

| The End of the Sixties. (Summer 1970) 7-31-17 by Arnold Levine

For me, the end of that magical time really was sealed early on the evening of October 4th in London in 1970. On the way from my flat across the road from the notorious Mangrove Cafe in Ladbroke Grove, to my parent's house at Parliament Hill Fields, I emerged from Kings Cross Station to catch a 214 bus. 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. The thin, transient paper edges were 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 in 1962. Reluctantly, but inexorably, I 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 as 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 her 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 regret 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 performer. 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, missing her at the Royal Albert Hall on her only tour in 1968, but was captivated by her on the Monterey Pop film, and some other contemporary TV shows she appeared in. Certainly, not a typical beauty; she had bad skin, drank and smoked 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.

|

Having just turned twenty, 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, schools, or parents had no control over. The old-system of 'keep quiet' conformity was not working anymore with many of my generation. The awakening information age now showed us all we needed to know about how the world was 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 as usual reared back with harsher laws, brutality, and fewer civil liberties.

The varied participants of this youthful up-swelling were relatively free as compared to previous generations. Boomers found they could travel anywhere in the world, with money in their pockets thanks to their parent's hard work, decent public education, liberal welfare programs, and chronic socialist and capitalist guilt since the end of the Second World War.

Many, including myself, at first watched vicariously from the sidelines. Leading outwardly normal lives during the work week days, then transforming ourselves on the evenings and weekends to living other dreams, and gathering

together at dances, political events, concerts, be-ins, and happenings. This all transpired despite not being sure what our communal bonds were, if at all, but knowing that it didn't matter right now, because tomorrow it would all be different anyway. Brought together in a movement, uniquely led for the first time by young people themselves, new and ancient knowledge was being mixed with intelligence, creativity and playfulness.

Yes, good old corny hope for the future was in the vanguard, inspired by our martyrs such as Ghandi, JFK, MLK, Timothy Leary and Mr. Natural. This was happening because of, and still 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 feeling of idealistic certainty that maybe 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 beginning to coalesce all over the Western world, it 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 the new religion of crystal office buildings.

Everything was being questioned: religion, ethics, politics, lifestyles.

Everything was up for grabs. There were now strong 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 those new ideas. The 'authorities' didn't go easily into this new world. Our idols were harassed for their beliefs and visibility. Drug busts and trials were splashed over the tabloids and the leaders search for their own truth ridiculed by the conventional media. Alternative media outlets bubbled up, and like the International Times (IT), hounded with libel and pornography charges and its leaders sent to gaol. Stage and screen censorship was still strongly enforced on all films and stage plays. Despite the 'Lady Chatterly's Lover' obscenity court case in 1960 opening the written word for publishing, the Lord Chamberlain still had to put his seal of approval on any creative work for public presentation. This arbitrary censorship was challenged and washed away when 'Hair' and 'Oh! Calcutta' hit the London Stage.

After all we were just teenagers, and twenty-something's, 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 kindred spirits. In America, especially, the struggle was also tinged with the life and death issue of the disastrous Vietnam War, colouring nearly every young Nephew Sammy's life.

In the growth of this movement, uppers, downers, speed, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin began to crowd out the peaceful pot, mushroom, and LSD users from whence it was born. So many young kids, from thirteen up were taking powerful psychedelic drugs, often daily, and were now being offered much darker substances. Mix this pharmaceutical cocktail in with the thousands of untreated and shattered returnees from Vietnam, and a multi-generational disaster was only waiting to unfold.

Popular culture and music kept splitting into a myriad of sub-genres that were actively being explored. 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.

These original music gatherings leave their trace today with contemporary regular large festivals still being organized, such as Glastonbury, or Burning Man in the USA. The additional 'freedom' we lusted for is perhaps continuing with the fringe British Travellers, and the American Deadhead movements.

At the end of August 1970, I was in Hamburg with Jeffrey. Our method to get there was in 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 more like a mini-estate car or station wagon. The open van interior enabled us to put the seats forward, and sleep inside if needed. Purchased in London 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 whole

upper part of the chassis had rusted away from the lower part of the chassis. Gravity kept it in place, but when turning a corner, the top part of the car always wanted to go in the other direction to the wheels and engine. This schism meant the rain would also fly in from all sides around our feet. Despite this minor inconvenience, on board we had sleeping bags, one tent, a few clothes, a little food, and primitive cooking equipment.

Our route to Hamburg from England was via Ferry from Harwich to Ostend in Belgium. Getting off to a late start out of London due to Jeffrey's usual dithering, we were forced to make a mad race to Harwich to catch the last late ferry. Arriving at the rain-glistening dock, I noticed that the parking lot was suspiciously empty, most probably because all the cars had boarded the last boat. The man at the gate confirmed we were too late, that it was leaving, and shut his window for the night, saying we had to catch the next ferry leaving at 6am the next day.

Jeffrey would hear none of such nonsense, and he immediately accelerated the car across the empty, wet tarmac parking lot and made towards the upward-inclined boarding ramp. Noticing people running after us, and converging from different areas of the dock, whilst shouting and

waving their arms frantically, I told Jeffrey, but he just shrugged it off. “It’s OK” he said, only looking forward. The ferry was at its berth, and Jeffrey turned right onto the dock ramp to the boarding point. Going up the metal ramp at some speed we could now see the ferry looming in front of us. But I saw there was something wrong. There was water roiling between us and the ship! The vessel had set sail and was about thirty feet away from the dock and churning still further away rapidly. “Stop the car!” I yelled at Jeffrey.

Simultaneously, I had a sudden vision of him trying to make the leap to the boat, and, perhaps he did to, because 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 our car raced to the brink. Thanks mostly to the upward incline, rather than the brakes, the car’s front wheels stopped just two feet from the edge of the dock, and our watery grave. The previously gesticulating dock workers ran up to the car and screamed at Jeffrey “Are you a fucking madman!?” Backing up sheepishly, we slept in the car to be the first ones on the 6am ferry.

Our goal was first to wallow in the mythical fleshpots of Amsterdam, then at the very centre of European hippyness, and press on to Hamburg with

what would be left of our already meager savings. Both of us were Beatle nuts. Our goal was to walk down the storied *Reeperbahn*, stroll into The Star Club and Rathskeller to see the very stages where the Stu Sutcliffe Beatles had learned their skills, and how to ‘mek show’ night-after-night, hour-after-hour. The influence of the Beatles on our lives was profound. This was a visit to sacred shrines. The Beatles were indeed ‘bigger’ than any god we knew.

Staying in Amsterdam for a while was made quite easy by crashing at old warehouses, specifically set up for Europe’s transient traveling youth. What a wonderful concept. The crash pads had bare wooden floors where we laid our sleeping bags. Toilets, showers and a basic café, were supplied, to keep yourself clean and sustained cheaply with simple food and drinks. Amsterdam had a very benevolent attitude to the new youth culture, and even the psychedelic clubs were set up with approval of the authorities, flourishing in old churches and warehouses like the *Melkweg* and the *Paradiso*. Inside the clubs, for the first time, we could openly buy and smoke grass, hash, hash oil, and opiated hash without fear of arrest. An attitude so unlike the constant vigilance required in nearby England. Sellers openly displayed their wares at the clubs, tables groaning with numerous varieties of pharmacologica and the

attendant paraphernalia. Psychedelic music would be played by live underground groups all night in a haze of smoke. It was so exhilarating to walk by policemen in Dam Square smoking a joint and they would just say cheerfully, “Good evening!” Sixties heaven!

After a good time, we were ready to leave our hippy Nirvana, and head north across the great dyke holding back the North Sea from the low-lying Dutch polders glistening behind them. Sputtering through the treeless Fresian fields towards Germany, we talked excitedly about our Amsterdam adventures, and looking forward to Hamburg.

Making the border crossing into Germany at a small border post located in a pine forest in the north of Holland we had problems. The coal-scuttle helmeted guard did not want to let us in the country. After inspecting the car, he pointed out animatedly that our tyres were too worn, and the car was extremely dangerous, which was quite true. Jeffrey provided me with a running translation of his complaints. I’m sure a lot of the concern could also have been that we were two long-haired, bearded, wild looking characters in the middle of nowhere, with a ratty car, and he got spooked. Jeffrey’s German fluency came into play. Arguing politely, but insistently with the guard for

some time, Jeffrey was not going to take nein for an answer. Finally, the guard reluctantly agreed to raise the thin wooden barrier, and let us through the border into Germany. With a stern warning the guard had told him to buy new tires in Hamburg.

Being a hippy with long hair in Germany, apart from in Berlin and Frankfurt, was still a very unusual sight which we often discovered elicited many insults and antagonistic glares from the natives. Driving through Oldenburg, we decided to stop at a supermarket to go to the toilet and clean up. On entering, we saw it was a large, noisy, warehouse size store, and had dozens of checkout counters lined up at the front. Within seconds of our entry, the sound level noticeably began to diminish. About halfway to the toilets was when the warehouse took on a Twilight Zone aura. As we passed the check-outs, I saw that the cashiers were literally 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. At least no one covered their children's eyes! Continuing our way to the toilets, without looking, I imagined

hearing their necks creaking as they swiveled their heads to watch us complete our journey.

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

On our arrival in Hamburg, we discovered cheap accommodation was in extremely short supply. In desperation, we took up residence on a scrap of linoleum hallway at a hostel in downtown Hamburg. From the 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 Club* and the other historic rock clubs and Beerkellers lining the seedy street, were of course, disappointing. Hamburg’s entertainment district was many years removed from its glory times of Beatle infamy. From Beatle biographies and photo’s, the clubs were not particularly well appointed even back in 1960, and these ten additional years had been

hard on the clubs. The clientele were the usual drunken sailors out for some fun, and a few tourist types like us. A musically poor rock band was playing to desultory applause in the Star Club. With this atmosphere, there appeared to us that there was no chance of a future 'Astrud' venturing into a club to experience a new social phenomenon which would change the world.

Strident, accordion-driven polka music filled the gaps between the rock sets.

The other titillating points of interest in Hamburg for us were the infamous 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 usual, police-avoiding method.

Being young and healthy men, our libido and interest was piqued. Having so little money, we decided to pool our spare cash and let only one of us visit a lady-of-the-night, if that opportunity arose. Jeffrey won the clip-up, and we set out to tour the Teutonic pleasure palaces. Finding a 'walking street' not far from the Reeperbahn, we entered. A walking street is a one block long street, that is screened off at both ends with solid wood boards, but with a walking

passage that allowed men to enter discreetly into a bright, crowded, raucous street 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 as they strolled. All sizes, colors, ages, and shapes of women were lounging sexily in their individual front rooms, enticing the passers-by to come closer with seductive poses. Some ladies were more brazen, hanging over the lower flap of the Dutch door at the entry to some houses, their breasts spilling out of their skimpy clothing beckoning potential clientele. Many windows had their curtains drawn to show that the lady was busy. On the street, there was a wild cacophony of polyglot language, with men laughing together in groups, and simultaneously bargaining with women as they drunkenly reeled down the street. Jeffrey did some investigation and discovered the going rate was from 40 to 80 marks. On further inspection and negotiations, none of this street's denizens were up to Jeffrey's standards, so we went to another brothel that a denizen had told him about.

The State brothels always had a courtyard on the ground floor where the ladies waited, spaced out against the outer walls, as men walked around

selecting their partner for a night of passion, or at least, 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. A fee of sixty marks was negotiated, and they went upstairs to the lady's boudoir. A surprisingly short time later, Jeffrey returned, regaling me with a well-described story of his conquest.

Chatting with some travelers the next day at our hostel, we heard tell about a three-day concert which was starting on September 4<sup>th</sup>. The 'Open Air Love and Peace Festival' 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 dozens more bands, were performing, and we realized we couldn't miss it for the world. Buying a few more supplies, we set off early the next morning, planning to arrive later that day, the day before the festival officially started.

Our journey to the Baltic coast went smoothly, and we boarded a small car ferry from the German mainland to Fehmarn, and landed on a very flat, rural, wind-swept island. A bridge and a freeway later replaced the ferry and

split the island. Perhaps we should have been forewarned about the chaos to come at the festival, as there were no discernable signs pointing to the festival, and no one at the small port knew anything about it. Eventually we found our way by the narrow roads past quiet farmsteads to the site of the open-air three-day concert. As we pulled off into a field, we could see there was a large field beyond this one, surrounded by thick hedges and trees, which appeared to be serving as a parking lot next to the stage and audience area. A short line of cars waited at a break in the hedge to enter the parking field, and we fell in behind the short queue, and thus followed one of the scariest times of my life.

Guarding the entrance to the parking field were about a dozen very tough-looking German Hells Angels. Yes, I can guarantee they did look like how you'd think German Hells Angels would look like. At least we weren't in a dark alley. Nearing 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, and stopped wild-eyed, and gasped that they were extorting money from everyone coming to the concert. Considering turning around and leaving for a moment, Jeffrey began to wiggle out, but the space between the waiting cars

was not large enough for a quick exit, and we were trapped in line as the leather and chain clad group swaggered up to us. We locked all our doors and rolled up the windows.

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

Pushing in one of the poorly-fitted rear windows, they tried to reach our possessions in the back. Just then, 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 alongside and three of them climbed on the car banging the sides and screaming at us. Jeffrey kept driving across the field

as the bumpy terrain and speed eventually tumbled our uninvited passengers off the bonnet and roof. Giving up, they stopped running after us, and went back to harass the next motorists in line. A close call for our health and possessions. Two days later these same Hells Angels killed a man at the same gate, to horribly affirm our well-founded fears.

After such a harrowing experience, we were now up for a bit of fun.

Touring the site, we were not impressed with our choices as to where to set up our camp in the outer farmlands dedicated for the attendees. Jeffrey occasionally worked for the BBC, and had a press pass with which he thought we could parlay with a bit of luck, into an entrée to the much preferable backstage area. A fenced off area was provided for the artistes trailers, cars, vans, and tents of other hangers-on's and roadies. Jeffrey flashed the press card and as he could speak the lingo, somehow convinced them that we were covering the concert for the BBC. They opened the gate for us into the backstage compound, setting up our tent next to the car in the crowded area.

Being backstage did not mean we were 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 provocatively threaten people and steal random items, daring the peaceful people to challenge them. Despite their looming presence, we met some beautiful people gathered there. Uli was an artist from Berlin, perhaps forty years old, but an old bohemian with eccentric ideas, and always ready for a creative leap. Uli was traveling in his VW van with two beautiful young hippy chicks. Smoking a lot of hash in chillums, we happily seared our throats with them as the concert finally neared its opening.

The concept of the festival was a good idea, unfortunately there were a few minor details the promoter had somehow forgotten about. On the bright side, there was actually a performing stage, but sadly not much else out front for the audience. From our own experiences at the scary parking area gate, and at the backstage entry, security was surely not organized or even existent. 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! The dense woods nearby offered the only latrine relief for the performers or audience. Settling in, we made friends with the stage crews and helpers, and all shared what they had with each other. Occasionally, someone from backstage would

drive off through a back entry through the woods they had found, to avoid the Hells Angels at the main gate, and went to the nearest village for the basic necessities. Through these crises, amazing music was now being continuously played up on the open stage, and washed over our grubby heads, smoothing over any other minor inconveniences such as the frequent heavy rain storms. If there was a particularly good band on we'd stroll around to the front of the stage to watch from the general audience.

The promoter had lined up some stellar performers for such an out-of-the-way end-of-season concert. Embryo, Limbus 4, Fich de Cologne, Alexis Korner, Ginger Bakers Airforce, Cactus, Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Ten Years After, Taste, Canned Heat, and finally Jimi Hendrix, who was arriving directly from the Isle of Wight Concert after playing with Dylan. Jimi was to perform during the evening of the second day, but because of the torrential rain they moved it to the middle of the next day. That early afternoon we had a chance to glimpse Jimi. Arriving backstage in a big, black, long car he slowly got out, looking around at the small crowd gathered for his arrival. Looking real shaky on his feet in the bright sunshine, he walked to the wooden stairs leading up to the stage. Stumbling a couple of times, he appeared to have

trouble getting up the rickety stairs, and had to be helped a little by his roadies. Wasting no time, we went around to the front of the stage to watch the show with the thousands of other fans. By this time, Jimi 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 for whatever reason, I have no memory of that.

The music set was no more than mediocre for a Hendrix concert, I have to admit. The sound equipment was rather poor and it was not perhaps one of his musical masterpieces after a long summer season. He appeared very weak, small and frail looking, but when playing, his fingers could still run up the neck of his guitar just like the first time I saw him at the Brady's Boys Club in the East End of London in '67. But here, at Fehmarn, a strange event occurred, impossible to have imagined ever having occurred now, considering the god-like reverence accorded to Jimi, but it happened during this set. My theory is, I assume many in the crowd came wanting to see the 'Purple Haze' Hendrix, but alas, he had been transforming his music into a more jazzy, bluesy riff. During his set, some jerks in the crowd began heckling Hendrix. Heckling Hendrix! He smiled wryly, and laughed at their continuous

interjections, and at one point in reply, gave the noisy boors in the crowd the two-handed finger, while mouthing silently what I presume were florid epithets, and played on. That proved to me even the greatest rock guitarist ever could not feed the hungry beast and escape its revenge when not satisfied. Perhaps Hendrix didn't want to be doomed to play 'Hey Joe' more than fifty years later, like Jagger and 'Satisfaction'. Jimi gamely finished his ragged set, and departed in his limo back to the ferry.

As our fourth, and last day of the rain-extended festival dawned, we got word backstage that something big was afoot resulting from the Hells Angel murder of a fan at the parking gate the previous day. Complaints about the lack of supplies and basic amenities had been noticeably growing among the audience when we mingled out front. Backstage, the artistes and management teams were getting upset at the promoter's management in loud terms. As we were cooking some breakfast, and deciding where to go next, Ulf, a friendly roadie ran up to us wild-eyed and said, "You'd better get out while you can!" Not needing a second warning, we literally threw our tent and belongings into the back of the car without packing, leapt in, and drove in reverse, out of the

backstage area dodging people dashing in every direction, on their own wild flight. Haste turned out to be a good decision. Even as we drove out of the back gate in a panic, a band was still playing obliviously up on the stage to an increasingly puzzled audience. Now clear of the temporary scaffolded backstage structures, Jeffrey turned the car around, and as he did I glanced over to the edge of the woods, which had served as all our latrines. Gathered in a menacing straight line facing one side of the stage and audience, we could see about 100 machine-gun toting helmeted police. "Step on it!" I shouted to Jeffrey. As we lurched forward I craned my neck to look back at the stage area, and I noticed some smoke and flames were springing up somewhere behind the main amplifiers. Within seconds, the loud rock music crackled to a stop as the conflagration increased dramatically. Everyone on the stage and in the backstage area were now scattering from the flames as the troops seemed to take the flames as a signal to march forward, to add to the crowds growing panic and confusion. Speeding away across the rough grass field, we watched the whole stage and backstage area become engulfed in flames in our rear-view mirrors.

Ulf, had told us as we left to meet up with him at a motel where the musicians were staying near the ferry. Waiting in the motel parking lot, we watched the dazed concert-goers straggling in to line up for the ferry back to Germany. Ulf waved to us as our backstage friends began to gradually drift back on foot, from the dramatic break-up of the festival. To recount the dramatic events, we hung out in the motel's cafe, ate, chatted, and smoked many strong chillums. As more people returned, the whole story was pieced together. Not having washed for five days, we also took the opportunity to use Ulf's room to clean up.

Leading up to this wild denouement, we had heard and experienced the complaints from the backstage crews gathering over the days of the festival. From the incoming reports at the motel, at the very end as we had witnessed, the promoter had set fire to the stage, and sped off with the concert proceeds in the ensuing confusion without paying the performers.

Sitting in the café booth, now with Alexis Korner and members of his, and other bands, we made plans to track down the errant promoter. Alexis, a true giant and patriarch of the British Blues and R&B movement was already a personal hero of mine, and to spend some time with him was a true,

hedonistic pleasure. Without his efforts in the 1950s the British Blues scene would never have conquered the music world in the 1960s. Among his star pupils were John Mayall and Eric Clapton, Alexis always remained true to his passion for roots music, mentoring and encouraging his protégés, and never going the easy commercial way. In the 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 he headed 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. Now sporting a thick afro hairdo, (he was white), with bushy muttonchop sideburns like Sly Stone, he spoke in his deep, dark chocolate voice, and husky chuckle caused by his ever-present cigarette.

The promoter had not been seen near the ferry, and it was generally presumed he was hiding out somewhere on the island. Cars were at a premium as most of the performers and their entourage had been delivered to

the island on the ferry by foot. Offering our trusty rust bucket to the quest, soon a small caravan left the motel car park, and fanned out onto the few roads that crossed the neat island looking for the promoter. The posse promised to meet back at the motel in a couple of hours. Alexis Korner, and a roadie of his had piled into the back of our car, sprawled on our sleeping bags. It was hard concentrating on our serious purpose when we were laughing and singing so much as we careened around the narrow lanes. Stopping at a small general store in a postage stamp size of a village to get some drinks, and munchies, Jeffrey asked the shop owner if they had seen the promoter. The little old aproned-clad lady behind the counter engaged in general Germanic chat with Jeffrey. She hadn't seen anyone of his description, but as we were leaving, she asked Jeffrey 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. They were a wonderful psychedelic stylized portrait of Jimi Hendrix's head with his multicolored hair coiling all over the poster like snakes.

Promoting the festival, *Der Bild*, the German magazine had them printed, and they'd been distributed to her little shop along with their regular magazines.

The conservative inhabitants of this burg were obviously not into Hendrix!

Needing no prompting, I rolled up the posters and stashed them safely in the car. No one found the promoter that day. Back at the motel rendezvous, along with Alexis Korner, and the remaining festival participants we shot the breeze until late.

After sleeping in our car in the parking lot, in the morning we had breakfast at the motel café, cleaned up in a room, and said our goodbyes. Checking the ferry schedule, we noticed that a car ferry also went North to the southern part of the island that Copenhagen, Denmark was located on, across the Baltic Sea. Despite the fact we had very little money left, we bought a ticket, rolled on board, and steamed to the Danish ferry port of Rhodby.

Copenhagen was a clean, friendly, unthreatening, old city. The hostels were full, and hotels too expensive, so we slept in the van. 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, be-fringed Danish hippy you met on the main pedestrian street. The only other moment of interest was when we saw Charlie Watts of the Rolling Stones strolling along

the 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.

Checking our finances, we discovered we were nearly out of money. Denmark was expensive, and we had miscalculated the exchange rate. According to our small pile of notes and change, we didn't even have enough money to pay for the petrol and ferries to make our way back to England. Looking at our options, our only commodity we had apart from our bodies, were perhaps the free posters given to us on Fehmarn. Parading down the walking street, we hawked them to all and sundry, and had sold just a few, before we came to the attention of the police who quickly and politely dissuaded us from that illegal entrepreneurial avenue. Desperate, we went into a poster and card shop we had noticed on the parade, 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. Keeping one of the posters as a keepsake, I lost it in one of my many moves over the years.

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 little bit further.

Parking the car by the wharf, we took a super-new hydroplane ferry across the narrow channel. It was a great ride, so fast and smooth. At dockside, we went through customs. Our hippy appearance almost guaranteed that we would be pulled over by customs officials at most borders, and Sweden was no different. Looking a little disreputable and disheveled, they had cause, compared to our fellow, button-down ferrymen. Questioning us closely in their disgustingly perfect English, they acted very gruff and officious. Searching us carefully, even though we had no luggage, they eventually accepted the fact that we were there just on a day trip, to say we had really been to Sweden. Finally spilling out into the land of free love, we found Malmo was just a big port with no apparent virtues for us. Looking in my tatty address book, I called and chatted with Lena Henson, a girl I had met two years previously in Paris, who lived a short distance up the coast in Udvalle. Linda had temptingly asked me to come up and see her, but I had to decline. 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. On the hydroplane that took us back to Denmark and our car, we were wistful. Our trip had taken us to many new experiences, opened our eyes to different possibilities in our lives, and we'd even seen Hendrix to boot!

Crossing from Denmark into Northern Germany, we took a more direct way home, with our route taking us through small villages and towns on quiet secondary roads towards Hamburg. At one typical small village, we stopped for a red light at a quiet country crossroad. While waiting for the signal to change to green, our ears were suddenly assaulted by that awful sound of a desperately screeching, braking car, coming from behind us. An agonizing second later we were struck at great speed and force. Shattered glass, luggage, and camping gear hit us, and flew past our heads to meet their destiny on the front windshield. This was accompanied by the tortured sound of crumpling metal and a highly revving engine. 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 his mind, and in doing so managed to dislodge many of the pieces of glass now

embedded in it. Touching my hair, I found the same situation. Surprisingly we were unhurt from such a hard impact, apart from a few minor scratches, but still somewhat stunned by the crash. After a few moments of head clearing, I smelt leaking petrol, so I yelled “get out of the car!” and attempted to get out of my door. Both our doors were jammed, so we each climbed out of our broken side windows, fell to the street, and then staggered from the car.

Standing at a safe distance from the car in case it blew up, we couldn't believe our eyes at the tableau before us. A large, new, Mercedes-Benz saloon car had crashed into the back of our car. As previously mentioned in the description of our car, the upper chassis was not metallicity, 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 unconnected rear end, 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 forward progress. The distinctive front grille, now partially obscured by my dirty underwear stuck to it, had stopped just behind our front seats. Funnily enough, at that moment, the engineer in me realized the rusty metal may have, in fact, saved our lives, or at the very least from severe whiplash, as the

rusty compression greatly dissipated the high-speed impact. If we'd had a structurally sound rear end, the impact would have been much greater, and we could have been propelled in any direction. Villagers and shopkeepers, on hearing the crash, came running out of the surrounding buildings to watch the scene, and some ran into the road to help us. Luckily, it was a very quiet intersection, and just a few cars carefully threaded their way through the debris when coming upon the scene.

Turning our attention to the M-B driver, we could see he was moving erratically in his car that was hitchhiking on top of ours. After an obvious struggle, he opened his door. Because he did not realize he was now three feet higher off the ground than he was before he got into his car, he stepped out, and comically fell the intervening distance face first to the hard road. Slowly rising with the aid of some villagers, he appeared either dazed or drunk as he staggered around aimlessly in the street. Sirens grew near and police cars slewed to a halt in the crossroads, setting up a traffic diversion around our cars, and began to interview us. As we were legally stopped at a red light, we assumed we had no fault in the crash. During the interview the policeman's tone towards us changed after another officer, who had been talking with the

driver, came up and talked with him. The other driver was telling him the lights were green, and that we had suddenly stopped. To us, that still didn't make any difference, as in any civilized country, it is the responsibility of the car behind to maintain enough distance to be safe at any speed. From what Jeffrey could pick up from the other conversations going on around us, the driver was a local bigwig, so we began to realize the hopes for a couple of hippies were not high for getting a fair shake. Information was exchanged by all parties. There was no question that Jeffrey's fluent German stopped the Police from arresting or 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 slowly off the back of our wreck. Our comically crumpled car was then pushed noisily to the side of the road.

So, there we were, at the side of the road, in the remote north German countryside, with an unusable, shattered car, that was now nine feet wide. Unloading what remained of our battered luggage we wondered what to do next. All the villagers and police were now gone, so there was no one to get any advice from. For about twenty minutes we sat on our luggage and weighed our options, which were down to hitchhiking or walking to the

nearest train station. Our recent revelatory trip was quickly becoming a distant memory. A strange clanking noise, coming from down the street, startled us from our self-pity. Looking up, we saw a camouflaged military tank thundering towards us, its long gun barrel pointed purposefully forward. The look Jeffrey and I gave each other was the, “What the hell now?” look.

Transfixed, we didn't know whether we should run or wave a white flag. Just as we thought it was passing us by, the tank suddenly slewed across the road, and came to a crashing stop just two feet away from our bags. A hatch opened on the side of 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! Turns out 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, as the tank driver had seen the GB sticker on the crumpled rear end of the car, and stopped to assist. More heads popped out from other hatches and we told them our sorry story.

Sympathizing about the bias of the local police they then offered to take us into the nearest town with a railway station. Climbing into the cramped, uncomfortable, noisy interior, we met the other soldiers, and had a great time

inside the tin box as we clattered through the countryside. The taste of the hot, incredibly strong, stewed tea they gave us in a chipped blue enameled mug still lingers in my memory. Pulling the metal monster 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 short term car insurance you could purchase at any border. On our return from Denmark into Germany we had purchased insurance, and with luck the insurance company had an office in Hamburg where we went to file our claim. The building had those little one-person elevators that continually go up and down. They were without doors, so that you just stepped in as it moved vertically. 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. Eventually, the insurance company sent Jeffrey a money order for a little more than what it cost to buy the car.

Booking a passage on the ferry from Bremerhaven to Harwich, we endured a hard nineteen-hour sea journey on an upright seat, coupled with

the train ride to Liverpool Street Station. Back in old Blighty, now minus our car, we went back to our usual work and college routines.

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'. Crashing the Abbey Road studios hallway with our hand-held cameras and lights, we were rebuffed entry to the hallowed studios. As a fallback, the famous Zebra Crossing out front was then utilized in a string of zany antics.

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 18<sup>th</sup> in the Samarkand Hotel choking on his own vomit. I sat stunned for hours after watching the news on the TV the next day. Now I knew what my older brother felt like at the death of Buddy Holly.

By early October 1970, the deaths of Joplin and Hendrix, for me, signaled the fractured 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 collective consciousness. The Beatles acrimonious break-up

at the same time compounded the losses. How could there not be new Beatle music released forever?

From that point, the universe shifted, but not in the way I'd hoped. Even the stylized mod and psychedelic fashions I had worn in the late sixties with such pleasure gave way to the new fashion of second hand, torn and tatty clothing, unruly hair, and the hangdog gait of the tough 70s.

Following these losses, where would my future inspiration come from? How would the 70s play out for the alternative ideas and artistry of the 60s that had meant so much to me? Apart from my engineering work to anchor me, I had absolutely no idea what could satisfy my soul and give some meaning to my rudderless life.