





T A F F    B A E D E K E R    by    D O N   F O R D

Section one

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## Preface

As this is being written, I've been home about 10 days from the trip. the longer one puts off the less reliable your memory will be. There is no attempt on my part to try to exceed in length the wonderful write ups that Walt Willis, Bob Madle and John Barry have done of their travels. I'm simply going to set out to tell the story of the TAPF trip: 1960 and whatever it takes, that'll be it.

Likewise, I'm not the master of the polished phrase, clever quips, and sterling prose that these fine gentlemen are. Since TAFF is a going thing and is likely to continue for years and years there will be some space devoted to the differences in our two countries, the problems of travel, and anything else I think may be of some use to future TAFF representatives from the U.S.

I feel that each TAFF winner owes it to fandom to produce a write up of his trip. This should be clearly understood from the moment of entering the race. In England I found several people who were unaware of this phase of TAFF; probably due to this point never having been actually stressed too much. However, this has been one of the original aims of TAFF since its inception back in 1953.

One more thing and then we're off: as I face the task of writing this report, I don't see how I can avoid using the pronoun I thousands of times, so why not just pretend that you are reading a personal letter from me to you and that way it won't sound too much like I've suddenly gotten the big-head or something.



## Preface

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On January 1st, 1960 I was recovering from New Year's Eve and quietly watching 77 SUNSET STRIP on TV when the phone rang & Margaret said it was for me. A voice said, "Get your ass in gear, boy, you're going to England" ! It turned out to be Bob Madle calling from Virginia. I replied by raising hell with him for not getting going more actively with FIRST FANDOM. Always be obsequious, I say.

The passport application was handled through the Federal Court in Cincinnati, & since I wanted to get back in the U.S., I obtained a form from the U.S. Public Health Service for my shots & vaccination. Note: this has to be taken back to the U.S. P.H. to be stamped with their seal after your doctor finishes the series.

I wanted to fly rather than go by boat since the costs are approximately equal & it takes 4 to 5 days each way on a boat. That's nice if you have the time to spare, but my trip had to be done in three weeks. Bob Madle tried to arrange for me to get on a charter plane out of Washington, but the CAA regulations are a bit strict & I just couldn't qualify. What you have to do is be a member of the group/organization making the flight at least 6 months before the trip takes place. The only thing he could find going were flights made up of government workers, which left me completely out. This would've saved TAFF considerable money as the fares are much cheaper on a charter deal.

It resolved itself by TAFF forwarding the money to me and letting me make my own arrangements. This, I did by going to American Express. I remembered reading Nick Falasca's account of the Berry troubles, as well as John's own write up & figured that American Express has agencies in most cities where I could always request local service if I needed it. London and Paris both have large offices & that would be where I'd need help on this trip.

The Cincinnati office booked me in on BOAC, but just as the tickets were made out, they called back to American Express and said that they were cancelling that flight & I'd have to either go a day earlier or a day later. This wasn't too satisfactory so we cancelled with BOAC and switched to Pan American. Their flight 100 leaves daily from New York to London non-stop. I paid them and left with my tickets to London & back & was feeling pleased with saving the \$30.00 jet surcharge which had just been dropped a few weeks before. So pleased in fact that I bought a lens for the Exakta which I'd seen on sale. Then 3 weeks before I left, American Express notified me that all the airlines had reinstated the jet surcharge as of April 1st.

I had time to do some planning and thanks to Ron Bennett, many stupid questions about England were promptly answered. Ron was really on the ball. He kept wanting to come down to London just to meet me at the airport, but I told him that's crazy: it's 250 miles from Harrogate to London & besides if I get 4,000 miles I can surely find my way into London from the airport.

Easter time is generally a bit cool in England for Americans and from all I'd read, they had rain every day. So I bought a waterproof cap & planned my wardrobe. My film needs were estimated as being 1 roll per day. Everything was packed up like I was leaving and I had the suitcase and gadget bag weighed. 54 lbs. 10 lbs over the free limit of 44.

Near as I could figure from reading the fine print on the plane ticket they'd be glad to carry the extra 10 lbs for \$2.00 a pound each way. something had to go. Mary Martin offered to loan me a light weight suitcase and by tossing out half My clothes, I got it down to 22 lbs for the suitcase and 22 lbs for the camera bag, and this only by taking out one of the telephoto lenses and carrying it in my top coat pocket.

I made up a list of names & addresses to send postcards to & attended a Burton Holmes lecture on London in order to get some ideas of what was interesting, photographically. One of my fellow camera club members invited me over to view his slides of London & Paris, taken over the past 5 or 6 trips he's made. Crammed with information on which guide book to get, restaurants to visit, etc. I left his house with a notebook full of hastily scribbled writing. Never trust your memory.

Invitations to visit different fans and fan clubs were coming in, as well as many cards, letters, and a telegram of congratulations on winning the TAFF election. (Telegram from BJO). All of a sudden this TAFF trip looked B\*I\*G! The British Information Service was helpful with pounds of literature on touring England, replete with maps, etc. Well worth writing for.

My employer was contacted, tentatively, about me getting a leave of absence to make the trip. The Personnel Director was luke warm to the idea & gave out with some double-talk. so I went to the next rung over his head & was told to make all my plans as definite, rather than tentative. I asked the Planting engineer to see if he could arrange for me to tour a Bumper Plant in England. When the Plant Manager heard about it, he wrote for me & suddenly the Personnel Director thought it was a good idea my trip; even asked me to be sure to take notes as he wanted me to give him a write up for the Company paper, along with photos. Thus, I was now leaving Autolite with their blessings, which is always better.

Now, all that remained to be done was count off the days until April 9th.

Eventually it came, and that Friday evening I drove the 35 miles from my house to the Greater Cincinnati Airport, which is in Kentucky. I got my luggage checked through to Idlewild, bought some additional insurance at a special counter and sat down to wait for boarding time (7:10 PM) with Margaret, Terry Anne, Jim & JOHN. Dale Tarr showed up and in a few minutes along come Lou Tabakow. I told Lou, "Here's the \$1.75 I owe you, Lou." Lou'd only driven about 200 miles up from the wilds of Kentucky at 70 & 80 m.p.h. to be there. He's a salesman out on the road all week long & had stopped working that afternoon to make it to the airport in time. "I really didn't hurry just for that, Ford." He said unconvincingly to all of us.

Time was up&my flight was called. The kids went up to the observation deck to see me off, along with Lou & Dale, while I kissed Margaret goodbye.

It wss a 4 engine DC-7, propellor job, which suited me fine in view of the troubles that the ELECTRAS had been having lately. Two had blown up in mid-air & there'd been a rash of suicides via the bomb in the plane routine & I quite frankly wasn't as keen about the flying trip as I have been on other journeys. A nice meal was served shortly after take off following completion of that, rough weather set in. The airsick tablets Mary Martin had given me were effective, though. My formula for prevent-

ing airsickness is not to eat or drink anything for several hours before taking off. I got my own pilot's license back in 1946 under the G.I. Bill and I used to get sick as a dog almost every flight until I learned to lay off the soft drinks and snacks before take off time.

Idlewild is a huge place and each airline has a section of their own which is as large as the Cincinnati airport alone. Unless you know where you want to go, it's easy to get lost. I'd taken this flight from Cincinnati so I wouldn't have to change airfields. It's bad enough, without having to come over from La Guardia or even New Jersey. I took a taxi to the International Hotel, which is right at the edge of the field. The 6 lane expressway runs under the runways & you always hope the pilot doesn't run off the bridge on top of you.

After checking into the hotel, I telephoned Pan American to see if my name was on their roster for tomorrow (it was) and was told all I had to do was be at their counter at 9 AM the next morning. I bought a paper to read, checked the tv schedules & saw nothing but crud on. The weather report called for rain that night & since my room faced the airport, I made a couple of time exposures with each camera. I'd taken a nap that afternoon and combined with the fact that I was somewhat keyed up, I slept vçry little that night. In fact, I could've done without a room & waited in the lounge at the airport just as well. It was a short bed & a foam rubber pillow, which I detest.

My alarm clock rang at 5:45 am and at 6 the hotel gave me a ring on the telephone. I looked out the window and saw An overcast with a low ceiling and a drizzeling rain. Pine! I had visions of waiting around the airport for hours for the weather to clear or even the cancelling of the flight. I ate breakfast, made the morning ablutions, packed up and decided to call Pan American just to make sure the flight wasn't cancelled. Not cancelled, I was told.

So, I rode the bus over to the terminal building, checked my luggage through & made the 44 lbs by carrying one camera & a lens with me. Next it was to pay the jet surcharges and then to get seat assignment. Since I was early, I got a window seat. Next stop was the observation deck, where I took some general scenes around the area & noticed that the ceiling was rising and that the rain had stopped. I ordered a couple of cartons of cigarettes for delivery on the plane & had inquired about customs, since I'd been advised to register my camera equipment before leaving the U.S. With a mixture of German & Japanese cameras and lenses, I might be forced to pay duty when I got back unless I could show evidence of prior ownership. It was a long walk to another building & I was tired, so I said the heck with it.

We loaded at 9:30 AM and there was considerable confusion about seating as the numbers were not clearly marked & there were a lot of passengers to load. I counted 96 in the economy section & don't know how many in the first class area. 56 I'd guess. We started taxiing at 10:05 am, only 5 minutes behind schedule! The engines started smoothly and if you weren't watching them, it was quite possible never to notice. It took considerable time to get to the runway...a couple of miles, anyway. There were 5 or 6 planes waiting when we got there & more behind us. We got priority over the propeller jobs and at 10:40

we started the run down the runway with a sinking back into our seats from the acceleration. With only a short run we were up and off & banking in a left turn over Long Island heading East. The surge of power forces you back into your seat like a small scale version of the acceleration couch & is quite re-assuring.

I got my camera going and came up with some nice shots taken during take off & over Long Island. The p.a. system announced that our estimated flight time would be 5 hours and 40 minutes, with London now having rain. Scheduled time from New York to London is 6 hrs and 25 min. We climbed steadily to 29,000' and the stewardesses served tea.

Travel companions can often times be a pest. I'd decided many months ago that I was not going to be someone's chaplain and be subjected to hearing all about their troubles. Nowhere in my 3 week Journey did this ever occur: & all of my traveling companions were quite pleasant. On the 707 in the economy section you sit 3 abreast on each side of the aisle. Next to me was a girl about 7 or 6, whose parents were across the aisle. She was a perfect little lady & amused herself by drawing pictures for her mother. I loaned her my ball pens which have different colored inks & she made some drawings which I thought were excellent for her age.

Later on, an engineer from Toronto traded seats with her so she could sit with her parents & we two had a nice chat for the rest of the trip. Lunch was served & the pilot announced we were at 33,000' and with the aid of a 125 mph tail wind, were now traveling at a ground speed of 750 mph. The cabin was quiet and you could talk in a normal tone of voice; there was practically no vibration; and they played nice background music over the P.A. system. The idea of traveling at that speed so easily was incomprehensible to all. When I was a boy, the Columbus Dispatch had a Sunday Supplement feature saying that man would travel at the speed of sound (700 mph at sea level) in 20 years. This was in 1930 or so and I recalled, now, the violent argument I had with a neighbor friend who claimed man would never travel that fast. It was impossible. Funny how little things like that stick in your memory.

We clipped another 15 minutes off the schedule & set down at London Airport in 5 hrs and 25 min for a new record, by 2 minutes, and an average speed of 670 mph for the trip. The view of London at night from the air was truly a beautiful sight to behold. I rate it as a highlight in my lifetime. There are various colored lights, in addition to the usual neon signs, which delight the eye. The mercury vapor lights, the sodium lights & the pedestrian zebra crosswalks with their flashing orange globes all go together to make London quite different from U.S. cities, colorwise.

We went directly from the plane to a special bus which would take us to customs. The driver must have been a frustrated pilot. With only a 1500' run he managed to give us all the feeling of the race at Le Mans. The through passengers were let off at one area & then the rest of us were herded into the customs receiving room. The British subjects were separated from us foreigners and sent off through another door, which allowed them to flash brief smiles of superiority at us.

Four examiners stamped us through with only brief questioning. When I assured him I'd be taking my camera equipment out of England on my return journey, he was satisfied with that and then asked me where I was going to stay. I told him I didn't know. This was a new thing in his life. He said, "Look you just can't stay in the park, I need some sort of an address." I said, "I may end up in the park for all I know, but here is an address for you." and gave him Ted Carnell's address.

I got the O.K., then, and was admitted through the magic door behind the examiner. Our luggage was there & as we claimed it, you placed it on a bench and awaited the customs men again. This was a baggage search if they felt it was necessary. I got a mysterious chalk mark inscribed on my suitcase & was free. My friend from Toronto was there & I noticed that the British subjects were still getting cleared, while us foreigners were completed. We walked through the doorway into the lobby and there was Ted Carnell.

Ted was a little grayer than 11 years ago in Cincinnati, and a little heavier, but other than that, still the same old Ted. We rode the airport bus into London and Ted was introduced to my friend on the plane, who wanted to know a few directions on how to find his hotel, etc in London. This, Ted could give him easily, as well as a brief run down on how to figure out the monetary system. That done, we could exchange a few pleasantries and try to get caught up on any fan news. This bus driver was a bit more sane than the previous one, but I cringed at the left hand side of the road driving.

From the Air Terminal on Cromwell Rd. Ted hastily shoved me into a taxi & told the driver to head for a train station. I told Ted that according to my watch & stomach it was supper time in Cincinnati & I needed food before I went to bed & perhaps we could stop somewhere at a restaurant. He said right now the important thing was for us to get on a train as before long the service would be less and that Irene could fix me something to eat when we got to his house. From then on it was a confused jumble of train travel, bus travel & finally we came to 17 Burnish Rd.

By this time I was completely lost and turned around and had the feeling that London was still in the far off future and that this was only a dream. Ted opened the door and said, "Here's Don!" and I met Irene and their two children Michael and Leslyn & the dog made more noise than all of us put together. I also met Ted's Mother and can't recall whether it was that night or the next morning. Anyway, I felt at home in the Carnell household. It was good to be there.

Irene fixed me a platter of eggs and bacon, with various side dishes that really hit the spot. The bacon is about what we'd call ham in the U.S. I had only 1 request to make: a glass of cold water. Everyone watched in amazement as I drained it in 3 seconds flat and upon the offer of a refill said yes. Water drinking just isn't one of the British pastimes. With the time bring changed to daylight saving that night, at meant an even shorter night for Ted & Irene (I'd only gotten up at noon, London time,) we turned in for the night.

Ted Carnell writes:

FORD'S FAMOUS FIRSTS: Don's first experience with London's famous red double becker buses came on his arrival from London Airport late on arrival day. Arriving at our local railway station around 11:15 pm we just managed to get on a packed bus filled with cinema-goers. There was only room inside, and this for standing purposes. As the height of the compartment was only 5' 10" (conductors have to be under this to qualify for the job) Ford's 6' 6"1 was something of a packing job.

He eventually managed to fold hid head down and rest his shoulder blades on the ceiling by which time everyone on the lower deck was sympathetic and one dear lady was attempting to get up and give him her seat (only she was wedged into an inside berth). As the conductor fought his way through the press of bodies to collect the fares he eventually came upon an immovable object -- Ford; by the time he had managed to by-pass Don the bus was almost at the terminus and there was one vacant seat, right behind the drivers cabin.

Inviting Don to sit down so that he could complete collecting the fares the conductor then found that Don's knees were so long that he had become wedged between the driver's partition and the back of his seat. We practically had to pry him out of the bus when we reached our stop. Parting Comment from the conductor as we alighted -- "Let's know when you're coming again mate, and we'll build a special bus for you."

Ted Carnell.

In the morning after breakfast, I telephoned Ken & Pamela Bulmer, Norman Ashfield, and Mr. Williams. I chatted with Ken & Pamela and made arrangements for Ken to meet me at Ted's office. Monday, and for me to stay with the Bulmers Monday night. Norman was home and said he'd be over, shortly, to take me to his house to stay tonight. Mr. Williams was the Works Manager at Pyrene Ltd. where I was going to visit on Tues.

Later on Norman arrived and we rode the bus over to his house at Sidcup, not too far from Ted's place in Plumstead. I met his wife, Molly, and step-daughter Janet. Janet and my daughter, Terry Anne, have been corresponding for some time now. Their ages being about the same, with Janet about six months older.

Norman and I have been corresponding since 1948 or so and this was our first meeting in all those years. We had much to talk about. All of us talked away until quite late in the evening. I took photos of the Airfields and set up the camera so Janet could take a photo of Norman and I together. They wanted to know about life in America and I told them that I could and how our family lived, etc. The fact that our drinking water is collected off the roof & stored in a cistern underneath the kitchen seemed to strike them as odd. In fact, it seemed to startle all to whom I mentioned it. Water under pressure is available over practically all of England. We compared the costs of electricity, food, cars and everything we could think of. Norman said his electric bill was around \$4.00 for three months. I'd just paid ours before I left home and at was \$17.50 for 1 month. The discussion ranged far and wide that evening and I certainly had a pleasant stay. Janet was going to take some office training and then would be going to go to work. She seemed so young by our standards to be getting out

into the working world. I never did get used to seeing the girls of 15 and 16 out working, during my whole stay in England.

Norman worried that he'd used up his leave and couldn't take off work to show me around London the next day; and worried that I might not have a good time. etc. I assured him that I'd make out fine, if he'd just shoW me how to get to Ted's office. That was the sort of feeling I ran into everywhere on my TAFF trip; people kept worrying that I might not be doing what I wanted to do or go where I wanted to go, continually outdid themselves to show me a good time.

Outside of Tuesday, I had no definite plans other than be at the convention Friday. I'd also promised to be at Ella Parker's on Wednesday & at the Globe on Thursday. I wanted to have somewhat flexible plans in order to fit into whatever the fans wanted me to do.

Monday, then, I rode into London with Norman. This was my first glimpse of the city by daylight and I snapped away at everything. Norman's house, Sidcup, the train station, out the train windows and inside Waterloo Station, our destination. We left my suitcase there and walked across Waterloo Bridge. There were street musicians the morning traffic jam and a view up the river of Big Ben & the House of Parliament. I went through film like army ants.

I wanted to get a roll of film processed in time for my slide show at the convention. Eastman Kodak had given me their London address, which was on Kingsway. I told them I had a roll of High Speed Ektachrome & When could I get it...which had to be no later than Friday. They called their processing plant and hemmed & hawed & said it'd take a week. No point in even leaving it, They did suggest an independant processor a block or so away and there I was told it could be picked up the next afternaan. Next stop was a luggage, or leather goods shop. Norman knew of a place on Sicilian Way, across from Les Floods book shop. There I picked out a strap for my gadget bag & said I'd take it. He asked me how soon I wanted it & I said I'd wait while he put it on. He turned pale and rolled his eyes towards heaven, probably mentally cursing these mad Americans he had to deal with. "Oh, I can't do that, Sir." he replied "Well, if you can't do it, give me a hammer & a rivet & I'll do it myself, right here." I said When he recovered his speech, he said, "It just isn't done that way."

"I don't see what's so complicated about it...all you need is a hammer and two rivets. Any fool can do it."

"We send all the cases out on Thursday and they're returned the following Thursday,"

"O.K.," I said, "Forget all about it." and I walked out with Norman apologizing to him. "American, you know" he told the shop owner. "Yes, I can see that."

Norman Ashfield writes:

A telephone call from Ted Carnell on Sunday morning 10 April, brought me my first personal contact with Don. Soon after I started talking to him, on the 'Blower', his reaction in a deep rich voice was 'I don't get you'; I had forgotten that Don was used to slower speech and not my fast almost cockneyish way of speaking (By the time he left me on Monday 11 April, I am sure my speech had considerably slowed down--I was getting in less w.p.m.) (Words per minute)

I went over to Plumstead, and after losing myself there, I finally landed up at Burwash Road, where I met Don in person. He certainly was as tall as I'd been told, but turned out to be a very pleasant person to know, and I soon got used to his height and forgot the difference in stature.

We then travelled back by double-decker bus, Don choosing to go upstairs so he could spread himself more and see more, to 81 Valliers Wood Road, Sidcup, Kent (my new address--all interested persons please note'), Don taking an active interest in everything--a 'MonkeyPuzzle' tree had him puzzled too! At Sidcup, Don met Molly my wife of a few weeks, and my step-daughter, Janet, who corresponds with Don's daughter, Terry. Don was soon at ease with us and we with him. Of course there were some misunderstandings based on the different 'Dingo'. I learnt that 'THE bathroom' and the 'BATHroom' meant two different things, and understood Don's astonishment when I had told him that in my old house, the bathroom was in the kitchen (The 'bath' was, but it took a few minutes to straighten things out.) We had also to get used to the idea that the 'fall' was the 'Autumn' and not the 'Fall of Man!.

Don stayed with us that night and We would cheerfully have had him longer had he not had so many other fans wanting him to stay with them. the tree of us found him excellent company and greatly appreciated having him with us. It was grand to meet someone I had corresponded with for so many years and find he was all one could have hoped.

Don spent much time taking photographs--in fact I was astonished at the amount of photographic equipment and films he had brought with him. (He arrived in England with two cases about 22 lbs each, on full of clothes etc, and the other full of films lenses etc.) But when I saw his exhibition of coloured slides at the Convention, I fully understood why he had devoted so much travelling weight to his hobby; I have never seen such good colour transparencies as he showed there, especially those of Cincinnati by night.

Thank you for sending such a fine friend over here. I believe that US, fandom will find it difficult to produce another TAFF delegate to equal Don.

Norman Ashfield.

Norman got me on the tube and told me which station to get off at & how to find Ted's office. Eventually, I arrived and later on Ken got there & we had a nice time greeting each other, again. It had been 1955 when we last saw each other, and I told him he looked quite different without the beard. The beard came in for some joking when we remembered how the Sharonville Police had stopped him as a suspicious character. I said I hoped the London Bobbies wouldn't be after me.

The three of us had lunch at Ted's favorite restaurant & then Ken & I beaded for Picadilly Circus and Monument Tower, two stops on the way to Ken's house so that I could take some photos. At Picadilly a tout came up and asked me if I wanted to see the Guards [which I knew were only down the street a few blocks away). I was going to string him along a bit, when Ken came over and asked who was on that day, the Reds or the Blues? The tout took one look at Ken and asked if he was with me. Ken said yes and zip, the tout was gone. He probably thinks to this day that Ken was there first with the sucker.

We got to Monument Tower and walked up 311 steps to the top. Ken said he'd never been up there. Finally, gasping with the exertion of our climb and with the rarefied air, we got out on the marrow platform for an excellent view of London. The Tower Bridge was up, letting a ship pass through and for the next 45 minutes or so, I shot stereo and then interchanged lenses for the 35 mm format. The clouds alternately came and went over the sun and it was one of those days where you have to meter every shot. It even came up a rain shower while we were up there.

There was a uniformed guard at the top of the stairway, and I speculated with Ken over whether he carried his lunch and if he had a private space somewhere, otherwise he'd have those 311 steps to face every time he answered a call of nature or went out for lunch. We both decided that job was not for us.

Going down the steps was a bit easier but nevertheless, the bench outside was a good place to collapse on. No sooner had we sat down than Ken jumped up with a loud cry. I couldn't figure out if he'd sat on a tack or a nearby pigeon had bombed him. Neither one. He'd found a zlb package of India Tea. His day was made. Success would surely follow. I said he'd better be careful...that might be a smuggler's "drop" and he'd get home and find a diamond in the center, or heroin, etc.

Ken asked to borrow my camera, saying he wanted to take a picture of me & the tower together. I showed him how to work it & there he lay, flat on his back, in the middle of the street! I have a stereo to prove it. Cars either had to detour, or wait for him to get up & move. The sight would have been a little less unnerving if he hadn't had my camera.

We stopped by Pan American's office to see if I could change my date of return to May 1st from April 30th. They didn't give me much encouragement & put me on a standby list of some 15 people. We'd have to hope for a cancellation, which wasn't too likely.

We got my suitcase, then, and rode the train to Catford, and a bus to Wellmeadow Rd. There was Pamela and the newest Bulmer, Debra. Ted Carnell 'phoned to lay Dave Kyle probably would be in, Saturday. Since nobody rise knew this, it should be a bit of sunrise to spring on the convention. Dave & Ruth had stopped by our house some months back, while on their trip out west, and Dave had mentioned that he might be at the convention, too, as they had 2 plane tickets.

Debra was a bit fussy & Pamela & Ken hovered over her very solicitously I'd say that she is an extremely well looked after baby.

Ken Bulmer Writes:

When It turned out that the telephone call was not transatlantic but came only from Eltham way, Pamela relaxed and spoke to Don in the way the typically dignified English hostess does speak. It was a most eerie experience to talk to Don on the blower, to hear that familiar voice, and to know that he wasn't sitting at home speaking into a tape recorder but was in the same city as us. After Norman Ashfield, at whose house Don was, had flapped about: a rendezvous was fixed for Don and myself at Ted Carnell's office. Typical, was that Ted didn't know this and was deluged with bods at an early hour, telling his authors that he considered them all kinds of so and so's well, me anyway. Don was sittin with his feet on the floor and his head tangled up in the lighting when I opened the door. I'd been practicing a sort of tip-toe! head bask, peering port of welcome for him in view of his height, and this was still a necessity. I'd been warned about the ton and a half of photo equipment he had with him, and this comprised most of the studio gear of MGM and Warner Bros. He was still the same saute, good-humoured, slow-talking, yet essentially cheeky chap-pie I remembered. He loves to slid the poignant in undetected and smothly. Only when you're bleeding you ego all over the floor do you realize what's hit you. To hear the CFG going full blast is an education in civilized mayhem. It's just as well they're a good-hearted gang and gentlemen - and Don is a true representative of all that's best in US fandom. After my idiot cries of delight we got around to discussing the day's campaign. Don had a number of places he had to see and Ted saw us off with suitable movie shots. I'd kinda like to see the one of me leaping into the air to get Don's topcoat on for him, and of him crouching down to facilitate the operation. With these two movements we nearly were on a level. Took Don up the Monument. He was carrying the ton and a half, and I naturally didn't want to deprive him of the job of guarding all that loot. At the top the Monument leaned a little.. We were met by a flurry of London snow-cum-rain and Don shot shots. As a camera bug, he kept apologizing to me for stopping; but that was fine by me; he was the honoured guest. We went up to Picadilly to check air reservations and more photogs were taken. Don wag wearing a white cap which looked like the nose cone of a missile soaring over the homburghs. Some character wanted to take Don on a sight-seeing tour of the Horse Guards and, all unknowingly, I choked the guy off. Kinda feel that Don hankered after that trip. Still, I took him to Tresco and a dishful of Ice cubes, hollow, which made up for that. Don drinks so much iced water that his veins must struggle to keep his big toss frozen out. Anyway, our refrigerator came through the test well - I was left with two trays of

solid ice cubes after Don had gone. Unwanted ice cubes. Ted Tubb came around and we had quite a gab fest. Don commiserated with us over the LC fiasco; we said it was the way of the world. All true pioneers aren't wanted. Don was full of his dry anecdotes and the time whistled by. He had to be up in Ted Carnell's office at 9-15 the following day. So I managed to wake up, force a cup of tea on the unwilling recipient of same, and leg off with the cases to the bus. We just made it to the station for a nice train and Don went off. I'd given him an extra quarter of an hour to get lost in; but, ornerarily, he didn't get lost and was pawing on the doorstep before the place was awake. Still, he wasn't late for his appointment; which was the gain thing. At the con Don made a big friendly impact. One character said that he was darned if he was going to be polite to him - but after a minute of the Ford personality they were hitting on all cylinders together. Don's like that. I managed a tenuous dream, tho'. I'd cracked a corny joke in Cleveland with Dale Tarr, Dale Smith and Don. Now I found a you fellow at the con - never did find out his name. and matched him with Don. Wait for it- the youngster topped Don Ford by Three inches! My convention was made. Missed most of on's very well received coloured photo show through the new daughter; and missed the shots of Pamela and self. Still - Don will be back, I hope. We'll see them than. As a taffman Don was right up to form and his visit has, I hope, Ironed out a few misconceptions. I hope he made a lot of new friends and I hope he enjoyed the trap. He darned well deserved it! And he lived up to the high standards expected - viva Don Ford for Taff.

Ken Bulmer.

Ken had me sign the wall in his den and I inspected some of the fan-nish decorations in this combination study/writing room...water pistols hanging on the wall, etc. I was afraid to inquire whether they were loaded or not.

Supper was ready & Ted Tubb came over while we were just finishing up. He's tall, 6' 4" at least, looks to be between 35 - 40 and has a friendly manner and appearance. There are crinkles around the corners of his eyes that make you think of laughter & I soon found that Ted & I think alike in many respects...don't take things too seriously, fandom is got a way of life but certainly most pleasurable, It's fun to get "authority" rattled once in awhile, etc.

After reading about Ted in the fanzines for so many years I'd often wondered if he'd measure up to his reputation in person. He does. I can't begin to recall all the wide range of topics we discussed that night. We ran the gamut. One thing that did keep cropping up was how the London fans were somewhat divided into roughly three camps, or perhaps 3 interests would be a better phrasing of it. A lot of the old timers hardly ever came to the Globe anymore and it seemed like it was hard to breathe life into the old embers. I said one fan I'd like to meet was Charlie Duncombe. Charlie, along with Vincent Clarke and on other fan I'm too lazy to look up now, were the ones I'd mailed the hard cover books to following the grant for such project voted upon at the C invention in 1949.

Ken said he had no phone, so we wrote him a post card & the three of us signed it. We tried to compare fan groups in various cities and I related what I knew of the clubs in the U.S. & talked about the Midwest-cons, our get togethers at Bellefontaine with Doc Barrett, some comparisons of U.S. and British fandom, etc. No attempt was made to solve the worlds problems, we simply had a good bull session that evening.

The next morning, Tuesday April 12th, was the appointment to visit Pyrene Ltd. Mr. Williams, the Finishing Superintendent, was to pick me up at Ted Carnell's office at 10 am. I told Ken 9:30, so I'd be sure to get there on time. I was up about 6 am or so & then Ken saw me off to the train, saying he was now going back home & sleep some more. I don't know why, we'd had 4 hrs sleep already.

Ted was not in when I arrived & I waited in the lobby to make sure I wouldn't miss Mr. Williams. He arrived & we introduced ourselves & were just leaving when Ted showed up.

Pyrene is out on Great West Road in Brentford. They make fire extinguishers and bumpers at this particular plant. Since Autolite also makes bumpers & we use the same basic process from Harshaw Chemical Co. we had much in common. Mr. Williams had also toured automobile & bumper factories in the U.S. last summer...including out plant at Sharonville. Apparently they had treated him well in the U.S. He seemed determined to outdo the hospitality he'd received.

We talked "Shop" a bit. I showed him some stereo slides I'd taken of our plant & then went on a tour of their plant. I photographed whatever I liked & they stopped any operation if necessary. I concentrated more on items that were different from ours & that might be adapted for our operations.

Next we went out for lunch & he tried to fill my hollow leg full of gin at a pup called the Red Lion, not too far from Kew Gardens. The fillet steak did, though. We returned to the plant about 2 pm where the engineering staff was awaiting us. They viewed the stereos & asked questions about our equipment & operations & I turned over to them some samples of a planting pin that we use to hold the bumpers onto the plating carriers. They now intend changing over to them.

It was not too late to get me back to Ted's office a 5, so Les Flood's book store was selected instead. I supposed he'd just drop me off there but no, he wanted to meet Ted. We ended up down in the cellar with Les in his office. Then Mr. Williams said he was going to take all of us out to Dinner. Les had an engagement, so it ended up with the 3 of us going to the Carvery in the Regent Palace Hotel.

This is somewhat on the lines of a smorgasbord. There are roasts on a v-shaped counter and you're invited to carve your own meat. Being the bashful soul that I am, I only made 3 trips. Then we adjourned to the bar until 10 pm. All during this time, I still couldn't spend a penny. I kept insisting that I be allowed to buy at least one round of drinks, but nothing doing.

I've skimmed over the conversations we had all during this time. They weren't particularly fannish. We talked shop conditions, productivity, hourly rates, unions, etc. I'm the Bargaining Committeeman for Plating at Autolite & the the Co. had written Pyrene that I was the Union rep. I had no intentions of bringing it up, but they did. I was introduced to the Chief Shop steward at Pyrene & left a copy of our contract with them, etc. But we talked on widely scattered subjects & I found Mr. Williams to be what on calls, "A man's man."

Anyway, we parted at 10 that evening. He and Ted made plans to get-together this coming summer and I was told over and over that if I found myself back in London with nothing to do, just telephone him & he'd be glad to pick me up. Quite a gentleman & it certainly was a fantastic day for me. Ted and I rode home remarking to each other what a nice guy he was.

Wednesday, then, I met Roberta Gray in Ted's office. We went up to pick up my film at the processors & from there went to a place to eat that Bobbie thought might appeal to me. I did get a hamburger, french fries, cold water; but the milkshake was just that. If you want ice cream in it, you have to order something else & I don't know the name of it. As Jack Paar said, 'You could starve in London because you don't know the right words.' We went back to Ted's & met Ron Bennett & Brian Jordan.

They asked me where I wanted to go in London. I said I had 4 objectives; Picadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, Monument Tower, Tower of London & Changing of Guard. That's 5, isn't it? Anyway, since I'd been on the monument, yesterday, & was going to the changing of the Guard tomorrow, so why not the Tower of London this afternoon.

We got there under darkening skiew & off & on showers. I got a permit to use my camera & flash unit & then went to the area where the armor is on display. There are knights mounted on horseback & there are a couple of floors of this. Quite nice & the stereos came out rather well, too. Bobbie knew much about early British history & could rattle off the names & dates faster than I could comprehend. We got kicked out at closing time 8c this is a place I'd like to return to.

We made our way to where I'd parked my suitcase & then set off..to Ella Parker's in the pouring rain right at the rush hour. with 22 lb gadget bag on my left shoulder & a 24 lb suitcase in my right hand, I was not the most maneuverable person. In the underground corridors people would come racing madly around a corner & come face to face with me. Gruesome thought isn't it? Since I couldn't move & they were going too fast to change course, we collided. There must have been dozens of black & blue kneecaps from beating against my suitcase. I simply stood there & let them batter themselves against it. Oftentimes my arm would be practically straight out until the hapless victim could untangle him/herself. There was a 15 minute delay while Ron went out in search of a candy bar. Finally the proper tube train was boarded & we were on the way to Ella's.

We arrived at Ella's and when we were introduced she said, "Christ, they told me you were tall, but you're a giant:" Present that evening were: Bobbie Gray, Brian Jordan, Bill Temple, Sture Sedolin, Ted Forsythe, Ron Bennett, Alan Dodd & Alan Rispin, & Ella's brother, Fred.

Big topic of discussion was the fact that the convention hotel had cancelled out only two days ago. Bobbie had told me about this early that morning and I was now hearing Ella's version. Between the two of them they had managed to secure another hotel on such short notice & things were now booked into the Kingsley Hotel on Bloomsbury Way. Notices were being mailed out of the change of hotel.

Chief reason for the change was the fact that the owner balked at the idea of us bringing liquor into the hotel & had then nullified the agreement made by the manager. The owner was a woman active in politics and on the council. I gathered from the lucid descriptions of her that she thought the sun rose and set on her ass.

Roberta Gray writes:

The Tuesday before the Convention, I was wondering whether there would be a Convention at midday. The fact that the hotel we had booked decided not to have us at the last minute is old hat now, but I am not likely to forget that particular Tuesday.

It started just before midday when Ella rang me and said in a rather strained voice that a crisis had arisen re the hotel. Sandra and I went round to the hotel and discovered what it was and thereafter the three of us spent the afternoon walking around looking for another hotel and wondering if we would end up booking a bed for the TAFF candidate in the crypt of St. Martins-in-the-Fields. However, the London Chamber of Commerce (Paddington) came to our rescue and got us fixed up at the Kingsley Hotel in Bloomsbury at special rates for the Con members.

It was that day that my right foot suddenly decided to play me up again and I was wondering how on earth I was going to keep my promise to Don to walk him round the interesting parts of London. Anyway, I went back to the flat and hoped that keeping off my feet for a while would help, but it turned out that I need not have worried when I called at Ted Carnell's office the following morning.

I was late, of course, a bad habit I seem to have acquired over the past few months. When I arrived at Ted's office a tall, dark chap got up - and up - and up. My first thought on seeing Don Ford was "My God! How am I going to keep up with him? He's a foot taller than I am." But, Don it seemed, had also been having trouble with his feet and what actually happened was that he had a job to keep up with me at times. When my feet aren't bothering me I am a quick walker, though, and anyone I'm with usually ends up asking "Where's the fire?" Don didn't feel like a lot of walking (Neither did I) so after taking him up to Piccadilly and Kingsway - and discovering to my astonishment that he did not drink coffee - we returned to Ted's office to collect Ron Bennett and Brian Jordan and moved on to the Tower of London.

Outside the Tower were a couple of men with a fruit stall and Don took a photograph of them as part of the London scene. When he'd taken it one of the fruitsellers came up to him and said; "Ere, mate, you needn't 'ave wasted yer money taking me picture. You coulda got one of me fer nuffin' from Scotland Yard." But five minutes later he was giving Don a queer look when Don said to a little boy by the stall: "hey, sonny, steal an apple and I'll take your picture."

Inside the Tower there was such a queue for the Crown Jewels that we decided to give it a miss. In any case, no cameras were allowed in there at all, whereas permission could be obtained to take photographs in the White Tower. Now it was the first time that I had been in the armoury section of the tower and all the boys got from me was "But where's the fifteenth century plate armour?" We reached it eventually, but just beforehand Ron came up to me and said "Have you seen the obscene suit of armour in the glass case?" I hadn't, but I got over to see it with indecent haste. The armour had belonged to Henry VIII for use in foot combats and it had been made so that there was not a crack or crevice where a weapon could enter. But egad! The steel codpiece. Henry was a hefty character, but I still think he was bragging. Don of course, took a photograph of it, helped by Ron, accompanied by scandalised looks from several of the visitors who were probably wishing they had the nerve to ask Don to send them a copy of the photo when developed.

The Yeoman of the Guard eventually persuaded us they were closing down for the night and back we went to Ted's office to pick up some gear. From there we went on to Ella's place where a number of fen were waiting to say hello to Don. I had to leave fairly early, but no doubt Don has persuaded Ella or Ron in writing up that part of his trip.

Don was taken along to the Globe on the Thursday night, but again I had not a lot of time to spare so it was a case of "good-evening, goodnight."

Friday was the day the fans started moving in to the Kingsley Hotel and discovering where the cafes and restaurants were in the district. I had gone to meet Bill, but the coach was early and I finally rang the hotel to discover that he was already there. When I arrived myself Ella had already done stalwart work introducing people around. As the Convention proper did not start until Saturday the evening was spent in meeting and reunions and getting the geography of the place.

The following morning Bill and I went to the National Gallery as I had been telling him for months about Da Vinci's painting "The Virgin of the Rocks" and this was an opportunity of showing him why I was so enthusiastic about it. Then I remembered that I had never seen the original portrait of Richard III, and as the National Portrait gallery was next door in we went.

Then it was back to the hotel for the official opening of the Convention. Doc Weir introduced Ted Carnell, the guest of honour, who in turn introduced Don, the TAPP candidate. By this time I had found that Don could keep an extremely straight face when he was kidding one along and I was prepared, but the audience had found out, too, and his speech went down very well.

I may add at this point that the British fen were wondering if Don were an American. He didn't drink coffee, he didn't smoke, he didn't drink whisky and he didn't hustle. Nevertheless, I noticed that what Don had planned to do during his visit did get done.

After Ted Carnell's talk on the state of present day S.F. there was break for tea, followed by an auction and then one of the highlights of the Convention - Don's slide show. This made quite an impression on the audience and was much appreciated.

The fancy dress party followed later in the evening although not many people turned up in fancy dress. Dave Kyle (who arrived on Saturday afternoon) and Don had fun with their cameras, though, and Don and Ted, with Pam Bulmer, were roped in to be judges. First prize was won by Ethel Lindsay and Ina Shorrock as the Witches of some extraterrestrial place that I cannot remember offhand.

Room parties were going full swing, of course, but on Saturday night I gave them a miss. Had a feeling that I should be as wideawake as possible for the BSFA meeting the following morning, which was just as well because soon after it started I found I was more or less chairing it, much to my surprise. Meanwhile, Bill had taken Don to see one of the traditional sights of London - Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park - and I have left that part of the report to him.

The afternoon was covered with "This is Your Life) Norman Shorrock" to Norman's complete surprise, followed by Doc WEir's talk on Keral Capek and another auction.

Have just remembered another reason why I was not at any room parties on Saturday night. Don wanted to do some night photography and Bill and I took him up to Piccadilly, but after midnight the lights were going out on the signs fairly rapidly. We went through Leicester Square and Trafalgar Square and thence back to the hotel, but Don did get some shots of London side streets that had not caught up with the mid twentieth century including a little street that was sheer Regency.

There was a TAFF candidates quiz, but for the life of me I cannot remember now whether it was Saturday or Sunday and as usual, I can't find the programme. The professional film stood the test of time fairly well and it was during this film - just beforehand rather than when we met an American girl, Ernestine Hope Bellamy, who had actually seen U.F.O.s. I had always kept an open mind about the things myself, but I was curious and we talked to her afterwards about it. And I should like to say right now that Miss Hope Bellamy was no crank, but a very intelligent young lady.

The professional film was followed by various amateur films and we eventually wound up at a party in Don's room. I did not count the number of people who were there, but every inch of space seemed to be filled up with fans. The party broke up about 3 a.m., I think, and the Con proper was over.

Before the Con started we had suggested to Don that he might find it interesting to take his camera up to Trafalgar square on Easter Monday as the anti-nuclear people would be arriving from Aldermaston. It seems that a number of people suggested it to Don during the Con, too. Anyway Don went to the Square ahead of us and Bill and I said we'd meet him by the statue of George Washington. When we arrived there about fifty thousand people already there waiting to see the marchers arrive and Bill said we would never find Don in that lot. I spotted him half a minute later on the steps of the National Gallery, to Bill's surprise. We went over to him and found he had got himself comfortably ensconced on the railings at the top of the steps where he had a good view of the whole square.

More and more people arrived so that by the time the actual marchers reached Trafalgar Square there were already fifty thousand onlookers, including some who climbed on to the roof of St. Martins-in-the-Field. As there forty five thousand marchers (Whitehall was a mass of people from wall to wall and end to end) it meant that at one point there were one hundred thousand people in the square.. Mind you, a good many thousands of the marchers had not come all the way from Aldermaston - the exhibitionists and the jerks had joined the colum in Whitehall and just beforehand (and looked a damned sight dirtier and scruffier than the genuine people who had done the full march). Although I think the whole thing is pointless, I did feel it a shame that the really sincere people should have these slobs tacking theseoves on and probably getting judged by the unwashed beatniks in their midst. My views were the same as Don on the march - that it would not do any good, but if people wanted to go ahead and demonstrate why shouldn't they. I have heard that there will not be a march next year as it had served its purpose, but perhaps the organisers took a jaundiced look at what had attached themselves to the march and decided that next year the beatniks and exhibitionists could damn well stage their own show. But I must say here that the march was extremely well organised and although an enormous number of people had truned up to have a look at the marchers there were, as far ad I know, no brawls of any kind.

Bill's coach went in the afternoon so we had to start thinking about getting away from the square and up to Victoria. The three of us were making our way out of the Square when there on the steps of St. Martins-in-the-Fields were all the fans from the Convention who had not yet had to think about catching trains or coaches. So I suppose can say that the Convention finished in Trafalgar Square on Easter Monday afternoon.

Don was staying with Eric Jones for a few days, so on Tuesday I met him at Paddington and we travelled down to Cheltenham together. Don took some shots of the steam trains we passed, telling me that in the States they are now used for shunting and that diesels had taken over the passenger lines. I told him that our railways were being modernised but in the meantime we were paying exorbitant prices for lousy service. Having had experience in the last few months of the socalled express service I should know. After Kemble the journey was enlivened by an old soul and her dog and two soldiers on leave from Cyprus. After hearing what they had to say my opinion of the archbishop went down even more. When I arrived in Cheltenham we made arrangements to meet the following day and Don set off for Eric and Margaret's home.

The following day he did not want to rove too far afield, so I took him to Tewkesbury. We had lunch in a restaurant with the fascinating name of the "Ancient Grudge" and then set out to take some photographs of the town. And I actually managed to surprise Don, though quite unintentionally. We were walking along the main street when I mentioned that the houses we were passing at the time had not been very well built as they were not two hundred years old yet and the windows were bulging outward already.

Don took a shot of Abel Fletcher's Mill, whose claim to fame is owed to the fact that it is mentioned in the book "John Halifax, Gentlemen." I recalled the O.D.T.A.A. garage (service station) which was next door to Gup's Hill Manor and thought it might amuse Don to take a shot of it. Its name is derived from the fact when the owner started it he ran into nothing but snags and at one time thought he would have to close it down

so in a moment of wry humour he dubbed it O.D.T.A.A. and from then trade picked up - people just had to stop and enquire what the hell it meant. Don guessed it by the way. The garage is on the site of the Battle of Tewkesbury - the "Bloody Meadow" of 1471 A.D. and it was from a window of Gup's Hill Manor that Queen Margaret watched her Lancastrian forces defeated by the Yorkists. On the way back we dropped into Tewkesbury Abbey, the present incumbent of which has spent an enormous of his own money in restoring it. We wandered around for awhile and I was just quietly congratulating myself at having manouevred Don pass the steps to the top of the tower when Canon Purefly, the incumbent, spotted Don's camera, said there was a wonderful view from the top of the tower and had taken the admission fees before we quite realised what had happened. As Don said, the good Canon coul have made a fortune as a barker at a fair. But I had had a reason for avoiding the tower. Heights don't bother me in the least, but spiral staircases do. I don't know why, but they just make my hair stand on end. And right at the top the stairs became so narrow that I sondered how Don was coping. Canon Purefoy was right, of course, there was a wonderful view from the top of the tower. There was a catwalk all round, but at one point Don slipped and as he said afterwards, for one awful second he thought he was falling two or three hundred feet.

The following day I took Don to Bourton-on-the-Water, a very beautiful village that is known as the Venice of the Cotswoles. The river Windrush runs through the center of the village and at short intervals little stone bridges span the river. Burton-on-the-Water had three places of interest for the visitor - Birdland, which we did not have time to visit, the Witchcraft Museum, and the Model Village. The latter is in the gardens of the Old New Inn and is a Lilliputian replica of Burton in the water. All the buildings are of Cotswold stone and were about waist high to me but not much more than Knee high to Don. There was a perfect copy of Bourton Church and here Don had a slice of luck. He wanted a copy of the church and was waiting for someone to stand by it when along came a parson and his wife and the padre very obligingly stood by the model church while Don took a photograph. There was even a model of the model village and a model of the model of the model village. Then space ran out. Our next call was at the Witchcraft Museum, where the girl selling the admission tickets gave a whinny of alarm when she saw Don's camera. It seemed that they had had trouble with professional photographers trying to take a crafty snap or two. However, we managed to persuade her that Don was not a professional and we went in. The lighting was not too good and Don used a flash to take shot's of the Witch's Kitchen, the room of the Horned God, and the living altar. This last, of course, is a model of a girl with her feet on the ground but her back laid on a wide slab and she is grasping a candle in either hadn. There is a strip of cloth across her, of course, but two old ladies who came along, gasped, tut-tutted, and said "How disgusting!" but whether they referred to the alter, or to the fact that Don and I were taking a photograph of it I don't know. If the truth were known, I expect the dear old souls thoroughly enjoyed themselves looking round. Of course, I did suggest to Don that he he could say that he took the photo at an actual ceremony and that the living altar was one of the femmefans. Don thought this a good idea and said cheerfully he'd say I was the altar. Why don't I keep my big mouth shut?

We had gone to Bourton by bus, but we came back by train. When we asked for two singles to Cheltenham, the ticket seller suggested that we take returns, as they were only two shillings and fivepence, whereas a single was three shillings and sevenpence. So we took the cheap day returns and a two carriage corridor train (yes, really and truly) took us back to Cheltenham. The train wound it's way through the Cotswolds and Don, who appreciated the scenery, too several shots from the train.

The next day he left for Liverpool and he call round for lunch before he had to go for his train. (Haven't heard from him since I hope that apple pie didn't kill him). The taxi eventually arrived to take him to the station and we told each other goodbye.

As it left I told Don it was nice to have met him and I meant that. It was and I hope he enjoyed his stay in England as much as we enjoyed having him over.

Roberta Gray

We went out to find a telephone booth for me to call Ted Carnell. I also called the Kingsley Hotel & told them that I was now at a party & for them to hold a room for my arrival later in the evening & one that I wouldn't have to change from when the convention came up 2 days later. I explained that I was from America to attend this convention & that had the effect of clarifying to them my "impossible" demands.

Ted Carnell, then, told me to relay on to the gang the news that the original con hotel was not informing people that the convention had moved. Ken Bulmer had called them to make a reservation & was told the convention had been cancelled. He'd been somewhat upset when he telephoned Ted.

Bill Temple & I rejoined the party and things began to hum with conversation. There were tables loaded with drinks and mixers and anyone who couldn't have quenched his thirst that evening wasn't human.

Ella looked to be about 30 to me & this'll no doubt get me shot next time we meet. She wears glasses & from the cartoons Atom had drawn of her, I was prepared to see a woman of 160-180 lbs in weight. Far from if She is a person very much alive with energy, drive and personality. Her voice reminds me a bit of Tallulah Bankhead's and her hearty booming laugh can over-ride the din of such gatherings. She is blunt in her talk & one always knows where one stands with Ella. ..a trait I much admire in People as I hate mealy mouthed individuals. In short, I liked Ella Parker very much from our first meeting.

Alan Dodd & Sture Sedolin sat off in the corner of the room from the rest of us & I was introduced to Ella's brither, Fred. He said he wasn't a fan & was going to leave, but I asked him to stay & found myself talking about farming with him. He had been in Canada on a farm for quite a few years. He eventually went to his room to watch the dog races onTV.

Alan Dodd was rather quiet and left a bit early. He never took off his overcoat & always seemed poised on his chair ready to leave instantly. Sture Sedolin is a fan from Sweden who has been active in fanzine publishing, but I never could get much conversation out of him. In fact, after Alan Dodd left, Sture sat off by himself, apart from the group. I thought he was simply shy, but was told a few days later that he seemed to get that way when the group he was with didn't do just whatever he

wanted to do. On those occasions he played the part of a 'dumb Swede'. Not having much conversation with him or seeing him too much, I didn't have much impression of him one way or the other. He seemed to blend into the walls & since there was life and activity going on elsewhere, I didn't make the supreme effort of dragging conversation or replies out of him.

Bennett, Jordan & Rispin were playing Brag in the center of the room & Ted Forsythe & I got active with our respective cameras. The evening seemed to pass quickly & I got ready to leave for my hotel. Bill Temple made sure I got on the right train & we said goodbye until convention time. The party was quite a blast & it made a pleasant thing to attend as a pre-convention warmup.

Somewhere along the line somebody had given me a map of the London Tube System. I'm glad they did as it came in quite handy. With the aid of that I was soon able to find my way about London without using fans as seeing eye dogs. I rode to Tottenham Court station & then via taxi to the hotel.

The hotel was nice and my room had a private bath. The bellboy clued me in a bit on the monetary system and tipping customs. My trouble by this time was in being able to figure out if I was getting the right change or not. He'd seen me give the cab driver a pound note & made sure I got the right amount back. I don't think I ever did actually get cheated on my whole trip, but cab drivers I never trust in any city. Lou Tabakow was a cab driver in Cincinnati for two years & the stories he relates must be typical of the breed. By the time I unpacked, took a leisurely bath & jotted down some notes for my trip report, it was well after 2 AM.

Ella Parker writes:

I've heard it said that anticipation is the best part of any treat. Looking forward one is apt to over emphasize the pleasures to come so that when the Big Day arrives, events fall flat on their face and turn out something of an anti-climax.

When I heard that Don Ford had won TAFF I'll admit to having lost some sleep through excitement. I'd plugged Don in my fnz but this was a public expression of a personal wish. I wanted to meet Don Ford. Now I knew I was to have my wish granted I began wondering what he'd be like. The best place to make an assessment of anybody is in your own home and among your friends. Also, too often one hears the complaint after a convention attended by a BNF that he - the BNF - had been monopolised by his friends and the newcomers didn't get a chance to meet him. This seemed a good opportunity to introduce some newcomers in fandom to Don before the con as well as meeting him for myself and judging whether I'd voted right or not.

I planned a party for him with this in mind and so he wouldn't feel overwhelmed by a lot of strangers I invited Ron Bennett whom Don had already met. Some of the other guests arrived before Don and his escort- Bobbie Gray, nee Wild, Ron Bennett and Brian Jordan put in an appearance. I was in the middle of brewing tea and making coffee for them when the door opened and what seemed like a horde of

people streamed into the room. Actually there were only four but to those of you that know him, when Don is one of the four it is apt to look like a crowd. I'd heard he was tall (he had to duck his head as he came into the door) but, somewhere along the line someone had neglected to mention he was LARGE with it! Don is the only person I know who can vacate a room holding 50 other people and leave it looking half empty.

What to say about him. I don't honestly know what I expected him to be like. I surveyed the roomful of fen discarding outer clothing and Don stood out among them. Privately I thought: if he has a voice to match his build then I'll have met my match at last! He strode over to where I stood mid a welter of tea cups and all he said was "Ella". In that one word he managed to convey his pleasure at the meeting and at being where he was. I particularly liked his handshake. One of my pet hates is the person who extends a limp hand leaving it up to you whether you take it or not. Don made no pretence. He really took hold of my hand and shook it.... I'm still wearing the plaster as proof!

As more people arrived and the talk grew in volume you could hear Don's voice easily only because of the accent. He speaks very quietly but his opinions are expressed in such a way you know he's saying what he thinks and not what he thinks you want to hear. There was no anticlimax to my meeting with Don. He was every bit as nice as I'd hoped he'd be and if he stood for TAFF tomorrow I'd vote for him again, Inevitably, I didn't get the chance to ask him all the things I wanted to. We met frequently during the convention but, just as inevitably the talks we had were in hurried snatches. There were some comical moments but this is Don's report so I'll leave him to recount them for you.. ...he'd better!

I know he was popular and he mixed well with all who were there. He obviously loves meeting people and did just that. I like Don and his sense of fun. For all his years in fandom he is still intensely interested in its welfare. I only wish we'd had the chance for a longer talk. It was real nice meeting you Don. Come back among us, one day. Yes?

Ella Parker

I'd left a call for 6:30 & the hotel switchboard operator sounded disgustingly cheerful that morning. Breakfast came with the room & I ate early that morning, ordering a glass of ice water to the disgust of the waiter.

This was to be a complete day devoted to photography. Since it is tiring to carry my gadget bag & try to shoot pictures at the same time. I'd made previous arrangements with Ted Carnell's son to hire out as my camera "Caddy" for the day. I removed the flash unit from the bag before I left the hotel and walked down to meet him at Charing Cross station. There, I saddled him with my camera bag & we started off. The route was past Trafalgar Square, through Admiralty Arch and up the Mall to Buckingham Palace. Along the Mall, the bums kept approaching me to let them show me the Changing of the Guard & in general to be my guide. It came somewhat of a shock to them to find Michael was from London & not my son.

At the palace I learned from one of the Bobbies the times & locations of events coming up & then chose my vantage point accordingly. As time drew near, the crowd increased & we found that we had the best spot. There were not too many American tourists about, due no doubt to the fact that it was just a bit early in the year for them. I did see a man & his wife from New York who had troubles figuring out their new camera equipment & we swapped information for awhile. Then, about 5 minutes before the Guards came marching up the street two busses stopped & disgorged a horde of tourists, mostly German & Japanese.

The ceremony lasted about an hour or so & the wind was rather strong & cool, leaving me feeling quite chilly and determined to buy a sweater before the morning was over. I wanted to go to Westminster Abbey & was looking at a map, since Michael wasn't too sure where it was (in fact this was the first time he'd ever seen the Changing of the Guard) when a gentleman walked up and asked if he could help me. I was a bit wary of another tout, but on talking a few minutes with him learned he was a machine tool salesman. He gave me his card: H. G. Harding. I asked him if he'd ever heard of the Cincinnati Milling Machine Co. "Our biggest competitor", he replied.

I said I was from the Cincinnati area and one thing led to another until he said his car was just around the corner & he'd be glad to drop me off anywhere I wanted to go. I said I wanted to buy a sweater & then go to Westminster Abbey. So, Michael & I went with him & he took me to the Army-Navy Store, which was a rather large department store & then pointed out the way to Westminster Abbey. Nice chap.

I bought a sleeveless sweater, which I immediately wore out of the store, with my receipt safely in hand in case I was thought to be a shoplifter. The nylon zipper jacket simply was not heavy enough for this cool weather. It was handy to stuff the pockets with extra film, lens hoods, exposure meter, guide maps, etc. I wore this a lot on my trip, along with the white waterproof cap. Apparently there are no such caps available in England. People would openly stare at me, my camera gear & clothing when I rode busses, subways, or trains. I'd have two cameras and a lens slung about my neck and another lens on my belt. This immediately placed me in the tourist class. I'd heard that Londoners were like New Yorkers; nothing could startle them, but this didn't hold true in my case.

Michael & I walked down towards Westminster Abbey and it being near noon, I said it was time to eat. We picked a likely looking restaurant & either the help was french or some other nationality as we had trouble being understood when we gave our order. Following lunch, then, we had only a couple of blocks to go to our destination when I saw a crowd gathered down the street. Figuring something was up I got ready to snap photos of whatever it might be. There was a murmur in the crowd and an official car pulled out from the driveway alongside the Abbey and I shot away and asked questions later. Turned out to be the Queen Mother returning from the Munday Ceremony which is traditional each Easter time. She was representing the Queen, who is supposed to give money, I take it, to 6 paupers. The photo came out just fair. It's good of the limousine, but unless you know who's in the back, you'd never be able to tell.

We walked into the rear courtyard & I asked a kindly looking gentleman a couple of questions & really got sucked in. He was a tout. Started showing us around the Abbey & giving us all the history, etc. He was so nice and polite I hated to rudely leave him. He was like a leech & by the time I figured out he must be a tout, we were sucked in but good. Michael kept referring to him as "The old bloke". I finally gave him a 2 shilling piece to get rid of him, all of which goes for charity'. I didn't want to waste a bright day on an inside tour. And frankly, I didn't particularly give a damn about the Abbey anyway, the inside that is.

I photographed Parliament Square, Big Ben and things in that area while we headed for the tube and to Waterloo station. We then walked across Waterloo Bridge and at a bus stop I asked for some directions as to how to get down to the embankment. A man & his wife walked half way across the bridge to make sure I found the proper place, despite my protests that they'd miss their bus.

We walked along the embankment to Westminster Bridge, across the bridge for a view of Big Ben & the House of Parliament. It clouded over and sprinkled a bit and as it was now getting into the late afternoon, I went back to Charing Cross station with Michael. Ted had told me that Michael really hadn't been around London too much and that if he got back to Charing Cross he could find the proper trains home. So, after paying off Michael, I rode to Tottenham Court and then walked to the hotel, where I got in an hour's nap before Ron Bennett met me at six.

After a bite to eat we arrived at the Globe, where I met: Mike Moorcock, Sandra Hall, Ella Parker, Brian Jordan, Ken Cheslin, Mal & Sheila Ashworth, Ken & Irene Potter & Lawrence Sandfield, Brian Burgess, and some others I've forgotten. One, I know, worked for a Book Club.

They all kept buying me drinks throughout the evening. I don't like beer, scotch, wine or ale. I chose Gin and orange with ice and found it a good standard drink to stay with. The orange is a concentrate & can be diluted down a bit with water to make a highball. The ice usually presented a problem. Two ½ cubes of ice was thought to be sufficient for any man, but I demanded more. I like a drink so cold you can hardly hold it in your hand so drink it instead.

Sandfield related his romantic adventures, which were brought on by his guitar & irresistible charm with women. Mike & Sandra seemed interested only in each other & exchanged soulful looks all evening long. Later on, it was announced that they were engaged to be married. Ken Cheslin is one of the new crop of budding British fans. I'd been getting copies of LES SPINGE and it was a pleasure to meet him. He's quiet, smokes a pipe and strikes me as being a fun loving chap.

The Ashworths & the Potters related that they were not staying at the convention hotel and wherever they were staying there wasn't enough beds for all, so it was their turn (Ashworth's) to sleep on the floor that night. Mal is sort of quiet and as a TAFF candidate for the Pittsburgh run, I was anxious to meet him. He's taller than average and somewhat on the serious side, as compared to his effervescent companion. Ken Potter. I rate Mal as a nice guy. His wife,

Shelia, has that rare facial quality which made me wish for time to do some portraits of her. There's a look of wide eyed innocence about her which is reflected in her eyes. Those eyes could make a lot of men forget many things. I'm not kidding when I say she would make an extremely good portrait model.

The Potters are a lively couple. Ken has written some articles about his selling jobs in London & his stories in person were even funnier. Each one is so true to life, and if you've ever done any selling at all, you get an even greater kick out of them. He's a bit short and shall we say chunky? Not fat.

So with 14 conversations going on and with drinks flowing freely, the evening passed all too quickly. I was just unzipping my gadget bag, in preparation to getting out my flash unit & cameras when a loud buzzer scared the hell out of me. "What's that?", I asked. The 5 minute warning I was told. Warning for what? Closing time. So, at the ridiculous hour of 11 pm we were kicked out of the Globe. That's just when things start to liven up back home.

Where to go, now? Finally they suggested a party at Ella's. I was all set to go until I found out that the bus and subway transportation dies at Midnight. Nothing runs until 6 am except taxis. Medieval times must have been more gay. Deciding that an all night party wouldn't be particularly wise to start out the convention with, I chose to return to my hotel. I'd figured that perhaps I'd go to the party until 2:30 or 3, but with no way of getting back, I couldn't see it. Besides I was a bit tired from all the walking I'd done that day. Brian Burgess saw me back to my hotel room & by the time he left it was about 2 am. I made a few notes of my daily events & hit the sack.

Friday, April 15, 1960

I slept until 11 am and then went down in the lobby to meet the incoming fans. There weren't too many about, so I strolled about the hotel area for some photographing. Then, the fans seemed to come alive. I have a sheet of paper with some of their names signed: Ethel Lindsay, J. Fairley, Ken Cheslin, Peter Tea Davies, Mike Kilbert (sp ?), Jim Groves, Jim Cawthorne, J. McGovern, Archie Mercer, & one I can't read. Also got to meet Inchmery Fandom, Joy Clarke & Sandy Sanderson. They said Vinç was baby sitting & would be here tomorrow.

By now I was using both cameras & some shots came out good & others crud. I never seem to have too much luck with hurried shots, which is frequently what you have to do at conventions.

Here were lots of familiar names. Names from OMPA, fanzines, con reports, letters, etc. I had a fine time placing faces with the names. Met Ted Tubb again, and his wife Iris; also Arthur Thompson & his wife, Olive.

Ted & Iris took me out to supper at a Chinese Restaurant. The menu is a bit different from what's available, here. About the only things that seem to be the same are sweet & sour pork & egg rolls. I had fun experimenting with different & new dishes. Then Ted & Iris were full and I played Ellis Mills by cleaning up what was left. I thought

Christmas came early this year! They seemed fascinated by my capacity. I don't know why. Afterwards I was in the hotel bar until quite late that evening.

Saturday, April 16, 1960

Up at 8. Met Ted Carnell & we walked down to the American Express office, where I got my tickets to Paris. It had taken a couple of days to secure a definite confirmation for my return flight. AIR FRANCE had a special deal. Go early Monday and return late Thursday night & it was about ½ fare. Around \$28.00 for the trip. Something like \$45 or \$47, I think, otherwise.

On the way back, I stopped in Foyle's Book Store & had them put Stanleigh Vinson on their mailing list. He wanted some Passing Show mags from back in the 30's. Then, we went to see about renting a projector. I got a projector, magazines, screen and spare bulb. Had to put up a 26 lb deposit, plus the rental of another 3 lbs, I think it was. Since they would not be open Monday & I'd probably be gone by then, the problem was how to get my deposit back. I suggested they call the hotel, where I'd previously told the manager I wanted to rent a projector and had inquired as to the current available. The camera shop proprietor hemmed and hawed. Finally, I said, "Do you have a telephone?" as I walked behind the counter and into his office with him behind me. Sensing his still further indecision, I picked up the phone and handed it to him and said, "Call the Kingsley Hotel and ask for the manager, Mr. Edgar." He did and everything was worked out smoothly. During the conversation I flipped out my passport to him so he could double check my identity with the hotel. He sort of gave a half-sigh and half-wince when he saw the U.S., passport.

Parking the projector temporarily at Les Flood's shop, I had lunch with Ted, Les, Brian Aldis and Ildeko Hayes, along with a stop at their favorite pub. Miss Hayes used to work for Ted, but now worked for a record company, I believe. Quite attractive and charming and intelligent to talk to, I can't recall what all we talked about, but the group reminded me of when we get Marty Greenberg, Phyllis Economou, Lou, etc. together for lunch at a Midwestcon.

We got back to the hotel and were ready when the con opened at 2 pm. I got to meet Vinç Clarke today, having met his better half yesterday. Doc Weir opened with a general hell raising speech about fans taking unwarranted quantities of Hotel Notepaper from the lobby, etc. Since I had about 8 in my coat pocket, I tried to slump down in my chair & pass unnoticed. Doc wound up by introducing Ted Carnell.

Ted spent his time in eulogizing me, much to my embarrassment. I still had no idea of what I would say. I did have some notes of some points I wanted to cover, so the "speech", if you want to call it that, was an ad lib affair. I guess it didn't turn out too badly. It's been my experience that most convention speeches are forgotten by the audience 5 minutes after the speaker is done, anyway. I finished up by presenting Ted with a Bellybutton Brush "For the man who has everything."

Later on, after circulating about & trying to meet everyone I could, I ate supper with Ron & Daphne Buckmaster, Lawrence Sandfield,

Norman Ashfield, & Brian Burgess. I had a gag item I'd stolen from Doc Barrett when he used it on me at our birthday party (Lou & I) in January. It's a piece of rubber that looks like someone vomited. Pretty gruesome when you lay it on a chair or table. Daphne wouldn't sit in a certain chair. Back at the convention hall it created quite a stir when I'd toss it into the lap of Ella or Ethel, etc. Pamela didn't appreciate it when I put in the bassinet with Debra. I got a frown over this from a lady, who was later identified as being Dorothy Ratigan, fellow OMPAN. So, I guess I'm now on her "list".

Following the ending of the TAFF quiz, I was due to show my slides. I believe the auction followed, but also during this time I had to load the slide magazines. Dave Kyle was in the hotel & was being readied for a special grand entrance. Ted Carnell made the announcement & everyone turned back to see Dave walk into the room. It was quite a dramatic event. I think everyone's eyes then turned towards Joy Ckarke and Sandy Sanderson.

Dave said he'd already made his speech but no one applauded...at the Sandringham Hotel (The one that cancelled) & it was just like the one year at Bellefontaine when he came 1 week early & nobody was there.

With the aid of Ron Buckmaster, Norman Shorrock and the expert assistance of Peter West we got ready to get the show on the road. During the necessary confusion of getting the screen up, projector set up & focus slide put in, etc., Charlie Duncombe came up & introduced himself. I tried to talk to him while I was working, but it wasn't too successful. I never saw him afterward and hated that I didn't get to talk to him in a more lengthy conversation. I've thought a hundred times since the convention, "I wonder if Charlie thinks I'm a no good s.o.b.?"

I'd prepared a slide show of previous World cons & Midwestcons, trying to avoid showing too many of the fans who'd been over to London in '57, and concentrating on some of the lesser known or shall we say lesser travelled fans than they'd previously seen. Also, I'd been warned to cut to the bone; that fans were a bit tired of convention slides, etc. In addition, I'd included photos of the CFG, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati & the start of my TAFF Trip from Loveland to London, which was why I had to get the roll of films processed earlier in the week.

I stood near the screen to point out and identify fans, while the other 3 worked the projector & changed the magazines for me. This particular ARGUS model wasn't working so good & the magazine kept sticking or else would advance. However, despite these obstacles we managed it fairly well. I'd included a number of night scenes of Cincinnati into the show, remembering these had drawn favorable comment at the Midwestcons. They also look pretty to the average person who is not particularly a camera fan. After the show was over, they commented more on these than they did the fannish slides.

The costume party was next & things were held up for a half hour or so while the movie and still camera fans had a field day. Ted, Pamela & I were judges & we were to choose two winners. First place was to Ethel Lindsay & Ina Shorrock as the Witches & 2nd to an unidentified fan who had a monster get up on. There were some good costumes & the selections were not too easy to make.

Bill & Roberta Gray suggested that I really should get some night shots of London while I was there. That suited me fine! We went to Picadilly Circus & Trafalgar Square. I got some good ones that night. Things were a bit quiet in the hotel when we got back. Bill & Bobbie retired, so I collected a couple of fans or so & we went to Dave Kyle room & got him out of bed. I tried to talk him into going over to Paris with me & he was quite tempted. It was about 5 am by the time I got to sleep.

Sunday, April 17, 1960

The alarm went off at 9. I re-set it for 10 and went back to sleep. Bill Gray took me to the corner at Marble Arch at Hyde Park. This is "Speakers Corner".. there, they sound off on anything they can get the crowd to listen to. With the aid of the different lenses I got some nice close up shots. One man kept his head shaved in order to show off his tattooed scalp. He's quite a gruesome sight on the screen! He was waving an American detective magazine which had an account of him in it & his prison sentence. I never did pay too much attention to what any of them were saying, for photographing them.

There was one woman, who had a dog on a leash, that would get in front of a speaker and start singing in a loud voice, songs like Easter Parade, You Are My Sunshine, etc. Then she'd yodel, screech and holler in the damndest voice you ever heard! Bill & I laughed ourselves silly at this free show. Then as soon as she'd break up one speaker, she'd move to the next one; the crowd following along to watch & egg her on. I could see why she needed that dog with her.

One man felt he got cheated in WW I and had a sign: "How The War Office Robs Inventors". He was witty and had the crowd laughing with him, not at him. The religious were there too, and all in all, I'd recommend that anyone visiting London include this on your itinerary.

Bill took some black and white shots of me, here, and I'd get along side a speaker while Bill would pretend to look off elsewhere until we were ready for the set-up.

Bill Gray writes:

This just couldn't be anywhere else than Britain. Imagine what would happen if a corner of the Red Square was at the disposal of anyone at all to say what they liked to anyone that wanted to listen. (Did I hear anyone mutter "Revolutionary"?" Yet such freedom of speech is exactly what happens every day, and especially on Sundays, at the so-called "Speakers Corner" of Hyde Park London, just behind the Marble Arch.) Absolutely anyone is completely and entirely free to say whatever they like short of obvious obscenity, or technical treason.

We went along on Sunday morning for a sample of the best free entertainment to be had in London, and that is exactly what it proved to be. There were some 15 varieties of speakers in action when we arrived, some on home made rostrums, some on plain kitchen chairs, and the remainder on their overworked feet. Around them in groups surged the crowds of sight-seers, listening here, heckling there, and generally drifting about from speaker to speaker having all the fun there was to be had for nothing.

What did they speak about? Who knows, and for the matter of that, who cares anyway? The speakers were the only ones taking themselves seriously, everybody else was simply having a darn good time listening to a few words from one while they were still laughing at another. Nobody knows the meaning of the word "toleration" till they've seen a British crowd at Speakers Corner, Hovering in the background somewhere were one or two London Bobbies with their customary inscrutable expressions. Theoretically, these police are provided by the Metropolis to deal with any riot or disturbance the speakers may incite. Practically they seem to be a waste of tax-money, and they probably compete with each other for such an easy spell of duty.

Listening to some of the speakers, makes one wonder why there isn't a riot. A neatly dressed elderly man is explaining why the Pope is the main evil of the world. Another makes remarks about the ruling government that would swell the Siberian population by one elsewhere, Either nobody cares, or else its all too funny to bother about.

One woman was having a private war on every speaker. As soon as one got going in the middle of a fair crowd of maybe a couple of hundred, she worked her way to the front and sang at the top of her voice to drown every word he said, (No loud speakers permitted). She had a dog with her on a lead, and as soon as she could find the room, she and the dog did quite a little show and step-dance. There is no denying she certainly had a voice of considerable quantity, and once she got really going, not even the most stentorian speaker could compete with her. After all, if they were free to speak, she was free to sing in the very same place. One by one, she invaded every cluster, and disorganized it. We never found out why, but it was certainly good clean democracy to watch.

About the only character this speech-buster didn't quell, was a Burglar Bill type with a completely bald head, tattooed all over including his face. He was keeping his audience in convulsions of laughter with the quick-fire humour for which Cockneys are famous. As we passed him, he was saying; "Wot I wants to tell you ladies and Gents, is that I ave ad the Honour of bein' at Hoxford College." He waited a second or two for this to sink in, and then follwed it rapidly with; "O' course I adn't bin in the blinkin place five minntes than the bloomin' burglar alarm went orf !!!!" .....

Yes, that was a sample of Speakers Corner. It goes on all the time. Unspoiled and non-stop Variety. Don't miss it folks, its too cheap to pass up. People from all nations come to see it on their way through London. They photograph it, write about it, tell incredulous countrymen back home about it, but one gets the feeling that most of all, they envy it. No Englishman can see the need for envy, there's no copyright on the idea, but somehow, it remains like the police who guard it, indubitably and traditionally - "Made in England".

Bill Gray

We got back to the hotel in time to hear Kettering voted as the site for next year's con. Ina Shorrocks was voted in as BSFA Chairman, Brian Aldis as Assoc. Pres, Archie Mercer as Treas & definately for the last year he says and Jom Groves as publisher.

A goodly mob of us went out for lunch at the Moulin Eouge, a nearby rest. We went downstairs and somehow or other I got into a conversation with the owner who looked to be Italian, He said he used to live in the U.S. until he got deported following his sentence. Been in England ever since. I asked him what gang he used to be with & what he got sent up for. It was for boot legging & he used to be with Capone's mob, he said.

I kept telling him what a nice set up he had for a casino down in this cellar, and asking him if he knew the Detroit Purple Gang & mentioned names of some of the gangsters who'd been in an article in LIFE some time back. When we left the restaurant, Carnell looked at me with awe and asked me how I knew so much about the gangsters in the U.S. "Next time you're in Cincinnati, Ted, let us take you to the hot spots in Northern Kentucky." I said.

Meanwhile back at the con, they were ready to go on with "This Is Your Fan Life" & planned to pick the victim by surprise. The word was leaked out that since Dave Kyle was now in London, Sandy Sanderson would be the victim. Eric Jones was to handle the taped effects and Eric Bentcliffe was the m.c. Norman Shorrocks, it was told to Ted & I, was who the real victim was going to be, Ted was asked to work Norman's movie camera. So, he asked Norman to move next to him, on the ruse that the angle was better. Eric Jones asked Norman to come up & adjust the mike for the tape recorder & then Eric Bentcliffe had him on stage & a more surprised person than Norman couldn't be found.

Ted had some little difficulties with two cameras, so Peter West took over Norman's camera and bobbed out and in the first two rows of seats with camera in hand. He decided he needed a plug and reached for the one Eric Jones had on his tape recorder & narrowly missed getting backhanded. The show of Jones beating off West was almost as good as the one on stage. Eric had to alternately change speed & synchronize with Bentcliffes script, while beating off Peter West. All in all, it was a wonderful production of a spoof of Norman Shorrocks's life, which of course, the Liverpool & Cheltenham group conspired to do without Norman finding out. Even Ina kept her mouth shut, and who says women can't keep secrets?

Out to supper with a group, again, we passed an outside telephone booth, I heard the phone ring and suggested to Ron Buckmaster that we answer it. He strung someone along at the other end with phrases like, "I'm sorry, the Duke is out." etc. It was all we could do to keep from laughing and giving the joke away.

We got some drinks & set ups and went to Ella Parker's room for a chat...Ted Carnell, Ella, Brian Jordan, Arthur Thomson and myself, Told a few jokes, talked about the state of British Fandom, etc. Arthur reminds me a lot of Frank Robison...they both have a voice which is very similar in tone, they think alike and have the same sense of humor. I suggested that we could have a party in my room that night, but I didn't have the capacity to hold the entire convention, I'd also brought along some B.S.S. cards that the CFG has used ever since 1953 and gave these to Arthur. He took charge of passing them out & figuring who to invite. The whole thing to come off later in the evening after we'd all visited about.

Ted had planned to go on home and left. A few minutes later I was down in the lobby when he called me over to where he and Dave Kyle were talking to a Miss Bellamy, a newspaper woman from New Hampshire somewhere. She was hipped on flying saucers & had noted the s-f con on the lobby bulletin board. It just so happened that she was on an European tour and was staying at the Kingsley. She related some of the sightings she'd written about in her newspaper work. The movie, "The Day The Earth Stood Still" was now being shown in the con hall and after her taking a few notes for a possible column in her hometown newspaper, she adjourned to the con hall & Ted got his chance to dart out the door and head for home, now considerably later than he'd anticipated on leaving.

I watched the end of the movie and then circulated around a bit. A number of fans were leaving the con, now. Next stop was Ethel Lindsay's room where an OMPA gathering was in progress. Following that, Ron Bennett, Sandy Sanderson, Eric Bentcliffe & myself adjourned to my room for a brief TAFF discussion. Mak Ashworth had left. We discussed whether there should be any changes in the TAFF setup for the immediate future and after some discussion decided that only minor changes were necessary; that TAFF had worked in the past and should be able to do so in the future.

Next fans started drifting in & before long only standing room was available. Bob Parkinson auctioned off ½ his beard for TAFF & raised well over a pound I believe. I was chosen as the one to do the job and started hacking away with my razor, saying: "This reminds me of my old job...I used to be an orderly in a maternity ward."

The hotel rang a couple of times asking to keep it quiet and finally the Bell Captain came up about 3 AM and asked me to break it up. It was late and since it was primarily a sedate hotel, I didn't feel they were unreasonable about it. They were nice about it & I was getting a bit weary anyhow. So, with a flash of inspiration I turned to the crowd and in a confidential hoarse whisper said, "Quick everybody! Grab the booze and head for Dave Kyle's room. ..room 524!" There was that fatal split second of indecision. I opened my room door and gave the nearest person a strong shove and propelled him out the door. Same to the next person and then like sheep following a judas goat they all ran pell meel up to Dave's room.

I'd nearly completed the operation "scram" and was talking in muted tones to 3 or 4 fans still left when the phone rang. I didn't answer it. Later a knock at the door. I didn't answer that either. Finally a wrathful voice outside the door said, "MISTER FORD! This is the night manager. Please open your door immediately! I opened and saw this cat in a silken robe, with a hair net on, rising up on his tippy toes looking indignant. I said, "I thought you were someone wanting to get in & I've nearly gotten them all out now." He spluttered a bit, but when the others left, cooled off a bit. I then waited for him to tip toe back and slyly Knock, himself, later on when the coast was clear, but I guess he figured I wasn't his type.

Monday, April 18, 1960

Was up at 9 and at Breakfast, Archie Mercer asked to see my receipt from the photo shop for the projector. I showed him & suddenly he pays me the rental charges I'd paid. I was a bit hung over right then & by the time I'd collected my wits about me, he wouldn't take the money back.

The fans now seemed to be deserting the hotel in droves. It began to get lonesome. Eric Jones left, saying they'd see me in Cheltenham on Tuesday. The Liverpool mob left with a reminder that they'd see me the next week-end. I reached in my coat pocket & found a letter Dave Kyle had given me the night before, saying he'd gotten in at the Sandringham Hotel when he was there. It was from Walt Willis inviting me to come to Belfast. With the scheduling I now had, such a trip was impossible.

The Clarkes had wanted me to see the Aldermaston March on Easter Monday. I really didn't have too much desire to see this event when I came over, but now with fans gone & time on my hands, I decided I might as well go & photograph the crowd anyway. The Clarkes said they'd be on the steps at St. Martin's. I told Bill & Bobbie Gray I'd be in the square somewhere & to look for me in a spot where I'd get a straight on view at the column.

They found me, later, on the wall at the National Gallery. After I was there about an hour, a bobby told me I'd have to get off. I did, feeling no use creating an Inter-national incident. The natives protested. I searched about for another vantage point & could find none. By now, there were over 50,000 people in the square. I drifted back to my original area & watched the arguing. An elderly couple, their faces red with rage were protesting loudly. Two more Bobbies came up for re-inforcements and they were apologetic but insistent. It finally boiled down to the fact that the curator of the gallery had requested the people get off. This woman said that if he'd come out, personally and tell them to move, she'd get down; otherwise no. The Bobbies shrugged their shoulders and left. I told this woman that I now felt badly...I was the only one who'd moved & now I'd lost my place. In fact there was someone in it now. The crowd made this person give me my place back, while they boosted me back up on the wall.

Next, a man alongside of me asked me who I thought our next President would be. I told him I really couldn't say, but that to me the indications were strong that Kennedy would win the Democratic nomination and Nixon the Republican nomination. In a contest between these two men I felt that Nixon would win, but it could only be a guess on any part. This seemed to anger him and he said that his choice was Adlai Stevenson. I didn't pay much attention to him and kept taking photos of the crowd & of the marchers who were now coming into the square. He then proceeded to tell me what was wrong with the U.S. & what all should be done.

That filled me up to the top so I began arguing back & needling him a bit. He was in his fifties and a laborite. I asked him if his party was so good, why Macmillan won. "That election was rigged", he replied. "Baloney!" I shouted, "How can you rig the man in the street?"

He edged away carefully. "Sure, you might buy a few individual votes, but how are you going to get them all?" I asked in a loud voice, I turned away to shoot more photos and he was gone when I looked for him again. The other people on the wall were amused at us over this incident & several congratulated me for sticking to my guns.

Since this march was going to take hours, I figured I'd had what I wanted & went over towards St. Martin's steps to see if fans were about. Bill & Bobbie Gray were with me. The March was orderly and so was the crowd. What it proved, I don't know. I figured there were a few who were sincere about it, but in with the marchers were a vast collection of what appeared to be: screwballs, beatniks, college kids out for a lark, exhibitionists, and chronic bitches. My attitude is: so they marched, so what?

Circulating were a group of fans waving at me when I got to St. Martin's. They asked me where I was going & I said I had to go to the hotel & then a bite to eat & then I was free. They invited me out to their party (Inchmery) that evening and I accepted eagerly. Ron Buckmaster said his car was nearby & since he was a bit hungry too, he'd take me to the hotel and after we ate we'd go out to Inch-roery and join them. He was parked in front of Scotland Yard in a no parking zone. Under the eyes of several uniformed minions of the law we backed up on the sidewalk, made a U-turn and were on our way. All it takes is guts.

Being a holiday, not every restaurant was open and those that were, were crowded. At one place we were standing in line and I said to Ron that ever since my military service I've always hated lines. He replied that he was still in military service, so we cut out to find someplace else. We were in the Tottenham Court area. At last a Chinese restaurant was spied...The Great Wall. Ron turned out to be not quite as hungry as he'd anticipated and once again Christmas came early! It was a tasty meal and here I had the best tea I'd ever drank. It was on the menu as lemon tea. It came in a tall glass which was inserted in a silver holder with a handle that was somewhat like the old soda drinking holders the drugstores used to have twenty years ago. In the bottom was a slice of lemon and by the time the tea had cooled off enough for me to drink, it was delicious. Most British tea is on the bitter side to me. So is the U.S. tea. Here, we get Orange-Pekoe, but I like green. Black, or Oo-Long the best. These are to be found in the Chinese Restaurants in the U.S. and the same thing prevailed in England.

Near as I can recall, now, the people at Inchmery that night, besides the hosts, were: Frances Evans, Ron & Daphne Buckmaster, Ron Bennett, Brian Jordan, Ella Parker, Ted Forsythe & Ethel Lindsay, There were movies, drinks, discussions and a good time, I told Vin that Stan Vinson was looking for copies of the Passing Show if he wanted to part with his own copies. Ron had his version of a Haggis, made out of a potato. The room was full of books, magazines and the paraphernalia that goes with a fanzine publishing dynasty.