

LONDON: A TRAVELOGUE

Two-weeks after it was over and I see Jimmy at a party. He has this strange look about him.

In recognition of another great peripatetic artist, Ken Kesey, I figure something...

That man is still on the bus.

DAY 1

Philipp (our driver) disappears. His first great gesture of the trip. 17 missed calls make no sense to a sleeping man. Eventually he picks up.

“Oh...God” – he says.

This all happens while we are parked in Peckham. It's raining a lot. We decide to go to a party. Philipp drives us when he finally returns. The party is fun. Lots of dancing. Then there's a little punch-up (none of us involved) and everyone feels a bit weird before bed.

DAY 2

Philipp didn't bring any proper bedding. I bring two pillows, a mattress cover and a tie-dye sheet. Jimmy has a duvet and some pillows. But Philipp seems to be sleeping on an aggregation of rags. He didn't bring a towel either.

We wake and head to Rock Steady Eddie's Rock n Roll Cafe in Camberwell, a London institution by all means. Somewhat popular with the institutional crowd too; Jimmy points at a day-care patient. He looks a little rough / but so do we.

David Gothard is our next target.

And Vauxhall. *Ahhh, Vauxhall.*

David takes an instant liking to Philipp. He calls him “*Germany*.” Jimmy is wearing a white t-shirt. He will wear the same t-shirt most of the trip.

David takes us to a beautiful square and talks of Chaplin and Blake.

DAY 3

We wake in Clapham, having parked up in the homely yard of Studio Voltaire. Nice studio artists speak with Jimmy. He tells them about our trip. They think he's a bit strange, but I can see they like his hair.

Hemel Hempstead is not in London. Unperturbed we head there anyway. Our destination is Leisure World. Despite being only 20 years old, Leisure World – a bit like Cedric Price's ‘fun palace’ reimagined through the brain freeze of a slush-puppie – is falling to bits. None of it works. Heidegger's hammer: the whole problem just pours out.

It reminds me of the Trocadero in the West End. In particular when they closed Sega World with a singularly brutal perfunctory gesture: the wedging of a large coke machine in the mouth of the escalator.

Done.



Our guide is the artist Nicky Carvell. She's from Hemel and proud. She regales then takes us to the Toby Carvery.

We eat. I feel sick after. We drive back to Clapham.

DAY 4

Today we visit Mad Professor!!!

DAY 5

The original idea had been to begin each day with a swim. Day 5 and this plan is belatedly put into action. None of us have ever been to Hampstead Ponds. That seems wrong. So we go. The water is cold and green. Phillip's absent towel problem grows more acute.

We then visit the ICA, parking the Rambler right outside. We drink beer. And head to Rotherhithe.

Ahh Rotherhithe!

DAY 6

A greasy spoon. When Jimmy goes to the loo we hide his sausage bap. He is gutted.

DAY 7

Long day on the road. We visit Alex-Noel Watson, a well travelled cartoonist. His front room is hot but he serves us each a cooling cola. Later, back in Peckham, we have a BBQ. That guy from Bar Story tells us to 'move on'...

*MOVE ON, MOVE ON, MOVE ON,
MOVE ON, MOVE ON, MOVE ON,
MOVE ON, MOVE ON*

So we go...to the carpark behind Morrisons and have a little party in the thunder and rain.

DAY 8

The road is long. I feel dead. Jimmy has relentless enthusiasm (still). Philipp seems robust, but I can tell he is tired. We head to a caravan park in Crystal Palace. We park up then head into the town. We eat a pizza at a restaurant that is an almost exact facsimile of a Pizza Express. Like one of those Apple Stores in Guangzhou. It's called "Palace Pizza".

DAY 9

Up and out. We head to Aldershot (also not in London) to watch some banger races. A miserable affair. I am no longer producing any dopamine. I retire to the Rambler and eat pistachio nuts. They are unsalted. Another blow. Later I demand to be dropped home. **Enough**. We get stuck in the traffic caused by road closure. A major cycle sportive is taking place.

DAY 10

I cannot account for what happened on our final day as I was at home. Apparently Jimmy and Philipp cleaned the Rambler and Philipp took it back to the hire company.

PAUL PIERONI

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