

## London by Night (and Day)

London was a wonderful place to live and there were even visitors from Canada. For the first week I was there I rented a bicycle and cycled everywhere. After my initial round of sight-seeing it was time to find a job. I found a job at Mercantile Credit Company through an agency. Mercantile was a very large company that leased appliances and equipment. I worked in a room with about 25 other employees. We spent all day opening payments from customers and attaching the payment to a remittance slip. The job couldn't have been more boring if it tried. The pay was good at £7.10 per week. There was always overtime available so my usual pay was about £12 (\$28.) per week. My office was on Argyll Street which runs off Oxford Circus. I worked right next door to the Palladium Theatre. The first week at work one of my co-workers suggested we go to the Palladium to see Max Bygraves. We sat in the "gods" (the nose bleed section) and paid 2/6 (.35¢) for a ticket. At that price it started my twice a week visits to all the theatres in London. I must admit though, I had to pay 70¢ to see Judy Garland and the opening of "My Fair Lady".

I rented a room at 35 Kildare Terrace for £2.10 (\$6.) a week with breakfast included. There were 7 other boarders in this house and we had a great time. Shortly after I moved into my room I met up with a friend that I had worked with for 6 months in Toronto. Peter Iden was in London to attend a Boy Scout Jamboree so we were able to spend some time together sight-seeing. Shortly after that I received a note from a former High School classmate, Al Twedde. Al was living in Slough, a 20 minute drive from London. We arranged to meet one Sunday at Windsor Castle. Al had bought a Royal Enfield 350 motorcycle so we met on a number of week-ends to make trips out of London.

I had made good friends with a budding actor, Phillip Anthony. Phillip had bought a large house in Kensington and I moved from Kildare Terrace to Phillip's house at 47 Kensington Park Terrace. I shared the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the house with another budding actor, Tony Booth. Tony became quite famous playing the lead role in the BBC production of "Till Death Do Us Part". He has also appeared in many English films and TV shows. If you do not know Tony Booth you may be more familiar with his daughter, Cherie. Cherie Booth is married to Tony Blair, so Tony Booth became the Father-in-Law to the Prime Minister of England. Cherie was 3 years old when I was chumming around with her father. I should have kept in touch.

I spent some time working in London and then it was time to start traveling again. Another classmate from High School, Bill Stubbs, had caught up with me in London after he had spent a month touring the British Isles. Bill moved in with me at Phillip's house and together we bought a motorcycle with a sidecar. The plan was to motorcycle to South Africa. We started off one very cool morning but only made it as far as Dover, 70 miles from London. That's where everything came to a crashing stop, figuratively and factually. We had bought the motorcycle in London and we were on our way to Dover to catch the ferry to Calais. Bill was driving and I was in the sidecar crowded with cooking utensils, blankets, extra clothes and a bottle of champagne. Just outside of Dover we came to a sharp left turn where a concrete bridge traversed the highway. Bill was not used to driving a motorcycle with a sidecar so when he leaned, instead of steering to change directions, the motorcycle kept going straight ahead and crashed into the bridge at 50 miles an hour.

All I remember is crashing out of the sidecar and rolling down the highway followed by pots and pans. Bill was lying head down between the motorcycle and the sidecar and I thought he was dead. An ambulance came and took us to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Dover. I was diagnosed with a broken pelvis. Bill had a broken wrist and a slice of meat out of his thigh the size of a steak. My diagnosis was wrong so I was able to hobble around the ward. We actually had a pretty good time in the hospital because there were a group of really good nurses. In the evenings one of them would go down to the local pub and sneak in bottles of beer for us. After a week the hospital told us we had to leave. Apparently we were causing a lot of disturbance during our evening happy hour. We hobbled out of the hospital and set out to tour Europe....But that's another story



**Brad McInnes**  
**YMASC President 1970 - 1971**

