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'Park Hotel'

Bled

Yugoslavia

TWO BASIL MANSIONS, BASIL STREET, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, S.W. 3.

KENSINGTON 4691.

Dear Mummy,

This is the letter I have been promising, and I will now give a detailed description of our activities.

We left at eight o'clock on the Monday morning from Basil Mansions, drove to the garage, filled up with petrol, and set off for Dover, driving down the new motorway and arriving with an hour in hand. We loaded in pouring rain and a thunder storm, into a Belgian Boat, and had an uneventful crossing taking about four hours. Daddy had booked a ~~waiting~~ cabin, and had two hours sleep on the way. We arrived in Ostend safely, and then set off down the autobahn at a hundred miles an hour - steady. We had a bit of trouble with the fan belt, but had it repaired. We stopped that night in Charleroi - next to a fairground to Simon's great delight. On successive nights, ~~after~~ we stopped at Freiburg, in a hotel that Daddy has stayed at and has an adventure 30 years before, and he said it was just the same.

We then camped into Yugoslavia, and continued down until the road got so bad that we turned off into a little village named Rakostane, and were there shown a tiny little camp of half a dozen tents in a pine wood. We took an immediate liking and set up camp there for the following twelve days.

The weather was brilliant all the time; the sun rose at five and shone intensely till seven in the evening when

it disappeared abruptly. We got up usually about half past six and settled down at about eight.

There was no piped water, and so we took it in turns to carry fresh, cold water from a tap about $\frac{3}{4}$ miles away. This we did in an enormous plastic container, and was much resented by Pinday who always insisted that it took him twenty five minutes to do it, and that he could only carry half a container full. Yours truly held the record with 7 mins there and back not including filling time - and with a full container! All our provisions had to be bought in the village from shops that were closed half the time, and at different times on successive days, but we could always live on bread and water-melon, bought from old peasant women who would come to the corner with baskets full of grapes, tomatoes, figs, aubergines, green peppers, eggs etc., although naturally not all at once. My impersonation of an old peasant woman keeps the party in stitches - you must see it.

I did most of the cooking and all the washing up, Daddy did the shopping, which was very fatiguing, as Pabostane was about a mile away over white dusty country lanes in the midday sun. Simon and I spent almost all our time on the plage, a concrete platform sticking out into the warmest sea I have ever swum in. A school was busy spending a third of its three month summer holidays there, which coincided with our

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visit, and we got to know everybody, and as its age group was seven to about fifteen, mixed. Practically everybody spoke French and German fluently with some degree of fluency, and Yous Truly was holding involved conversations in both. I have picked up quite a smattering of Yugoslav, although I must admit, Simon learned the first word anybody knew — SLADOLED, meaning, of course, ICE CREAM. In Italy, naturally, he said, 'Uno gelato, per favore Signorina,' and in France 'Une glace, s'il vous plaît, madame.' He also worked a lot of fiddling transactions in changing money from one country to the next, spending it on ice creams, and generally playing Mr. Jasper. Anyhow, we both got very admirable suntans lying about gossiping and swimming, but of course, peeled dreadfully, Nivea having no effect. Daddy has a magnificent suntan, the best of the lot, and he also after went in swimming. We are all much healthier, finding having lost a lot of fat. Daddy has lost weight, and I have the most magnificent stomach muscles you ever saw. My swimming, having been of the most precarious before, is now excellent, particularly in the crawl, for I swam for about three, four or even five hours a day, and even paid a flying visit to an island over half a mile out to sea, arriving

breathing as lightly as if I had just walked along Knightsbridge. Simon and I were the star attraction, being the first English that these school types had ever seen, Simon with his natural uninhibitedness being especially admired, but the Old Campaigner (me) managed to secure himself a little friend, as Daddy puts it, very nice, - I'll show you photographs. We met a couple of Yugoslav Youths who spoke French or English & showed us around when we arrived and told us where the shops were etc. There were no news papers, and we knew absolutely nothing of the outside world, the first we saw being the result of Power's trial, - ten days later!

We are stopping off at Salzburg for a day on our way home, especially to see the Mozart Museum at my request, as I have always wanted to see it. We will arrive home Thursday next to prepare for school, to which I am very much looking forward - I dream of mathematics problems!

I hope you are well, and Auntie Joan, and we will soon see you, - hoping you receive the postcards

Very much love
from
Robin