

The End of the Sixties.

For me, the end began one early evening in London in August 1970. On the way from my flat above the notorious Mangrove Cafe in Ladbroke Grove, I emerged from Kings Cross Station to catch a bus to my parent's house at Parliament Hill Fields. I was preparing to go on a summer car trip to Europe with my old school friend and flatmate Jeffrey. At the corner of Kings Cross Road and Euston Road was a makeshift newspaper kiosk huddled against the entry steps and the fluted columns of the superb Victorian folly of St. Pancras Railway Station. In front of the kiosk I saw large black headlines on the white Evening Standard teaser board with its thin, transient paper edges flapping in the gentle breeze through the wire holding frame. "Famous Woman Rock Singer Dies". Oh dear, who was it now? So many had crashed and burned since the onset of the Beatle-led cultural revolution started in 1962. I reluctantly walked over to the kiosk and looked down at the tabloid-size newspapers piled neatly on the counter.

My heart sank down to my plimsolls "Not her! No! Not Janis!" The bored newspaper seller ignored my outburst. I gave him the sixpence. The bad/great girl of rock, the singer whom many of us guys secretly wanted to take in our arms and protect from the world that was eating her up; was dead. Janis was just another rock-star cliché in the end. Her immense talent and future wasted, the potential barely tapped, just like the youth movement she helped define and inspire. Even uber-smashed Lady Day had left a substantial catalogue for us to cry over. Watching Janis Joplin cry, laugh, emote and live through each song she sang, had always given me a spine-tingling experience like no other. Her voice seemed to split into a chorus of separate, different voices when she screamed with pain and then softly sighed with love for us all. I never saw her perform live. I saw her on the Monterey Pop film, the recent Festival Express, and some other contemporary TV shows she appeared in, she certainly was not a typical beauty; she had bad skin, she drank too much, but her inner vulnerability gave her a powerful outward glamour. I played her vinyl albums hard to their scratchy end, just like Janis herself.

I had just turned twenty, and it was getting hard to hold onto the idealistic dreams of the late sixties with our heroes dying or being imprisoned almost daily. Governments feared the growing youth movement they, the Churches or parents had no control over. Their old-system of "keep quiet" conformity was not working anymore with us. The awaking information age now showed us all we needed to know about how the world was really being run and by whom. The lurid moral turpitude and revolutionary spirit seen by the powers-that-be branching out from this growing awareness, had shocked the establishment to its calcified roots and they reared back with harsher laws, brutality and fewer civil liberties.

The year before had witnessed the amazing high and low of the 60's youth/hippy movement. Woodstock in America and the Bath Festival in England had proved that events could be peaceful and work even with upwards of a million fans at each. The waning year of 1969 then brought the fatal stabbing near the front of the stage at Altamont Speedway.

The varied, colourful participants of this unique youth upswelling were relatively free, could travel and had money in their pockets, thanks to their parents hard work, decent public education, liberal welfare programs and chronic socialist and capitalist guilt since the end of the Second World War. The Road, creativity, peace, and ecology were now becoming a way of life not just an amusing diversion.

Many, including myself, watched mostly vicariously from the sidelines. Leading outwardly normal lives but on the evenings and weekends, living other dreams, gathering together, at dances, political events, concerts, be-ins, and happenings. This despite not being really sure what our bonds were, if at all, but knowing that it didn't matter right now because tomorrow it would all be different anyway. We had been brought together in a movement uniquely led for the first time by young people using new and ancient knowledge with intelligence, creativity and playfulness.

Yes, good old corny hope for the future was in the vanguard, inspired by Ghandi, JFK, MLK, Timothy Leary and Mr. Natural. This was happening because of, and in the midst of, a cold war where we were told we could all be dead in four minutes at the press of one red button in Moscow. What a cathartic, blessed tonic was that euphoric hopeful feeling of idealistic certainty that we could make a difference, when compared with the heavy, cold, institutional blanket being placed over us by scared, unimaginative people. For this unorganized movement coalescing all over the Western world, it now transcended just going to a mere rock concert. Now the reflection we saw of ourselves in John Lennon's rose-colored-granny-glasses, was a vision of a world which could be far different from the dead-end future reflected from new religion crystal office buildings

Everything was being questioned: religion, ethics, politics, lifestyles, everything was up for grabs. There were now generational paragons to follow; Bob Dylan, The Beatles and other rock idols questioned authority and gave us more than just clothes fashions, hairstyles and dances as had the early rock generation of Elvis and his contemporaries. Our idols' own explorations gave us the impetus and courage to learn about and experiment with new ideas.

We were just teenagers and twenty-something's after all, yet we were grappling with deep and complex philosophical issues that were constantly changing our lives. Vegetarianism, sexual freedom, civil rights, women's rights, spiritualism, religion, and inner therapy were (re)discovered, reworked and haltingly practiced from the bottom up. New ideas, religions, philosophies and good old-fashioned hucksterism gained popularity from EST to Esalen as we searched for the right belief systems to live our lives by with fellow kindred spirits. In America especially, the struggle was also tinged with the life and death issue of the disastrous Vietnam war coloring nearly every young Nephew Sammy's life.

Altamont Speedway, a dirt racetrack set in the grassy rolling hills forty miles east of San Francisco was the site of the ill-fated Rolling Stones concert that laid bare the dark underside of the vibrant youth movement. The speedway area is now surrounded by the world's largest electricity generating windfarm. Rock Festivals until Altamont had been

remarkably incident-free events apart from the usual bad trip sufferers in the free clinic medical tent. Pacifist practices had dated back to the peace movement and the original Be-ins in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and Griffith Park in Los Angeles. The two stabbing deaths by Hells Angels "security" at Altamont brought a dose of the real, hard world to our hopelessly idealistic dreams.

Great though they were, the Rolling Stones in truth were not of this new peace and love underground world. Always on the dark side, they had followed on the coattails of the Beatles and the peace and love movement for the last couple of years. They never deigned to perform at the big multi-day, multi-group festivals churning around the globe. Even Dylan himself had appeared at the Isle of Wight Festival. The Stones always preferred to tour by themselves. So Altamont, although not a true example, is now seen as the evil twin bookend to "good" Woodstock. It still stands as the obvious symbol of a failed movement brought to its knees by drugs and violence. Yet Altamont did not finally kill off or exemplify the direction of the movement, it merely deflated the popularity back to its preferred more underground following.

Along the paisley-coloured way, the Hells Angels motorcycle gang had jarringly muscled their way into the peace and love movement as the 'security' for music events. Originating in Oakland after WWII, their exploits were legendary with the impetus of Marlon Brando's "The Wild Ones" film, and their bad reputation was well deserved. Even the autocratic concert impresario, Bill Graham, had to negotiate with them to guarantee the success of his enterprises.

Along with the Angels came the threat and reality of random violence and the introduction of the darker drugs of the time. Uppers and downers, speed, cocaine and heroin began to crowd out the peaceful pot, mushroom and LSD users. So many young kids, from 13 up were taking powerful psychedelic drugs, often daily. Mix them in with the thousands of untreated and shattered returnees from Vietnam and a generational disaster was only waiting to unfold.

Popular culture and music was in fact splitting into a myriad of sub-genres that were actively being explored and created at that time. The world's western influenced youth were traveling, meeting, and learning from each other at revolutionary music gatherings. Reggae, Indian, Latin, Folk, Mid-East and African music began to influence, be influenced by, and change Western popular tastes. Even today, these gatherings leave their trace with regular large festivals being organized such as Glastonbury and Knebworth in the UK or Burning Man in the US along with the fringe British Travellers and American Deadhead movements.

At the beginning of September 1970 I was in Hamburg with Jeffrey. We both sported long, frizzy hair, mine dark brown, Jeffrey's ginger and each had pathetically feeble immature beards and moustaches. I had met Jeffrey when we were eleven years old on the first day of High School and we became fast friends. His parents had come to Britain from Cologne in Germany, where most of his family had perished in the concentration camps of WWII. An only child, born late in life, he was both spoilt and punished by an

autocratic father and a kind but quite touched mother. They would all slip fluently between English and German when speaking or arguing with each other, which was quite often. This upbringing was a recipe for an eccentric character, creative but without much moral or social boundaries. He soon made himself a celebrity at our school with his ever-more zany exploits. Jeffrey's passion was film and his hero was Hitchcock. The highlight of his life could well have been when he spoke on the phone to the Master when he was filming "Topaz" in London. He was indulged with film equipment and began to make macabre 8mil and super 8 films of about 3 to 15 minutes long. At the age of twelve, his film "The Tramp" won a competition and he was featured in the "Sunday Times" with arty photographs by Lord Snowdon of "the new Hitchcock". He was a perfect foil for me as I was a rather shy, self-effacing personality, his audacity enabled me to do things I would never have done by myself. I became a willing victim/participant in his ever more outrageous capers.

Our vehicle was a small mid-1950's light green Morris Traveller commercial van. It had had windows cut in the sides and back to make it look like a mini-estate car or station wagon. The interior enabled us to put the seats forward and sleep inside as needed. We had purchased it for forty British Pounds, which was cheap even then. It had a great little engine, but its main problem was the metal (or lack of it) body. The upper part of the chassis had rusted away from the lower part of the chassis. Turning a corner, the top part of the car always wanted to go in the other direction to the wheels and engine. Of course the rain would also fly in from all sides around our feet. On board we had sleeping bags, tent, a few clothes, a little food and primitive cooking equipment.

We had driven to Hamburg from England via Ferry from Harwich to Ostend in Belgium. As usual, we got off to a late start out of London due to Jeffrey's dithering and were forced to race to Harwich to catch the last late ferry. Arriving at the dock, I noticed that the parking lot was suspiciously empty probably because all the cars had already boarded the last boat. The man at the gate said we were too late, it was leaving and shut his window for the night, saying we had to catch the next ferry which would leave at 6am the next day.

Jeffrey would hear nothing of it, he accelerated the car across the empty, wet tarmac parking lot and made towards the boarding ramp. I began to notice people running after us, converging from different areas of the dock, they were shouting and waving their arms frantically. I told Jeffrey and he just shrugged it off, "It's OK" he said, only looking forward. We could see the ferry at its berth, and Jeffrey turned onto the dock ramp to the ferry. Going up the metal ramp we could now see the ferry in front of us. But I saw there was something wrong. There was water between us and the ship! It had set sail and was about thirty feet away from the dock and churning further away rapidly. I yelled at Jeffrey to brake. Simultaneously I had a sudden vision of him trying to make the leap to the boat, and after a noticeable way-too-long long moment of hesitation, he slammed the barely usable brakes to the floor. Puzzled passengers on the departing ferry's stern watched wide-eyed as the deranged proceedings unfolded. Thanks mostly to the incline rather than the brakes, the cars front wheels stopped just two feet from the edge of the

dock and our watery grave. The dock workers ran up to us and said to Jeffrey “Are you a fucking madman!?” We slept in the car and were the first ones on the 6am ferry.

Our goal was to first wallow in the mythical fleshpots of Amsterdam , at the very centre of European hippyness and then press on to Hamburg with what was left of our already meager savings. We were both Beatle nuts and our goal was to walk down the Reeperbahn and go into The Star Club and the Rathskeller to see the very stages where the Stu Sutcliffe Beatles had learned their skills and how to “mek show” night-after-night and hour-after-hour. The influence of the Beatles on our lives was profound. This was a visit to sacred shrines for us. The Beatles were indeed “bigger” than any god we knew.

Staying in Amsterdam for a while, we crashed at old empty warehouses set up for Europe’s transient traveling youth. The crash pads had bare wooden floors where we laid our sleeping bags, along with many others from all over the world. There were toilets and showers, and a basic café, where you could sustain yourself cheaply on simple food and drinks. Amsterdam had a very benevolent attitude to the new youth culture and psychedelic clubs were set up with approval of the authorities and flourished in old churches and warehouses like the “Melkweg” and the “Paradiso”. For the first time we could openly buy and smoke grass, hash, hash oil, and opiated hash without fear of arrest. So unlike the constant vigilance required in England. Sellers displayed openly their wares at the clubs, tables groaning with numerous varieties of pharmacologica and the attendant paraphernalia. Psychedelic music would be played by underground groups all night in a haze of smoke. It was so exhilarating to walk by policemen at Dam Square smoking a joint and they would just say “Good evening!” Sixties heaven!

It was time to leave our hippy Nirvana and head north across the great dyke holding back the North Sea from the low-lying Dutch polders spread out behind. Sputtering through the treeless Fresian fields towards Germany, we talked excitedly about Amsterdam, our dreams and The Beatles and Hamburg, where they had learned their craft.

When we made the crossing into Germany at a small border post in a pine forest in the north of Holland, the coal-scuttle helmeted guard did not want to let us in the country. He pointed out animatedly that our tyres were too worn and the car was dangerous, which was actually quite true. It could also have been that we were two long-haired, bearded, wild looking characters in the middle of nowhere with a ratty car. Jeffrey’s fluency in German came into play. He argued politely but insistently with the guard for some time. I did not understand a word of their conversation and just hoped for the best outcome. After some time and hard-looking bargaining, the guard reluctantly agreed to raise the thin wooden barrier and let us through the border into Germany. Jeffrey later told me that the guard had warned him to buy new tires in Hamburg.

Being a hippy with long hair in Germany outside of Berlin and Frankfurt at that time was still a very unusual sight and elicited many insults and antagonistic glares from the natives. We were driving through Oldenburg when we decided to stop at a supermarket to go to the toilet and clean up. As we entered, we saw it was a large, noisy, warehouse size store and had dozens of checkout counters at the front. Within seconds of our entry the

sound level noticeably began to diminish. We were halfway to the toilets when the warehouse took on a Twilight Zone aura. As we passed I saw that the cashiers were frozen to their places. Immobile and gape-mouthed, their fingers were still attached to the buttons of the tills as they stared at us. Dozens of shoppers had stopped pushing their carts and blatantly looked at us with clear disgust. As we continued our way to the toilets, I imagined hearing their necks creaking as they swiveled their heads to watch us complete our journey.

In the toilet we could hear the noise level gradually increase back to its previous level as we completed our ablutions. Upon exiting the toilets, we experienced the very same descending silence and indignant staring that our entry had elicited. I thought to myself, "Look out folks...pretty soon your children will all be looking like us!"

On our arrival in Hamburg, we found cheap accommodation was in short supply. We took up residence on a scrap of linoleum floor at a hostel in downtown Hamburg. From our window on the crowded sixth floor we could see the leaden, freighter-filled River Bremer flowing to the North Sea.

Our visits to the Reeperbahn and the rock clubs and Beerkellers lining it, was of course disappointing. Hamburg's entertainment district was many years removed from its glory years of Beatle infamy. From Beatle biographies and photo's, the clubs were not particularly well appointed even back in 1960 but these ten additional years had been additionally hard on the clubs. The clientele were the usual drunk sailors and a few tourist types like us. A musically poor rock band was playing to desultory applause in the Star Club. There appeared to us that there was no chance of a future "Astrid" venturing into the club to experience a new phenomenon which would change the world. Strident accordion-driven polka music filled in the gaps between rock sets. Did most watchers think the same of the Beatles and other British groups in their early days as we did of these present day derivative bands?

The other titillating points of interest in Hamburg for us were the state-sponsored brothels and walking streets where prostitutes carried out their government approved duties. This enlightened policy was so different from the usual furtive English way; A small paper note on an open Soho doorway or a discreet "nude model" ad in a seedy newsagent's window near Paddington Railway Station was the careful, police-avoiding method. Being young healthy men, our libido and interest was piqued. We had very little money, so we decided to pool our spare money and let one of us visit a lady-of-the-night. Jeffrey won the clip-up and we set out to tour the teutonic pleasure palaces. We found a walking street, blocked off at both ends with solid wood screens that allowed men to enter discreetly into a bright, crowded, raucous scene behind them. Inside, on each side of the street there were two-storied narrow terraced houses. Each house had similar, large picture windows at ground level which allowed pedestrians a perfect view of the room inside. All sizes, colors, ages and shapes of women were lounging sexily in their individual rooms, enticing the passers-by to come closer. Some were hanging over the lower flap of the Dutch door at the entry to some houses, their breasts spilling out of their skimpy clothing, beckoning possible clientele. Many windows had their curtains drawn to

show that the lady was busy. There was a cacophony of men joking together and bargaining with the women as they drunkenly reeled down the street, with so many women to look at and they not knowing which one to visit. Jeffrey did some investigation and discovered the going rate was from 40 to 80marks. None of this street's denizens were up to Jeffrey's standards and we went on to another brothel. The State brothels had a courtyard on the ground floor where the ladies waited against the walls as men walked around selecting their partner for a night of passion, or at least, for half-an-hour. After some more inspection and conferencing with me, Jeffrey settled on a short, slim German woman with long black hair and a very short skirt. They negotiated a fee of sixty marks and off they went upstairs to the lady's boudoir. A surprisingly short time later, Jeffrey returned, with a subsequent well described story of his conquest.

Chatting with some travelers at our hostel we heard tell about an amazing three day concert which was starting on September 4th. It was called the 'Open Air Love and Peace Festival' and was happening on Fehmarn Island, a small, sparsely populated piece of greenery in the Baltic Sea just off the north coast of Germany. Jimi Hendrix, Canned Heat and more, it was going to be a great cast. We couldn't miss it for the world. Setting off early the next morning, we planned to arrive later that day, the day before the festival officially started.

Crossing on a small car ferry from the German mainland to Fehmarn, we landed on a very rural, wind-swept island. By luck and guesses, because there were no discernable signs, we found our way by narrow roads past quiet farms to the site of the open-air three-day concert. There was a large field surrounded by thick hedges and trees which was serving as a parking lot next to the stage and viewing area. A short line of cars waited at a break in the hedge to enter the parking field and we fell into the short queue, and thus followed one of the scariest times of my life.

Guarding the entrance to the parking field was about a dozen very tough-looking German Hells Angels. Yes, they did look like how you'd think German Hells Angels would look like. At least we weren't in a dark alley. As we neared them, we could see the gang gathering en masse around the cars in front of us. They were rocking the cars and banging on their windows and chassis. A man ran by coming from the direction of the gang, He gasped that they were extorting money from everyone coming to the concert. We considered turning around, but the space between the cars was not large enough. We were trapped in line as the leather and chain clad group swaggered up to us. We locked all our doors and windows.

They gathered around the car shouting and banging on the roof and windows. They were demanding money from us. Jeffrey shouted in German at them to leave us alone and warned that we were from the press, but that didn't stop them for even one moment. I opened my window a little and shoved some coins and bills out, hoping they would scramble for the meager sum and we could skitter away, but they wanted more. They started rocking the car, rattling the door handles and banging on the roof, visibly denting the thin metal over our heads. The security of our flimsy vehicle would not hold out much longer under such an assault. They pushed in one of the rear windows and tried to

reach our possessions. Jeffrey, seeing the path into the parking field had cleared up, slammed the car into gear and slewed wildly away on the wet grass to the gate. This however, did not deter the Hells Angels. Our defiance had infuriated them and they ran along side and some climbed on the car banging and screaming at us. Jeffrey kept driving across the field as the bumpy terrain eventually tumbled our uninvited passengers off the bonnet and roof. They stopped running after us and went back to harass the next motorist in line. We were really close to have been severely beaten up and our belongings stolen. Two days later these same Hells Angels killed a man at the same gate.

After such a harrowing experience, we were now up for a bit of fun. We toured the site to decide where to set up camp and were not impressed with our choices. Jeffrey occasionally worked for the BBC and had a press pass with which we thought we could parlay with a bit of luck into an entrée to the much preferable backstage area. We drove to the back of the stage where there was the fenced off area for the artists trailers and the cars, vans and tents of other hangers-on's and roadies. We flashed the press card and as Jeffrey could speak the lingo, he somehow convinced them that we were covering the concert for the BBC. Astoundingly, they believed our story and opened up the gate for us into the backstage compound. We set up our tent next to our car in the crowded area.

We and everyone else backstage were not free of the bullying and intimidatory actions of the festival's resident gang. The Hells Angels regularly wandered through the backstage area as if they owned it. No one would or could stand up to them. They would threaten people and steal randomly from them, daring the peaceful people within to challenge them. Despite their presence, we met some beautiful people hanging out there. Uli was an artist from Berlin, perhaps forty years old but bohemian and with really wild ideas, and always ready for a lot of fun. He was traveling in his VW van with two beautiful young hippy chicks. We smoked a lot of hash in chillums, happily searing our throats as the concert finally neared its opening. Uli came to visit us in England the next year and we had fun making a 16mm film called "The Nowhere Man meets the Beatles". We crashed Abbey Road studios with our cameras and lights, but were rebuffed entry to the hallowed halls.

The idea of the festival was a good idea. But unfortunately there were a few minor details the promoters had somehow forgotten about. There was a performing stage, but not much else out front in the audience. From our own experiences at the parking gate and at the backstage entry, security was surely not being enforced. Any form of food, fresh water and toilets within half-an-hour's drive for the thousands of fans gathered would also have been a good idea too! As we made friends we all shared what we had with each other backstage and occasionally someone would drive off around a back way through the woods we found to avoid the Hells Angels, and go to a nearby village for basic necessities. The dense woods nearby offered the only latrine relief for performers or the audience. The amazing music was now being played continuously and washed over our grubby heads and smoothed over any other minor inconveniences such as the frequent heavy rain storms. We occasionally strolled around to the front of the stage to watch the bands.

Some of the performers were Embryo, Limbus 4, Fich de Cologne, Alexis Korner, Ginger Bakers Airforce, Cactus, Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Ten Years After, Taste, Canned Heat, and Jimi Hendrix, who was arriving directly from the Isle of Wight Concert after playing with Dylan. He was to perform during the second day but because of the torrential rain they moved it to the next day. During that afternoon we had a chance to glimpse him. Arriving backstage in a big car he slowly got out and looked real shaky on his feet in the bright sunshine. He stumbled and appeared to have trouble getting up the rickety wooden stairs to the stage, and had to be helped by his roadies. We went round to the front of the stage to watch the show with the thousands of fans bubbling with anticipation. By this time he was not touring as the Jimi Hendrix Experience but as his Band of Gypsies with Billy Cox on bass and Buddy Miles on drums. One report on his set has Don Cherry joining Jimi on stage, but I have no memory of it.

The set was no more than mediocre, the sound equipment rather poor and it was not perhaps one of his masterpieces. He appeared very weak, small and frail looking, but his fingers could still run up the neck of his guitar just like the first time I saw him at the almost empty Brady's Boys Club in the East End of London in '67. A strange event, impossible to have imagined ever occurring now, considering the god-like reverence accorded to Jimi, happened during his set. I can only assume many in the crowd wanted the 'old' "Purple haze" Hendrix, but he was now transforming into a more jazzy, bluesy riff. During the set some jerks in the crowd began heckling Hendrix, heckling Hendrix can you ever believe! He smiled wryly and laughed at the continuous interjections and gave the hecklers in the crowd the two-handed finger, mouthed silently what I presume were florid epithets and played on. Even the greatest rock guitarist ever could not feed the beast and escape its revenge. Would Hendrix be doomed to play "Hey Joe" forever, Just like Jagger and "Satisfaction"?

As the 4th and last day dawned, we got word backstage that something big was afoot as a result of the Hells Angel murder of a fan at the parking gate the previous day. Complaints about the lack of supplies and basic amenities were noticeably growing among the audience. Backstage, the artistes and management teams were getting upset at the promoter. Not needing a second warning we literally threw our tent and belongings into the back of the car without packing and drove out of the backstage area before things got really out of control. It turned out to be a good decision. As we drove out of the gates a band was still playing on the stage. Looking over to the edge of the woods which had served as all our latrines, we saw about 100 machine-gun toting helmeted police gathered in a straight line facing the stage and audience. I craned my neck to look back at the stage and I noticed it was beginning to smoke and burn somewhere behind the amplifiers. The music crackled to a stop as the conflagration increased dramatically and everyone on the stage and the backstage area began scattering from the flames as the troops began to move in. We bumpily sped away across the grass field, watching the stage and backstage area be engulfed in flames in our rear view mirrors.

Leading up to this denouement, we had heard the complaints from the backstage crews gathering over the days of the festival and learned the reason for this debacle. It was the inept, crooked promoter. He had organized a huge festival, provided minimal facilities

and at the very end he set fire to the stage and ran off with all the proceeds in the ensuing confusion without paying the performers.

Ulf, a roadie for a German band, one of the friends we made backstage, had told us before we left, to meet up with him at a motel where the musicians were staying near the ferry. We waited there for Ulf as the backstage denizens began to gradually drift back from the dramatic break-up of the festival. We ate, chatted and smoked chillums as more people returned and the whole story was pieced together. Sitting with Alexis Korner and members of his and other bands, we made plans to track down the errant promoter. The promoter had not been seen near the ferry and we presumed he was hiding out somewhere on the island. Cars were at a premium as most of the performers and entourage had been delivered to the island on foot. We offered our trusty rust bucket to the quest and a small caravan soon left the motel car park, and fanned out onto the few roads that crossed the island looking for the promoter and we promised to meet everyone back at the motel.

Alexis Korner and a roadie of his had piled into the back of our car and it was hard concentrating on our purpose when we were laughing and singing so much as we careened round the narrow lanes. We stopped at a small general store in a postage stamp of a village to get some drinks and munchies and to ask if they had seen the promoter. The little old aproned-lady behind the counter engaged in general chat with Jeffrey. As we were leaving she asked him if we would be interested in something she had been given. From under the counter, she pulled out a wad of about sixty large-size posters. We couldn't believe our eyes! They were a wonderful psychedelic stylized portrait of Jimi Hendrix' head with his multicolored hair coiling all over the poster. Promoting the festival, *Der Bild*, the German magazine had had them printed and they had been distributed to her little shop along with their magazines. I suppose the conservative inhabitants of this burg were not into Hendrix! I needed no prompting, rolling up the posters I stashed them safely in the car.

In the end, no one found the promoter. Back at the motel rendezvous, with Alexis Korner and the remaining festival participants we shot the breeze til late. Alexis, a true giant and patriarch of the British Blues and R&B movement was a personal hero of mine and to spend some time with him was a true, hedonistic pleasure. Without his efforts in the 1950's the British Blues scene would never have conquered the music world in the 1960's. Among his star pupils were John Mayall and Eric Clapton but he always remained true to his passion for roots music, mentoring and encouraging his protégés and never going the easy commercial way. In the very early sixties, I and the rest of British TV-watching youth were given a chance, by an enlightened producer, to learn and appreciate blues and R&B when his became the live, house band for a children's twice-weekly variety show called "5 o'clock club". In every show he and his band, or his guest performers, never played down to the age of the audience, but introduced us to a vibrant, energized music form that certainly penetrated my psyche for life. We didn't know who Muddy Waters or Willie Dixon were, but we loved their music. Later, as my musical tastes matured, I had a solid experience to call on when forming my opinion of what I did or didn't like. I can still picture his thick afro hairdo, (he was white), the bushy

muttonchop sideburns and the deep, dark chocolate voice, and husky chuckle caused by his ever present cigarette.

We slept in our car in the parking lot and in the morning we had breakfast in the motel café and said our goodbyes. We had looked at the nearby ferry schedule and noticed that a car ferry went to the southern part of the island that Copenhagen, Denmark was located on, across the Baltic. Despite the fact we had very little money left, we bought a ticket, boarded and steamed to the Danish ferry port of Rhodby.

Copenhagen was a clean, friendly, unthreatening old city. Apart from the little mermaid statue, it had the famed Tivoli Gardens, which was a wonderful old-time haven of rides, arcades and entertainment, especially if you do it on the opiated Kashmiri hash you just had toked from a cool, befringed Danish hippy you met on the main walking street. Walking along a wide promenade in the Tivoli between an Oomph-pa-pah band Gazebo and a beergarden, an obviously very drunk man was staggering towards me. He was weaving diagonally across the wide path, just stopping himself from going into the bushes at each side as he defied gravity and staggered the other way. He began to lurch laterally across towards me, but it became a timing thing, his erratic progress caused him to pass obliviously ignorant just an inch in front of me, leaving me gagging on his gaseously toxic breath. Finally he ended up in a hedge where he mercifully didn't try to continue. The only other moment of interest was when we saw Charlie Watts of the Rolling Stones strolling along the main walking street with his wife, carrying a young kid and a couple of other kids in tow. The Stones were to perform in Copenhagen that week.

We were out of money. We had miscalculated the exchange rates and Denmark was expensive and we did not have enough money to pay for the petrol and ferries to make our way back to England. Our only commodity we had apart from ourselves was the free posters given to us on Fehmarn. Parading down the walking street, hawking them to all and sundry we had sold just a few before we came to the attention of the police who quickly and politely dissuaded us from that entrepreneurial avenue. Desperate, we went into a poster and card shop we had noticed and miraculously walked out five minutes later with a bunch of money. The owner had loved them and had bought the lot! There was now money to get back home with a little to spare. I wish I had even one of posters as a keepsake!

Gazing out beyond Copenhagen Harbor, we could see the distant shore of Malmo in Sweden on the horizon. Sweden! We were so close and our new found money gave us enough to continue our trip just a bit further. We parked the car and took a super-new hydroplane ferry across the narrow channel. It was a great ride, so fast, so smooth. We docked and went through customs. Our hippy appearance guaranteed at almost any border that we would be pulled over by the customs officials and Sweden was no different. We did look a little disreputable and disheveled. They questioned and questioned us, searched us carefully, even though we had no luggage and they acted very gruff. They eventually accepted that we were here just on a day trip to say we had actually been to Sweden. Malmo was just a big port with no apparent virtues for us. I

called and chatted with Linda, a girl I had met two years previously in Paris. She lived a short distance up the coast in Udvalla.

We had finally strung out our time and money to the furthest possible point and the invisible elastic band that attached us to England began to pull us back to those regular work-a-day responsibilities. Our trip had taken us to new experiences, opened our eyes to different possibilities in our lives and we'd even seen Hendrix to boot!. We crossed from Denmark into Northern Germany on our more direct way home. Our route took us through small villages and towns on secondary but straight and quiet roads towards Hamburg. Stopped at a red light at a quiet country crossroad we were waiting for the signal to change. Our ears were suddenly assaulted by that awful sound of desperately screeching braking tires, an agonizing second later we were struck at great speed and force from behind. Shattered glass, and our luggage hit us and flew past our heads to meet their destiny with the front windshield along with the tortured sound of crumpling metal. The impact propelled us into the center of the intersection. In panic, I called out to Jeffrey "are you OK?" He put his hand on my arm and said, "I'm alright I think!", He shook his head to clear it and in doing so managed to dislodge many of the pieces of glass now embedded in it. I touched my hair and found the same situation. We were surprisingly unhurt but somewhat stunned by the crash, so after a few moments of head clearing and then smelling leaking petrol, we attempted to get out of our doors. We found them both jammed so we each climbed out of our side windows and staggered from the car. Standing at a safe distance we couldn't believe our eyes at the tableau before us. A large, new, Mercedes-Benz had indeed crashed right into the back of us at high speed.

As previously mentioned in the description of our car, the upper chassis was not metallically or in any sense of the word, structurally connected to the bottom half. Because of the speed and size of the M-B it had hit our rear end and then without stopping, had ridden up onto the back of our car, crumpling, bending and concertinaing the metal walls and roof at the back of the van on its progress before stopping behind our front seats. Villagers, on hearing the crash came running out to watch and help from nearby houses. Turning our attention to the driver, we saw he was moving in his car, he opened his door and, I think, because he did not realize he was now actually three feet higher off the ground than he was before he got into it, got out and comically fell the intervening distance to the road. Getting up with the aid of some villagers he appeared either dazed or drunk as he staggered around in the street. Sirens grew near and the police slewed to a halt, set up a traffic diversion around our cars and began to interview us. We assumed that we had no fault in the crash as we were stopped at a red light. The Policemen's tone towards us changed when they said that the other driver, says the lights were green and that we had suddenly stopped. To us, that didn't make any difference. In any civilized country, it is the responsibility of the car behind to maintain enough distance to be safe. From what Jeffrey could pick up, the driver was a local bigwig so we realized our hopes were not high of getting a fair shake. Information was exchanged. No question, Jeffrey's fluent German stopped the Police from arresting us and taking too much advantage of us. A tow truck was called and with much groaning of metal and tinkling of glass, the M-B was pulled off the back of our car. Our comically crumpled car was then pushed noisily to the side of the road.

So there we were, left at the side of the road in the north German countryside with an unusable shattered car that was now nine feet wide. We unloaded what remained of our luggage and wondered to ourselves what to do. All the neighbors, and police had gone, so there was no one to get any local advice from. For about twenty minutes of sitting on our luggage and weighing our options, which were few, and getting down to hitchhiking or walking to the nearest station we felt miserable and our recent great trip was becoming a distant memory. We started to hear a strange loud clanking noise coming from down the street. A military tank was thundering towards us, it's gun barrel pointed purposefully forward. The look Jeffrey and I gave each other was the "What the hell now?" look. So, not knowing whether we should run or wave a white flag, the tank suddenly slewed across the road towards us and came to a crashing stop just two feet away from us. A hatch opened on the tank, a fresh young face popped up and shouted, "Need sum 'elp mate?" Our eyes widened. Of all things it was a British tank. We had been traveling in the British Occupational Zone, a left-over from the Second World War split up of Germany among the allies. Even in its Frank Gehry-like state, our car had helped us. The tank driver had seen the GB sticker on the crumpled rear end of the car and stopped to help. More heads popped out from other hatches and we told them our sorry story. They sympathized about the local police and then offered to take us into the nearest town with a railway station. We climbed into the cramped, uncomfortable, noisy interior, met the other soldiers and had a great time inside the tin box as we clattered through the countryside. I can still taste the hot, incredibly strong stewed tea they gave us in a chipped blue enameled mug. Pulled up at a mainline station, on-lookers gaped as they saw two dusty hippies clambering out of a tank. We bade our saviours farewell and took the next train into Hamburg.

Traveling into European countries required an additional car insurance you could purchase at the border. On our return from Denmark into Germany we had purchased insurance and with "luck" they had an office in Hamburg. We went to the car insurance office to file our claim. The building had little one-person elevators that continually go up and down. I had never seen one before, they were without doors so that you just step in as it moves. We got some strange looks from the staid office workers as we dodged in and out of them at different floors while we were waiting for our appointment. We eventually got a little more from the insurance company than what it cost to buy the car.

We booked a passage on the ferry from Bremerhaven to Harwich. A hard 19 hour sea journey on an upright seat, then the train ride back to Liverpool Street Station saw us back in old Blighty minus our car but with memories forever.

After the Peace and Love Festival, Jimi Hendrix went back to London, and played a drop-in gig at Ronnie Scott's with Eric Burdon and War. He died on September 18th in the Samarkand Hotel choking on his own vomit. I sat stunned for hours after watching the news on the TV the next day.

By the end of September 1970, the deaths of Joplin and Hendrix, for me, had signaled the final end of the sixties. Our generations' greatest musician and greatest voice had been silenced within days of each other, leaving a gaping hole in our creative universe.