

19/10/84

In the morning we headed toward London. Croydon, more accurately. We had deciphered Linda's handwriting and headed to Croydon to find K&L's flat and make some calls. When we arrived in Croydon, we went to the train station to call and find out Keith's phone number and the location of his flat (assumed both would be working). We also wanted to call Richard and say 'hello' as well as get Kesh's phone number and address in Southend-on-Sea since we wanted to go see him that evening. Our attempt to get Keith's phone number was fruitless (unlisted) so we called Richard and told him we would swing by. We did have Keith's address so we went over to his flat to leave a note with our whereabouts and told him we would be back later in the week. The ring of the bell was belatedly answered by Keith himself, dripping with water and suds wrapped in a towel and sporting a completely black face. He had been working on his car. After completing his shower, we talked for a while over coffee reminiscing about St V and catching up. Linda was at work. We left him saying we would return (hopefully) by the end of the week and armed with instructions on how to get to Acton we left.

We crawled to Acton. The traffic was horrible and I managed to lose our way on several occasions. By some miracle we found ourselves in Acton (I'm still not sure just how). Anyway we did manage to find Richard and he called Kesh. We got some basic directions from Kesh and he told us to call when we got to Southend-on-Sea. Richard gave me Kesh's telephone number. Richard had also made plans for us to go to a play the next evening with Jim Rutherford and his wife so our stay in Southend would be a short one. I braced myself (could have used a shot of strong rum) and off we drove into the rush hour traffic.

It wasn't so bad. The N Circular Road around London is not as bad as its twin in the south (that is a collection of tortuously pieced together roads called the S Circular). We made it to Southend in record time, at the place Kesh told me to call from. To my horror, I discovered that the phone number Richard had given to me was wrong. There was no such number in Southend. And we didn't know Kesh's last name nor even the faintest hint of his location but resolved to try to identify his name (last) from a phone book if we could find one. So we drove and drove checking every phone box we could, no dice. We finally ended up in desperation back at the spot Kesh had told us to meet him and call him from in hopes he might send us a search party. I finally decided to try Richard (supposedly out to dinner) one last time. Lo and behold he was home! I quickly sorted out the numbers problem with him and then called Kesh 1 1/2 hours later than expected. He showed up 45 seconds later - he only lived a hundred yards from where we were sitting!

After explaining the situation and briefly washing up, we headed out again (he drove). He took us to a Chinese restaurant and then to an Indian Festival he wanted us to see. We watched and danced, sharing in a bit of his cultural roots. It was a very ethnic evening and I appreciate Kesh for sharing it with us.

Next morning amid the cold, drizzle & wind, we walked around with Kesh and he showed us Southends sights (and a bit of childhood trivia). We walked through town, bought us some coffee & me some running shoes (finally) then we packed up and headed back out to London.

This time we managed to find Acton without delay and we quickly changed into 'evening' clothes and went down into London. It was just about what I expected it would be. Perhaps because London has been well exposed in photographs, etc. We walked around a bit killing time until we were to meet Jim & Rocio in a pub. Richard showed us some 'trendy' spots to buy clothing and we passed the 1st National Bank of Chicago which just about blew my mind. In fact the Safeways, 7-11's, McDonald's, etc would have convinced me I was stateside if it hadn't have been for the surroundings.

Finally we met Jim & Rocio and had a few drinks at the pub (I had my first 'real' English bitter). Then we exited for a quick meal and on to the theater. The play was "Falstaff" a ribald yet touching play (one man recalling the embellished life of Falstaff of Shakespeare's plays). Quite good I thought, though the critics panned it. Finally we got to Jim and Rocio's apartment and collapsed into bed.



Although this was taken in St. Vincent, it is a great picture of Kesh, and Richard, both of whom we saw in England

(and beautiful Debbie as well)

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