Letter from Enid Vincent 1

Our ref: EH/LL449

Harewood House

61 Glenburnie Road

London SW17 7DJ

13th April 1992

I am writing in reply to your letter to Virginia Bottomley dated 28th December 1991 which was received here at the end of January. I apologise for the delay in replying but you raised a number of issues which required a comprehensive investigation.

You are correct ion saying that your medication was increased at the time of your admission to Bluebell Ward. The dose which you received was prescribed by a doctor in the light of your clinical condition at that time. There is nothing to suggest that your white blood cell count was affected but your medication was stopped temporarily once the sedation due to droperidol began to take effect. This is common practice, I am unable to comment on treatment given to other patients but Dr Gundy prescribes medication in accordance with the British National Formulary guidelines.

I am sorry that you were not happy with the standard of food provided. The quality of catering is regularly reviewed by the Mental Health Unit and comments as to how this might be improved are welcomed. There is a problem with maintaining adequate provisions in the cupboards. It is difficult to maintain a balance between allowing full access to provisions for all patients and rationing, to ensure supplies remain, which does involve less freedom of use. Staff have to use their discretion to ensure everyone has a fair share. I’m sorry if stocks were temporarily exhausted on the day you

arrived. Any food which remains after a meal is thrown away to comply with environmental legislation.

Bluebell Ward does have rules with regard to smoking and non smoking areas. These were agreed by the patients and staff in the light of the Health Authority's smoking policy. Staff are equally bound by the ward policy and if any of them are seen to flaunt it, this would be taken very seriously. As you are not specific about the incidents you describe the managers in the Unit are unable to take further action in respect of this now. The bathroom and utility room are locked at times when nursing staff believe that they are unable to give adequate supervision of these areas but if at any of these times a patient wishes to avail themselves of these facilities they would not be denied access unreasonably.

I understand your concern with regard to incontinence experienced by elderly patients on the ward. Staff do make every effort to maintain a high standard of hygiene and certainly are expected to change sheets as necessary. Without information about a specific incident the Managers have been unable to identify a specific instance that matched your description. With regard to the overall cleanliness of the ward there is a specification which the domestic staff follow and I understand that monitoring on Bluebell Ward shows they do this particularly well.

I am sorry that you perceived a lack of love and care on the ward as the staff there regularly demonstrate their commitment to a caring and sensitive approach to the treatment of their patients. I apologise if you feel the service was not offered to you in an acceptable manner.

I regret that overall your experience of admission to Bluebell Ward was such an unhappy one. I do however appreciate your bringing these concerns to my attention and believe that the Mental Health Unit will continue to keep the standards of care they provide under review.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Enid Vincent

Chairman

Wandsworth Health Authority

c.c. Virginia Bottomley

Letter to Virginia Bottomley 3

Your ref: POH(2)1701/418
Altenburg Gardens

7th March 1992
London SW11

Dear Mrs Bottomley,

Thank you for your letter of the 27th January replying to mine of the 28th December and I presume my ‘chaser’ of the 16th January although you made no reference to this second letter.

Whilst I accept your comments that decentralisation of the NHS has transferred power from Government to the local health authorities I regret this seems to have done little to speed the wheels of reform. You promised to send a copy of my first letter to the Chairman of Wandsworth Health Authority, Dr Enid Vincent and I am sure you did so, but I have to inform you that after some 6 weeks I have yet to receive any comments from her. Perhaps a reminder from you might hurry her up ? I

would very much like to meet her personally to air my grievances, and those of current patients at Springfield.

I am currently preparing an article which has been promised national newspaper coverage highlighting the heinous practices of ‘megadosing’ and ‘polypharmacy’ so much in vogue at Springfield, together with the disgraceful lack of care and respect exhibited by the majority of doctors and nurses. One suspects this is a nationwide phenomenon and I hope you will devote more of your time in the future (re-election permitting !) to improving conditions for these downtrodden and forgotten human beings.

Looking forward to receiving Dr Vincent’s reply,

I remain, yours sincerely

Jamie Summers

Letter to Virginia Bottomley 2

Thursday 16th January 1992 from
Springfield Hospital

61 Glenburnie Road

London SW17 7DJ

Dear Mrs Bottomley,

I wrote to you 19 days ago on matters of great import

concerning your department and have not received a reply, not even a cursory “Mrs X thanks you for your letter and has noted its contents”. Perhaps you dismissed my words as the ramblings of a mental asylum inmate and binned them ? A brief phone call to Carole and Andrew, your friends, would have sufficed to allay your doubts, but no, you chose to ignore my letter. Well, I have more to say – should you require a copy of my earlier epistle please do not hesitate to ask.

My comments of 19 days ago still hold true and far from improving, the general situation has indeed deteriorated since then. Just 3 days ago for our breakfast there was no tea, no coffee, no butter, no margarine, no bread and no sugar – please think of us sometime over your muesli and poached egg won’t you ? Whilst I am delighted to report that I had my second change of sheets this morning in 5½ weeks I regret that they were unable to provide a clean duvet to replace my existing one which reeks of stale urine (not mine either). The washing machine which conked out soon after Christmas has fortunately just been repaired – thank heaven for small mercies.

More importantly I have to mention some individual cases which must come under your aegis as number 2 in your department. The most horrifying was the man at Springfield who around New Year’s Day started getting severe chest pains – an ambulance was called and he was driven down to the nearby St. George’s Hospital, I hope you know the one, it’s your showpiece NHS hospital for South West London – you’ve closed most of the other ones. On arrival he was turned away because the doctors there don’t want the loonies from Springfield on <u>their</u> wards. I have to report that he died in the ambulance on the way back. I quote your boss speaking on the 14th January … “more and better care is being extracted from the resources available and in a more efficient manner”. Oh yes, Mr Waldegrave ? One expects more from Eton/Christ Church men, let alone fellows of All Souls. Why does he tell such porkies and

massage his facts ? We all remember there are lies, damned lies and statistics … his reforms are working well are they ? Not here they aren't.

Let us move to the private system. BUPA not only won't pay for my stays in mental hospitals but I understand now they won't pay for any psychiatric care whatsoever. I assume private hospitals do come under your remit as well ? Being connected to health as they are, although I am told extracting money from them for treatments received often causes more anguish than the illness itself. I have another medical case to bring to your attention and the name may well ring a bell with your husband. A close friend of mine called Mark Faber, who was about your husband's vintage at school and played cricket for Sussex in Tony Greig's era, undertook a fairly routine operation to remove a varicose vein that had troubled him for some years. This was about 12 days ago … something obviously went wrong in the operation, Mark screamed in agony but no doctor came for one hour and he died. And that is the private sector.

Back to Springfield – why is it that these human beings are denied access to non-psychiatric doctors ? They suffer from physical ailments just like you and I and yet their G.P.s become non-persons once they have crossed this threshold. There is a lady here who is 64 but looks 94 (you should see the cocktail of drugs swilled down her throat every night), she is incontinent at both ends, she slobbers continuously, her clothes stink permanently, she has a gout-like swelling on one ankle and her lungs are feeble. This is long-term care under your blessed NHS. She has no teeth and consequently is nigh impossible to understand, she can't even eat a sandwich without spewing it out. There is a dentist on site, some 300 yards away who could fix her up with some dentures but does he move ? No. She needs a doctor badly, not a shrink, or she will die soon.

I reckon someone could present a good case against your

department for gross negligence or at the very least driving without due care and attention. I am sure it is now possible to sue the government; there is that wise man who is currently tackling Norman Lamont and his team at the Treasury. He followed government advice regarding small businesses for 11 years and eventually went broke – well I could have told him a thing or two about your counterpart at the Treasury, John Patten, who came as a supply teacher to Eton in my time. I well remember his lectures on the economics of imports/exports which were so nonsensical they were almost farcical. What a dismal science it is. And if that man has reached such an exalted position in government, God help the rest of us ! My apologies for being somewhat rude but one can't help becoming angry in a place like this.

By the time you get this letter you will have had 3 weeks to muse over the first one and had it been an electricity bill you probably would have been cut off by now. I want to see some action, and I want to hear some truths from you and Mr Waldegrave – no political double-dutch, no side-stepping the facts. None of this "the NHS is safe in our hands" lark because very clearly at the moment it isn't.

This is my last time of asking. I want answers.

Yours etc.

Jamie Summers

c.c. Bernard Levin

Reply from Virginia Bottomley, 27 January 1992:



Thank you for your letter of 28 December 1991 about the treatment you are receiving at Springfield Hospital.

I am sorry to hear that you feel this is unsatisfactory.

As you know, the reforms of the NHS have centred upon the importance of establishing the role of district health and family health authorities as the purchasers of hospital, community health and primary care services and prevention. They have important functions in translating patients, needs and concerns into improved services. A major aid to them in developing the quality of care is the Government's initiative on citizen's rights. The Patient's Charter introduces national standards, but more importantly the concept of local standards to be incorporated into local health charters. At the same time the reforms have sought to delegate management decisions to the level of service provision.

So that you may receive an answer to your specific query about the treatment you are receiving at Springfield Hospital, I am copying your letter to Dr Reid Pinkout, Chairman of Wandsworth HA, together with a request that she reply to you direct at the same time as reporting to me.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY

Letter to Virginia Bottomley 1

Here begins my saga of trying to complain about treatment in the NHS. Eventually I got absolutely nowhere but to start with I went straight to the top …



Saturday 28th December1991 from

Springfield Hospital 61 Glenburnie Road

London SW17 7DJ

Dear Mrs Bottomley,

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jamie Summers, age 37½, educated Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford (14 'O' levels, 3 A grade 'A' levels, 2 S levels). I believe we have a connection – my brother-in-law, Andrew Ingram is I think godfather to one of your children (very good choice).

Firstly, a brief summary of my personal predicament. Nearly three weeks ago I voluntarily admitted myself to the above establishment on the instigation of my wife, Sue, in order to ease the pressure on her mind caused by my somewhat restless and sleepless behaviour. Armed with a prescription from my G.P., Michael Gormley (who also looks after most of the Royal Family, not to mention the members of the group, Genesis), I presented myself at Bluebell ward under the auspices of my allocated NHS doctor, a man called Jonathan Hillum. Without my knowledge or consent, Michael's prescription dosage was immediately almost tripled and administered – this being that

favourite toy of the psychiatric profession, namely Largactyl now called Chlorpromazine. Two days later, when this cosh was not having (in their eyes) a sufficiently stultifying effect on your's truly's brain a second doctor, one Dr. Vince, without even consulting Dr. Hillum, who was absent, decided to give me 80 mg of Droperidol liquid – I would here like to point out that the maximum dose given by Desmond Kelly and his team at the lovely Priory in Roehampton Lane is 5 mg at any one time … I was pole-axed for 10 hours, stiff as a floorboard from the neck down. Anyway, blood had been taken (yet again) and glory be, when the analysis came back, I was told by a member of the night nursing staff that they were worried because my white blood cell count had increased dramatically and that I was to be given no drugs at all for two days (yippee !). This white blood cell problem is usually due to some infection but in my case had clearly been caused by massive over-prescription of these dangerous drugs, as I am not a sick person by nature and have never taken antibiotics in my life.

Two days off these substances gave me sufficient breathing space to recover my senses and to assert my rights in refusing to take them. Thus for the past 12 days or so I have simply taken 800 mg of Lithium Carbonate (Priadel) at night as I have done religiously for the past 19 months. I have been able to view the system dispassionately ever since.

Enough of my story. I hope, nay I am convinced that you are of as compassionate nature and will take it upon yourself to come and see some of the evils that are masquerading as care in the rotten apple that is psychiatric medicine in the National Health Service. Perhaps you and your boss, Mr Waldegrave and your underlings have been concentrating your energies on the normal hospitals, but your eyes and ears are needed here.

Let us start with the quality (sic) of the food. Perhaps Caroline Waldegrave could take an interest here – I hear she knows her onions ! When I arrived the cupboards were nigh bare

– oh, the staff have their cosy little locked cupboards full of reasonable things but us patients/animals for our hungrier moments had little. For 10 days there was no sugar, no butter – only the lowest form of ‘spread’- then the cheapo powdered coffee and the tea-bags ran out and were not replenished. The bread was the pappiest form of white trash available – any salad left over from ‘supper’ (at 6 p.m.) is generally thrown away vindictively by the staff. Fruit ? There might sometimes be 5 bananas or oranges between 28 of us.

As for the regular meals dished out from the kitchens ¼ mile away I would not deign to feed pigs or rats on the stuff. The mashed potatoes look tainted, the vegetables are boiled dry of nutrients, the meat if any is poor poor quality and our boiled eggs at breakfast are regularly done to a turn of 17 minutes – marvellous for everyone’s bowels ! Since I arrived I have done my utmost to upgrade this miserable diet with injections of fruit, butter, cheese, mayonnaise, marmite and loaves of my own bread – you see I am a wholesale baker by trade, We are what we eat after all.

Secondly, one must comment on the nursing. As in all things there is good and bad, but regretfully I have to report that predominantly the curtain falls on the distaff side. People crying in pain for help are left smirkingly to flounder on the floor, pleas for aid go unheard … ” no, I’m busy” is a favourite excuse. Vomit, shit and urine are left to be smeared around the ward. There is little love and care here. Petty rules abound; the kitchen, bathroom & washing/utility room are almost permanently locked and out of bounds to the ‘loonies’ – smoking is confined to a sauna (the radiator is jammed on) and the dining/play area, and yet the staff and doctors flaunt their own no smoking sign in their office, the hypocrites. Us patients do 90% of the nursing of our elderly co-sufferers – the incontinent ones often awash in their own urine and faeces slumped on their soiled and never-changed sheets. I am not over-painting my canvas.

As for the doctors here I shall name names. I can only speak about those I have met here on the ward and compare them with the doctors I met almost 12 years ago in the Priory and more recently briefly 19 months ago before the money ran out (it's £400 per night now privately) and BUPA, bless their little cotton socks, won't pay for my stays in these places. But I digress. The chief rottweiler in the pack of Wandsworth hounds is a man called Greville Gundy who has been in this game for many years (he featured in Jonathan Miller's recent madness series). Nearly retired now, he has been pushing drugs down people's throats with relish for ages – not long ago he gleefully told me that he has prescribed 2 grams per diem of Largactyl to some patients. Let us take this in context – Desmond Kelly probably wouldn't give anybody more than 300mg per day possibly half that – so we are talking 7 or 8 times the doses meted out under the private system. It is like taking 10 paracetamol or aspirin at a go – not good for the liver or the arteries as I am sure you will agree. Does he want the animals to become vegetables ?

Second in command are his lieutenants Hillum, Vince and Potter. Of these only Vince incurs my wrath, probably because of his spiteful treatment of yours truly not to mention others under his 'care'. If only the doses of these terrible body-shaking drugs, which I believe are desperately expensive anyway, were reduced to a palatable level or better still switched to more natural remedies available then the money saved could be reallocated to give more nursing staff, better wheelchairs etc.. Excuse my Bernard Levin length sentence !

One last gripe concerns the lamentable cleaning staff – a cursory wipe here and there simply ain't good enough – new brooms are needed.

Please let me know your views.

Yours faithfully and sincerely,

Jamie Summers

c.c. Bernard Levin

Copy of Diary 1980

This really follows on from the end of the letter to Bernard Levin, the last section of which tells the story of the previous days :-

Wanda tells me the way to Lymington from Bristol – Bath / Warminster / Salisbury. The sun is hot that day and I am crying tears of happiness because God had brought me home some 800 miles, through the French train strike and Paris, all the way to be at Mary Rose's side when her soul ascended into heaven. And he had shown me at that final gate at Frenchay Hospital that men often have clouded, faithless and unloving personalities.

So me and Morris trundle off through Bristol, through that beautiful city of Bath to Warminster. Nature called in Warminster i.e. j'ai du piser un coup & I found a little cafe on the High Street – there was a nice old lady behind the counter and a poacher too ; then a country yokel came in and came up to the bar where I was. On glancing down at his jacket pocket I said to him, " Do you realise that you are carrying exactly the same things in your pocket as I am ? ". We were too … one of those digital clock/calculators re-covered in cloth material, the same silver felt tip pen, Silk Cut, matches etc. He works on Lord Bath's estate & has a beautiful silver cross too which I lack at the moment but my body is my

cross. Well, yet again, Morris wont start so he helps me give her the customary push and we're off again … " See you on the Judgement Day ", I shout to the farm-worker.

Morris then sets me off on the road to Salisbury, all along the chalk escarpment, past the White Horse, past stone age settlements, tumuli etc.. Salisbury Cathedral (I still haven't been inside) was looking miraculous as we climbed the hill heading out to Southampton. Across Salisbury Plain, with those rather worrying signs saying – BEWARE TANKS CROSSING – I prefer cows myself! Then via Cadnam to Beaulieu where most of the Chichester family were clearing out a copse at a ruined cottage on the river & having a bit of a picnic . I help for 3 hours or so, cutting, stacking, burning etc. And by no means do I tell everyone there about my week's mission as it could easily upset people. God tells me what to say and when to say it.

So at about 6p.m. I return towards London, stopping off to see Sir John Chichester who was looking after the house and taking the incessant cliched telephone calls. Well. they're not all clichéd but many are. Sir John understands & even Susannah, their 10 year old whippet, she knows. I give 2 hitchhikers a ride from Brockenhurst to Chandler's Ford and the Morris reaches London in good shape in time for supper chez nous at Altenburg Gardens.

Then I go to bed, mission accomplished – & sleep like one of those logs !

Letter to Bernard Levin, The Times

This is a letter I wrote to Bernard Levin at a distraught time in my life – simply because I admired his journalism and I wanted someone to know my feelings.

Dear Mr Levin,

I rang your secretary twice last Friday to be told you preferred to receive a letter. I shall give you a brief ‘ curriculum vitae ‘ before getting down to the ‘ nitty-gritty ‘. I am twenty five, born 13th July 1954 to wealthy country gentlefolk in the Cotswolds. From Cothill Preparatory School I went to Eton, gaining 14 ‘O’ levels, 3 ‘A’ levels and 2 ‘S’ levels. From there I went to Christ Church, Oxford. At Oxford I am afraid I spent most of my time either on the golf course or at various social functions in London. Unfortunately this behaviour didn’t cut much ice with the academic authorities and after one year and two terms among the lovely spires I retired. I then took a 50p per hour job as a dishwasher at a London club before accepting my first ‘real job’ offer, which was with a re-insurance firm, Greig Fester. I survived that for one and a half years before wanderlust struck. I earned some hard cash during that year (1977) before setting off to New York and points south. My route was, briefly : New York, Atlanta, Houston, Yucatan, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama and Bogota.

I spent five months travelling overland through Colombia,

Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Brazil – including three weeks chugging along the rive gauche of the Amazon – and returning to Colombia. Eventually I returned to New York in July 1978 and then to London. I was still searching for some concrete direction. I wrote to Intermediate Technology Ltd., then took a job at Habitat, King's Road, until Christmas 1978 before setting off overland at the end of January 1979 towards Nepal. I must have been one of the last few travellers to follow that well-worn path, but fate smiled gently. Turkey was foul (and fowl) – a veritable Midnight Express but my two days passing through Iran were memorable. Most Iranians, I feel, are honest, caring people . I crossed into Afghanistan at the beginning of March. What a relief it was to reach Herat and meet the proud and strong Afghans.



Climbing above Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir

From Kabul I set off again through Pakistan and even went skiing for three or four days, climbing up above Gulmarg, an old hill station near Srinigar. Finally I reached the dreamy Kathmandu at the beginning of April. Here I joined a trek organised by Edward Montagu, consisting of nine Europeans and twenty seven porters and sherpas. The scenery was spectacular

and the mountain people enchanting.



Trekking in Nepal

A three week walk in the Jugal Himal took us up one valley, across a ridge and down the Indrawati valley. I then travelled on round India for two months – receiving a lot of bad 'vibes', through Iran to Turkey, Greece, Italy and London. I returned home on 1st July 1979. At this stage I was hoping to set myself up on a smallholding in Southern England after gaining at least one year's experience on someone else's land. However, I never seemed to have the necessary dedication or money (£3,000 per acre) – so the farming idea was shelved.

I was considering opening a restaurant until, during a round of golf with a friend, the idea of 'frozen foods' developed. My partner and I started experimenting with recipes and how well they turned out when cooked etc.. Early attempts were tasted and enthused over by my friends and I am convinced that the company MANGE 2 FOODS Ltd., will be a success. Half my company's profits will go to charities after the initial year. Virtually all my ingredients are organically grown; we do four soups, three or four mousses and about six entrées, not to mention the biggest seller yet – heart-shaped salmon fishcakes.

It was on 17th December 1979 that my life suddenly changed. I was delivering the first of my MANGE 2 products (with a free 'backsheesh' home-baked wholemeal loaf) to some friends and saw a girl there whom I hadn't seen for years. It was love at first sight and the light of our Lord was shining through Cha's eyes. Suddenly my outlook on life was changed from a mild pessimism to an inspired confidence and faith. Our great friend in the sky took over my life completely in all its aspects. It had all been a question of giving ; if you give so shall you receive. All my life He had been grooming me for this time and I have the spirit and emotion to do His will on earth; and believe me I am most honoured.

Christmas slipped by – at Elsenham on the Eve, then hitching on Christmas Day back to London – I then rang a friend, Kim Beddall and spent the evening and night of Christmas Day there. Kind people …



Mary Rose at Vale do Lobo, Algarve 1974

On Sunday evening 5th January 1980 (having finished the golf

competition at Rye), I planted out about five hundred bulbs in the garden of Mary Rose's Belgravia maisonette, then boated, trained and taxied up to Klosters in Switzerland. I was due to stay for two weeks. The snow was perfect and we had some great times.

Mary Rose is a girl of twenty two, radiantly beautiful and full of giving and love. I lived, on and off, with her for three years until quite suddenly she became engaged to Greville Howard, and the day she married at her uncle's house (Beaulieu), I was skiing at 18,750 feet in Bolivia. Now back in Klosters … I was staying in a little room lent to me by a fabulous family called the Fatorinis as there was no room in our family flat. I did, however, sometimes take my lunch and dinner in with the rest of the family. Now my sister Carole started behaving irrationally towards me, eventually throwing a glass at me (it missed) and accusing me of talking nonsense to her children (aged eight and seven). She has these depressed fits sometimes, but not usually so violently . Anyway, I decided to leave her in peace by cutting short my holiday, and on Saturday 12th January I told my brother-in-law that I was leaving Klosters. I stayed around until the 14th, which is Kitten's (another elder sister) birthday and then hitched off towards home, going by train most of the way to Paris. In Paris I saw some great friends and enjoyed la bonne vie, but something told me I ought to be getting back to London.

I arrived back on Thursday 18th January at 7a.m. off the boat train and collected my 1966 Morris Minor Convertible from its menders, then polished it up and started preparing to cook some of my dishes for sale when at 10.30a.m. Georgie Chichester rang to say, " Mary Rose is dying ". She says little else. Mary Rose was knocked unconscious whilst out riding (never her favourite sport) on the frosty ground on 12th January 1980 – the same day that I had declared my intention of leaving Switzerland – and had been in a coma

ever since. Her husband Greville and her mother and father stayed at her side throughout. On that Thursday morning I broke down to a physical and mental heap on my kitchen floor for some time before going out walking. I try to enter churches but they are locked. The sixth, in Clapham, is open, but the builders have perched their coffee mugs on the altar – so I go screaming on Clapham Common to pull the adorable Mary Rose through. In the evening Georgie rings again to say that Mary Rose's heart is beating more strongly and that she has passed urine. So back I go to Clapham Common and scream for miracles . I offered to help in any way, but Georgie said, " Pray from where you are ".

On Friday, ignoring Georgie's advice, I drove my Morris down to Lymington and appeared at noon at the family house. Mary Rose is still living, contrary to what a friend had told me that morning , " Oh, she died – didn't you hear ? ". I had taken down six of my heart-shaped salmon fishcakes and we moved across the Beaulieu Heath to their granny's house , and just before lunch Lady Chichester rings to say, " … it is finished ". I share their grief for some five hours before returning to London.

On Saturday I rose early again and drove down to Heathrow to meet Cha Weychan off a flight from Bulgaria; marvellous but she arrived on a plane that didn't exist . All the same I met some good people working in the Terminal 2 Coffee Bar. Cha rang later, which was much appreciated. That afternoon I made more bread and went off to dine with friends in Bucharest Road, SW18. They offered to give me a bed for the night, and I accepted, but I could not sleep … or rather, God did not want me to sleep, so I left quietly at midnight, lighting a candle in their spare room, and returned to my home in Altenburg Gardens.

Minnow, one of my housemates asks, " Where on earth are you going ? ". " West. ", I replied. So I packed all that I might need for a couple of days on the road, put my feet into

my Adidas trainers (60,000 miles and still going strong) and lit one more candle at my house and another in the ashtray of the Morris. We are off again, following our fortunes, doing His will on earth. First nature call stop was at Heston at about 2.30a.m. where I picked up two Welsh hitch-hikers who had been standing there between four and five hours. What a charitable nation we are. I tell them I'm not sure where we are going, but Bristol seems a possibility. Avebury, let's go to Avebury – so we pull in at Membury Services (which seems incidentally to operate as a pick-up joint for the call girl market in those early hours). I saw a man with a friendly face and asked him, " Excuse me, could you help ? I'm going to Avebury ". " Oh, I live there. Got a seventeenth century cottage right in the village ". He directs me to Avebury, where we stop to listen, to touch the stones, to feel the brilliant stars. There was real power and the moles were pushing up their pyramids as we walked around. Avebury church was dream-like; its stained-glass windows sentinels of salvation.

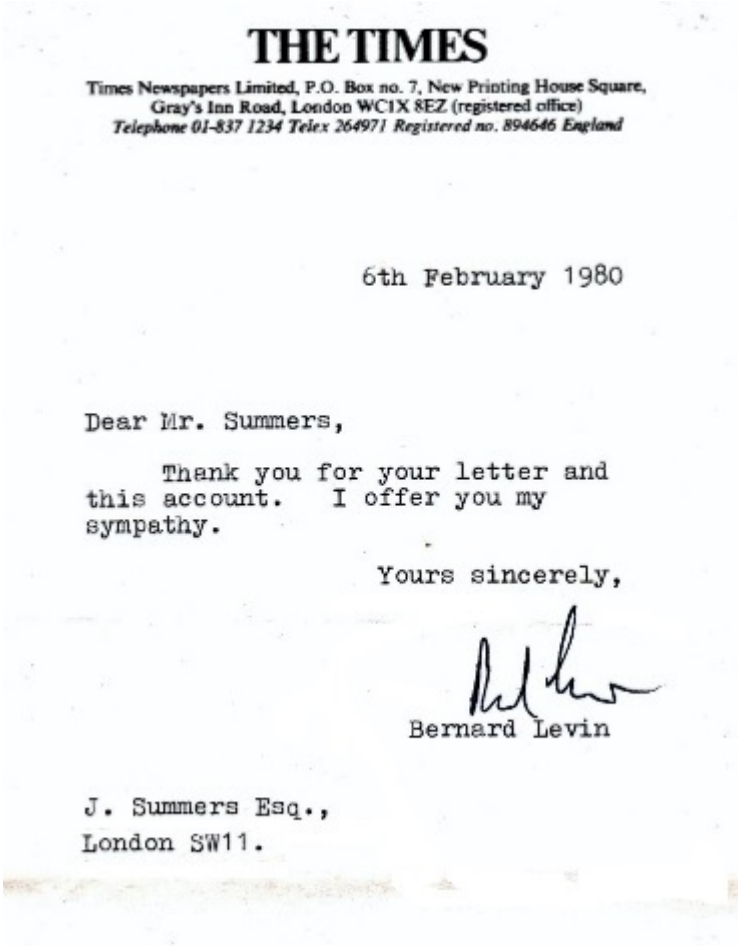
So, from the dolmens and monoliths (these people understood nature as much if not more than we do today), the Morris drove us quickly through Bath and to Bristol central. Ritchie (one of my hikers) knew a splendid midnight cafe where we had coffee and breakfast. A man with a limp came up to me and said, " Excuse me, can I help you at all ? ". I asked where was the best hospital for serious accidents ? ". " Oh, just across the road from here, the Bristol Royal Infirmary. " There I acquired my first taste of hospital inquiry desks : Mary Rose wasn't there, but we discovered where she was. The time was now 7.45a.m. on a Sunday morning, and I clambered up Sion Hill, Clifton to the Camera Obscura, and for me that was the most spectacular dawn ever . Flocks of birds were floating along the Avon Gorge and the frost was thawing slowly. It was obvious what my mission was … to say to Mary Rose, " Arise and walk " . I rang up Cha Weychan's mother and went round to be fed coffee and a great rap we had too.

At about 10 o’clock Wanda Weychan took me up to Frenchay Hospital up in North Bristol. I was then at the last gate, telling the fat man behind the Frenchay Hospital inquiry desk my story. It was obviously not his responsibility so he passed the proverbial buck to a Dr. Briggs, who was in the ward carrying out post-mortems on a Sunday “ because there was such a backlog … we’ve had a lot of experience here with death and I can assure you that we are acting in your best interests … “. The clinico-scientifico anti emotion syndrome.

Wanda, a veritable saint, drove me back to Clifton. As we said goodbye and as the sun was so hot on that amazing morning, down came the Morris’s soft top. My candle still burns in the gusty conditions and snuffs out on Sion Hill between the obelisk and the church where they queue to hear the man preach.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Summers



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6th February 1980

Dear Mr. Summers,

Thank you for your letter and this account. I offer you my sympathy.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Levin

J. Summers Esq.,
London SW11.

Copy of Diary 1980 (continued)

Monday 21st January 1980

I telephone Carole, my middle sister, my muddled sister, to tell her the sad news – ” Did she commit suicide ? “, says Carole …

” Give me Andrew”, I said, restraining my pent up anger. He understands and doesn’t act.

I return my salopettes to Alpine Sports – the queue-barger woman. Then have a long rap with Tom Bovingdon up in Harrod’s

Olympic Way about golf nets, people and ancient ledgers.

To Basil Street … Doc 15 minutes late. Supertramp 'Child of Vision' playing as we near Guy's Hospital (my birthplace 13.7.1954) Keat's House – for my homeopathic appointment with Anthony Fry. He's ½ hour late as well. Prescribes Lithium Carbonate, " Slow down kid !" . Say goodbye to Michael (Doc) and hop into Buttercup. I am intoduced to to Revelations 14 – the references to the Lamb, Syon (Zion) Hill etc.. Amanda Fitzalan-Howard comes for tea – fresh baked bread and chai. Colour selections – has to dash off to see her knitters. Take loaf of bread to Bishop's.

9.30p.m. arrive at Gail Bishop's house on Leatherhead Golf Course – snacks from the kitchen. Gail understands and so does her pitiable sister but the new boyfriend refuses to open up – & was a a right Bolshevic. Morris stalled 200 yards up the road. A fine household of people.

Back to town at about 2a.m. …

Tuesday 22nd January 1980

4.30a.m. or so Morris and I set off towards Heathrow, but needing gas, we stop at the garage on North End Road at Baron's Court & guess what, she doesn't want to leave. Not even when 2 Frenchmen give her a push – " Prend élan ", they say to me on leaving. Bizarre mais la verité. So I shove Morris round the corner & leave her for the day outside M.Cornelle's flat which was probably one of the safest spots.

Then it's autostop to H'row – one man stops but he's not going far. Bless him anyway. Then a taxi takes me to Terminal 1 for £6-50 – quick breakfast served out by some rather ignorant Indian ladies, then at 6.40a.m. British Airways set off to Paris – headphones on amongst a pleasant mix of people. Manage to get hold of the death announcements in the

Times/Telegraph when I'm 25,000′ up. Arrive at the appalling Charles de Gaulle – how does anyone manage to find their way around that tubular monstronsity ? 30 mins wait at the bank – papier, papier, toujours papier !

Then bus into Gare de L'Est – meeting a friend en route to whom I give the threepenny bit. Arrive chez Didier at roughly 11a.m. – il attend le plombier. Post letters to Chris Sandford and Wanda re Revelations 14. Speak to Marie on phone twice – pauvre petite – tired at first then having to work on the 'Corail'. Didier and I clean up the flat – take chai – then kip for 2 hours. 100 francs for Didier, sending package. Then out to Samaritaine for 3 frisbees, dried fruits, olive oil, Greek wine, M.C.Escher book for Sue (Gernaey), stickers, peppercorns, taramasalata.

Remarkable quartier environ de l'église ST. ÉSTEPHE – blending of Forum Les Halles and the counterculture cobbles. Back to Didier – ring Cha & then Jill Frederick's sister. Then metro with Colombian sack & hessian sack full of gifts – musicians abounding underground. Arrive at Les Invalides virtually broke to take bus to Orly – an almost deserted airport nowadays. Catch Kuwaiti Airways flight back to H'row, one of the most enjoyable flights I have ever taken – then back by tube to Baron's Court. Spoke to guy called Chris Parfitt who had just returned from India. Yet another believer. Morris starts first time !

Sue and Patrick's drinks party – then off to Kim and Françine for supper and so to bed.

Whatalong day.

Wednesday 23rd January 1980

Morris heads off to score & discovers she can't do much about traffic jams in the Queenstown Road. Meet Robin, Charlotte,

Sarah & baby Adam – then another old Morris drives me back to WKP 795. I decide to give her a rest outside Raven Records. Addison Lee take me to Anthony Fry at Guy's (what a dull driver … I had to resort to my headphones to avoid listening to him !). Anthony is 20 mins late (Doctor's prerogative) but I practice a little Dari in the waiting room.

Then walking over London Bridge, past Greig Fester. New patisserie on Gracechurch St., talking politics. Down Central Line to Holborn / change to Piccadilly & arrive at Knightsbridge. Then walk to Albert Bridge & find taxi after Diners' Clubbing another (No.3) Sony 121 + headphones. Collect Morris from Raven Records.

Telephone Maggie Lapiner, tracing hr to Perivale. She tells me she's just starting in a pub, the 'Seagull', between Southall & Greenford. So I storm up there; Maggie looking lovelier than ever, play the juke-box, have our halves of Guinness and smoke a few fags. Then off homeward bound, Morris really firing on all cylinders ! Set off on a search for Benhams (unable to find), Bennett's … " not in gym shoes, sir ", la di da di da di da. So up to Françoise, which looks as though a bomb hit it. Then on to Fingal's (Fulham Road), closing but waitress recommends Sloan's. That was closing too as was the Hard Rock – what a sleepy city we live in.

So it's back to Altenburg for scrambled eggs on toast.

AND

SO

TO

BED

where the festivities continue – superbon

extra.

Thursday 24th January 1980

Maggie sleeps on, bless her heart. Then off we go for another day in the life of. First stop Nat West Pont St. at 10.15a.m. but the new manager is unobtainable. My old friend Mr Mycock has retired – he wouldn't have bounced a cheque for £250. Troubles with the Technocrats. And so on down to Heathrow with Maggie, my gorgeous friend. Morris stops at the wrong terminal. Object find Gail. Friends help & Gail is paged from the departure lounge.

Maggie and I were standing at the iron gates in front of the departure channel when, from nowhere it seemed, six sisters or nuns were buzzing around us, like little hummingbirds. A most beautiful moment it was, then Gail appears through the doors to receive her gift – the Sony & phones, 3 cassettes, 2 candles and a card saying ' Go as you are ' – all wrapped in a sheet of the Times in a Raven Records bag ! We buy some more Duracells, then Gail has to go … to Moscow then Kenya.

I introduce Maggie to my friends up at the coffee shop & we eat some lunch. Then it's bye bye – me going to Sunningdale, Maggie back to Perivale. Hand over my sneakers to the Pro's Shop and play 13 holes with Peter Breeden – he 2 over par, me a bit ropy but not too bad. Then set off for my 4p.m. appointment at Allen & Overy (Solicitors) – I'm ½ hour late cos Morris stopped on a roundabout by the ' Compleat Angler Hotel ' – fine black guy helps me out & we tow start her … give him £2 for his trouble.

Ted Molt says hello in Knightsbridge (he used to have Morris convertible). Reach A&O – Sir Godfrey Morley, Colin Welsh, Derek Sloan. £360 cheque from mum's estate. Derek stays to hear the week's events and hands over Mange 2's company memorandi. Mange 2 is born ! Glowing orange fire-ball sun over Buckingham Palace as I was driving back down the Mall.

Supper chez Franny & one non-believer. Nick Porritt, Losely

man, Charlie. Mark Fielden calls. Depart at midnight …

Friday 25th January 1980 **VISIONS**

3a.m.

The Spire on the Hill

(St. Marks)

Doves †
Courage

The White Cat

The Song

Solsbury Hill

Peter Gabriel

Bath … laughing about the Game, the Great Game

Sunday 24th February 1980

5’ish to Syon Park with Sue Gernaey & Rufus (dog). The whole tour from Harry Percy. Syon ↔ St.Paul’s. Obelisk & gifts.

Monday 25th February 1980

Window cleaner. Mr Unigate & suit. Mr Halsey, news of Mycock. ” Never cut out to be a bank manager ” … ” Well, none of us are really “. Harrods Book Dept.. Julian & Georgie for tea. London Window Co. and Sotheby’s talk. Jehovah’s Witnesses. Doc Michael, house supper for 6 and laughter. Toast … absent friends.

Tuesday 26th February 1980

‘ Living by numbers … does it all add up to you ? ‘ Calmate, Sue. Message re Gail dizzy, call Jamie at Dixons on Capital Radio. Gasmen bring the wrong clock. Take fishcakes to Jayne Phillips, Majid Saud, Dr. Kelly & Harry P. at Priory + mushroom. Morris no go. By bus past Northumberland Arms to Altenburg. Walk to Clapham Common bandstand – clock configuration. Letters from Kitty & Jayne – former with silver cross & chain. The present †. Tea-time re Dr. Flood, talking of AJPS. Amanda brings her creations (jerseys). 7.15p.m. to Sue & her telephone – Rufus returns.

New Genesis album in 10 days. New single … ” Turn it on again “.

Wednesday 27th February 1980

Up with the birds and dustmen. Thinking of Lady Mary Rose Williams (mum’s best friend) and Mr McNair-Wilson (Lymington M.P.) and connections thereto. Lady at the crossroads … ” I’ve seen you here before “. Touch cures nausea – ta Sue P. Rang Gran – she saw eclipse in Kenya. Outing to Graham Millar (trustee) – the evil Bolingbroke story & Mr Inglis at Touche Ross – back via Sainsbury’s with nausea continuing. To bed at 1p.m., Jayne rings with news of Harry at 2.30p.m.. Poisonous pesticides killed the peregrines.

More nausea – calls to Desmond Kelly & Harry.

Thursday 28th February 1980

Dizziness