

Barmouth

Vignette: Barmouth, North Wales,
April 1978



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April 1978

Monday 3 April 1978 –

I remember travelling to Shrewsbury, and spending a quiet time of prayer along the river meadows. At Shrewsbury station I met Zahid (my friend from Iran) when he got off the 3.30 pm train, the last I had been prepared to meet. This happy meeting was itself a miracle, and an answer to prayer!

We visited Packwood Haugh [the preparatory school I attended from 1963 to 1968, starting when I was eight and leaving when I was thirteen]. We drove through Baschurch, through Ruyton XI Towns, past the red sandstone Church, the village pump, the dairy, up the hill, and in through the gates. The school was all 'bigger', in terms of new buildings, new fields, woods – the school had enlarged its borders. Yet at the same time it seemed much 'smaller' – huge distances had contracted to a stone's throw.

Zahid and I walked down the hill with Mrs Pease-Watkins, the Headmaster's wife. The Headmaster, 'PW', as he was known, was furiously shifting earth with a shovel, as it was during the school holidays. Meeting PW for the first time in ten years was a moment of truth, set against a landscape of hills and fields, captured as it were in a frozen fragment of time, like a huge painting. Together, the four of us walked up the hill, round the school, and then we sat down to tea. PW hardly seemed to have changed. Like Napoleon, like Stalin, he still had everyone firmly under his thumb – while the whole place – finances and community – flourished under his dynamic influence. Only now was there the amazing experience of being able to talk to him as man to man.

Notes written at the time record:

The past I leave behind me. And it seems that everything of significance that has happened to me has taken place since Packwood, since I last looked out across the valley from the 'mushrooms' [topiary round bushes]: Haileybury and starting the Christian life; Kenya; Cambridge; Pakistan; Greece. The dim and distant past I leave well and truly behind me...

Cambridge International House Party, Barmouth, North Wales

Monday 3 April 1978 (continued) –

From Packwood, Zahid and I traveled westwards through Llanymyrech and Dolgellau to Barmouth, North Wales. We arrived at the 'Mount Argus' Guest House to join the house party in the early evening – just in time for the second of Charles Marsh's talks...

TALK 1, given on Sunday – as far as I could surmise – was on '**New Life in Christ**', the general title for the series. General theme: All other religions and ways are dead. But Christianity is Christ, and Christ is LIFE. TALK 1 was based on John Chapter 10 and Charles Marsh (CM) explained what God has done for us through Christ – the wonderful new life that Christ offers us. In John 10 v 10 Jesus said: "I have come in order that you may have life – life in all its fullness... I am the Good Shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep," and, to give it an international context, "There are other sheep which belong to me that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them too; they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock with one shepherd" (John 10 v 16).

TALK 2 (Monday) was on John Chapter 3, '**The Beginning of this New Life**'. John 3 v 5: "I am telling you the truth... No one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit." You can be born a Muslim, or a Hindu or a Buddhist, but you cannot be born a Christian! You must all be born again. You must be born first, then you can live: learn to

walk, go to school, grow up, go to work for the Lord... Ending: Reason to live. All must complete: "For me to live is..." EITHER (a) For me to live is money, pleasure, another person; to die is LOSS – for you will lose what you have lived for; OR (b) For me to live is CHRIST; to die is GAIN.

Tuesday 4 April 1978 –

We visited Harlech Castle in glorious sunshine. I made friends with Wendy (from Eindhoven, Holland), who had accepted Christ on Sunday; and Khalida (from Baghdad, Iraq), who had come to Jesus the night before – she was reading a book of Scripture verses in Arabic. I also met Tuula (from Finland) and Hsaio Feng (from Taiwan). We travelled by coach to Porthmadog, singing Mexican-style songs with Sylvia and Pepe (from Mexico), Jeanette (from Nicaragua) and Elizabeth (from Spain).

Dry, brown hills across the tidal plain silhouetted against the glaring sun. We had a picnic lunch at 'Black Rock Sands', and then played a football match – England vs the Rest of the World! It was very windy – and then we lost the ball, as it got blown out to sea – and nearly lost Mohammed as well in his attempts to retrieve it! Caves, rocks, sand, sea and sun. The bus taxied round on the sand, and then began to accelerate along the runway – windswept sand and sunlit water, reminding me of take-off from the Middle East.

Later that afternoon, I rode on the Ffestiniog Railway with Wendy, Mohammed and Dave. Old-style carriages, steam engine, fantastic forest scenery, mountains, lakes.

Back at Mount Argus, we had a small-group Bible study outside on the lawn, on John Chapter 15 – Jesus the Vine, and the importance of bearing fruit: (i) Fruit is delectable and pleasing to others; so we too should manifest the fruit of the Spirit in our lives – love, joy, peace, patience etc.; (ii) Fruit is the means by which the plant reproduces itself – it carries the seed; so also we bear fruit when we spread the Gospel and make disciples as Jesus commanded us.

TALK 3 (Tuesday) on John Chapter 15, '**The Continuation of this New Life**'. The Christian life is like a wicket gate followed by a long, narrow pathway.

(i) *The Christian and his Lord.*

John 15 v 1: "I am the real vine." Vine = root + branches + stem + leaves + fruit. Verse 4: "Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you." Remain where God has put you. You took the first step of the Christian life by faith. Go on as you started, growing in faith each day. It took Hudson Taylor 20 years to realize what it meant to *abide*, to rest in Christ – in His power, His purity, His strength. Learn to draw strength and grace from Him each day. Cut off from Christ you can do nothing. Two Keynotes: (a) daily prayer in the name of Jesus; (b) daily meditation on God's Word. Just hand it all over to Him and He will sort things out.

(ii) *The Christian and his Brothers.*

John 15 v 17: "Love one another." After the warm fellowship of Christian Unions, find a church if possible with 3 things: (a) based on God's Word, with evangelical doctrines given true weight; a scriptural church; (b) a 'live' church; (c) an active church, where you can be involved and use your gifts – the 3 characteristics of the New Testament church. Local church fellowship is vital.

(iii) *The Christian and the World.*

John 15 v 18: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you." The world – what is it? 1 John 2 v 16: "what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of" – a hostile world that is opposed to God and His messengers. We are called to witness and bear fruit in a hostile, God-rejecting world; to know Jesus, to see Him; to go and tell others about Him. Be dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Let Him use you. If you don't want this, then I'm so sorry for you! You're losing your life; you're living for self...

Wednesday 5 April 1978 –

Ascent of Cader Idris, the second highest mountain in Wales – a fair and perfect day. There were some hassles over the chaotic organization (e.g. the provision of sausage rolls), a car that had to be lifted clear of the bus, and an agonizing journey along roads that were signposted ‘Unsuitable for Coaches’!

I remember the approach march, the steep ascent, the spectacular view towards the cliffs of Cader against the sun, and a precipitous ‘slide’ down the scree to a clear, green lake fringed with snow in shadow.

I recall the summit itself – wind, sunshine and a snowball fight! The reality and freedom of the hills at last – an experience I had last enjoyed on Ben More Assynt in September 1977 – centuries ago, it seemed. The top of the mountain gave the perfect setting for a day when my vision for the future became beautifully clear – when suddenly all my past life seemed to fit together into place, and I was able to catch exciting glimpses of the way ahead...

“Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose” (Psalm 25 v 12).

“The steps of a man are from the Lord, and he establishes him in whose way he delights; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord is the stay of his hand” (Psalm 37 v 23).

“Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut” (Revelation 3 v 8).

I talked with Charles Marsh on the way down – about serving the Lord in Islamic countries, and how to share one’s faith:

- (i) *Discussion:*
 - (a) Avoid speaking against Mohammed and the Qur’an. Argument is forbidden, both in the Qur’an (do not argue with ‘people of the book’), and in the Bible (“avoid senseless controversies”).
 - (b) Try to take the initiative. Talk about the Lord Jesus. Let Jesus be the centre of the conversation. If side-tracked, return with “We’re talking about Jesus...”
- (ii) *Possible approaches:*
 - (a) Say, “I want to tell you something you don’t know. Do you know how you can have peace with God? Are your sins forgiven? How can you be sure?”
 - (b) “God made me to want the very best in life, and to receive all of his blessings. Now can you name me one single blessing, that Jesus has not already given me?”
 - (c) “Let’s look at the person of Jesus – his character and his qualities... Consider his purity. In neither the Bible nor the Qur’an is there any record of Jesus ever having sinned. Now I know about a prophet who asked God to forgive him seventy times a day. But Jesus never asked God to forgive him. He lived a perfect life. God said of him, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’
 - (d) “Consider Jesus’ amazing power. We know that only God can open the eyes of the blind, but Jesus did. Only God can heal the lame, the deaf, the dumb, but Jesus did. Only God can forgive a man his sins, but Jesus did – and proved he had the authority to do so by commanding the paralysed man to get up and walk. Only God can cleanse lepers, drive out demons, raise the dead, but Jesus did.

- (e) “Consider his love...” etc. (in Algeria, when Charles Marsh delivered his first sermon on the lines above, no less than five enquirers in the village returned for further discussion. At least one expressed his thanks for the address – for he had glimpsed Jesus. The next week CM gave this address in Arabic and the same thing happened.)
- (iii) *Practical tips:*
- (a) Win his confidence and friendship. There’s nothing to beat the human touch. Be completely sincere in what you do and say. Your friend’s standards are high, and he can read you like a book. He will respect you if he can be sure that you are a ‘man of God’.
- (b) The fact that you are taking the trouble to learn Arabic at all is a point in your favour. Learn to speak good classical Arabic. Also read the Qur’an and know what it contains.

So, down from the mountain – and I sat by a stream in the evening sun chatting with Dave and Danny. Bible studies outside on the lawn until 7 pm – Jesus and the Samaritan woman. CM’s outline (to make up for our blundering about earlier on in the day):

- *Make Contact*
- *Show Concern*
- *Communicate the Truth*
- *Convict but don’t Condemn*
- *Challenge to Commitment...*

TALK 4 (Wednesday) on John Chapter 12, ‘**Follow me where I am**’. John 12 v 20 to 26: “Some Greeks were among those who had gone to Jerusalem to worship during the festival. They went to Philip and said, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip went and told Andrew, and the two of them told Jesus. Jesus answered them: ‘The hour has now come for the Son of Man to receive great glory. I am telling you truth: a grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies. If it does die, then it produces many grains. Whoever loves his life will lose it; whoever hates his own life in this world will keep it for life eternal. Whoever wants to serve me must follow me, so that my servant will be with me where I am. And my Father will honour anyone who serves me.’” Verse 39: “God has blinded their eyes and closed their minds.”

We have the contrast of those who are blind (v 39), and ‘some Greeks’ who wished to see Jesus (v 21). This is the picture in every land. Most people are blind, deaf, have hardened hearts, but there are *some* who wish to see Jesus...

- (a) *Christ our Lesson (v 24, 25):*

Follow Him to the Cross. A grain of wheat is dropped into the ground and dies. It is the hidden seed that suffers in the ground. Compare the sufferings of Jesus: the important part was not what was visible – the crown of thorns, the nails – but the hidden sufferings of his soul. Your life = a grain of wheat. It is small, dry, insignificant. But if you want to see its full potential, you must throw it away. A grain of wheat can either be eaten or sown.

In Algeria, in a year of drought, there was barely enough grain to use as next year’s seed. The temptation was to eat what little grain there was, and leave none for seed.

It was the courageous farmers who let their children go to bed crying for hunger – to throw away the children’s bread. But those who did were rewarded with a rich harvest.

Your life: it can either be spent for self, or thrown away – perhaps in another land – and spent for God. Some (quite legitimate) things are to be put aside, in order to have enough time to serve and be sown for the Master. It’s easy enough to sow the Word, e.g. give a tract, go door-to-door visiting, tell someone about Jesus. But you must *be sown*; for the messenger is as important as the message. To live for self is to destroy your lovely life. 95% of Christians are destroying their lives – they’re eating them up – by living for themselves. If that’s the case, then at CM’s age (76) – you will look back and be profoundly sorry. For your years will have been wasted.

(b) *Christ our Lord (Isaiah 6):*

Follow Him to the Throne. It is the throne of authority. “All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go...” (Matthew 28 v 18). We must have Isaiah’s vision before us. “Your sin is forgiven, your guilt has been taken away.” We must be like that angel. Our mission is to be like this: ‘I come with the authority of God, the King of Kings; I come with the cleansing message of God; I start in the presence of God, before His throne’. So Isaiah said, ‘That’s what I want. Lord, here am I! Send me.’

(c) *Christ our Leader (Acts 8):*

Follow Him in Active Service. John Chapter 10: “My sheep listen to my voice... There are other sheep... I must bring them too; they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock with one shepherd.” We are ‘my sheep’, and if we will go, ‘other sheep’ will hear his voice. God hardly ever uses just one person to bring someone else to the Lord (e.g. John Stott was not used to bring many to the Lord in Cambridge. Why? Because he wants to use *you*). You need, like Philip, to be led to those who ‘wish to see Jesus’, to those who are seeking after the Lord...

Thursday 6 April 1978 –

We walked across Barmouth Bridge, and then round and back along the seashore. I had a chat with Hsaio Feng from Taiwan. Along the seashore the sunlight upon the gentle breakers reminded me of a long evening walk in Crete the previous summer (1977). We saw jellyfish – *le meduse*. I also had a long conversation with Michiko about Japan, Hokkaido and Japanese society. It seems Japan is ripe for spiritual revolution. Young people are disillusioned with modern Japanese society and its materialistic attitudes. So Michiko thinks that Christianity could begin to have a real foothold in the country and possibly sweep though it – as it has done in America. There are not the strong indigenous religions (Buddhism, Confucianism) to fall back on. We made our way back across the bridge and I chatted with Mike about South Africa. Afternoon rehearsals for ‘the entertainment’. Tea out on the lawn – another beautiful warm spring day.

Bible study outside, looking out to sea, until the sun sank behind the western hills. John Chapter 11 and Ephesians 2 v 1 to 3. John 1 v 14: “Lazarus is dead.” One day, people will say that about you, about me. Verse 25: Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” Verse 43: Jesus called out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, Come out!”

Charles Marsh came to help us, especially in a deadlock with Zahid. Some helpful arguments:

- (i) We’re not talking about religion, but about Life. All the others are religions, but Christianity is Christ, and Christ is Life. Religion is about what you do for God. But this Book (the Bible) is about what God first did for us. Before you come to

know Jesus, you are dead – you are like Lazarus, bound and in a tomb. It is only Jesus who has the power to say to anyone of us, “Come out of the tomb.” Other religions may tell us how to be good, but only Jesus can give you life. You are spiritually dead (Ephesians 1 v 2 –because of your disobedience and sins); you need spiritual life, eternal life – which is expressed in French as *‘la vie de L’ Eternal’*. (NB for a Muslim this is all new, unfamiliar and hard to swallow. We need to pray that God will open the eyes of the spiritually dead, the minds of unbelievers.)

- (ii) Jesus is alive! Where is Mohammed’s tomb? A Muslim will tell you. Where is Jesus’ tomb? Has any prophet or good man ever said anything like “I am the resurrection, I am the life”?
- (iii) When you die, you will die a Muslim, you will be buried as a Muslim. I will die a Christian, someone else will be buried as a Buddhist etc. But Jesus comes and calls you out of the tomb, and you will rise a MAN. And unless you already have the life of Christ in you, you will be judged by what you have done. John 5 v 24 to 29: “I am telling you the truth, he who hears my words and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He will not be judged, but has already passed from death to life. I am telling you the truth: the time is coming – it has already come – when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear it will come to life... Do not be surprised at this: the time is coming when all the dead will hear his voice and come out of their graves: those who have done good will rise and live, and those who have done evil will rise and be condemned.” Do you wish to escape that judgment? Then see verse 24.

Evening show highlights:

1. Indonesia – Rini, Maudi, Tina and the two Mikes dressed up: *Lembe lembe toyan toyo-o* (Batak);
2. Iran – Mahommet and Zahid: jokes, e.g. lunatics on a plane kept quiet by being told to go outside for a walk;
3. USSR – from the Moscow Conservatoire, Madame Hsaio-Fenski playing Rachmaninoff, and the world famous Madame Musselovski (Wendy), the woman with the amazing elastic muscles: “Now, when you are quite ready, will you please try to extend your right arm?” [*commentator played by yours truly, arms and legs played by Dave and Danny*];
4. Taiwan – slides of Taipei and beautiful mountain scenery, Li Chung sang a Chinese hymn;
5. Israel – Joyce showed some slides;
6. Wales – John Richards (the bus driver) sang ‘Beautiful Dreamer’ to the accompaniment of violin and piano;
7. Hawaii – Dancers Dave, Danny and Maruan complete with grass skirts and flowers!
8. China – Yengi told a proverbial story;
9. Mexico – Pepe’s beautiful story about a tree in four seasons (using mime): spring – growing up, bursting into leaf; summer – birds making nests in her branches; autumn

– leaves spiraling, falling down; winter – “waste winter winds curse and twist the crests of ageing elms” – tree bending before the fury of a storm; at the end, a still, lifeless tree, with a broken branch swaying tragically in the breeze;

10. UK – Eileen singing “Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us...”;
11. France – Yogurt eating competition between Maruan and Yengi, hands supplied by Nargis and Khalida, arranged by Roseleyne;
12. Lancashire – “There’s a famous sea-side place called Blackpool...”;
13. Spain and Central America – Spanish dancing with Sylvia, Jeanette, Pepe, Elizabeth, Luca and Simona: *Perum perum pum perro perro*. Daffodils, snapping fingers, fishing hats;
14. The News, read by Richard Baker (Jenny) – Barmouth invaded by foreign students, scattered over a 10 mile radius; each answered, “We were all following Simon”;
15. Mike Brown – “It’s been a fun-packed international holiday... Simon’s search for lakes, Sylvia’s twisted foot”;
16. Ended with a rather chaotic dance, but after an evening of wonderful international entertainment, and an amazing sense of togetherness and camaraderie...

Friday 7 April 1978 –

Long walk up on to the Llanaber ridge just below Diffwys. With Khalida, Tuula and Michiko we ascended along farm roads – forests, mountains and lakes against sunshine and trees in the foreground.

We talked some more with Charles Marsh – that deep down underneath Zahid is really seeking; family ties in Muslim society; and Japan – like Victorian England, or in the previous generation: the concept of individuality and independence in thought, belief and action is only a phenomenon of modern western civilization. That is why Jesus said, “If anyone would follow me and does not hate his mother, father etc. cannot be my disciple.”

I had a good talk with Dave and Joyce about incredible and diverse answers to prayer accompanying the house party. We had a sense of prayed-for situations: the weather, almost unbroken sunshine; Joyce’s foot – a week ago she could hardly walk; Sylvia’s twisted ankle; Zahid’s coming at all – the fact that he was on the last train I was prepared to meet, and his rapid recovery from flu; finances – after accounts were settled they found they were 2p short (in £1,000!) In answer to prayer they found, separately, two 1p coins lying on pathways!

We had a picnic lunch all together, then a steep ascent, giving Wendy and Sylvia a tow uphill (backwards)! On to the ridge, over the crest, and there was a lake (about 1,000 feet below). I had a time of sharing with Tuula about relationships, sensitivity, understanding and maturity.

Down again – I decided to stay far enough behind to be alone – time with the Lord, for reflection, for looking ahead, for praise and prayer. The hills all around me, an empty valley. I remembered that the last time I had walked alone in the hills was on a cold December morning in the Peak District – a wild, primitive experience accompanied, it seemed, by a bugle lament crying out across the battle-field. What a contrast *now*, with those dreadful days of late 1977! Now, several stages further on, I can look the future in the face with

confidence and joy – and, as if echoing all that I thought and felt, the hills began to rejoice and become suddenly clear and real, and full of promise, as if to say in defiance, “No, Jesus will never fail you nor forsake you! Whatever bitter experiences you may think you had in the past, trust Him for the future...”

Then I realised – I could (in imagination) go *back* in time, to almost exactly two years ago, to April 1976 and the beginning of the glorious ‘Term 6’ [my sixth term at Cambridge]. Only *now* that I’m free from the emotional turbulence of 1977, and the new summer begins, am I in a position to recover the special flavour of 1976, and to rediscover what was so good, so distinct about Term 6: the clear-mindedness, discipline and joy in prayer; scriptural teaching; the thrill and excitement of preparing to go abroad, to Pakistan, the BMMF conference; early morning walks down along the river Cam; consideration of the ‘Great Year’ in Africa, and what made it so great; the tremendous spiritual lessons I learned, by and large not recorded in the diaries, the ‘Real Africa’; and always keeping before me the exciting prospect of going overseas again. Back on to the plateau of 1976, and forward from there...

I had an interesting talk with Guy about Quiet Times and the danger of treating them purely as spiritual exercises and never really meeting with the Lord; drawbacks of Cambridge life; speaking in tongues etc.

Our last Bible study was on 1 John: “God is light.” (1) Sin and punishment – the difference between judicial and parental punishment. As God’s sons our sins are forgiven, we are not condemned; but God tests us and disciplines us as a father his (sometimes disobedient) children. (2) Jesus’ death upon the cross – why it was necessary; how we too have to be crucified – dead to sin, but alive to God.

THE FINAL TALK 5 (Friday) – a memorable talk, illustrated with slides from Chad and Algeria. ‘**Tested by Fire**’ – “Our God is a destroying [consuming] fire” (Hebrews 12 v 29).

(a) *He tests our work:*

1 Corinthians 3 v 13 to 15: “But each one must be careful how he builds. For God has already placed Jesus Christ as the one and only foundation, and no other foundation can be laid. Some will use gold or silver or precious stones in building on the foundation; others will use wood or grass or straw. And the quality of each person’s work will be seen when the Day of Christ exposes it. For on that day fire will reveal everyone’s work; the fire will test it and show its real quality. If what was built on the foundation survives the fire, the builder will receive a reward. But if any one’s work is burnt up, then he will lose it; but he himself will be saved, as if he had escaped through the fire.”

(b) *He tests our faith:*

1 Peter 1 v 7: “...because of the many kinds of trial you suffer. Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold, which can be destroyed, is tested by fire; and so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure.”

(c) *He will test us:*

Matthew 3 v 12: “He has the winnowing shovel with him to thresh out all the grain. He will gather his wheat into his barn, but he will burn the chaff in a fire that never goes out.”

(d) Illustrations:

- Chad Republic – CM described his work there: “All the work of God that I, Charles Marsh, have done will go up in flames. But all the work that *God* has done, through CM, will remain.” Picture of a flourishing African church. Suddenly CM was recalled – his wife’s arthritis had become so bad that she could not turn the key of the front door. Air fares were expensive, so he did not expect to be back for 3 months at least. “But what if I send to you a young man who can carry on the work that I have to leave?” The suggestion was greeted with much enthusiasm by church leaders. That was eight years ago...
- “Out of the north, evil shall break forth upon the inhabitants of this land” (Jeremiah 1 v 14); and from the north persecution came to the Christians. Faith was tested by fire.
- Algeria – work among Berbers and Arabs. CM and his wife had to learn four languages in 4 years. Bible discussions, for the men and for the women (separately); Sunday schools for the children; translation work during the Algerian winter (with 3 feet of snow up in the hills). More stories about persecution – for a Muslim who becomes a Christian there is pressure: from the family, the State and the Mosque. Tested by fire – silver is heated in a crucible until the dross burns off, and the metal shines like a mirror. Virgin bush has to be burned before it can be cultivated. At that stage it is empty, desolate, ugly. So in our lives our evil nature has to be crucified with Christ, the dross burned off. The new life comes – flowers, crops.
- The Fire of Judgment – pictures of threshing corn, with separate piles of chaff and wheat. The piles of chaff go up in a puff of smoke; the wheat is gathered into sacks and stored in a barn. CM – unable to distinguish between them: “I can’t go around you saying ‘chaff, wheat, wheat, chaff’... but God knows. This week we have all been together. But One Day, God will separate the Christians from the non-Christians. We have had a good time here. Let us all return with joy, yet with solemnity. I hope one thing is clear: I love you, for Christ’s sake.”

Saturday 8 April 1978 –

I returned to Statfold via Shrewsbury (after having lunch with Joyce). On Sunday I was shown around the Hall. Found that last night I had sat at a desk to write: the chair was Hepplewhite c 1820; the age of the desk was 1720! We went to Church at Clifton Campville, and then I returned to Cambridge with Rini.

What made it an unforgettable week? Why was it a Mountain Peak experience?

Just some of the reasons...

1. Those who came to the Lord, or who made some definite commitment: (i) On the first day (Sunday) Wendy accepted the Lord. Her face was beaming: “I just can’t believe it could have happened to me!” (ii) Then Khalida, a nominal Christian from Iraq, came to a real faith in Jesus Christ. It seems now that Tuula has made friends with her, and they will be able to read the Bible together. (iii) Michiko broke down and made a real commitment – putting the Lord first, before her family and country and culture. (iv) And on the last evening Sylvia received Jesus. (v) Many others who were not ready to take the final step of faith were nevertheless moved on in their thinking and helped in their search. For the Christians it was certainly a week of encouragement, strengthening, learning, challenge.

2. The weather was unbelievable – especially in the view of the fact that it was raining the day they travelled up from Cambridge, and the next week – in Cambridge – it snowed! From the day I arrived till the day I left there was almost unbroken sunshine, warm enough to sit outside on the lawn for Bible Study until 7 pm. The beautiful colouring of the Welsh countryside – so clearly a case of prayer wonderfully answered!
3. An amazing unity, sense of togetherness and camaraderie, especially seeing we came from all the corners of the world: (i) the Far East, Indonesia, Taiwan; (ii) the Middle East, Iraq, Jordan, Iran; (iii) Europe, France, Holland, Spain, Italy, Finland; and (iv) the Far West, Nicaragua, Mexico. John the bus driver remarked on this unity – as he often takes parties on holiday: “I don’t think any similar party of people, including those from one nationality, has ever welded together and ‘gelled’ as well as this.”
4. A time of great personal blessing. I was there for less than a week – yet it seemed more than a month! There was so much that I learned – so many people I met, absorbing the whole time – every day so rich and full. Superb Quiet Times in the early morning up in the hills above Mount Argus, views across to Cader Idris and the sea. Times of really meeting with the Lord, fullness of joy in His presence – leading to a revival of prayer times in general.
5. Teaching, instruction, challenge – through spending a week with Charles Marsh. What a blessing – to receive, at this stage, right at the beginning, such teaching and encouragement for the work – the ministry and mission to which I believe the Lord has called me – to be given, at this formative time, the clear example of CM’s life and work:

“O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His steadfast love endures forever!”
(Psalm 118 v 1)

*When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations,
‘The LORD has done great things for them.’
The LORD has done great things for us;
We are glad... (Psalm 126 v 1 to 3)*

International House Party 1978: Harlech Castle and Ffestiniog Railway



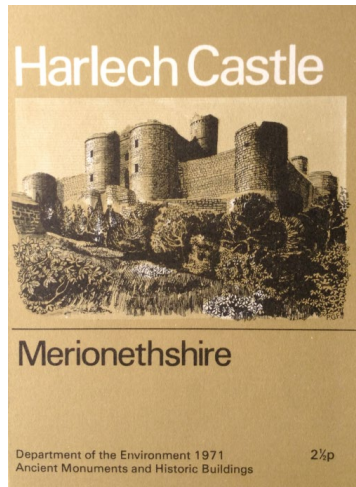
Pepe, Michiko, Roselyne



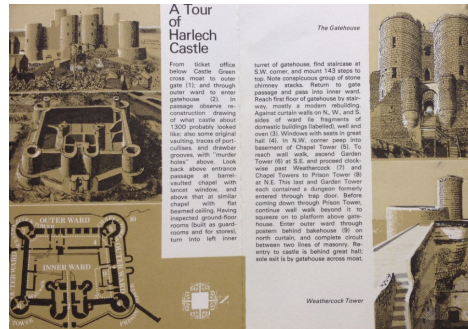
Danny, Tuula, Wendy, Khalida



International football match



Harlech Castle...



Ffestiniog Railway...



International House Party 1978: Cader Idris



Zahid and Joyce



On the way to the summit...



At the summit of Cader Idris...



Lake and snow below the summit of Cader Idris...

International House Party 1978: Mount Argus and Evening Show



Relaxing outside...



International House Party, Mount Argus



Zahid and others at Bible study



Mexican dancing practice



Spanish dancing with Sylvia



Yogurt eating with Yengi and Maruan



Hawaiian dancing with Dave, Maruan, Danny



"There's a famous seaside place called Blackpool..."

International House Party 1978: General Views



Pepe, Danny, Sue and Khalida on walk



The Harbour at Porthmadog postcard



Ffestiniog Railway postcard

Google Earth Image 2020: Barmouth and Penygader (Cader Idris)

