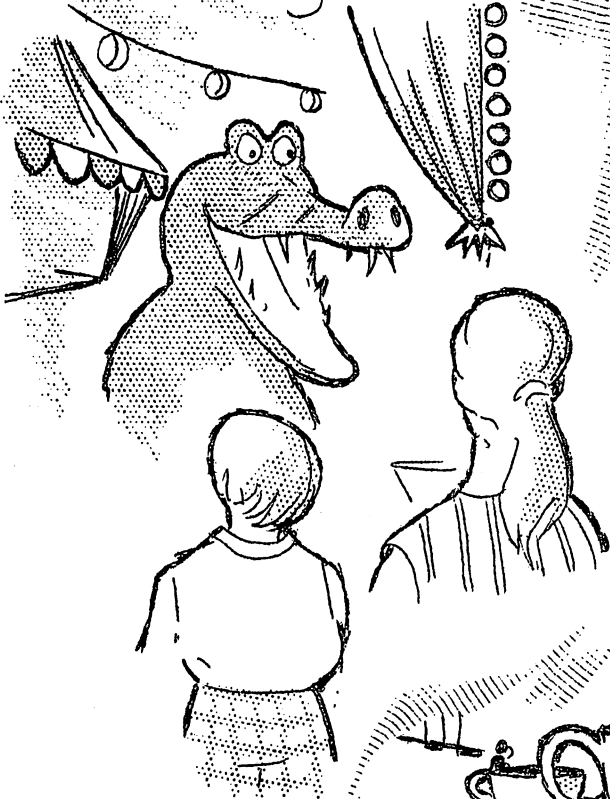
fire, theft, damage to the car or its contents. This figures. There are 30 aisles marked on the card but how many cars to an aisle I don't know. Having locked the cars we walked towards what I thought was Disneyland. Not a bit of it. We had a short train-ride in front of us. These were just a string of cars, open both sides but with a roof just wide enough to keep the sun off your head. It's a mad scramble for seats because the train isn't held up for too long before it's sent on its way.

We alighted from this train at the gateway to Disneyland, we really had arrived. Standing outside the paybox I noticed there are two methods by which you can pay. One, you pay just the entrance fee and then for your rides as you take them, paying for them at their own pay booths or, you buy a book of tickets. I'm not sure if the price of admission is included in that, Len treated me to the day's outing and I was far too busy trying to see everything at once to watch what was going on at the box, I didn't use all the tickets in my book and I have it here now. It shows how much of a reduction you get on the rides by having the books. A 35¢ (cash) ride costs only 25¢ by ticket. Apart from the saving in cash this can be if, like me, you are set on taking as many rides as possible, there is the saving in time at the rides themselves.

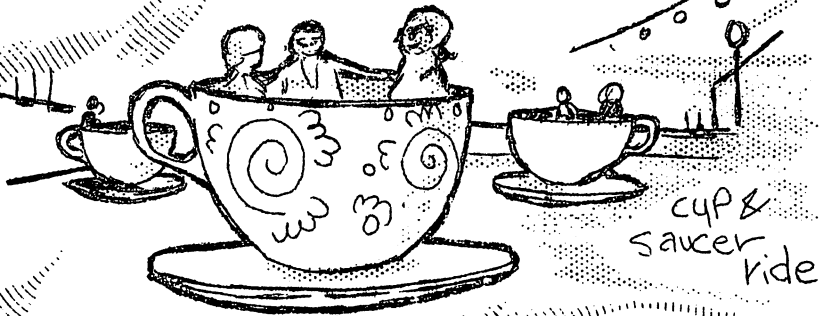
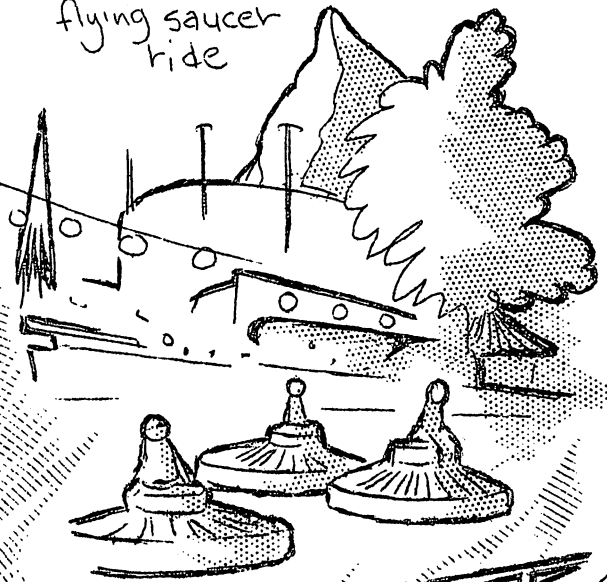
My only regret is that I didn't have colour film in my camera that day. I look at the pictures I took and have to remember what it all looked like. As I recall the first thing we tried was the monorail. To get the full impact of this you should try for a window seat. I was in the middle of the car so it was just like an ordinary train ride to me. Way high up, true, but I couldn't see anything. All day I was finding myself more and more impressed with the slick efficiency shown in handling large crowds. To me, used to the rumbustiousness of the Hampstead Heath barkers who wheedle and coax you to come try their sideshows, it strikes as impersonal and very commercial, which of course, it is. Once you master their method of doing things in Disneyland it takes hardly any time at all from the time you decide to go on a ride to actually getting on it. You wind slowly but surely through a system of crush barriers until you reach the attendant who helps you on. Our bunch had a fine old time bartering and exchanging tickets. I must tell you about those. They are of different colours and have a large red letter from A to I don't know what, I only have two left, an A and a C. The A ticket is green and is worth in cash 10¢, 5¢ from the book. It takes you on: Main Street Horse cars, Horseless carriages, Omnibus, Surreys and the Fire Engines. Tomorrowland and the 20,000 Leagues Exhibit. Ticket C admits to: Tomorrowland, Rocket to the Moon, and Tomorrowland Autopia. Frontierland, Shooting Gallery, Mike Fink Keel Boats, Indian War Canoes. The place is so vast, it's impossible to cover it all in one day tho' we did our best. My favourite of all the things we rode was the Submarine. Disney doesn't waste an inch of space. I told you about the Matterhorn. Not only does this act as a landmark for those in Search of Wonder, it is used by rides going through, round and under it. Also, at intervals during the day, it is climbed by a team of mountaineers to give you something to look at while you are resting your feet.

The ride that went under the Matterhorn was the submarines. You filed down and in to seat yourself in front of your very own port-hole window. Having stood in line for long enough to see those in front set off, I knew the things actually submerged. We set off slowly and then the water began licking at the windows. Down, down we went, probably not very deep but it was tremendously exciting for all that. There were all sorts of gimmiks for us to look at, like the mermaid floating around waving at us to come join her, the shipwreck with its treasure chests burst open, corpses and other bits of atmosphere. Some of the colouring and weeds to say nothing of the rocks we saw, were enchanting. Of course they laid on a Sea Monster for us. All this was accompanied by a taped recording of orders and nautical conversation, supposedly by the crew. We even had an alarm! To digress for a moment. Recently, I had a letter from Fred Hunter in which he mentioned hearing on radio the commentary of Glenn's space

king Arthurs
dragon



flying saucer
ride



rocket-car
ride



the good ship
Columbia

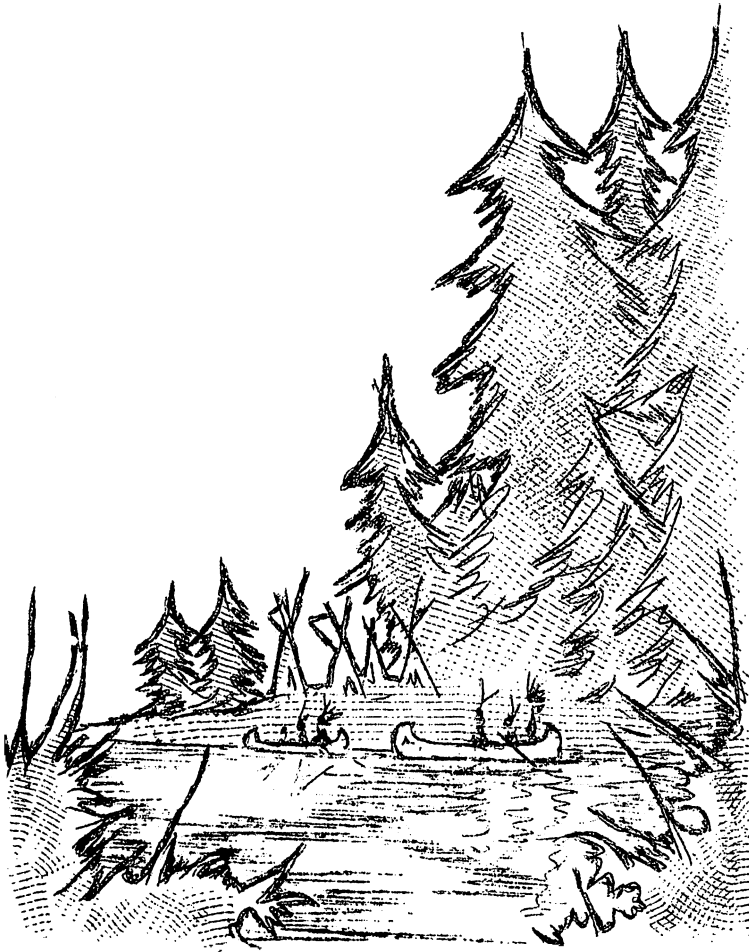


jaunt and he said, I quote:- "...The achievement was tremendous but, gee, how I longed for a BBC commentary instead of the American version. I could have screamed every time he (the American commentator) said "This programme is coming to you by courtesy of....." Commercials, egad, in an historic programme like that." I know exactly how Fred was feeling. It sounded most odd to my ears to be told every time I went on a round-a-bout by whom it was made, of what materials, and, in some cases, how much the motor weighed. I was croggled to hear all this coming over the loud-speakers just as we were diving. Frankly, at that moment, I couldn't care less who had made the thing.

I wouldn't want you to think the day was spent in one mad dash from ride to ride. Now and again we did no more than wander round looking at whatever took our fancy and there was plenty, I can tell you. During our strolls I noticed in various places a notice which said: "NO STROLLERS." Actually, I had seen lots of them without them really registering until we went into an exhibit simply made for it but there was that notice again. I pointed it out to Ron Ellik who just nodded his head in agreement. I was already feeling a mite indignant about it and his airy dismissal made me feel worse. "By what right does he forbid it?" I asked Ron. "It makes things easier for others," he answered. This didn't make much sense to me and it struck me this might be a misunderstanding in terminology. "What is a stroller?" I asked him. "Well, it's a...it's a stroller," he answered brightly. We were getting nowhere fast. I pointed at myself and said, "I'm a stroller." Ron laughed. "No, you're not, are you?" Finally, he was inspired. Pointing he exclaimed, "that's a stroller." A baby's push-chair! Aren't Americans funny!

The afternoon was well advanced and Anna was tired so she and Len headed for the car and home. Paul and Ellie Turner and Ron and I decided to stay a bit longer. Ron promised Len faithfully he would deliver me to the Moffatt house safely sometime that night. I loved to watch the bandsmen going from one ride to the other and, as they whirled around, they played the tune most appropriate to that ride. Like, when they went on THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY they played Tea for Two, on the horses they played the Post Horn Gallop. Mixed in with the large, ever shifting crowd were all sorts of characters from the fairy and adventure stories. They would stand to have their photographs taken surrounded by kids who loved it. For a long time I had been aware of music that waxed and waned in strength. In our wanderings we came across a lake on which there were a couple of fairly large boats full of passengers just sailing around without going anywhere. We elected to take a raft to TOM SAWYER ISLAND, it seemed a lot more adventurous. The raft, so it says on the leaflet, "is patterned after the log rafts of the Mississippi at the time of Mark Twain." We seemed to be no sooner aboard than it was time to land. I don't have any idea how large the island actually is but they certainly manage to cram a lot into what space there is. We visited Tom and Huck's Tree House, looked at the Old Mill, crossed the suspension bridge that RonEl insisted on shaking as we crossed, without mishap, no thanks to him. Then Ellie discovered the caves. For the next ten minutes we wound our way through narrow passages, at times bent almost double. I wriggled through spots that afternoon I would have sworn I was too big to tackle but where Ellie led I followed and at the expense of only one grazed elbow. By now we felt we had earned a rest so sat swinging our feet on the Teeter-Totter Rock. It is exactly what its name implies. We were off again. Another bridge to be crossed but I looked at it in horror. I could never cross that! They called it the Pontoon Bridge. It was made of barrels covered with slight planks of wood, and was being rocked in a most alarming way by those up in front. The thing was wet and looked treacherously slippery to me, lying as low in the water as it was. Gritting my teeth I stepped out gingerly. Naturally, as Ellie and I reached the centre, Ron and Paul set it to rocking madly again. It was with a sigh of relief I reached dry land.

In spite of the crowds on the island, it was pretty easy to find less popular



paths along which to meander. Abruptly, our ears were assailed by blood-curdling whoops that, in those surroundings, made me think of scalplings and being tied to a post while my fate was decided. We came to the banks of a stream and, across the other side I saw a bunch of indians complete with head-dresses, tomahawks and all the trimmings. There were teepees to be seen in the background and it was difficult to realise that all this was just a show put on for the customers. Apparently, we had arrived at the climax of their show and, as they broke up for the day, they took to the water in their canoes whooping like mad. I had the craziest thought as they rowed away. Looking at them dressed as Chiefs and Braves, I tried to imagine them in dark suits with brief cases in their hands, going to an ordinary days business. The resulting image was ridiculous but amusing.

As we headed for the exits, I remembered there was something on MAIN STREET I particularly wanted to see. The silent cinema. Paul, Ellie and Ron wanted to try their hands in the shooting gallery so I wandered off on my own. Before going into the cinema I looked at all the old fashioned shops lining the street. Fascinating. In the cinema the walls were lined with small screens, each showing a different film. There were no seats but, in the centre of the floor was a small podium on which you could stand and, just by swivelling round, see all the screens at a glance. Down on the floor was the Promenade for those who wanted a closer look at the films. The shows were continuous and quite short so if you came to one in the middle of the showing you didn't have long to wait before it began all over again. In this way I saw a very early Will Rogers film which, for the kind of day it had been, was quite amusing. All of them, of course, were of the slap-stick kind complete with pratt falls.

Having seen all I wanted I came out to the street thinking the boys and Ellie would be ready to go. Apparently, I hadn't been in there as long as I thought, there was no sign of them so I sat me down on a handy doorstep to enjoy a quiet cigarette. I carefully put my camera beside me so I wouldn't forget it and made friends with a small girl who was wandering along all alone. Her parents, I imagine they were, dashed up to claim her, no doubt relieved to find she was unharmed. When the others finally caught up with me I was hungry enough to eat a horse so we decided it was time to eat. We were going to KNOTT'S BERRY FARM for dinner and I was looking forward to seeing this place at close quarters. Having assured each other that, yes, we had enjoyed the sideshow of our choice, we headed for the gates and food. Of all things to find there, just inside the gates, on the Disneyland grounds, we discovered a piano show-room! Who on earth goes to Disneyland to buy a piano??? So intrigued

were we by this phenomenon we trooped in to see what was so special about it. As far as I could judge, and I don't go into piano show-rooms every day, it was just as ordinary as you'd find anywhere. Shaking our heads in bewilderment, we exited from there and again, made for the gates.

STOP! I hollered. I've left my camera back there. Luckily I knew exactly where it should be and Paul gallantly offered to run back for it. We had been dawdling along and had gone into see the pianos since then, so we stood there with all our fingers crossed until Paul returned. He has a sadistic turn of mind. As he ran towards us he managed, somehow, to keep the camera out of sight behind him without it being obvious he was doing so. I was sure he hadn't got it and it wasn't until I looked suitably crestfallen he returned it to me. I literally crooned over it in my relief. To the accompaniment of ribald suggestions for tying it round my neck so I wouldn't lose it for good, we really did get out the gates this time and entrained for the car-park.

As the air outside the park hit me, I felt cold. Now I remembered that I'd left my jacket in the Moffatts' car and they'd gone home hours ago. I was wearing short sleeves and was going to be half-frozen before I got home that night. I did manage to forget it for a few minutes at a time tho.

It didn't take us long to reach Knott's, in fact, it took us a darn sight longer to find a parking spot. I reckon we circled the place twice before we saw a car pulling out and queued up to take his spot. Had I not been told a bit about the place I would have wondered how such a large area could rightly be called a restaurant. Here too, I came across for the first time, the good old standby of any business with room for it, a Ghost Town, and good business they are too. It so happens they encourage you to take one of their menus for souvenirs and, as it gives a potted history of how the business was built up, you might be interested in a bit of it. This couple, Cordelia and Walter Knott, bought 10 acres of land on time in 1927. They grew berries and, with the surplus, made pies and jams which helped them with their payments on the property. In 1934 they were doing pretty well so decided to try their hands at serving chicken dinners; they had three daughters by now and they provided help with the work. On the first day they sold 8 dinners. 1946 saw the girls and their husbands taking an ever increasing part in the family business. One of the boys opened and ran the Steak House, another had charge of the Preserves Kitchen, also, still going strong, was the Chicken Restaurant. Between them the two rooms seat 1,330 people at once. When we were there the place was pretty full. From 8 dinners that first day they have recorded for one day in 1961, 15,238 dinners sold. That's the berries!

We had a delicious meal and far more than I could handle with my shrunken English stomach. I was frankly amazed at how much the average American can tuck away and still come up looking for more. After we had dined, the lads took us round the grounds to look at the shops...oh, yes, there were shops and each one of them owned and run by a member of the family. There is a gift shop which had some lovely stuff on view and a dress shop that looked to be stylish enough tho, how the prices compared with outside shops, I couldn't say. I hadn't done any window shopping on clothes yet.

From there we went to look round the Ghost Town. I remember when I first heard that the LASFAS bunch had used a 'ghost town' in which to shoot a film they'd made, it wasn't clear to me how such a place became available. I'd never heard of these show places with all the usual mock-ups of buildings etc. that they have. Having now visited two of the places, I can see they'd be ideal for the job if you can get permission to use them. It was too late for the town to be operating so we had to content ourselves with walking round, peering into dusty windows at all the interesting bits and pieces to be seen from outside. There was an old time Music hall for which they gave us an advert in the shape of an old swirl-worthy moustache in cardboard. They have their own train, which had done its last run for that day before we got there,

They have a Wagon Camp with a number of covered wagons and old wooden crates and such to serve for seats. I believe they light a camp-fire in the evening and give a sing-song for the audiences, I wouldn't know for sure, we didn't see it in session. Yes, I see from the booklet cum menu I have here, they give free entertainment in the shape of "square dancing, stories - of the old West, I imagine - and music." It must be quite a place when in full blast. There was one ride still working, even at that time of night; it was getting on for 10.p.m. by now, and that was the Calico Mine Co. train. You get a ticket to ride this train through the tunnels in which the gold workings are supposed to be. Never mind about how phoney it was, it still excited and, at one stage when they exploded something, scared the customers. We had a lot of fun seeing how they had it all carved out to look like a real mine, even to the figurines working in one section. There were trucks, empty and full, going back and forth to the vein being worked.

By now I was freezing to death, pretty near and couldn't get into the car quickly enough. As we headed back to town, Paul and Ron worked out between them for whom it would be most convenient to **deliver me** to the Moffatts. Ron had to go someplace and pick up his car so Paul drove us there and that was when and where the Turners and I parted.

Ron had to drive out to his Mother's place to pick up some stuff so unexpectedly I got a ride out to Long Beach. It was nice and warm in the car and I enjoy being driven at night which made it a perfect finish to what had been a marvellous day. It was easy to see Ron's Mum was used to her son's odd ways and friends. She showed an amazing sang froid on being faced with a completely strange woman, quite late on a Sunday night. She didn't turn a hair. While he dashed about collecting his gear I sat drinking tea and watching WHAT'S MY LINE? on the TV. It took me a couple of seconds or so to tumble how they play it over there. They play for money and not for fun only. Having added insult to injury, as you might say, by borrowing a cardigan from Mrs. Ellik, Ron drove me back to Downey, part of the way along side the beach so I could get a close look at it.

It was just on midnight when he deposited me, tired but deliriously happy. I don't really remember going to bed that night but I must have done.

When I woke next morning, I lay in bed until realisation dawned on me that this was my last full day in L.A. so I'd better be up and make the most of it. By now I was using the Moffatts' house pretty much as my own and dashed into the kitchen to prepare...guess what? Tea. We were scheduled to go to Long Beach in the morning so we were able to take things easy. Again it was a brilliant day but it hadn't taken me long to get used to every day being fine and by now I was taking it very much for granted. We drove off, cameras at the ready and had a lot of fun paddling in the sea (wading, as they call it over there). We found a bunch of seaweed lying on the beach and I've never seen anything like it in my life. It looked like some kind of alien fungus. When I tried to burst one of the pods I had to use two hands, so tough were they. We took off our sandals to walk in the sands and they were so hot I felt sure my feet must be scorched. We didn't stay long as Anna said it got crowded later and besides, we had to get to Rick's. We were lunching out and went to a bowling alley. Honestly, it would be better described as a bowling 'palace' so palatial was it. I examined the enormous menu and couldn't help but get lost in it. Settling to have a sandwich, I sat back unaware of what I'd just done to myself. The waitress brought my sandwich. Really, I wish now she hadn't. I looked round for the step-ladder I was sure they must provide with them. It was heaped up on the plate, I swear there was at least half a loaf of bread in it, to say nothing of all the other ingredients. No, I hadn't asked for a 'club' sandwich; I've read about those and I knew I could never work my way through one of them. This one looked just as bad from where I lurked behind it. I examined the problem carefully from all angles and it became clear to me that if I was going to get any food at all I would

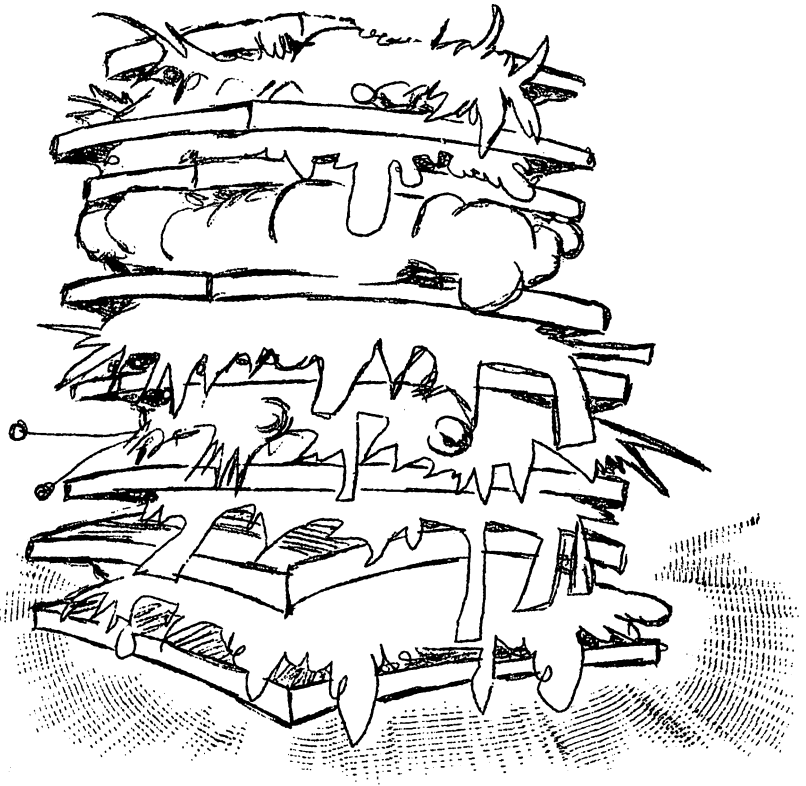
have to dismember it entirely and start from scratch. I took off layer after layer of bread, god knows how much meat there was in it. This I laid on the plate to be dealt with in my normal way using knife and fork. On the side, as part of the sandwich I'd ordered, was a small dish of salad and some pickle, also some sauce or dressing, I'm not sure which. Len and Anna sat watching fascinatedly as I wrought havoc on what, I must admit, had been a truly wonderful construction job. My heart bleeds for the person who went to all the trouble of building that edible edifice only to have it brought crashing down so heartlessly.

To make matters worse, having sorted it out in a way I could manage with ease I couldn't finish it. There was as much food in that one sandwich as I normally eat in a week!

Feeling like David after having slain such a Goliath it was a pleasure to sit back in the car and watch Anna's expert driving as she drove us to Rick's house. We were going back to Olvera Street so I could buy one of those handbags for which I'd been faunching. As we drove along, knowing I wouldn't be coming this way again, I was eyeing as much of it as possible trying to imprint it on my memory banks. I recall pointing out to Rick a sign that looked odd to me; it was for tyres but was spelled 'tires'. Typos yet! It wasn't really, that's how they spell it for real. It was a long time before I got over thinking we were passing a carnival each time we came to a used car lot. They have all those cars out for sale and the place is bedecked with bunting and looks most festive. Some of them at night are a blaze of light, all of them, now I come to think about it. I suppose it must pay them to use all that electricity just for advertising their premises but it did strike me as extravagant.

Back in Olvera Street I again wandered round all the shops and this time we, Len, Rick and I went into one of the cafes for a root beer. This was my third since arriving in the country. After much comparing and mind changing I made my choice of a bag and used it continuously for the remainder of my stay. It holds almost as much as a small suitcase, which is an advantage. I am happy with it.

By now of course, the cloud of our imminent parting had fallen on us and we were apt to fall into long silences, then break into bright chatter to try and fill them. I almost caused poor Len to choke. I'd been very careful to think twice before I said anything in case I used an expression that could be misinterpreted. You all know the classic example of which I am thinking. Something I was describing to them, it doesn't matter what, actually it was a place I'd been to and I said it was a 'swish' restaurant. As I said, Len almost choked. I couldn't understand what I'd said that was amusing. When he explained to me what it could be taken to mean I didn't really believe him. Talk about the long arm of coincidence. A couple of days later I saw an issue of LesNi's QP? which had that very word in it used as Len had explained it to me. You certainly live and learn. I'd thought I was doing so well in avoiding dubious terminology. You can't win.



While we had been driving around enjoying ourselves, Anna had been home cooking dinner for us. Nothing had been said about it being a semi-formal occasion so it was odd that we all treated it as such. When we got home I had a bath and, without having given it a thought previously, decided to wear a dress as a change from shorts. Anna had made the table look very nice, we had drinks before the meal and Rick held our chairs for us as we sat in at table. I was glad I'd thought to dress. I'm afraid I didn't do justice to the meal. The hours were slipping away too quickly and thinking of that had cost me my appetite.

Len, Rick and I washed the dishes, well, I washed, Rick wiped and Len stowed away. After all, it was his house and he should know where all the things went. Then I had to pack. I'd been just five days in Los Angeles and the amount of stuff I'd already collected was incredible. At this rate it wasn't going to be possible for me to lug it all with me. Len volunteered to wrap it and mail it off home for me; an offer I was quick to accept, gratefully. I combed through what I thought was surplus weight and heaped it all on the bureau. It was a bit of a job because I was trying to see weeks into the future, wondering how much reading time I would have and whether I would get the chance to read anything at all. Twice I put my copy of the WILLIS PAPERS, which had been gifted to me by the LASFAS club, into my case to read on my travels but had to admit finally that it would be best to read it in peace once I got home, so it went with the other stuff for mailing.

To think back to that night saddens me all over again. It had been a wonderful visit and for the moment all the other people I so much wanted to meet didn't come into account. I was most reluctant to leave, in a purely selfish way, I hoped they were as reluctant to see me go. Somehow we had managed to become firm friends without the chance to discover each other in talk. I may have left others later on in the trip unsure of whether they liked me or not, with the Moffatts' and Rick I had no such doubts. We are friends for life. As I packed we talked, laughed, and talked some more, none of it of any consequence. Packed at last we all moved out to the living room for a last few minutes and then, as Rick was coming along early in the morning, we had to say the last goodnight.

We were all up betimes next morning and after a hurried breakfast we drove out to pick Rick up. I still don't know what the Los Angeles airport looks like because this time I was equally preoccupied with Len, Rick and Anna. It was a very subdued me that waved them goodbye and boarded the plane for my next stop in my Big Adventure. ((P.S. I hope it is only coincidence and not a consequence of my visit that the LASFAS club-rooms were torn down. I hear too that the same fate will overtake the Alexandria Hotel where I went for a drink. Don't you think this is taking things a bit far?!))

