

Jamie's Israel Diary January 1992

Saturday 18th January 1992

Spring from Springfield at 9a.m., having written letter to Graham re Patrick Estate / Wellesley Estate monies.

This is one Graham Millar who it turned out, after much detailed investigation by myself, family members and ultimately the Securities and Futures Authority, had 'churned and burned' some £250,000 of my Trust and Lloyd's deposit inheritance. He had even used £13,500 of my money to pay one of his own tax bills !

Post it at Lillie Road – van started first time; surprised me! Park outside Queens Club Gardens where John Piper slapped me 12 years ago (soon forgiven) & walk to Baron's Court Tube.

Plenty of time at Heathrow ... walk round Terminals 2,3 and 1. See Steve Davies + cue-case in No.3, smaller than expected, trying to look inconspicuous. Stock up stomach on coffee, coke, Burger King chicken concoction (not as pretty as picture!) & Danish pastries. Check in bag at CSA desk after long Q redirected to TAP desk. Chat with Romanian off on TAROM. Aeroflot desks to the left, Russian models and their minders; extraordinary guy in panic obviously smuggling currency / cocaine into Russia with his girlfriend who seemed to be in on the game. Kept zipping / unzipping his taped-up bags and shifting the trollies around for no good reason.

Expect he's in the Lubyanka now. Slight delay on flight but only $1\frac{2}{3}$ hours to Prague – good plane, Tupolev 144, (a direct rip-off of a BAC 1-11 apart from the seats which were only marginally inferior) excellent snack meal of bread & meats etc.. Free drinks & newspapers – take note BA !

Arrive Prague 5.30p.m. their time, hop onto tarmac & into bus

which takes us all of 100 yards ! Not many planes around – one Mongolian, two Czech. Clear customs/controls & collect bag – leave it at left luggage. 6p.m. now, bus to town not going for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or so so take very smart clean taxi (\$9 cash much appreciated) to St. Nicholas Church in main square of Old City. See about 60 cars in total on 25 minute drive in & that's Saturday night on the airport highway !

See letter/article sent to Vole for Prague interlude ...

Lots of checks & piss-poor scanning equipment – TU 154 (Trident copy) → Tel Aviv. Leaves on time.

Sunday 19th January

Arrive 5a.m. at Tel Aviv – incredibly efficient airport. Through all checks & bag in hand 10 minutes after leaving aircraft – eat your heart out Gatwick. Bus to town. Check out Adiv Hotel (no Diners Club) so walk on to Hotel Moss & sleep till 1p.m.. Walk round town for 5 hours + . Highlights – Russian shop, camera guy, Spanish run café, silverware. Lowlights – dearth of books on Prague, dogs at the yacht club. Gloomy pictures bar one at modern art museum. Good cappuccino at London Café – why can't we make squirty cream non-UHT ? Synagogue on Allenby won't let me in without little hat – anorak hood not good enough ! Buy old maps, T-shirts, film.

Evening taxi trip out to beyond Hertzliya to the Daniel Hotel (very plush), Bali Hai restaurant with Thai staff. Table of 6 Germans & thoughts thereon. Back 11p.m.. Good sleep.

Monday 20th January

Slightly shoddy b/fast at H.Moss. Buy amazing Mozart and Prague book from German-Jewish run old bookshop – pay about \$18 but it's worth much more. Nice people. Get nail clipper to tackle awkward little toenails ! More coffee / ☒ croissants with the Spaniards. Suss out car hire prices &

decide to take bus to Eilat for 29 shekels (\$12). Arrive Central Bus Station on No.4 town bus – bolshy slob on bench ☒ – eat snack & board bus with loads of army guys & gals for 5 hour trip to Eilat. Stop at Beer'Sheeva & again just before Dimona Power (Bomb) Plant at Azad – Mordechai Vanunu and all that hooaha. Negev desert. Last stop at weird animal ☒ sanctuary – nearly miss bus. Taxi from Eilat to the excellent Coral Beach hotel, masses to eat at supper including steak but with conversation-less krauts. Write half Prague saga. Good sleep again.

Tuesday 21st January

Multi-choice breakfast. Test sea and pool waters – sea warmer. Wander down towards Taba past coral reserve, funky observatory & submarine ride where 2 camels say hello, marine research centre, hotels being built & Eddi's café 1km from border. Return to hotel & continue towards Eilat. Check out 'Texas Ranch' rodeo centre, enter dolphinarium (nice), on past oil terminals & port (thousands of S.E.Asian cars), past army bases & along sea front round hotels. Looking for centre but signs not great so get rather lost climbing amongst the new settlements built for Soviet émigrés (1,600 here so far). Eventually reach bus station after some poor directing.

Good snack bar there. Enter department store & purchase Cougar radio/cassette £20 ace value. Drop film for developing at Shalom Centre (Shopping Mall) – good cappuccino at café there. Browse around 11 miles today à pied, I reckon.

Managed some sunbathing at lunchtime but factor 12 Body Shop is perhaps too screening in this good but gentle sun.

Talk to drunk Finn & interesting chat with 2 young Danes re scuba diving. One is instructor – tells about guy who had to spend 115 hours in the decompression tank owing to overdoing life on holiday the week before (sans sleep) & trying to rescue friend's diving belt whilst underwater.

Doesn't sound the sport for me !

Soup/salad supper – finish Prague article.

Wednesday 22nd January

Write postcards to Sue & Andy Garber. Get photocopies of Prague piece – send one to Bernard Levin & another with letter to the twins. Whatalot of words I'm doing at the moment ! More serious sunbathing with Factor 4 after a brief excursion by bus to Taba, Egypt. Lots of form filling, tax paying, customs etc. Very little over there apart from Hilton Hotel & the Nelson Club Hotel – no army, few people. Territory returned to Egypt after Camp David accord 1980 ?

Sun loses its strength at 2'ish – so more scribbling until 4'ish when I bus in to Eilat. Buy map of bible locations, batteries – film not ready. Post Office shut. Check out 'Reliable' car hire, more expensive than Tel Aviv, haven't yet decided whether to bus up or rent car. Walk down to Galei Hotel to watch documentary (Canadian) in Finnish (!) on treatment of Jews in Russia in 1990 – apparently it's got worse since then – & their immigration here. Introduced by sweet little man from Coventry who helps their cause.

Brilliant dinner at Tandoor restaurant ... Tandoori Nan, Chicken Korma & mixed veg. Sweet rice dumplings in honey, Turkish coffee £12 – I assure you the best Indian food I have ever tasted accompanied by live sittar & dancing. Underneath King Solomon's hotel, v.large.

9p.m. attended lecture given by Jacky Pri-Gal, Honorary Consul, at Neptune Hotel supposedly on foreign policy, economy & tourism but the bore concentrated on domestic policy & Eilat. He was interesting on David Gurion, later Ben-Gurion who founded this country. Left early – too hot, too dull !

And so to bed.

Thursday 23rd January

Write letter to Diana. Hope it works.

My sister-in-law, a poor choice of go-between in my attempt to rescue my marriage, who binned my letters to her.

Bus to Eilat 9a.m.. Buy envelopes in Post Office, film not ready – organise car hire \$310 for 8 days from Sat.a.m.. Reliable Car Hire. Buy 5 tapes at £5 each, 2 Marianne Faithfull, 1 Police, 1 Stevie Wonder, 1 Dvorak/Smetana. Coffee – film ready – none of Prague ... photos they had registered as negatives ! Post letter to Diana & to Vole. Back by bus, sunbathing nearly 3 hours. Then to Coral World – underwater observatory, best aquarium in the world (?), living coral, myriads of wondrous coloured & shaped fish. Turtle pool, shark pool. Well worth 22 shekels entry – evening nap, Arab evening in dining room, belly dancer & her minder/fleecer . Leave before end to read.

Friday 24th January

Wake early & read B.Levin. Write postcards to Pip & Charlotte + Steve Morris. 7.45a.m. bus comes for tour – Timna Valley.

☒ Brief documentary showing mining/smeltering of copper.

Plutonium here too. Sculptured rocks, Solomon's pillars, little Egyptian holy site to 5/6 gods. Then to Timna Lake (funded by Missouri Jews) where Bedouins encamp and camel escapes to come and check me out. Coffee milk good. Discover it's made at next port of call the Yotvata Kibbutz (considered one of the best in Israel). Friesian / Holstein / Charolais cross milkers looking forlorn but get good diet of cotton seed / straw / fresh fruit & have classical music played to them. Visitors' centre. Back past Hai Bar gazelles / ostriches to Eilat new settlements at top of hill. \$130,000 for 5 bed house. Jewellery centre – malachite green/ blue stone & silverware. Back 2p.m. – nap. Read, early supper, early bed.

Saturday 25th January

Shalom Shabbat. Postcard to Piers F-A. & Minnow. 9a.m.Suzuki

Spirit arrives → Eilat, sign papers & off on Ovda Road up along Egypt border (wire fence) through marvellous Negev scenery to Sdi Boquer. First to Ben Gurion graves then his simple home 1 mile away. Pass Avedat fort on hill. On past Dimona to Masada. Cable car up, walk down (20 mins) – walk  round edge. Essenes & Zealots. On to Qumran, Dead Sea Scrolls found in 1947 in caves. Dead end street past burnt out jeeps (1967 ?) – looking for road to Bethlehem, end up in Jerusalem. Lucky to find sign to American Colony. \$50 B&B in annexe, perfectly comfortable. Walk around first to St. George's Cathedral & chapel. Keith-Roach plaque ...

In gratitude to Almighty GOD and in loving memory of Violet Oliva Keith-Roach who worshipped for many years in this cathedral. This memorial is erected by her husband Edward Keith-Roach, District Commissioner of Jerusalem, and by her two sons, Martin and Anthony. 1939 A.D.

"She opened her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness".

On to Scolus Hill, across ring road to Jewish quarter, past the Romanian Church & 'Italian Hospital', & to St. Paul's Church where evangelical service going on, attend for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour – rather odd little songs with poor accompaniment, but they mean well. Back for supper in hotel, 9p.m..

Sunday 26th January

Superb breakfast. Eucharist at 8a.m.. Congregation 4. My 3rd communion. Into Old City at Post Office gate. Tomb of Kings closed Sunday. Franciscan cloister & church & garden. Greek place of Jesus' prison in Via Dolorosa. Round & about & into Dome of the Rock. 13 shekels entry – shoes off, bolshy Muslim guard in cave shrine under rock. Allah sign & plastic bin sitting on rock. On through Arab market (saffron 50p) into smart chic Jewish quarter. Expensive coffee 4.50 shekels but good Gaggia type. Out of gate by Armenian church

round walls to Jaffa Gate – enter Jaffa Gate & enter Christ
☒ Church. Vicar waffling on ... service started at 9.30, it's
now 10.40 & he's still rabbiting on. I got here at 10.20,
10.55 now & he's still going – lot of sore bums here. Time
to go ! Left onto Patriarchate Road, left into St. James'
Street – discover Rothschild Centre. Enter, look around,
introduce myself as friend of Miriam's son/grandson ?
Entymology → good discussion / debate on Israeli politics /
Chunnel / neo-nazism / Le Pen (losing his battle in Paris –
vive le peuple). Very bright Sumatran brought up in Germany.
Give him card. ½ hour at least there. Back down St. James',
left into Armenian church (St. James' Cathedral) – dead
ends at rear. Down through gardens with deep wells (Romans) &
out of Zion Gate. Right up hill to Tomb of David, cost of
entry 2 cigarettes + 1½ shekels for 1 candle & Jewish little
cap (cardboard version). Light candle – see tomb. Round to
site of last supper, downstairs an absolute disgrace –
uncared for , rubbish everywhere , nearby graves used as dump
. Discuss with female caretaker – Jews have picnics there &
don't take their rubbish away ! Back along Western wall past
Jaffa Gate & along Jaffa Road sussing out camera shops – buy
yetanothermap 20 shekels. Return via Schlomzion Hamalka (King
David Street) enter Jaffa Gate – back to Rothschild centre
to try to change \$20 as banks now closed. John takes me to
Arab money changer in market who gives me worse rate than
hotel would ! Never mind, c'est la vie. Directs me to
Wailing Wall – nose around, eventually turfed out due to
lack of little hat. Round Arab market again (got new film for
5 shekels) & out via lower Via Dolorosa (pass monks with
lightweight cross !) to Lion Gate. Down & right to Mary
(Mother of God)'s tomb – rather dark & spooky & Catholic .
Up into Garden of Gethsemane (padlocked !) & into beautifully
fronted Basilica of Agony. Mosaic floor inside, interesting
☒ altar paintings – pray awhile. Out & up hill past lovely
Russian orthodox St. Mary Magdalene church (closed), into
Dominus Flevit church with disconcerting sepulchre but masses
of rosemary. On up steep hill (Mount of Olives) to near

Nablus summit. Ace view of old city – couldn't find Maxwell's grave as all inscriptions in Hebrew. No loss ! On up hill, round Dome of Ascension leaving Russian tower to right. Its cross gleams, however. Along Martin Buber St. & left down hill on Shmuel Ben Adaya St.. Get smile from very pretty girl playing handball & wave in return ! Round wall, avoiding Rockefeller Museum, up Saleh El Din & round to Nablus Rd.. But unfortunately Garden Tomb closed. This is where Christians believe Christ rose from the dead – the rest think it happened at Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Return to hotel for a coffee. Was planning to go to Yad Vashem Holocaust museum but read it shuts at 5. So decide to go to Bethlehem instead. After 11 miles (once more) it's time for modern transport.

Hit Jerusalem rush hour at its peak. Road out is poor, compounded by maniac drivers particularly Arab taxis & Israeli Army jeeps. Hundreds of near misses in the twilight. Miss sign to Bethlehem so continue to Hebron – suburbs to the right then suburbs to the left before explosion rocks car ! Assume direct hit from intifada stone-throwing youth & curse Arabs but soon discover interior light has blown plastic cover out (although mysteriously light still works !?). Made one heck of a noise I can tell you ! Hit Jerusalem road and stop when near B'hem at roadside café. Very kind Arab speaking good English gives me baclava & coffee flavoured with cardomam seeds + box of matches. First gift of food in Israel & it's an Arab who obliges. Shukran. Keen Hussein of Jordan fan (makes 2 of us) – nobody buying his bakery products because people stay indoors. If Arabs venture out at night it's," Oi, where do you think you are going ? " from the soldiers. He's thinking hard about selling up & going to Jordan, where life would be easier.

Find Bethlehem turn off – down Manger Street to Manger Square – place deserted apart from army sniper in a watchtower over the Post Office. Walk round side of Church of

the Nativity (closed naturally) meet private road & return to square where pandemonium sets in – jeep & guns hurtle off westward, more scurry upstairs above shopping centre. Decide to leave them to their fun & games & return to Jerusalem.

More army panic by Rachel's tomb – 10+ jeeps, eventually clears. Drive round north of city, through Hasidic quarter before returning to American Colony.

Supper \$19 – Melon / Smoked Salmon, Fish Soup en Croute, Squid + veg, Strawberry Ice Cream / Pineapple Fritter. Very good value.

Monday 27th January

Letter to Steve & Wendy, postcard to Tony Yeldham after somewhat restless night. Breakfast 7.15a.m. , get car from garage, tip car-man, drive to Garden Tomb. This is the site of the cross and site of the resurrection – lovely garden



run by society based in London. Plants thriving – you name it they got it. Anti-clockwise to wooden platform overlooking bus station, past well / wine-press to tomb entrance ... one bay dry one damp in the corner – out to take photos. Listen to guide with group, sitting to their right when Kerblam!

SONIC BOOM ! shatters our peace. Ta very much Israeli Air Force. Buy postcards in shop after much browsing. Leave this magical place & drive round walls towards Gethsemane. Park & wretched 'guide' (this is the worst spot in Jerusalem for pestering) tells me that unless I fork out 20 shekels to him I am liable to get 'stoned' & that parking there will cost me 150 sh. . Crap. Walk down to view Absalom's Pillars (son (3rd ?) of Abraham) from above . There are 3 high canopied stone belvedere-type structures. Up through Jewish graves & back to car . Around city walls – get lost in West J .. Eventually find Knesset, Israel Museum, Biblical Lands Museum (shut).

Looking for Yad Vashem now – get directions in Israel

☒ Museum. Find it – visit museum of holocaust history.

Tears & I'm not the only one. Art gallery of objects & pictures done under duress. Hall of names – they try to discover each person lost to Nazis. Round trees of remembrance covenanted to Jews from all Europe. Coffee & cigarette, bookshop browse & off towards Tel Aviv.

Get lost once more amongst new settlements – signposting abysmal, standard of driving worse ! Eventually locate right road & cruise to Tel Aviv. Park by bus station close to Dan Hotel in south. Purchase Catherine Cookson hardback (£2) – try to get money on Diners Club card. No luck twice. Collect plastic bag left at Hotel Moss . Enter Kulti shop – fine T-shirt designs etc.. But no money no buy. Ya-Harkon St . – lots of drunks around. Drive north, foiled by one way system again, & hit road to Haifa 120k.p.h. all the way.

Park before port. Visit Templer War Graves 1869-1945 British, Jewish & German. Photo of C.B.Patrick grave , age 33 killed 1914? Relation ? Also one of Rea – a relation of Chris Rea ? Long walk, 5 miles, round upper Haifa eventually locating Elijah's cave & tomb. Here he met followers before outwitting Baal (Kings 2). Back to car – coffee & bad chocolate bread microwaved. Much traffic on road north – see Marks & Spencer so stop at smart shopping centre with ice-skating rink at top ! On towards Akko, then right round populous town, Qir Bialik, as usual left / right up / down before seeing signpost for Haifa . Fill up with petrol near Qir Ata & finally notice there's a dent in the car roof just 1cm from the windscreen ... so it was a stone / rock that was thrown at me in Hebron. Well, 1cm is as good as a mile in this case but that could have been nasty – hope Reliable Car Hire are used to this sort of thing ! Rejoin main Haifa / Akko road & decide to go to Caesarea as originally planned this time by going over the top of Mount Carmel past enormous University tower (observation floor on 24th level). Right at sign to Atlit & peace descends. Lovely hairpin road through Carmel National Park (3 cars, 2 army

vehicles in 10km compared to 3,000 in 10km on highway). Back onto motorway & down to Caesarea which seems nice & quiet. Check into Dan Hotel by golf course – ritzy prices, food a bit dowdy. Interestingly I wasn't allowed to eat cheesecake after steak. Milk & meat don't mix in kosher practices. Americans at table next to me. Bed 10.45p.m. after reading how much there is to see around Galilee.

Tuesday 25th January

Awake 5.15a.m.. Good radio station – The Voice of Peace. Write Major & Betsy . Early morning walk round part of golf course – looks a bit moth-eaten & under repair. Expensive anyway, decide not to play. Back for 7.10a.m. breakfast – cold coffee, fair food. Dan Hotels rather jaded. Leave at 8a.m. for Roman amphitheatre – quick tour, photo. On to Herod's city, Temple to Augustus Caesar, massive breakwaters (no JCBs then), walk across beach where Jesus departed these  shores? Back to car & up to Herod's Stables near the hotel but everything shut although lovely horses stabled there now. Into Hadera in heavy traffic – lengthy process cashing 400 shekels on Diners at Israel Discount Bank. Nice coffee & pastries opposite – 1st parking ticket all in Hebrew !

Head N.E. to Megiddo (Armageddon) through pleasant countryside. Naturally miss sign & end up going through Afula & out other side. Pick up student / hitchhiker who gives none too great directions. Drop him back in Afula & get lost. Eventually find Megiddo – quick look at museum & out round this powerful site. 4000B.C. buildings, Solomon's Palace, Ahab etc.. Walk round clockwise, strong wind at times, more air force jets but no booms today ! Staircase. Tunnel closed.

Decide to check out Nazareth on way to Mount Tabor. Pick up Swede & Dane girls going to Haifa. Tortuous hairpin road up to Silesian Hospice & above to Islamic tower & reservoir (not

yet on postcards). Force 9 wind as I stand on A1 ley line between University on Mount Carmel, through where I stand atop Nazareth & on to summit of Mount Tabor along pylon lines.

☒ Feel inner strength.

Descend to central Nazareth & park by Arab market / Church / Basilica of the Annunciation. Wander up market (buy 75p saffron) before church opens at 2p.m.. Very Catholic – little service going on under dome of rock where stood Mary's house ? Who knows – anyway something happened here ; maybe Jesus met disciples here after rising from the dead.

Head for Mount Tabor – of course get lost in Nazareth Illit.

Large circle & back to square one ! Left on Afula road , more hairpins; skirt edge of Afula & on to Mount Tabor. Pick up high class Bedouin studying Italian & on up the hill to Mount Tabor via very steep slightly hairy road in poor nick.

Park by Greek Orthodox church (pretty) there & enter using one of my very few Greek words ἐφχαρίστω which opened the doors anyway. Not that great inside. Back down the road a bit , park & wander through rocks & bushes to drive leading

☒ to beautiful Terra Sancta Church next to Monastery.

Incredibly heavy doors reveal fantastic interior of stained glass windows above & below. Sacred stone altar but roped off. This is where the transfiguration of Christ to Heaven occurred ... (allegedly !). Wander round graves of apostles (?) – there's the Pope that died in 1962 buried up here as well – buy 2 postcards from sweet nun in monastery.

More wandering around the old stones of this ancient fort – discover amazing cave . Photo. Return to car & descend going round hill the other way at bottom & on to Kinnaret, Tiberias & look for hostel on Mount of Beatitudes. Get lost again ! Go beyond Capernaum before turning round, going up hill to north & finding right road. Hostel closed for renovation & church (built by Mussolini, probably not personally !) Fine position, however. Alsatian sees me off.

Check out Ginnosar Kibbutz Hotel & kibbutz itself but doesn't

look v.nice. Pass serious car accident, body on side of road with paramedics attending. Check out Galei Hamat Hotel near hot springs, lobby too hot, leave. Check in at Gai Beach Hotel – expensive but takes Diners. Nice receptionist recommends me restaurant, Pagoda in town. Thai veg soup (v.good), crispy duck (masses) & spring roll. £10. Fast service. Good long sleep.

Wednesday 29th January

Wake 6a.m. to see dawn breaking over Sea of Galilee (or Kinnaret). Choppy – won't take boat. Think this is a glacial lake as saw signs of glaciations last night.

Breakfast 7a.m. with German working at Beit Shona. Cold coffee. North round lake to Church of the Multiplication of  the Loaves & Fishes with mosaic. Pray inside chapel.

Even more impressive is church next door, Deification of Peter Church where Christ made his only joke, "You are Peter & on this rock I found my church". Mensa Christi (Table of Christ) inside – for once one can touch stone & I sit on edge of table. Outside is fine bronze statue overlooking lapping lake. Walk on foreshore, take photo & return to entrance of church where lady tourist sitting. Suddenly it starts to hail – "Hail Mary", I say & walk through rocky garden & underneath 2 arches of ancient well-type structure.

 On to Capernaum – Roman (Herod) temple on site of Jesus' church. Shinto service going on in modern auditorium. No paper in grotty loos which causes slight grief, but manage.

On up hill to Rosh Pinna & left to Zefat thinking Hazor ruins up there. Coffee & 1 felafel with good Moroccan & buy new film. Pick up Gordon, hitchhiker, who "works for God" – bit confused but spoke good English – drop him back at Rosh Pinna. Fail to find Hazor ruins – on to Qir Shemona and right towards Mount Hermon. 2 army hitchhikers. Then another who speaks English well, take him all the way to skiing area.

Past Banyas where 100 Israelis lost their lives capturing place from Syrians in 1967. Past Nimrod Castle, superb site

atop hill.

12.30p.m. now. Coffee & rolls, then rent skis etc. & get lift pass, £30 total cost. Up long cold chair lift, ski down icy crusty run to drag lift then down better snow to base. Up lift again – mosey around above station before Army tick me off. Broken truck & jeep up here . Very security conscious.

Photo of peak & a bit of Syria. Down to base by a different route & return skis 3p.m.. Descend to Qir Shemona , left towards Shamir, right to Gonen & up over ridge to En Ziwan.

Booms (artillery practice ?) as I ask army about Quneitra border which am told is Syria not Jordan as I assumed ! So head along Route 98 all the way back to Tiberias.

Extraordinary road – bomb craters, burnt out jeeps, war debris, memorials. Mostly in 2nd gear – anti-tank obstacles to negotiate . For 30kms do not see another car !

UN positions on left. Solitary deer enlivens the spirit.

Excellent Arabic coffee near Tiberias & head for Jericho.

Good fast road. Arrive 8.30p.m. – place utterly deserted (Intifada) but find Hishan Palace Hotel. Pretty grotty & £10.

Get ripped off for OK meal $\frac{1}{2}$ km away ... 20 sh when should have been about 12. Back to hotel – 85 year old man who was in British Police Palestine.

Thursday 30th January

Awake 6a.m. after night of dog barking and distant wailing.

Café arabische in square. Leave hotel, no-one around.

Drive to Allenby Bridge but told politely border closed till 8a.m.. Back through Jericho to Mount of Temptation. Climb to Greek Monastery; guidebook says open at 7a.m., difficult Greek monk says 9a.m. so descend. Coffee at Temptation restaurant – visit old Jericho. Walk round walls – already tumbled down ! Oldest city in the world they say but Megiddo must be a rival. Similar shaped archaic structures.

Look for Elisha's grave to north but fail to locate (as usual) go some way before U-turn by some grazing camels. Left to Jericho & Allenby Bridge again. This time told no way in

except by taking taxi from Jerusalem. Tant pis. Decide to give St. George's Monastery a miss as it's another Greek Orthodox number & they don't welcome tourists. Ascend to Jerusalem & check in at American Colony. Assemble laundry \$11 which returned immaculate in evening. Go to Old City – boy selling kids' trousers vanishes within 20 mins.. Coffee near Damascus Gate, paint on ceiling falling onto my table ! To Jewish quarter via longish route – buy presents & find bargain Yiddish cup for Tony Y. Lunch on main shopping street – drop 2 films to be developed. More bargains in pleasant souvenir shop . Enter New Gate – another closed church, get lost (this place is a tangled web of narrow twisting lanes) but find 3 English looking for Christian sector. So they guide me out of maze & I take them to Garden Tomb & St. George's. They leave; I visit British Council which only has Sunday Times & it's Thursday – could do better. Return to hotel & unload plastic bags. Soon out seeking but not finding the Kings' Tombs so enter at New Gate, quickly reverse, round to Jaffa Gate, left on St. James' Street & browse around smart Jewish area near synagogue & Roman ruins . Coffee & Danish pastry – art gallery 12 Visions of Israel exhibition. Back same way to evening prayers (6p.m.) at cathedral. Psalm 69 read alternately, vicar & congregation of roughly 12 . Then back to hotel. More Intifada explosions as I leave church. Sirens. – good browse in Arab run hotel stores – nice bag & box look tempting. Bath then supper ... rigatoni, veal wrapped in ham, choc. cake + orange juice. Wander round Pasha's room upstairs – bellissima.

It wasn't until many years later that I realised I was following in my parents' footsteps here at The American Colony Hotel where they lived during the war my father organising cavalry forces at Haifa and my mother working with Colonel Bryant, Chief of Police of Jerusalem.

Friday 31st January

Wake 5.30a.m. Write postcard to Anne & Antony. Large

breakfast 6.10a.m.. 7a.m.Eucharist . 4th communion. Back to hotel. Visit Kings' Tombs just south of hotel – some filled with water fed by drainage channels in side of cliff.

Northern tombs more powerful. On down Nablus Rd. & right to my favourite bank, the Israel Discount. Longish wait for 300 shekels. Round corner to bus station – photo of Golgotha, Place of the Skull . Try to enter Jewish cemetery above skull rock but gates shut. Syrian Catholis centre, dead end. Wander round area between Nablus and Az Zahara roads – incredibly strong wind in my face as I stand at eastern edge of wasteland & car parking square, on east side of Salah El Din. What happened here ? Into small park further east with olive trees, very strong winds again. Jewish Synagogue at corner ... round garden & back to wasteland square where stands



a tired-looking donkey. Photo. Round & about then across Sultan Suleiman – colourful Arab market going on outside Damascus Gate. Buy Charlotte some trousers – bargain. Enter Old City, discover fine shop run by good Arab who has brother in England – buy box &

round silver little box. Bargains again. Next looking for shirt or dress for Pippa – find lovely embroidered number.

Bidding starts at \$65, I pay 75sh. Rather awkward shopkeeper. Longish search round the tangled web for Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Strong wind as I walk along S.E. side, enter. Church not that impressive. Front left pew wobbles noisily as I kneel down to muse awhile. Ascend tower, spiral staircase, many steps. Fine views at top. Photos.

Down Via Dolorosa – obstreperous guide latches on to me leads me towards quieter Jewish quarter, takes cigarette as tip but wants much more. Foul-mouths me, so I swear back !

Walk up St. James' St.. Hoping to see my friends in the Alex Rothschild Centre but shut so stop for Arab coffee in St. Michael Restaurant by Jaffa Gate. Good. Back to hotel to unload gifts. Soon decide to visit sights south of city. So

drive out on the appalling Bethlehem road – always traffic jams & nightmare drivers. Arab Mercedes taxis causing the most heartache. Rachel's Tomb closed, so on to amazing Solomon's Pools at Aflit about 4 miles past Bethlehem turn off. Large unkempt fort-type building on left, then walk round 3 one acre each reservoirs in pine valley. Very muddy.

Pumping station broken but looks mendable – shame to waste this pure water. Astounded at the guile of Solomon – this was eons ago. On to Herodium, 12 km left of road but good road. Army checkpoint, drive up to near summit & park.

☒ Fierce wind shakes the car. Pay to enter & struggle against wind to walk round Roman Temple inside top of hill.

Do not linger as wind in danger of pushing me over cliff –

brief glance at Roman city below hill. This is where Herod, a good man turned evil, dispatched his troops to murder the children and babies of Bethlehem 5km away. His tomb is allegedly here but I care not to seek it. Back to main road & on to Hebron. To Abraham's mosque – directions given by Sheffield guy in Israeli army checkpoint. Guns everywhere in mosque & carpets. Velvet covered tombs, nice roof. Out into wind past more army & back to Jerusalem. Plethora of blue number-plates (Arab) gives way slowly to yellow (Jewish).

Stop by Zion Hill Hotel & climb up through gardens. Coffee & browse in King David Hotel (most expensive here) – across road to YMCA and its tower. On up hill round some sort of closed stadium. Eventually locate top of Mount Zion (?) –

an olive tree in small garden amongst flats behind electrical shop : dog barks. Return to car & hotel, lost again, take longish route over side of Mount of Olives. To evening prayers after buying bag in Colony Stores. Service given by Ian someone, the vicar of Shotton ! John Summers Steel.

Bath & 7 course supper – good as usual. Tears from receptionist being harangued by nasty Arab who won't apologise. Letter to Steve & Wendy again & post it.

Saturday 1st February

Wake 6a.m.. Eucharist. Snow starts as I leave. American priest, Ian of Shotton in congregation of 4. Breakfast. Off to get film developed – play good Samaritan ... old frail Arab lady across street from hotel calls me. Wants me to carry heavy flagon of water for her. Trudge to Damascus Gate – no way could she have managed it. Drop film & pick up 1 hour later. Arab shops open although it's Jewish day off. Pack & leave 11a.m. – advised against going to Nablus & Jelen. So go to Ashdod (nothing happening) then Ashkelon, south of Tel Aviv. Enormous archaeological site from way back to Herod's time. He was born here. Walk along beach in drizzle, up sand cliff & round ramparts of city before exploring middle.

Much still to be excavated. Find possible site of Herod's burial although Herodium may be place. Beach lovely, strong crashing surf with Roman stones & columns everywhere.

Probably did 6 miles round site, took 2 hours plus. Decide to visit Gaza strip where Israelis fear to tread though much of their labour force lives here. 1 million people – near Gaza & Khan Yunis massive used car dumps (like Panama), almost biblical scenes of donkeys & horses & carts. Countryside on east side rather pleasant. Went wrong way at Gaza & told by patrol, 100 yards further & you're dead so reverse sharpish. Just short of Khan Yunis told I can't go on, so head past Kissufim on good road towards BeerSheva.

At Netivot pick up delightful Ethiopian girl hitchhiker Abiba (language problem here) & take her to Ethiopian community on outskirts of B'Sheva. Then go to shopping mall in town where she has to endure appalling racism from just about everybody. Expensive coffee & strudel. Then to bus station to meet her friend, drop them up the hill & head off to Tel Aviv. Get lost in Ramla, wretched signposts again, get lost again in Tel Aviv before eventually parking near Diezengoff Center (very plush, à la MetroCentre). Eventually locate Tandoori Restaurant – not as good as Eilat one.

Raining once again as it has for most of day – back to car & off to airport. Told car has to go to a hotel 10km away, naturally drive 20km finding it ! Explain about dent in roof

& parking ticket & get driven back to Ben Gurion Airport where I have to bide time from 1a.m. to 6a.m. when flight goes.

Sunday 2nd February

Have worked out that I have driven 2,063 kilometres in last 8 days + maybe 110 miles – phew. 3a.m. check in. Takes 50 mins of questions & bag searching. Get free biro for the hassle ! Nice German guy going back to Frankfurt, buy him ciggies at Duty Free. Tupolev 154 (2?) (the Trident copy) to Prague. Bank won't change my shekels so fellow traveller swaps them for German marks, thanks. Manage 40 minutes walking around Prague Castle area – strong feelings in St. Thomas' Church but don't stay long – up steep hill to lovely cobbled square & round Loreta anti-clockwise. Film being made – lots of extras. Down & back to tube & back to Dejvická – then taxi, fare agreed at 80 krone – have to pay 96 on arrival. 2½ hour delay before Tupolev 134 (loaded up with coriander !) leaves – bad mistake by (trainee ?) pilot at Heathrow nearly hurts child. Back on dry land. Tube to Baron's Court – van starts 1st time – merci Dieu ! Home to Altenburg to give presents to family, answer letters & then drive to Carole's for night.