

WELSH WALKABOUT

Introduction

I'm a regular geezer struggling in life, and I meet the elements of this vegi-canabalistic Birdseye pea eating planet, pockets charged with various illicit substances used as weapons of peace, against fear, violence and the survival of the planet.

Living on the outskirts of South London, I mingled with the youth and adolescents of mixed race and background, including folk passing their hours of mainly unlawful practices and injustices, or justices as they may have thought.

Being a bit of a delinquent myself, I hit out best with a small collection of young offenders; Guys that had done nothing much more than a bit of taking and driving away, or maybe broken into one or two homes in a bid to live a higher life style. Guys I think with just a different reality, like one might have tried to impregnate an Amazon Rainforest tribe with democracy. It may seem right to you, but not to them. Who is one to say what is right, and what is wrong. I'm no priest but who the fuck is.

Not to mention that old law that says drugs are bad; so smoking a bit of weed, or brewing up a pot of mushroom tea are really going to harm you, right. Maybe a bit of depression for a short spout, but nothing one can't recover from. Try recovering from a jaundiced liver or half a dead pancreas after drinking alcohol for breakfast for a year or two. I bet more die from alcohol than die from marijuana or even some more powerful illicit narcotics. And what harm does pot do to the people around you? Answer: None. For some strange reason, people get frightened of you when you are having fun, so they ban the drugs, put people in jail, burn up the user's, or pusher's, stash, and tell the media what a good job they've done giving innocent folk a hard time. Maybe if the politicians started smoking a bit of the stuff, the world might become an easier and more peaceful place to live in. You know, less war etcetera. In fact, if we could grow a bit of puff and sell it by law, we could make a living, in fact, forget gold; we should make the new currency cannabis. We can all grow make are own, exchanging strains with our neighbours, swapping for food, and growing a bit of food too, not forgetting that irresistible delicacy of a squelching hash cake. And we can work because we want to work. You know; sane industry, long "TEA" breaks, short hours, food platters and stuff. You want a car; you get together with your mates and build with iron or maybe bronze ore from the ground. You want a computer you build it with raw materials, tools, information studying and manuals. And you share information. You want to drive a bus; you drive one and pick up people on the way. I think you get the picture, a fun world, and crime: What crime? A bit like the USSR and Vodka! We need to face all of the leaders of the world with a pipe of skunk, propose to them all light at the same time, like a kind of rally. Are they really as

frightened as they seem to be of this harmless weed? I reckon cannabis and hemp are such successful plants they'd probably reverse so-called global warming, and paper produced per acre of hemp is proven to be four times that of trees. Anyway, so I took drugs, hung around with "stonies" as we liked to call ourselves on our side of town. A polite name I think, not the message of criminal activity.

My main haunt, and home town, was Roehampton, London S.W.15, a suburb of the Borough of Wandsworth. That was the world to me in my drug taking years of 1983 and 84.

Aged seventeen I drifted from mates' dwellings to neighbour's doors, chatting about Paganism, Druids, crystals and dowsing, and scoring weed. I worked; Bit of farming, bit of carpentry, even sweeping up one or two leaves. I stole less in my drug taking years than I'd stolen in any of the disenchanting miserable days of my entire life before entering the Babylon and holy grail of life and weed. I paid my way as much as I could, making an effort to avoid being a parasite on society, although I did have a mum and dad who gave me good food and warmth, that a lot of my friends had not.

On top of weed and maybe mushrooms, there were one or two other magical substances swilling around Roehampton, magic to my seriously spaced out mind that is; the main narcotic in my life being amphetamines. I liked to buy half a gram of "Whiz", as we called it in Roehampton, about once a week. I'd get about six lines out of that, each line giving me roughly six hours of astral clarity. Doing the maths that's thirty-six hours, or you could say a day and a half! I'd often share my stash with friends, rolling up a pound note into a straw, plugging it into our noses and hoovering that finely chopped line of amorphous white angelic powder, straight off whatever shinny surface one could find. One crazy nut of a friend of mine even used to use an old LP as a surface to chop up his gear for that blissful yet agonising snort, a Steve Hillage album called Green I recall. The guy, I will refer to him now as Joe, a taker of more substances than I, was a lovely fellow. A mate that used to walk around the trees in Richmond Park, dowsing for answers, and studying demonology and ancient Ley lines. A very peaceful guy, yet at the same time verbally upset at societies atrocities. I guess he was a bit critical of this that and everything. You couldn't get annoyed with the guy. He was quite respectful too. Lived with his mum, and didn't steel, although he to advantage a little when ones Jimi-Giro (dole cheque) came in, and if you had drugs, he was sure to be your best friend.

The amphetamine would be chopped into a finer powder using whatever blade one could find. One mate of mine used to have a posh scalpel to do the job, I used to use my hunting knife, not really etiquette, but it did the job. This hunting knife, an Opinel, I also used for cutting up rabbits, pigeons, and whatever meat I could find to feed my ferrets. I was a bit of a hobo on the quiet too. A filthy knife too. I was not a great one for hygiene. Well at least using my Opinel hunting knife as an amphetamine chopper seemed to do it for me. Often one would find themselves hacking up a Bik

razor to extract the embedded in plastic razor blade. I used to hate razors, creepy things, yucky things, ewer! My faithful old Opinel definitely got me there, made with galvanised steel and covered in rabbits blood.

After a session, one would lick clean the surfaces used to chop or contain the whiz, ideally a mirror if you were lucky enough to own such an expensive tool. Waste not want not I guess. Not only would this conserve supplies, but it would hide any evidence for our funny old friend Bob the policeman. And when on whiz, destroying evidence was quite important, as whiz could tend to make one a little more paranoid than straight. On snorting too much in too shorter period the stuff can cause a bit of psychosis, but this would go if you put your mind to it. And when high on amphetamines, a mind you would have. Thinking full time.

I had nothing against the police, but didn't agree with their laws on some drugs, although policemen and policewomen did used to make me a little nervous too. Although I don't half fancy most of them police women with their sexy attitudes and bondage style uniforms. Problems I had had with police over my years of adolescence were more misunderstanding of right and wrong. I guess I didn't really think much in earlier days. It's my guess that maybe a lot of us don't think when we're young, or at least we thought in a somewhat different way.

Whiz would come in lovely packages; an origami type fold with lovely pictures and patterns on the magazine type paper, you know, glossy, so that the paper didn't absorb too much of whatever substance you were wrapping, and maybe some flashy artistic advert material. Rarely did I buy it in bags or anything else, I think bags started to be used many years later, why I know not. I mean what better way to recycle your magazines than to use em to wrap up drugs, like they used to use newspaper to wrap up chips. Although bags are waterproof; I had lovely friend that smuggled her half a gram of Whiz through the customs in her shoe: Alas! The whiz dissolved in her foot sweat and didn't even make her high. I guess this is a situation whence forth modern thinking say, "Whiz in plastic bag be-eth wise when men in uniform present". Although having to swallow a plastic bag in certain circumstances does prove to be a bit more difficult than swallowing paper wrappings. For example; when you've got no way out, and you're nicked, best option, swallow the wrapper!

Anyway, this book, based around the summer of 1983, is about some adventures I had whilst on vacation from the brain tinkling games of South London to a funny little old place called Wales. At the age of seventeen, it was my first tackle at living on the road with near to no backing from family, a kind of singular, on my own, self-catering holiday with one or two adjustments. Contradicting that, there were one or two shoulder ups from family, and a little bit of help from my friends but follow me and read more. On your own, with no direction of home, like a complete unknown, just like a rolling stone!

My adventure, that seemed to go on for five or six months as time does when you're knocked out and loaded, lasted in reality for about six to ten weeks and, although I'm not claiming to be one of the most interesting people, the tale has remained in my head for many decades afterwards, and I have repeated some of the story to one or two interested ears on more occasions than that of that many leaves on a Oak tree in Summer, or maybe as many magic mushrooms in Richmond park in the Autumn. That is; some of the people I talked to were in fact trees, not to mention the mushrooms swaying to and fro around my lame excuse for a cardboard box bedroom in years to come. I especially liked talking to Oaks and Silver Birch. But hey, rock'n'roll, we're gonna ram it down your throat, "Five for the number one badden in the world, Ian Kilmister, keep him on". Only kidding, have a read, you'll enjoy it. This story is one of wit and disaster, plus the desperation to make life feel as okay as one can possibly make it, and how someone somewhere out there is always looking for ways to bring you down. Plus the main theme of this book; Out there, on the road, with no fixed abode, and a heavy load. Thumb power. Dodgy lifts; weirdoes, cool dudes, wise arses, and what ever the cat brought in. Take a ride with I and enjoy slate, limestone, and gold enriched mountain spring water filled Wales.

Chapter One

Three weeks holiday pay from where I worked, Spectrum, the London Borough of Wandsworth's base for our local Youth Training Scheme, and I was off. Not a care in the world. Free! Freedom had always been very important to me, freedom to enjoy drugs, music, nature, and fun things. Why are politicians so against all these things? The best and most remembered day of my life was the day I walked out of school, at the age of sixteen, for the last time. Like I'd just been released from five years in prison; free, completely free with no ties; boy I wish sex was as good as that!

It was a sunny day in July and the tarmac quivered in the heat. I'd had this insane idea about going "on the road", as one says, since I was very young. I thought it was a cool thing to do, and when the opportunity arose, I practically threw myself out there. I think that what I thought "On The Road" meant was, fast cars, lots of introductions, adventure, sleeping in all kinds of strange places, new faces, music, bars and pubs, not forgetting the occasional little old festival. It was a journey into the unknown. A journey that would show that freedom never lasts long enough, as there is always some plonker in the way who wants you enclosed within four walls of some kind, be it either physical walls or psychological.

Seventeen years old, an eighth of an ounce of Lebanese hash, and a similar quantity of Pakistani Black hash, two half gram packages of amphetamine sulphate stashed away in various hiding places, the amphetamine doubly wrapped in several coats of cellophane to attempt to keep those magical amorphous rocks of pure delight dry as could be, in preparation for the worst kinds of weather that may or may not be ahead of me. A crappy old canvas rucksack on my back, with a few bits and bobs to keep me alive, you know; tents, maps, frying pans and stuff, not forgetting an old army canvas shoulder bag kind of thing containing a few at hand essentials with "LUCY in the SKY with DIAMONDS" (LSD for those who haven't worked it out yet) written on the side in felt tip, and I was off. Though I guess all that I really found important was my drugs. As for clothing, I didn't plan for bad weather or any other kind of crisis, kind of off on a wing and a prayer and maybe a bit of trust in fate and a bit of luck with the weather.

I was wearing a pair of cheap old work boots, factory boots I think they were called. I had been sold these discounted by an ex employer in a shoe repair shop I had once worked in part time whilst at school. About ten hours a week for a tenner, which in those days bought me beer at the weekends, fags throughout the week, one or two games on the Space Invader machines and some quality food for my small little army of ferrets that kept me busy whilst in social hibernation.

Below me I wore a pair of worn blue denim jeans, Levi's. Levi's were affordable in those days, about a fiver, a fifth of my Youth Training Scheme wages. I'll let you do the maths. One pair of Jeans would last me all year. My mum used to

send me down to Fenton Smart's clothes shop, at the bottom of my street, once a year to buy a pair. At the time of this tale, my jeans were pretty tatty. For pockets I used to balance my pocket gear in kind of hammocks of torn pocket lining. The main things in my pocket being my money and my tobacco, I would use my old tobacco pouches as a purse for my money: Another recycling idea by the down and out hippy! As to where I kept my surrealistically illegal merchandise, I will leave most of that to ones imagination and curiosity.

On my chest I wore my favourite brown and red button-up shirt that I got for fifty pence in Kensington Market, London. The shirt was silk round the shoulders underneath, and had maybe a cashmere type material over the rest of my chest and back. The buttons were mother of pearl and all a bit loose, and in warm weather I would have em all undone for a tan. A regular shirt pocket above my left nipple came in use as a kind of contingency plan for anything that my jean pockets weren't up to accommodating.

I had a sweater that I recycled from my old school clothing, plain old black jersey kind of thing tied around my waste. I had no coat; The Gods would sort that one out. I kind of believed in "gods" in the plural, as whilst I was on mushroom trips I would see the sky filled with big god like faces. Maybe mushroom are a pathway to seeing other spiritual worlds, as various forms of Mexican Indian have claimed. Maybe magic mushrooms, psilocybin, really do have magical properties. I think not a crazy idea. No more crazy than Catholicism or Christian beliefs. I mean they all drink alcohol don't they. That's a drug. Tripping on various chemical or alkaloid type substances are maybe a trip to a fourth dimension, leaving the fifth dimension being the unanswered mystery of death. We are all familiar with two dimensional films and pictures, plus three dimensional life, but what of drugs and magic eh, what's that? A different place maybe. Not three dimensional but an "Alice through the looking glass" kind of thing.

So anyway, I made my way to the start of the M1, Britain's first motorway I think. I mean em one, one, it must be the first, you just can't tell with the British though, can you?

The slip road and start of the motorway was a mile or so up from one of the North London tube stations. I dunno, Kilburn Underground or something. As I gutter walked and jay walked busy London dual carriage ways towards the M1, a feeling of actually doing something adventurous with my life swamped my head with waves of pride and animosity, maybe even one or two shivers left over from the last line of speed. Adrenaline pumping through my veins, I felt like I was kind of taking that risky plunge into the unknown depth of a murky river. My whole face became whitewashed

with excitement, with shivers of amphetamine tinkling down my spine and waves of magical energy shooting out of my forehead in a spiral of joy.

As I entered the slip road I was hit by the vast amount of hitchers doing similar philosophical pilgrimages as I, in one way or another that is. There must have been about thirty of em. I thought of the despair, test of patience, and the long wait I would most likely have ahead of me. Thinking I would be at the same spot come morning. Temptation to turn and forget the journey wasn't an option. I guess I felt I had promised myself this mission.

I got talking to a couple of guys, who were half way through mugging me for my drug stash, when my mum and dad pulled up in their car just about in front of me. No questions, I jumped in and we were off. Not very cool or independent, but I guess I might not be around to tell this tale if mum and dad hadn't been there for me. Arhhhh! I mean these guys were definitely dodgy, I felt myself being overcome by a cloud of vicious criminal aggression. They really had me thrown out of control. I was flipping my lid, it was freaky I can tell you! I mean, these two guys were harassing me to swap some of my hash for some of their bush, but I kind of knew they were not genuine, and I didn't want to do the deal but they were getting kind of persuasive. I mean, bush is nice, but hash goes a long way further than bush. I was not in the habit of buying bush ever, with exception to maybe some Sinsemilla a couple of times, or maybe an eighth of Maui Cob that I once experimented with. Sinsemilla was a very powerful grass in its time, very similar to LSD in strength. As to Maui Cob; it was nothing really special, just a method of drying I think.

My favourite hashes were Lebanese and various forms of Black; Red Seal, Gold Seal, Pakistani. I'd have liked to have try Opiated Temple Balls if I could have found some. Opiated Temple Balls were the kind of Holy Grail of hash to one or two guys and I, but I never got there I guess. Maybe that'd be the fifth dimension! Various buddies would gossip about these temple balls being used by Tibetan monks as a meditation aid. One or two of my mates claimed to have actually sampled some. When I say opiated, I believe these lumps of some kind of black resin were enriched with maybe heroin. One guy said these Temple Balls were black and spherical with embedded white dots all over, I presume heroin, also known as refined opium, I think. Although I have not been to that Holy Grail, I have had opium on its own once. I acquired one gram of this black resin my friend said was opium. I smoked it from a piece of foil (chasing the dragon) and all though it was nice, I wasn't that impressed. I never even gained any incentive to go searching to score some more.

Anyway, mum and dad pulled up in the nick of time, Right: Mum and Dad, you see, had a cottage in Wales, and by some amazing coincidence were driving part of the

route that I was travelling on at the same time as I. I mean they came that way pretty often with me when I was younger too. I'd say about twenty times a year. They had a lovely cottage that was an old farmhouse with outbuildings, a courtyard and stuff. There was even a stream running through the front of the cottage's garden and it was centred right in the middle of fields with no neighbouring dwellings of any kind, totally secluded from society and civilisation too. The cottage didn't even have electricity; they used coal, paraffin, candles, wood and bottled gas, the only modern utility being water. Welsh water is magic too. I'm sure it has gold minerals and stuff in it that gives it great powers. Welsh water tastes delicious! My dad said the locals called the water gin.

My parents had done very well for themselves and had spent their money with wisdom. They didn't get stoned, drunk, or anything else intoxicating. They spent their money on houses, holidays, cars and travel. Although they did waste a bit on my education – Sorry mum and dad, but hey, that's kids for you!

Mum and dad were driving a bright red Ford Sierra that in those days was quite a classy car. Although the “on the street” saying of this car was; “Sealed for life in a Sierra”. I'm still trying to work out what they meant by “Sealed in for Life” thirty years later on today. I guess they must have meant something to do with the control freak syndrome, or maybe because the parts are difficult for mechanics to get at. Yes, that's it. Bloody Hong Kong stuff! You can't fix it, you have to buy new. Well I say Hong Kong just as an adjective. Everything from Hong Kong used to be cheap plastic and easy to break stuff so I compare Hong Kong with modern Ford cars, American really, but whatever.

My old man loved his cars, driving em that is. He wasn't very clever when it came to mechanics though. He was brilliant at woodwork, but not mechanics. The car was a bit of a bright coloured red one that I was quite opposed to. I liked to blend in with the background, and the colour red did just the opposite. My own rucksack in fact was orange, but the one I took with me on this particular occasion was one of dad's old canvas rucksacks, because it was smoky blue and a little more inconspicuous. Although it was a real crap rucksack compared to my state of the art orange one. I guess you could say I was a little colour prejudice, but not on the racial side, I just hated red. Looking back I now realise how crazy I must have been. I mean, how the fuck was I supposed to get a lift if drivers couldn't see me. Young and stupid eh!

Anyway; an hour or two later, and after leaving the M1 and later coming off of the M6, at junction twelve I think it was, we travelled up the A5 for a few miles until I said, “Dump me here can ya dad?” And “dump me here can ya dad” mum and dad did!

It must have been somewhere in the region of Telford or Shrewsbury in the West Midlands of the UK. There were no buildings, just road, long grass, weeds, and few small trees and the dry sound of crickets and insects clicking and buzzing away. It was almost like the beginning of time, or maybe life had just started for me anyway.

It was a hot day. I'd say a regular good British summer's day at about twenty-three degrees centigrade. I charged my nose with a pinch of whiz to set my mind tingling off in the haze of murky reality. I used to just pinch a bit of speed in between my thumb and forefinger for a quick snort, without the ritual of chopping the stuff up on a mirror. I mean, I might have been taking chances to take the stuff, but I wasn't stupid enough to start chopping up beside the road side. As to chopping the stuff in advance, that was just never done, for what reason I know not. Without chopping up the whiz, the hit was usually just as good but not as fun. The ritual of chopping up every lump until the powder resembled the sort of dust you'd find in a Turkish Delight box, a very fine icing sugar constituency, then drawing a blade along the side of the small pile to drag a line out of it, rolling up a pound note, and snorting up the line of magical powder. One would jump back, hold their nose, as it was quite a strong aroma shall we say. The next hour you go around with a trickle of bitter, but crystalline sweet saliva running down the back of your throat like Alpine mountain spring water with a hint of perfume maybe. After an hour you would just be head in the sky for another five hours or so. You'd feel like a giant, stepping from hill to hill. Probably mole hills, but they felt like proper hills in my drug duped and addled mind.

Some, who didn't like the snorting ritual, would wrap the amphetamine in a cigarette paper and swallow it. I did this once or twice and I must admit, although the hit was a little different, it was just as good, but I think not nearly as fun. Maybe better for you too. I mean, that snorting, it can't do the sinuses that good. I don't know whether amphetamine can burn a hole in your nose like cocaine can, at least it never did in mine. I never actually tried regular cocaine. Be it not enough dough in my pocket, or maybe even no needy desire. Just didn't try the stuff. Coke to me was dangerous: Serious addiction, rotten bones, mental trauma, expensive. My speed did it for I and I had no capitalistic urges to enter the pampered and spoilt world of con artists, idiots and nerd brains.

So I had entered into a new world and I was off into the unknown. Education drifted away behind me and I was now boss of my own life.

Chapter Two

I had a good look at my map, got my bearings, planned my route, and I stood near a roundabout and looked straight up the A5, of which I could see about four or five miles ahead. I looked back down the road from which I had just come, and my face felt shot. Shock I guess you could call it. Shock of the contrast between adult life and the home comforts of childhood where everything is controlled by one's parents and teachers, to a life of "You're on your own, no direction of home, just like a complete unknown, just like a rolling stone".

I soon learnt about the partially endless wall of vehicles that continuously carries on past as I levelled my thumb and felt like an idiot. Standing there like I was the laughing stock of life. I guess hitching a lift takes a bit of getting used to. Mind you, I had hitched once before on a disastrous trip to a festival, where I'd had a bad trip on some overheated acid. I reckon the guy sold me bad acid on purpose because my friend Sinbad and I had got into Glastonbury without paying. Peace and love, yeah right! Giving a guy a bad trip on purpose is kind of like "murder in the underworld", and can lead to all kinds of mental health problems too. You can't go to the police because you're murdered but still alive. So basically you're in hell whence undergoing a bad trip.

You see an unlucky acid tripper never learns his lesson. He'll have a bad trip but will never remember his bad trip a week or even just a day, or even an hour later, at least never remember what a trip feels like. LSD certainly takes you to another world, but the world has different scientific rules, and you cannot conceive to understand where you've just been after the trip, or tell anybody what you have just experienced, good or bad trip. The scary twist of acid is that; as you can't remember what your feelings have been, you need another tab to go back there, more custom for the pusher. There was a time when I took as much as three tabs of acid a week for many months. I've heard people boast that they've taken more than that, but there either lying, or maybe stupid, or maybe mad! You see you can't overdose on LSD and one tab will do the same to you as ten or more tabs, and after your trip you have to wait two or three days until your next tab will work. If you take a tab just after a trip, nothing will happen. Crazy old drug that acid.

Speed is different though. You can carry on speeding until you're a nervous wreck and end up, like with bad acid, in a psychiatric unit. Your buzz can last years and you just keep topping it up. You may lose on or two teeth, suffer from occasional bad back aches, but you're two steps into the Holy Grail believe you me, speed is brill!

As in my early days of hitch-hiking, and more recently too, and after a long break from the road, I felt the feeling of idiocy as I tried to be as casual with my thumb as I could. I guess it takes a day or two of travelling before you become relaxed.

So I turned and, thumb in the air, starting walking. Walking mainly to look more normal than standing there like a daft prick. This world is definitely a cruel one!

I had obviously made the wrong decision with my rucksack. This old canvas wreck of a hold all started to dig into my back. It was torture. After walking a couple of miles I decided that I had to do something about it. So I went about ripping out this metal kind of frame that was under the back to back layer of canvas. This made the sack on my back a little more comfortable so I could trench on in a little less pain. I think the metal frame that I'd taken out must have meant to have been ergonomic for one's spine maybe. At the time I was very confused. I thought it was some kind of practical joke. Maybe some masochistic bondage type thing? Anyway, it seemed to be better out than in.

As I tromped on, the amphetamines inside my brain almost gave me an extra invisible brain; a brain kind of coming out of my forehead like a bubble, and in the bubble all the joy and emotion that my sad and decrepit mind needed. When you're on speed, that's all you need, so take heed, and follow that lead. It was definitely my favorite drug. Six pounds sterling bought half a gram of white powder, giving the user about six lines of everything one could ever need. I didn't desire normal things like water and food. Necessary things like water just didn't cross my mind. That's how good speed is, and probably why doctors in the seventies gave speed in the form of barbiturates to needy slimming fiends. Barbiturates were great drugs too, if you could get hold of them. Once I bought ten for a quid. One needed about five at a time and boy were they powerful. My only regret is that I didn't share them with my best friend Kilroy. I was holding out as you would say in dope smoking circles. When I lost my mate years later, I always blamed my selfishness on this instance.

I must have walked for about four or five miles, smoked two point four joints and almost given up on the idea of somebody actually giving me a lift when, on entering a slip road onto a dual carriage way, and as the heavens opened up with rain, a Vauxhall Cavalier swung by and threw open his door.

Now I was a bit nervous at first. It was a similar car and driver to a lift I had taken once before on my bad trip whilst coming home from the festival. The lift, on the way down the M4, had turned pretty horrible when the horrible guy tried to fucking molest me. The outing all went extremely pear shaped and after a very long and traumatic nightmare, I made it home in one piece to carry on with things and eventually lead to this holiday.

The day was darkening and I wanted to get the show on the road. So onboard I flung myself and off we sped.

The car was tingling with dash board lights all over the place which was pretty unusual in those days. Bit like my dad's Sierra. The lift was a comfortable and warm one and the driver said he could take me well into Wales. I think it was somewhere like Bala he was going, but after an hour maybe, he dropped me off in a town I found out to be called Dolgellou. It had been a nice enough lift to get me into the jive of things. No perverted assaults or anything. I had dreaded being dropped off at the end of my lift into the lonely and cold night. I guess I was dreaming of hot baths and walking around in your socks. I say when I think of the warmest moments of perhaps the past, they always take me back to Christmas time, when everything is one massive party and the fire is piping out warm air and glowing rays of joy.

Now, it was the middle of the night and there was practically not a soul in sight. It was a strange village, kind of like something out of a fairy tale; turrets, towers and stuff, or was that the sulphate still lingering in my head.

I ventured into this strange place from across a bridge, the only life being a cat. I was a big fan of cats and spent a few minutes psyching out the cat with my head. I used to think I could talk with cats telepathically, I guess that was a bit of a delusion caused by the amphetamines over the months of abuse.

I strolled around the small village for a while, not a soul to be seen, and on deciding that the place had nothing for me, I decided to wander on to the next level. I mean there were no chip shops, off licenses or pubs so why stop there! Leaving across the bridge a fellow came towards me. I swear he was concealing a knife. He looked dodgy. I somehow got past him and a police car pulled me over on the other side of the bridge. Being a bit nervous of a search, I was a little on the tense side. Yet the police officer just wanted to make sure I was okay. He then left, leaving me feeling a little paranoid for a short while. But I soon got back into the feel of things. As to the guy with a concealed weapon, he'd vanished completely. And after ten minutes I had forgotten him, the police and everything, and I was ready to play the next level.

You see, amphetamines keep you awake most of the time, unless you've had so much that you pass out through exhaustion, as had happened to me on two or three occasions. I was as wide awake as a cockerel at dawn. I didn't have a watch either so I was like a wandering spirit of psychedelic life with not a care in the world. Anyway, when you're spaced out, wristwatch hands just spin round in all directions making reading the time completely impossible.

I sat at the bottom of a hill on a grass verge looking onto the T junction at the bottom of my hill. A spot of tea I thought, so I got my little gas burner out and within

five or ten minutes was sipping on a soupy tea of milk, sugar and Twinings. Although food and drink didn't mean much to me, I guess it had a little part to play in the trip.

The midges there were pretty bad. Cigarette after cigarette and the occasional reefer kept them at bay a little. I smoked cigarettes too. A drug worse than quite a handful of illicit substances you may know. More addictive than cannabis, nearly as addictive as heroin and, I believe, more harmful. Yet cannabis, almost harmless, and if you're worried about your lungs, eat the stuff maybe in cake. I never practiced this much as eating puff was quite an extravagant way of using marijuana, although I did occasionally have a bit of cannabis in my coffee. Later in life I even had some with lemon and honey; good for a cough you know.

See cannabis is fun in many ways: Playing around with scales and weighing your deal up to see how good a deal it was, a real mood lifter if it was a good deal. The deal was usually spot-on with my London dealers. Experimenting with rolling papers and bits of cardboard for making funny joints, maybe extra long ones, or even three pronged ones; making various pipe contraptions out of bits of pipe together with old cans and bottles; or maybe a spot of cooking with hash; "Spots" was another fun way of smoking hash. With spots you needed a gas fire and a lot of gas. Not to sniff but to heat your kitchen knives hot enough to turn a dot of hash, into a spot of ash and the smoke into your lungs as the tiny bit of dope hissed between the two red hot knives. Doing spots would make your hash go a long way especially in times of poverty and famine, dope famine that is, there is a situation known as a dope famine in junky land believe it or not. Kind of like the famine of 83 that lasted for a long and painful two weeks of zero marijuana spiritual experiences. Later in my life there were famines of much longer servitude, but that's a long scary tale ahead of me. Cocktails were a common situation too. Mixing different types of dope was practiced quite commonly. With me usually Lebanese and Black, but some would mix hash and bush that gave a much better cocktail effect.

In my day there were many types of hash. There was Red Leb, very hard to find, Lebanese, the best value for money, Pakistani Black, as squeegee and more fun than play doe, Red Seal, a more solid form of black that had bits of red cellophane in and around it originally used for packaging fresh from manufacturer wrapped around a quarter weight parcels, Gold Seal that was not as good as Red Seal, and covered in gold painted daggers, Double Zero that was way over rated, and Rocky, cheap and completely a waste of time. You could get a quarter of an ounce of Rocky for seven quid, the price of a sixteenth of an ounce of black, but it was like smoking mud or dried henna. Rocky is probably a good bit of puff to get started on maybe in your early teens, if you can get some of the stuff. Later on in life I came across some Marijuana oil.

Now lads; if you can get this get some, it's the business and great fun too. It's usually sold in one gram packages. A piece of translucent plastic with a gram of oil pasted on it and then folded in half. When you open it you get a sticky butterfly pattern. You then gently heat up a knife and scrape a little off of the plastic, onto the knife, and then onto some rolling papers, you then add tobacco and make your joint. Smoke and enjoy. Totally way out and beyond, go there. If you don't like using tobacco, roll up a tin foil yogurt pot lid maybe, dunk it in the THC oil and suck on the pipe as you lay a flame on the oil enriched end. Straight there man!

As to getting stoned, I was always stoned. I was as good as gone. My head was totally not there, or out of touch with reality one might say. The main thing I like about cannabis though, is that it has an amazing taste and aroma that was as good as, maybe your favorite ice cream. I'd say cannabis has a very sweet smell and soothing taste.

Anyway, so I drank my cup of tea. I didn't put up my tent or anything. I guess it would have been a good idea but I guess I kind of felt a bit of stage fright, or maybe more like I was too paranoid. I was a private lad and didn't want any invaders, be it police, or maybe that dodgy character I saw back on the bridge, or maybe like that bloody pervert that tried to molest me on the way home from that festival.

So I sat there tingling with strange and euphoric feelings. I guess at the time I thought of being high as the definition of thinking. I didn't speak much in my drug taking years. A big problem was that I had quite a lot of difficulty finding things to say to drivers, but I guess I just threw myself in there, head on! I would say things like: "The clouds are nice today", or maybe, "What's that button for?" that was about it, silence for the rest of the journey. Or at night I would say, "Your dash board's pretty cool". I might have said a bit about my wonderful friends in London. I loved talking about the delinquent home next door to where I lived in London. T'was a building filled to the brim with cool dudes.

Occasionally I'd share some of my puff with drivers in hope of maybe making a good friend. I kept my speed to myself though. I'd only share my speed with already established and best of friends.

Chapter Three

I decided it was time to move on. I was now right into dawn and insects of all kinds floated around as dew glistened in the hazy sunlight above the long grasses and weeds.

I decided to turn right, of which I think must have been Northwards. I was good with maps and found my way around with ease and even without the need of a compass, using landmarks instead. Not always very accurate, especially hence on the climax of narcosis, and not a good system if wandering the Highlands, or maybe where there are no roads and stuff.

I had a very basic small map of the whole of Britain. This A to Z map about told me where the motorways and “A” roads were and left the rest to reading sign posts.

As I balanced on the edge of this blind bend “A” road I felt like I’d never get a lift as I drifted along the curb side. I couldn’t walk on, as the edge of the road was near non-existent for pedestrians. There was practically no traffic and after a not too long wait, about twenty minutes I think, and still buzzing on speed, a coal truck pulled up. One of those trucks with a flat and open rear with no sides. At least I think it was a coal truck, as it had a few empty string like coal sacks tied on to the railings behind the cab, and there were remains of coal dust around, but I guess it could well have been a slate dust. Whatever! In I jumped next to a couple and their dog and a bottle of cider. Drinking and driving in those days was not taken so seriously as nowadays in the twenty-first century. Blooming nanny state crap we have to put up with.

In the cab were quite a nice threesome, very hippy come hell’s angel kind of thing, and they shared their booze with me which I think was very nice of them too. They dropped me off in a slate mine town called Bethesda I think.

As I said before; I never used to talk much whilst hitching. I guess I was just muttering away in my own head, out of touch with reality as usual, or maybe just plain old gone in the head. They say speed and amphetamines make you talk a lot, and they do in a lot of scenarios, but not whilst hitch-hiking. I used to find some lifts a bit uncomfortable, as getting to know a stranger can be quite a task, even if it’s only for an hour or so. Knowing what to say is a skill that one either has naturally or maybe acquired due to experience and maybe age. A lot of us, though, don’t have that skill and just tend to talk about the weather and stuff. And some just repeat the same old thing again and again until you’re blue in the head listening to them. I guess I used to tell people about things like my age, my music, not forgetting my friends in London all of whom I admired and boasted about ambiguously. I never used to talk about my family much. Too many secrets to confuse, mixed with a little bit of shame,

embarrassment and inverted snobbery. Maybe if I had mentioned my family a bit I might have had a little more to say. Those evil deadly silences cropped up in my presence more than a comfortable amount of times. Although silences could also be evidence of angels and ghosts passing through; I tell you, if it was angels and ghosts, there were a bloody lot of them, and fuck em, they should watch where they're walking!

I don't know what I was trying to achieve on this pilgrimage. I guess it was an attempt to understand my existence or something, or maybe I was trying to start a new and independent life. I was young and setting out on an expedition, I guess we just do these things, and have done since we came down from the trees and man first started to experiment with technology and things. Evolution as we know it.

I knew vaguely where I was when we arrived in the small village of Bethesda, as I had spent a lot of my childhood holidays in the North of Wales. About eight to ten weeks worth of holidays every year for about ten years. Mum's and dad's cottage was called Friddiodd Glession in Nebo, Gwynedd, North Wales. Old tap water heaven, if you're going to Wales, make sure you bring back a gallon of Welsh and gold enriched water home with you. You bath in it and it makes your hair come up great, even without soap. And the Welsh, they've got so much of it, in fact I'm so addicted to Welsh water I prefer to go to Wales rather than places like Italy, France, Germany, or any other country on this molecular pea sized planet.

My mum and dad must have made me walk up all the mountains in Snowdonia National Park over the years, so I saw just about the whole of North Wales. We had one or two other friends with cottages up there too. There were Peter Lloyd, my uncle Roger, and the Andrews. I can't remember where exactly their cottages were; I guess I left that to mum and dad. We used to visit them from time to time especially if we knew they were in. Mum used to know these things. Very organized was my mum. We were also very friendly with Philip Jones who had sold mum and dad their cottage.

When my uncle was in Wales I did a bit of rock climbing too, but my favorite past time was smoking fags and the occasional beer. I had done a bit of fishing in Wales as well, but never had had much luck. When I caught the occasional trout I'd club it to death in a mass of panic, as I used to hate killing the blighters, I'd eat the thing for supper with a dash of lemon. I never caught more than one or two at a time, so I couldn't share my fish with others very easily. I'd have liked to fill the dinner table but I guess I wasn't very talented at the fishing sport.

So I said goodbye to the coal truck and decided to get some provisions. Some milk, bread and bacon I think I bought; just basic stuff for the day's entertainment.

North Wales is full of little village shops that sell just about everything, a bit like our corner shops but a lot more of them.

I decided to head up the hill in, I think, an Eastwards direction. Mind you, Welsh roads wind and turn so many times and in so many directions it wouldn't surprise me if you'd end up walking upside down; them Welsh guys is magic you know! As I reached the moor at the top of the hill, I threw my stuff and myself over a fence and put up tent by the side of a small lake about two hundred and fifty yards from the road. It was an ace venue for some chill out time.

I got myself some food together, a bacon sandwich I think. I could cook quite a lot for a seventeen year old adolescent. My mum had got me into cooking from quite an early age, things like cakes, bacon, sausages and one or two dried packet things, and maybe the odd egg sandwich.

I drank quite a lot of tea too. Tea, along with a cigarette, would bridge the gap between joints of dope and lines of sulphate a little; two spoons of sugar and a generous portion of milk. Them sugars must have gone straight through my teeth. I never used to brush my teeth in those days. I didn't even think of my teeth's care as my brain was always so addled by various narcotics. All that seemed to be important in life was the next long lasting high. I conditioned myself with the odd pack of vitamins, Iron pills, Calcium and stuff, and only ate quality food and not too many burgers. I ate stuff like sausages, potatoes, brown rice, beans and pulses, fish, baked beans, and the occasional carton of orange juice. I'd say I had quite a well balanced diet without even thinking about it. I guess my mum and dad must have brought me up quite well that way. I say I never brushed my teeth, I guess it all seemed to be too much aggravation, a bit stupid of me, because amphetamines are especially bad for your teeth and bones. Tobacco doesn't help your oral hygiene either. An aging drug user you will find has more problems with his, or her, teeth than with non drug users. Over the years and more recently I have had literally hundreds of trips to the dentist. To top it all, I was petrified of the dentist's drill. What planet was I on? God knows what's gonna become of my bones, touch wood my back now seems all right and for the rest of me I just pray and now, in the twenty-first century, I hold on for dear life and use the best of toothpastes.

For entertainment that evening I didn't need much as my head had sorted that one out with a bit of speed and some smoke. I did have a small transistor radio. It wasn't a very good radio. A radio that I had acquired through trading in a battery charger that had been given to me as a present for Christmas, yet I couldn't afford the rechargeable batteries so swapping it for a radio seemed like a good idea. I got this radio at my favorite electrics shop near work called "The Trading Post" in Thames

Ditton, Surrey. Although my employers were based in Wandsworth, London, the boat I worked and trained on was in Thames Ditton. I learnt carpentry there and helped renovate this old eighty foot Rhine Barge called the Caroline.

I didn't know what I was listening to on the radio. To me it was just an extra buzz in the background to fill my confused head with more tingling sensations, a bit like the wristwatch that I mentioned earlier on with all the hands spinning at high speed. Sunsets and magical clouds were a prime source of my entertainment. The moorland I was pitched on had marvelous views of the hills and land down towards the ocean.

I must have hit the deck early that night. When you've got no company, an early night seems like a reasonable idea. A mug of chocolate and a spliff and the unconscious comatose like state of sleep kicked in.

Chapter Four

Well I kind of woke up in the morning, not sure what the difference between night and day was, but there I was, me in the world, deal with me big crazy miracle of a planet earth! I guess dreaming and being awake were very close to each other when you're stoned. In other words one might say my brain probably saw no difference in being awake or asleep. Basically I was gone, wasted, twenty-four seven.

So I exited my tent, stretched my arms, smiled at the wonderful view, and decided to start about getting back on the road. I started with a joint and a cup of tea, but gave the speed a miss for the time being. I used to space out my narcotics reasonably and sensibly. Rather than steal I would work out my accountancy skills in financing my drug taking: Stand back folks, I carry a Maths O'level. Back in London half a gram I could space out over about a week, spliff about an eighth of an ounce would also last for about a week, plus the occasional beer and maybe an acid tab thrown in. Beers were just a piss in the wind, I didn't find them very important. In fact I got more physically unwell on beer drinking than any of the illicit illegal substances that so many governments call dangerous. I couldn't handle more than about three pints without throwing up and so only used to drink the very occasional pint. Most kids bonked young chicks at parties, me, I used to bang my head against the wall and drink until I threw up at the end of various lawns and council flat walk ways.

My green ridge tent was very easy to erect and dismantle, so I was soon leaping back over a fence and onto that long winding road across the moor. In fact the tent and I were heading for "The Jimi Hendrix Experience"! The more I pitched the tent, the easier it became to do so.

Sticking my thumb out had started to become a little bit easier by then. But as a Volkswagen Camper van sped by with the occupants shouting "Walk it", along came the rain. I swear it was my Uncle David's and aunt Jan's family, but maybe I'm just getting a little paranoid. Although the Brimscombe B's as we used to call em, did have a habit of driving around with a rain cloud above their van. Alas, not just rain came, but huge buckets of it, and thunder too. Forked lightning coming down all around and there was no shelter. I tried tightening myself up to a bolder but the giant lump of limestone did not reflect, or deflect, the rain. I was drenched as I walked on in a slight panic. Stupid me, I hadn't even packed a coat. I planned on purchasing one from somewhere along my trails. As if! I must have had on me about forty or fifty quid, but hey, money was unreal to me, I didn't worry about it, I just suffered in bliss.

The rain was icy, beating down on me like cubes of ice. The rain wasn't hail stones, but just as painful.

About half a mile down the road, a seriously long plod it seemed, I found some trees. A small fenced off section of pine with a clean and dry bed of soft pine needles. In there I was sheltered from the rain and lightning, but I was drenched to the bone. To clock it all I discovered that one of my half grams of sulphate had become moist. Wasting no time I swallowed it all leaving me with one other half gram that had survived the rain. I must have swallowed about four lines worth. Doing the math that works out at about twenty-four hours of never coming down. Unlike LSD, you can overdose on speed, and four times as much in weight will give you four times in time. Believe you me, I rose a million miles.

I don't know whether or not it was my head or reality, but suddenly the sun came out and I was back on the road. Still drenched but so spaced out that nothing mattered.

I walked and walked and walked. Head in the clouds, birds and butterflies twittering around my head, no one stopping to give me a lift but, what the heck. I came to a small village with a tea room, a post office and a small village green. Firstly I marched into the café and asked for scones and cream with a cup of tea. I seated myself outside of this empty tea room, and watched Welsh life drift past. The café owners treated me with admirable respect. They gave me the real v.i.p treatment which was very nice of them. The food and tea was delicious. I paid the waitress and crossed over to the post office to buy some postcards to send my friends back in London. I reckon I must have bought about seven or eight cards for some of my favorite friends: All at Hambro, the name of a delinquent home come squat that I frequented quite a lot, a few relations, and one or two other bosom buddies from my measly but enjoyable existence.

I left the post office and went about drying out properly on the village green. It was a very small green; a triangle with about fifteen foot borders and a sign post giving directions and various destinations. I took off my shoes, socks, and jacket, and made myself comfortable. The sun was shining, my clothes were drying fast, and I sat there rolling cigarettes and writing cards. The scene was a bit too public to roll spliffs, so I made do with cigarettes that, in fact, were about as good to my head as dope, as my head was so way up in utopia on speed. I tell you; many times better than ten minutes on cocaine.

I was pretty comfortable on this green and didn't really want to go. I guess one has to keep moving on though. Keep the queue moving sort of thing.

Chapter Five

Twilight was getting close and I decided to move on. Walking and walking until I finally got another lift in the pitch black. A regular soldier type that, in fact, was what he was. As we drove speeding through the darkness I found it difficult to workout my bearings. The lift finally came to a finale at a very familiar village to me named Capel Curig. The time must have been around midnight, or maybe one in the morning, and quite light as there must have been a full moon and clear sky.

Dazed and a bit confused and desperate for a break, I leapt over a dry stone wall and took out just my sleeping bag and had a bit of a kip. I was in a field and knew not what cattle or livestock may abode there, but never suffered any type of disturbance, so they, or whatever was there, must have been friend and not foe. I must have got an hour of shut eye when the speed in my brain decided that I'd had enough and up I leapt. I don't know why, but Capel Curig was making me a little paranoid and so I decided to move on. Uphill I headed. What orientation I knew not, but vaguely remembered that there was a familiar mountain and lake four or five miles up the road.

As I wondered the moon must have hidden itself as the darkness grew a little thicker until, after traipsing a few miles, my feet suddenly became so sore that I decided I needed a good solid rest. I found a campsite and entered. There were loads of tents but everyone was asleep with nobody walking about. I wasn't sure whether or not I was going to pitch there so I threw down my rucksack and sat cross legged, with a candle in front of me that I fished out of my shoulder bag for a little warmth and security.

I must have rested there for a couple of hours, thinking about what I should do next, smoking one after another cigarette and a joint, the first one for a while, and as dawn broke and the sky became day time, I decided to trek on. Still speeding, as we junkies used to call it, I heaved my rucksack and side bag back on and left the gate of the campsite in what was beginning to feel more like a slog and not mountain to mountain, mole hill to molehill, as I had earlier felt. Maybe I was coming down from my fixated brain. Coming down off amphetamines was never a problem for me. I didn't like coming down of acid but speed was different, for me any way. This might have been because I sometimes liked the rain, and got a similar feeling on a "come down"?

Chapter Six

As I dragged myself along the mountain “A” road, the traffic began to thicken. I even saw a farmer that I was quite familiar with, old Philip Jones, but he recognized me not, as he sped by in his Landrover with four or five guys crammed in. I yelled at him “Hoy” but he just kept on going. I think he might have kind of recognized me and thought; “Oh my God”, or something like that, and just kept on driving. I mean I practically had “DRUGS” tattooed across my forehead, not to mention the fact that I was a ragged old hippy and for christ’s sake, who wants to know a mangy old, smelly, flea infested, drug taking parasite of a hippy?

I’d left the lakes, passed the climbing club post, and was heading down hill thumb in the air. I must have done about three miles since the campsite when my feet started to blister badly. I started to hobble in a limping fashion. Walking soon became unbearable and I over and upped over another dry stone wall and limped up and onto the top of a pedestal with a tree, looking down onto a river, people playing around and bathing in the rock pools. It looked like paradise, yet I was out of reach. For the blights of me, why I never went down and joined them I know not? I think I thought it was not worth enquiring as I was not a rich man.

Up on this hill point I prized off my boots and went about cleaning and drying my toes and feet, and what other first aid I could conger up. The blisters were like golf balls, huge. I was still high as a kite, literally and psychologically.

Along came the first disaster of the holiday: One of my sneakers that I’d tied to the back of my rucksack, was no more! I guess that solves the mystery of how one so often finds only one shoe from time to time. The boots I had on my feet were cheap and felt like tough cardboard. The sneakers, Dunlop Greenflash, would have been like “Aeries magic slippers” for my blisters, I’m sure.

Any way, a joint or two later and refreshed, I was off. Gone off if you ask me! I soon got a lift by this young looking wise guy driving one of those little sporty cars, I can’t remember exactly but it might have been a VW Golf hatchback, something like that anyway. We were soon smoking a joint and chatting druggy talk. He was not such a wise guy, more a plain kind of guy. He was maybe a friendly thief or something. Anyway, he drove around a bit and dropped at what town I can’t remember, but I think it was near the sea. It might have been Llandudno? Out of the car I got and started rolling down a regular street, parked cars, litter bins and stuff. I came to a chip shop and in I went. People must have thought that I was some kind of vagabond, or maybe something like a useless old hippy that I guess, in fact, was what I was.

I left the chip shop with one small portion of chips. To me that was all I could afford. I had always been a bit of a survivor and good with money. Not blowing all of my money on expensive stuff. When I was a kid I used to believe that if I ever became a tramp, I would cash in refundable bottles and stuff and live on chips, which is practically what happened but, hey, “you may, er, call him a tramp, but I think,er, it goes a little deeper than that, he’s er – a Highway Chile!” as Jimi Hendrix would say.

I guess due to my drug taking paranoia I had begun to feel more at home with the more personal atmosphere of the countryside, and I often found town life a little on the unfriendly side. I passed on through this seaside town, people glaring at me as I trod by, me thinking “God I can’t wait until I get out of this town”, and I was pleased to be on the road again. Leaving on some “A” road, thumb in the air.

Chapter Seven

By now I had got quite used to my blisters. I walked a mile or two and saw a friendly looking campsite sign and so I decided t'was time for a rest from the rough ride of a road.

Off I headed up a little "B" road, which turned into a "C" road or one might say a track, and went into this little campsite come farm, about half a mile in from the main road.

There was not much of a view. In fact no view at all. The campsite was very enclosed, with tall hedges all around, probably to keep all of the tents from blowing away as this campsite was quite high up. Although no view, I was happy there, and the farmer even sold eggs and milk. I got really comfortable in this little place. I think it was quite cheap too. There were about four or five other campers, and a tractor creeping around.

I rolled a spliff or two, tuned in the radio, and went about hydrating and cooking a dried stew I had brought from an army surplus shop London. The stew was one of those mountaineering meals that one just adds water, or snow as some lucky mountaineers might find themselves fortunate enough to be doing. I stirred away as my cooking pot bubbled away on my little gas camping stove: A descent meal to see my belly happy for the evening. Though I kind of preferred cooking the meal rather than eating it, I guess drugs and stuff take away the joy of food unto another joy. Drugs not as good for you as food but hey, I was young; and a bag of bones.

My feet were on a tropical island of paradise and my mind was beaming rays joy inside my skull. Although I never used to get bad "come downs" off of speed, I did take an early night that night, to end the utopian dream and finish to my four line hit. About ten was early for me. The food had been delicious after all and it was about time for a blissful sleep.

My tent was a regular ridge tent, nothing special. It had cost me about twenty-five quid from an army surplus store in Wandsworth, London. Just round the corner from my Youth Training Scheme work base as it happens. I could easily erect this tent in speedy time. The tent was dry, tough, and green: Nothing fancy, just a basic tent to give one some cover and privacy.

My main light supply was candles. I had a torch, but it ate batteries for meal time. I never had a descent candle holder, I used to melt the candles onto my favorite book, a medicinal herb book, and that was it. I had to be very careful not to knock my candles over, of course, and miraculously I never did. Had to watch I didn't fall asleep too, or my book would have been honey on toast, or maybe wax on toast! Of course I

wasn't together enough to organize myself with a descent ashtray either. I would just use one of my saucepans or maybe just flick my ash out of the tent door.

My tent was pretty bare. I had nothing more than essentials: A sleeping bag, socks and pants, a sweater, cooking stuff, my rucksack and bag, some food and tea concoctions, and that was about it. I guess all that I was worried about was the entertainment concocted up in my head from speed and dope. A bit of incense and a colourful rug would have been nice, but I guess I had not the money for that kind of luxury.

I used to be petrified of insects, especially spiders, and used to clonk em one if they came in my tent. My old herbal remedy book had a thousand and one uses of which one being squashing those funny little six and eight legged creatures. Poor things! A bit disrespectful to the insect community, squashing em that is, but I was adolescent and stupid. Today as I write these words in the twenty-first century, I love spiders and respect most insects, and will willingly share my domains with a large proportion of them. Exceptions might be mosquitoes and midges which either inject you with venom or go to town on eating your living flesh as you stand there alive. Splat, that's all I can say to them. Cockroaches were a bit of an enemy too. I'm sure they landed from a different planet than cockroaches, evil little things, not very dangerous, but creepy.

I must have woken at about eight the next morning. In fact I think a tractor woke me up. I could tell it was the early side of late because the morning dew was just starting to vaporize. I didn't have a wash or anything sensible like that, just a quick piddle. My brain was too addled to do anything sensible like washing myself; I guess I just didn't really think it important. I didn't even wash my hands in them days. My nails constantly had a layer of mud under them, practically with things growing out of them. I used to attempt to scrape out the crap with my Opinel knife, I was always cutting myself. Sometimes, a small cut when you're on speed or amphetamines, can be more serious. Your blood is possibly thinner, and blood pressure maybe a little higher, so when you cut yourself blood sometimes spurts out everywhere.

Anyway, I waddled over to a sign saying "Milk and Eggs" and bought I pint of untreated and unpasteurized milk, my favorite, and I bought half a dozen eggs. "Back to the tent lads" I would say to myself. I guess you could say "lads" was what my drug orientated and crazy brain thought a natural and normal communication!

So anyway, I limboed myself into the cave doorway of my tent, passed all the pans and stuff littering the tent floor. I had a pint of milk and a fried egg sandwich for that breakfast. Sometimes I took care of my stomach. Breakfast, lunch and supper were kind of like a routine built into me by home life, so I kind of ate because of habit rather

than hunger. My face was like a bare skull. I was withering away. I didn't used to look at myself in the mirror as I didn't see the importance in taking care of myself. All that mattered to me was that my brain would be tingling in one way or another.

The unpasteurized milk was always a hit with me. I say unpasteurized milk was my favourite because it tasted so wholesome and delicious, pure natural liquid food, straight from the cow and nothing in between. Green top was usually what you would ask for in Wales. Green top, unpasteurized. I heavily recommend trying some if you get the chance. One can almost taste the cud, delicious.

After breakfast a joint. I can taste it now, that sweet fragrance of Pakistani black, ahh. Or was it Red Seal? Whatever it was, I can still remember the taste more than twenty-five years later as I write this book. You can't get good hash these days. The dealers just peddle you off some strange piece of mud with a bit of dope in the middle. Either that or they sell you some mad Skunk that sends you straight to the insane asylum! Why can't we have a friendly bit of Black around? Legalize Black and in return we stop the supply of skunk out right. Tell me mister business man, what do ya think?

Now I had a map, and Machynleth was a place next on my agenda. Before leaving London, I had been told that there was an alternative living commune in the near vicinity; "The Alternative Living Centre" I think it was called. I was intent on checking this out and maybe learning one or two things there, or maybe even getting to know someone there.

Route planned, bags packed, fuel snorted and I was off, after paying the farmer for the pitch of course. Thumb in the air and it wasn't long before I was sitting in an Austin Princess if I remember rightly.

I was getting used to this thumb in the air thing. As we dwindled along flowery country lanes, this guy started telling me about Led Zeppelin the rock'n'roll group. I was a fan of Led Zeppelin and I was interested as he said Robert Plant, the Led Zeppelin singer, had a sheep farm near to where he was going. Stupid me, I didn't think of trying to visit the guy, Robert Plant that is. I just kind of didn't think of it being a possibility to actually get near to any one as famous as, or like Robert Plant, forgetting that I was of any self importance.

This car dropped me off in the village just off of Robert Plant's estate. I never made note of the actual village name, nothing sensible like that, I just stood there feeling a little bit confused. It seemed like I had scored a goal, but all alone with no other players.

I walked into a small corner shop to stock up on some essentials. I remember, although I was quite short for a youngster, these tiny little kids came in, and it made me

feel like a giant. They were good kids, and I don't know why but they really made me feel special.

Up the road I wandered, to hence where I had been dropped, to be picked up in some old car. I think it was a Volvo Estate maybe.

Driving was this broad of the more mature age. She was nice and talked about this and that, middle class type stuff. See I don't think I was even listening to what she was saying. I don't know where my head was. Maybe I was thinking like Beavis and Butthead: "Er tits, er boobs, er do you think we could like, em". Any way: She dropped me off in Machynleth and I pumped my working boots up the trail to find the "Alternative Technology Centre".

It was late in the afternoon as I entered this little campsite by a river just below the commune. After pitching tent, I twisted around the campsite for a while, even did a little poaching come fishing attempt. I had a reel of nylon, a hook, and I used a twig for a float, and a worm for bate, dug up with my Opinel knife. The river beside the campsite was full of salmon I think, or maybe Sea Trout, loads of em. You could see them swilling around in the large rock pools. I passed a while with my branch of a rod, line and float, but them fishy things, did I catch one? No!

I was pretty sure the fish might have been Salmon because of their size. They were about two foot long and later on I did find out from the camp site owner that there were Salmon in this particular river.

Back at the tent, my first thoughts were walk somewhere. Take an evening stroll and see the glow worms and bats? Take me to your Public Boozer. Booze and speed go like water to a sponge and are so satisfying you can drink dangerous levels without even realizing it. Speed and alcohol love each other, once I had so much I collapsed and temporarily lost the use of my legs, it was scary believe me, handle with care! The campsite owner had told me where the pub was and so back to my tent, one line of speed and off I strolled.

I found the pub after strolling for a mile or so and immediately went about sinking a cold, clear, crisp and bubbly, lager. They used to serve me in pubs without any problems at all when I was seventeen. In those days you could get served easily, even with the legal age being eighteen. I think I got refused when I'd been sixteen, but at this point in my life, no questions asked. I guess I looked a little older than I was, maybe due to weathering or something. To tell you the truth, I never even thought about age. I kind of took pubs for granted, and visa versa the landlords feelings mutual.

Alcohol and speed work like soul mates together, but don't try this at home kids, these are for trained experts. I was plastered. Out of my head, so wasted and completely wrecked, I started chatting to this group of lovely ladettes, they were gorgeous, about

my age too. They were gone before I had the chance to get close, alas, and I still think of them to this day twenty-five years on.

After fumbling down the dark winding road, I found myself back at my tent, spaced out enough to mistake the campsite for a cocktail bar. I'd collected a bit of wood before my pub crawl, and so went about that ever so favoured and desirable camp fire.

It was a pretty effortless camp fire; just a few sticks and small twigs mainly. The flames must have burnt for about an hour and I cooked a tin of soup on it. Balancing my little aluminum saucepan on the twigs until I had a mug of broth. The flames died out and that was an end to that day. I must have drifted off in sleep land at about midnight.

I was disturbed from my sleep the next morning at about seven o'clock, by things being thrown and my tent door. I unzipped the door to find a very angry campsite owner fuming over the hole I had burnt in his turf floor. I'd thought camp fires were the norm. I didn't understand. I was extremely apologetic and when this guy calmed down he gave me a spade and ordered me to find some turf elsewhere and repair his turf. I found some adjoining the river and made the repair. This job I found quite easy. Turf is quite easy stuff to work with. He said that I could have had a fire by the river but not on prime camping soil. I guess I just didn't think. Grass, the turf kind that is, didn't seem to me to have any value. I was just a weed to me. I'd have been just as happy to be pitched on mud. I really freaked when these objects, whatever they were, were being chucked at my tent door. Who the fuck was it I thought, I didn't know who or what to expect. I guess I was lucky it wasn't some violent guy that I'd pissed off, although the campsite owner was very angry he didn't get physically aggressive. He did make me feel very uncomfortable though.

To complete my Machynleth mission, I snorted a line of speed, packed my gear, and I headed up towards the Alternative Living Centre. I didn't fancy staying around the campsite any longer as the owner had made me feel a little unwelcome.

At the so called commune there were a few tourists around, and a few youngish adults kneeled down on various vegetable patches. There were solar panels, wind turbines, a fair amount of farming equipment, and a health food café. I went straight for the café for a coffee and added small brown roll and butter to my platter.

I didn't think of talking to anybody, or attempting to make a bit of a life outside London. All's that was important to me was my speed and dope. I soon wandered out of the commune and was back on the road. I wasn't that impressed with the commune. My expectations had been sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, and not health food and clean air.

Back on the main road and I got a lift pretty quick; A lift from this lovely couple that had been pitched next to me in the camp site. They drove a Volkswagen Beetle and were very teacher type people. As usual, I didn't say much, in fact I got a bit paranoid.

Paranoid that they might report me to somebody about my drugs. You know, teachers, they think they're always right and stuff, and are all so het up with code of practice and all that, so I had to be careful. But that was probably paranoia. They were probably a nice couple, in fact come to think of it; the guy looked like my amphetamine dealer from London I frequented. The couple might have been able to give me a good time too. I never contemplated or understood this talking to strangers stuff. I mean how can anybody expand their social circle if you can't talk to strangers like mum always said? Hang on a minute; it was teachers that told me that. Crazy, mad Great Britain!

Anyway, these guys driving the Beatle were only going to Machynleth town, a couple of miles down the road, and they dropped me there. I don't know why, but I thought they were out to interfere with my drug taking. I guess there are some people you trust and some you don't.

Chapter Eight

In Machynleth I kind of entered hyperspace and found my self in another town, maybe Brecon. At least my drug crazed brain travelled so tranced-out I can't remember the journey. Somehow I ended up getting out of a car of some kind, walked straight through the town, and on entering a roundabout I stuck my thumb out high in the air. Pretty much straight away this hippy hating couple of policemen in their whatever car, said I can't hitch at that particular spot and said I had to "Walk on sunny" using good old fashioned foot power. Worried about my drug stash I didn't complain and began footing it along this "A" road. I was about one hundred meters up the road when this old Morris Minor Van pulled up beside me and, practically without the van stopping, I was in the passenger seat and we were chugging along the country lanes..

The driver was a long haired and laid back beachcomber type hippy. A bit like me but with a few years added on. He must have been about twenty-five. He drove with one foot crossed up on the seat thus only having one foot controlling the pedals. A bit scary but I guess he was sort of in control, and no, it wasn't an automatic, the car was more an antique than anything else. How he drove it with one foot still boggles me decades on. The back of his van had a load of camping junk including a super giant kettle about half a meter in diameter, and a great giant clump of mint leaves. He said he was on his way to a festival and that I could come along. Here we go I thought, I've made it to the start of the beginning.

This guy was all over the place on the road. We went on all sorts of roads; "B" roads, "A" roads, and even a motorway that he treated like a path, pulling up on the ghost island of a junction to figure out whether to turn left or go straight on; pathologically indecisive! I felt quite safe with him and so rolled a few joints as we traveled. He began to start complaining of sickness. We rolled off into a motorway café and he got out of his car and began throwing up beside his car. I felt a bit worried about the situation but just stayed in the car as I felt quite safe there. We were soon back on the road and then the guy pulled up on a roundabout where he went about vomiting again. I couldn't really help the guy obviously, and I sat in the car and rolled a joint. I tried to think of some kind of first aid ideas and suggested he eat some grass, roadside grass that is. He wasn't amused or impressed; in fact he got a little angry. I just sat back and went about chopping up a line of sulphate. Funnily enough, I can't remember what I used as a chopping surface over this walkabout. My guess is I used the lens of my torch. Us hippies think of everything we do!

As this guy was vomiting beside the roundabout, I was puffing away on a joint when suddenly the whole car lit up from behind. It was the pigs. They had crawled up

behind and caught me by surprise. In a panic I stubbed out the joint and stuck it behind me. A police officer came up beside the car, told me to get out, and immediately picked up the joint.

Next stop, after being kind of groomed in the back of the police car about what a poor child I was turning to drugs kind of crap, we arrived at Bristol Police Station. They found my amphetamines, my dope, and I was totally screwed. I sweated it out in a cell for a while; about twelve hours. This was actually the second time I had been in a police cell. I had spent a few hours in one for shop lifting when I was eleven years old.

The police bailed me out to appear in a couple of weeks in Bristol Magistrates or something. The Morris Minor Van guy was let out at the same time and offered for me to continue with him to his festival. I was a bit down though, as I had no more drugs to numb my addicted mind. I asked him if he'd drop me off on the M4 motorway instead of continuing to the festival, and drop on an M4 he did. Or it might have been a small motorway that led out of Bristol to join the M4, but it's all the same isn't it? The police had ransacked his car but he was okay about it, which was a bit of a relief as I was feeling a bit guilty of getting him into trouble and aggravation with the law. He took it very well and said goodbye and home I headed. Why the guy had been sick I didn't know, I didn't even ask him. I reckon he might have been an undercover cop. All I could think about was getting back to London and refueling, so as to speak! The only lines to snort at that time were the white lines up and down the roads. I was kind of hoping I could magic up some speed off the side of the road, I was that hooked. I'd say that particular come down was as down as they get; arrested for enjoying myself, and no more speed or dope until Hammersmith at the start of the M4 in London.

Chapter Nine

The journey back to London was pretty much another hyperspace situation. Not because of drugs but because of worry and concern as to what was to become of this legal episode. You know; criminal record, parent's reaction, fines and all that.

Puffing away on boring old cigarettes I was soon back at mum and dad's place in Roehampton, London. The next days ahead were pretty grey and dull. Mum and dad were pretty disappointed, although they already knew that I dabbled in drugs a little, after I had bleated the truth out to them after overdosing and a suicide attempt whilst working and living on a farm. I was a child that, although quite mature and responsible, my parents had little control over me. But they arranged to take me to Bristol Magistrates after a short stay at their Welsh cottage, so I chilled out with mum and dad for a while, re-fueled with a bit a cannabis of course. My head's gone a blank as to exactly what I did there. The only thing that sticks in my head was a trip down to the nearest village with dad.

Now I wasn't much one for steeling in my drug taking years, but life is full of little tests for us all, and dad took me to the local iron mongers. Now, a knife sharpener (oil stone), shone neon, red, green and yellow in my head. The stone was a small one, about three inches long. Stupid me, court case in the very near future, and I went and blooming well stole one. A crazy thing to do, and, although I got away with it and could have got in serious shit, I regret it up unto this day. In fact I feel shit about it. I love the Welsh and this was just the crappiest thing I could have ever had done. Never mind, the Gods will make me pay in one way or t'other. I'm not talking about Hale Marries, but forks of lightening kind of thing, at least that's where I'm at.

Now cannabis to me was like a cigarette and a beer both wrapped in one pastry layer. I didn't think twice about smoking joints. To me cannabis was in coalition with air and water and more important than food. As fury freak brothers around the globe would say, "Dope will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no dope".

I didn't stay long at Friddiodd Glession, (mum and dad's cottage, translated as; blue or green sheep track), and I was soon in Bristol Magistrates. Dad drove me down to the court house in Bristol and dumped me on the doorstep. Armed with a tie, a clean pair of jeans, perhaps a smart shirt, and a rucksack thrown in for measure, not to mention the eighth of an ounce of splif that sat in the little pocket pouch of my jeans, ponging out the court room, I faced the judge and I wasn't given too bad a punishment either: A seventy pound fine to be paid in five pound a week installments and a criminal record. The punishment meant nothing to me. After all, my only office was the park! I was soon

rockin' the free road, thumb in the air and rollin' along. My Welsh walkabout soon kicked back into motion.

I soon found myself wandering along country lanes, kicking stones and picking up bits of trash thrown out by cars and stuff. I even found half a burnt five pound note that was later magically turned into a real five pound note by our antiseptic friends "The Bank of England".

That fiver would help my fine, and my habit. An eighth of an ounce of spliff was about eight pounds in those days. That was for Black, the best. Lebanese blond was even cheaper, a fiver an eighth. An eighth of an ounce, for those non smoking imperialists, weighs the same as a metric Sterling penny, or one might complain to the European Union so; three and a half grams. A half pence coin was equivalent to a sixteenth of an ounce, and a two pence piece a quarter of an ounce. It was very rare for me to have a quarter on me though, as I was not a wealthy man. A quarter of an ounce was also considered a more serious offence if caught in possession too.

I wound my way around roads and stuff until I came to the Welsh border town Monmouth. Now I had arranged to meet a group of friends in a campsite four miles up the river Wye. I was a day early and so was in no rush. I sank a pint of the local brew in a pub to try and see if I could score. I could have done with another half a gram of sulphate but, alas for me, no luck. I guess I hadn't mastered the art of scoring out of town. I saw no signs of drug culture as my eyes twisted around every nook and cranny in this pub. I hadn't a clue. I guess I'd have to stick to the eighth of dope that I'd acquired in London and forget about whiz for a while.

So I upped my rucksack onto my back, and up the riverside I started. The sun was shining and dandelion seeds sped past my eyesight as I swung along. My head in the clouds, more dope to puff me on the way as I swayed to and fro, not bothered about the recent law troubles, happy as Janice Joplin on acid. I came out of the fields as the path entered the woods. It was beginning to get dark and, what with no street lights, I needed a torch to find my way. It was quite freaky out on this path in dark trees. I could hardly see the path, and if it wasn't for my little torch that I had grabbed off of mum and dad's cottage, I would have been well screwed.

It must have been about eleven or twelve o'clock when I finally found the campsite. "Biblins" it was called. There were no signs of campsite owners or any other kind of officials, so I pitched my tent on the edge of the site, planning to explain to the campsite owner that I'd arranged to meet a group there later on that day. It was a pleasant pitch very close to the water's edge, not too many midges and so I went about getting some much needed kip. It had been a pretty long and chockablock day, what with court and all.

Morning rose and the next day sprang to life. I must have been up about eleven o'clock and sausages were soon frying away in my pan and the kettle boiling. There was still no sign of wardens or campsite owners, just a few groups of campers, including some cub scouts, girl guides, and maybe some Duke of Edinburgh nerds. The campsite was mainly for groups, clubs and stuff, as opposed to singles and families. The people I was meeting up with were some friends that ran a delinquent home called Hambro in my home town, and were giving the young troublesome adolescents a bit of nature. I was both friendly with the adolescents and the workers, and there were some voluntary workers who had once been young delinquents themselves. These places were known as Intermediate Centers then and this one, Hambro, was very successful in steering kids away from trouble. In fact they had such a successful rate in the Borough of Wandsworth, London that the council later pulled the plug on them because there was a drop in crime in the area so the politicians thought Hambro was no longer needed. If Hambro hadn't turned people away from crime due to rigid strictness, the council would probably have kept the place open. Bloody politicians, they love playing around with statistics to gain votes, but not to do what's good for regular laymen. But Hambro's closure was to be several years later and to all of my buddies, a great loss!

I was right by the entrance to the campsite, a track that came down through the woods. I waited and waited, thinking of the excitement of seeing my favourite friends. A quad of bikers turned up and got chatting with me. Two fellas and two ladettes, all dressed in leather. They'd left their motorbikes up in the woods across the footbridge. They were asking me about the campsite situation and stuff. They wanted to bring a whole gang of bikers up there. As I stared up at them from my tent with the sun behind them and my brain addled with the come down and lack of illicit substances, my eyes quivered with unease, but I liked these kinds of dudes.

The bikers meandered into my head and soon immersed themselves in the historical brain cells of forgetfulness, and they disappeared. I completely forgot they had been talking to me.

My friends soon appeared. Bouncing round all over the place, they swarmed the campsite. I welcomed them and Duncan came over and we got talking. I cooked him a couple sausages and we went off and had a splif by the river. Duncan was my best mate, or Kilroy some called him.

Kilroy: Handsome, cool, intelligent, casual, free, sane, lots of women. A friend in six or seven billion, however bloody many there is in this cramped lacking of space planet. It would be an honor to walk with Kilroy. I didn't fancy him or anything; I just thought he was the coolest geezer on this planet.

The IT centre, Hambro, pitched their teepee and tents right up the other end of the campsite. So I dug up my tent and pitched along with them. I say teepee and a teepee it was. They had built their own teepee with a collection of two inch by two inch pine posts that were joint together with metal pipe so that they could be transported in their rented Sherpa van, and canvas as an outer shield, and a cotton inner sheet. An open top gave the option for internal fires, with a wind flap to be adjusted when required, if and when the wind changed direction so that the tepee didn't fill with smoke.

The night drew in and the holiday kicked into hyper drive. This was to be my residence for the next six weeks. My Welsh Walkabout suddenly became static as a meditating Budist Priest.

Chapter Ten

Now you may be wondering about my job back home with the YTS Youth Training Scheme. I worked for this YTS scheme as an opportunity to learn a trade in carpentry. And my work base was on an eighty foot Rhyne barge on the Thames River at Thames Ditton in Surrey. Theo would drive me and some of the guys and girls from Hambro out there in his van every morning. He'd buy us breakfast and we'd fuck around on this barge all day learning carpentry and generally renovating this old barge we were on. Theo our boss would be very easy going and allow us to work at a very easy pace. It was a fun job. We'd go one day week to the YTS base in Wandsworth to pick up our cheques and maybe go on a day outing to places like London Zoo. Hardly job training but I guess the YTS people had some kind of reason.

Well Ian, one of the main workers at Hambro and a great friend, and Theo, my carpentry teacher, persuaded the system to stretch my employment to this campsite, saying that it'd be therapeutic for me, and for them, to even be paid to stay on this holiday, along with another of my good friends Sinbad (Michael).

Michael: Sinbad and I were real brill mates. We took speed together, acid together, mushrooms, dope, black bombers (a quality kind of speed), and what ever else had fluttered passed our eyes. We did lots of drugs and we worked together.

Sinbad and I had similar tastes in music too, at least I liked his music; Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix. I think Sinbad quite liked my music too. I was into music in a pretty big way. Music was my thing. Not football, ballet, or any other sport. I'd really dig wacko music too; I would go for way out hippy music like Gong, Steve Hillage and Spirit. And some unknown stuff like Bread Love 'n' Dreams, way out stuff that I would pick out of old archives. I had some pretty rare Hendrix Albums too; Albums of Jimi playing in a bar in New Jersey in mono before he was famous. I loved my music and was always ready for expansion.

Sinbad and I were kind of on an even pa. We weren't best mates but we got along fine and did our lives together. It wasn't until many years later when I made a pass at his girl friend that we fell out.

Also on the barge there was Sally. A lovely girl but I didn't go for her as I didn't think she'd familiarize herself with my hippy and druggy lifestyle. There were some other very young kids on the barge not employed by the YTS. They were there to experience a little bit of hard graft. Scraping out the bilges I think Theo would often get them to do. We even had a girl on Community Service there for a while, but she evaded that within a few weeks. She was nice, Karen she was called. She invited Sinbad, me and

a couple of our mates to a party in Clapham once, a party of hells angels but, as one might not expect, altogether a very peaceful party.

Kilroy and Gary would visit the barge occasionally and maybe one or two of the Hambro workers. Gary was a good mate, but you had to watch him as he was a little light fingered and I didn't trust him completely. His sister was gorgeous and I melted every time I saw her. Definitely a goddess of goddesses.

The barge was called "Caroline" and the idea was to keep young troubled kids occupied renovating the vessel, and eventually turning it into habitable accommodation for homeless guys and girls.

Chapter Eleven

Now at the camp site there were a big bunch of my familiars. There was Stan; Now I didn't know it, but Stan had a gay crush on me, which is why we were good mates too. He used to buy me lots of beer and see me happy for puff. He used to speak badly of my amphetamines, but used to have a line or two out of my stash so that I didn't do too much myself. I didn't know he was gay until a year or so later when he made a pass at me. Now I'm not gay, but anything went with me, as long as I got my end away. Bi-sexual I guess you could say.

Stan was a strange guy. He used to say he was tripping all the time and that acid only brought him down to "normal". He'd wear soldier outfits, even dressed as a German soldier once or twice that I may emphasize I admired not. And sometimes he'd wear Jap soldier gear. He was so straight he was bent. And so square he was round. He'd lose his temper on a regular basis, not taking any nark from any one. Although he was quite small, he was mean. Stan wasn't my best of friends but we always seemed to end up together. I was hoping his sister'd come along. She was lovely; an angel off of the wedding cake, I loved her and would have loved to have dunked my teabag with her.

Back to Gary, friendly old Gary: He took chances and was always in and out of Wandsworth nick. Now Gary, he was big in my head. I had to look up to him and respect him and didn't want to mess with him as I loved his sister Debby. She was like the snow queen of fairy land. And she took speed which was a win in my books. She never saw eye to eye with me though. In fact, I was so in love with her at one point I nearly killed myself in the name of love. At the time I felt that if I killed myself I'd be in her arms from there to eternity. She was a magic lady.

There were all kinds of guys at this village of tents by the river, the River Wye that is. There were Jason, Martin, Malcolm, Ants, Alan, Danny, Emeling, Kilroy. Only guys I emphasize. A few women came along on short trips a couple of times, but I guess none of them felt like staying on or anything like that. Ian's bird Heather came along once or twice, with a bunch of younger kids from Hambro. They would put up a few tents temporarily but only stayed for a few days.

All together really nice people, the lot of them; they were people with feelings and emotions and a grasp for a better life, somehow. You could say that Hambro was one big happy family and, unlike ninety percent of the world's population, totally in control.

Chapter Twelve

Again Welsh Walkabout was live, rockin' and rolling. Still generally static though. We were cooking on log fires, gathering our own wood, as well as generally living like we lived all the time, but outside. We made ourselves a kind of village. We even had a dog there called Jossid, Ian's dog, a Staffordshire Bull Terrier, a bit rough but not dangerous. I felt safe with Jossid around, apart from the time she got a bit rough with me whilst I was on a magic mushroom trip back in London. I'd gone round to Hambro whilst on mushrooms, sat down, and the bloody dog got on top of me and started biting my wrists. I found it quite difficult to handle at the time, but no blood was shed so, hey ho.

I remember when Ian acquired Jossid. Ian's a bit of an expert in Psychology and used his mental skills on Jossid who turned out to be a sound dog. Jossid was a well behaved and obedient dog. I was very impressed with Jossid, a great little girl. Ian is brilliant with dogs and humans alike.

I had no experience with dogs in my home life and upbringing, just cats, gerbils and various birds, the feathered kind that is. It was quite special to live in an environment with a dog present, a very special dog it was too. I was quite envious of dog owners in general. A dog to me was like a thinking, acknowledging, and working toy, friend, and protector that I hadn't had and would never have. She was a lovely beast old Jossid.

Traveling still went on. Guys going up and down the M4 motor way, in what ever transport they could arrange, mainly thumb power really. I must have gone up and down that motor way four or five times in the next few weeks: Picking up Youth Training Team cheques etcetera. Not to mention maybe one or two humble bits of dope. No speed though. I decided to lie off of the speed for a while, considering my recent escapade with the law. Ian would continuously lecture me about how bad amphetamines were to your whole body, but I guess it just never clicked in me until much later in life. Crazy for a bit of whiz, I even resorted to snorting line of Number1 tobacco snuff.

Ian was good at letting people know the facts of taking various substances. He would advise people but not lay down the law. He didn't scare people and point the finger at them, he would help them with advice like: "Don't do it so often", or maybe, "Make sure you take plenty of Vitamin C"; Useful advice. He wouldn't slam down the law on guys, he was a good friend. He later tried to get me into a rehab unit but alas, things in the future went bad for me and I ended up squalling around psychiatric hospital corridors, but that's later on in life.

At the campsite the police hadn't forgotten me either. I got a special visit from them saying that the guy I had been bust with in the Morris Minor Van had died of Hepatitis, and it was advisable that I get checked out in case I'd contracted the disease, especially as I had drunk water out of the same bottle as the plague ridden fiend. I reckon he was probably a cop, I mean the length some of these cops go through to bust people for drugs.

Ian drove me down to a doctor in Monmouth in his old Saab 96 for a blood test, but as the doctor came at me with a needle I freaked out and refused the test. But hey, I'm alive today so what the hell. I also thought that it might have been a sting by the police to see how many narcotics were in my system, not to mention the fact that I was ape shit terrified of needles. I mean, although I hadn't had any sulphate for a while, I wasn't sure whether or not there'd be residue left in my system and, bloody hell, it's my body. Bleeding Bristol police, they didn't even give me my stash box back. I had a lovely stash box before they bust me. It was a seven gram blue tin, with a red holographic background with black (the colour that is and not spliff) magic mushrooms in the foreground, twiddling around in an array of kaleidoscope patterns. Great for playing around with whence out of one's head on acid or mushrooms! And as to the legal system that took my tin; I call that theft!

Crazy fucking law; I mean what's wrong with having some brain tingling fun. I mean why allow people to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or perhaps even sniff some nail varnish remover, but smoke dope and, hey, that's bad for you. They're in cuckoo land man. What's wrong with a bit of dope? Now, maybe speed's a bit bad for the body and the mind, and maybe acid can give a bad time, but nothing you can't get over. Now Heroin: I never went, now or then, near the stuff. Not that it's that bad for you or anything, it's just I wanted a little control over my life. You get hooked on heroin and you may find yourself with one or two more problems than you can deal with, Cocaine too. Avoid I say. Stick to the cheap and cheerful.

Anyway, I came out of the doc's and somehow met up with Kilroy in Monmouth. Now Kilroy knew how to live. "I've seen this supermarket that's a knock over for shoplifting" Kilroy said to me. Hours later we were by the side of the road with a half bottle of Southern Comfort and a massive bottle of cider. We had our thumbs out, hoping to get a bit of the way up the trail before rolling down a hill towards the river. No one stopped for us though and so we decided to walk up the riverside. Now I was going pretty insane by this time, and didn't think of telling Kilroy that we were going up the wrong side of the river. So silly us we had to wade through the damn river, stopping at an island in the middle to finish off the cider. But then, silly me, there was a fucking bridge further up that I didn't think of telling Kilroy about too. Thinking about it, maybe

Kilroy put some speed in my booze, or acid maybe. I don't know. If not that Southern Comfort was a bloody amazing bottle of good time booze.

It's funny me and Kilroy. Many a time I ended up tripping with Kilroy, and I often didn't tell him what I knew. Why? I can't even answer that myself. He was the most fantastic of people and I was proud to associate with the guy. His brother and sister were lovely people too. His sister, Ruth, was sweet and very angelic. His brother Stan was totally the opposite of Kilroy. Mister Grumpy some would call Stan, and he was always having tantrums too.

Kilroy and I were plastered. I don't know about Kilroy, but I was practically hallucinating I was so plastered. We got back to the camp site, dried off, and chilled out around the fire that was constantly simmering away almost twenty-four/seven. I'd often get up in the morning and bring the fire back to life with a bit of blowing and tinder. Within a few minutes I'd have a kettle on the fire and then a cup of tea maybe. We weren't given breakfast or lunch even. But Ian did supply all of us with a vast supply of fresh bread and melted margarine, as for a fridge, there was none. The tub of margarine was always in a bit of a state. Straw and dirt constantly swilled around in the half molten gloop of marg. I was not very clean in those days and I'd often get various infections, to me though, the infections were just another trip.

I always remember that day with Kilroy, he's now dead, about twenty-five years later he decided to take his life. He bravely took that flying leap in risk that the after life would be better than his life at its present, and let's hope it is. I'll always miss Kilroy, he took everyone by surprise I think. One would never have guessed he was not enjoying life. Well I think he's happy now. Good luck Kilroy.

Chapter Thirteen

Well. We must have stayed in Biblins campsite for six weeks or more, and this day was the last. The long drive home was ahead of us. It was a break from the road for me, because Hambro had a place for me on their mini bus and hitch-hiking can be quite stressful: Loitering along the side of the road for hours on end, feeling grotty, thirsty, and puffing away on cigarette after cigarette. Speaking to stranger after stranger about god knows what.

Any way, somehow we got everything packed, in a mass of confusion and diabolical decision making. One group in Ian's Saab, and the rest of us in a school bus. I think I was lucky enough to be given a front seat, woh yeah! And by the window! All though I think I'd rather have been in Ian's Saab.

As we left the campsite we passed a large congregation of about twenty bikers. The guys and girls in leather I had met before Hambro had arrived had swarmed the campsite. I was a bit upset actually, as it would have been great to have mixed with them. I like bikers. I was a bit of a biker too, on a little fifty cc Yamaha FSIE and back in London that is. Not quite as cool as some of these high end bikes the bikers were on, RD 250's and stuff. I think that my little "Fizzy" was a great little bike though.

Anyway, so we're on the road to London but, for some reason, of which I can't remember, we had to call in on Newport first. I think it might have been something to do with vehicle hire. Newport was a big town about fifteen miles Southwest of Monmouth and in Wales, bordering the M4 motorway. On the way in we came across Ian's Saab with a load of tear-a-ways waving us down. Lucky for them we came along as they'd locked themselves out of their car and needed a small person's hand to slip in through the open window and unlock the door. The Hambro team was always full of luck. Problems would solve themselves in the Hambro world.

Now I've got a story about Ian's Saab 96. I loved it. To me it was more of a god like chariot as opposed to a car. It looked so cool you could have got frost bitten had you got too close. As it took off up the track it was like a power boat opening up on to the sea. And the reason Ian and company had locked themselves out was because the locks didn't work from the outside and so you had to leave the window half wound down to open the door from the inside. Some idiot had obviously done the window up a bit. Anyway, in fact, years later Ian sold me the car for one hundred quid. I actually manage to own the car of my dreams. And to drive the car was something so special you just felt real. I had no license though so didn't drive it much. A lot of the time I'd just start her up and maybe tinker around with the engine and stuff. I was proud of that car until disaster struck: My dad had conjured one of his nutty ideas and sold the thing to the scrap metal

dealers for a tenner. My dad liked cars to be spick and span and didn't want my cool cucumber showing up his cars in our front yard. He dumped the thing while I was tied up in a padded cell or something. I guess the car was getting on a bit, so I didn't care. I've had several cars since then and have moved on. The car was at fault anyway; there was sometimes a lot of difficulty getting into third gear and I had to shift from second to forth. The car does leave me with good memories so – let's go.

Anyway, I'm in the Van, we've left Wales across from the Severn Bridge, and we're heading down the friendly old M4 motorway towards London.

One stop at a motor chef, next stop we get to London. We sort everyone out to their homes and stuff, and by late evening, back on the chain gang and on with life!

THE END.

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