

The Story of 1972

Vignette: Haileybury, Dorset, Scotland, Austria
1972



Adrian Hall

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1972

Spring Term and Easter Holidays 1972

My diary written a few years later records (edited):

Spring Term 1972 – continuing in the Lord's work, consolidation. David McInnes [Lent] Mission – lives changed!

Easter Holidays 1972 – Iwerne: first camp from a real motivation; with close friends. Best possible situation for foundations to faith – evangelical background here. Swing from emotionalism to level-headedness...

Iwerne Easter Camp, 4 – 12 April 1972

Great Bible Phrases

1. "Justification by Faith" – 5 April
2. "The Word of God" – 6 April
3. "The Blood of Christ" – 7 April
4. "Ambassadors for Christ" – 8 April
5. "The Holy Spirit" – 9 April
6. "The Day of Judgment" – 10 April
7. "A Man of God" – 11 April

These Iwerne talks were given by various 'officers', including Mr Nash ('Bash'), Mr Eddison and Reverend David Fletcher.

Summer Term 1972

My diary written a few years later records (edited):

Summer Term 1972 – bedsitter block: improved natural situation led to improved spiritual condition, as is often the case. Here was privacy (for quiet times) and the support of close friends.

I first learned to pray at length – in Goldings Wood. What a joy to become really involved in the Lord's work on a spiritual level through prayer. Battles are fought, and victories won, primarily through prayer. These experiences stemmed from reading a book that R-J lent me – How to Pray by RA Torrey... a prayer life made systematic by discipline, transformed by the breath of the Spirit... David Fletcher: "Pray for men of calibre, like Edward L, and men of influence, like Chris C..."

A levels and leisure afterwards: read Turned on to Jesus by Arthur Blessitt, about an exciting ministry amongst the drugs scene in western America. I had a longing to be 'all out for the Lord' in one's own style.



Hambledon Hill, Dorset, near Iwerne Minster



Rock climbing near Lulworth Cove, Dorset



Tea near Iwerne, Mark A, Andrew D



John H (left) after Voluntary Service



Tea at Iwerne, John Eddison presiding...



Andrew D in a light-hearted moment

Letter from Virginia (24 June 1972)

Excerpts from a letter from Virginia, dated 24th June 1972, from Astydamantos 43, Pangrati, Athens 516:

My Dear Adrian, I rather suspect I haven't got around to writing you an actual letter since I arrived. But I hope you will have...

I must say it has been marvelous wandering about all these places with names that one only read in 'set books' or heard about in Legend – Sparta, Epidavros, Korinth, Delos (beautiful island with ruined shrine and town), Delfi – more shrine to Apollo. And I think Crete is my favourite place – full of Minoan stuff, and we went to all sorts of places which one now reads of with a seeing eye, in Odysseus or 'The King must Die' – Knossos, Phaestos, Gournia, Amrissos. I met Janet Maulden at Knossos and had a most amusing time as a result. She was in a villa in Crete and had a Mercedes at her disposal, so we were able to visit all sorts of more out of the way places. Normally we travel everywhere by local bus – quite an experience in itself; Greek driving has to be seen to be believed, the roads are not much better, and the drivers will talk 19 to the dozen, using both hands for emphasis, and always seem to reach the most crucial parts of the argument just as they are about to negotiate particularly nasty hairpin bends!

I am now living in a minute flat until September. It belongs to an American girl who's going home for the summer. It's about the size of a caravan, with a bathroom at one end and a kitchen at the other. But it is on the top of a block and has a huge balcony, on which I shall sleep when it gets too hot, and looks right over Athens slap at the Acropolis, east end of the Parthenon. So I sit here in the evenings and watch the son et lumiere – fortunately without benefit of the 'son', which is the most awful sound track I have ever heard! Tricia and I went one night and it reduced us to helpless mirth.

Really the purpose of this is to ask you how your exams have gone? And when do you get the results? I imagine they are all over by now aren't they? Do let me know. And then what are your plans for the summer? I presume you go back to school for Oxbridge in the autumn? Then what? More school or will you give it up then? Please let me know! I guess you will going up to Inverpolly won't you – lucky Beggar! But perhaps I shall manage it next year. Do write if you have time and/or energy. Much love, V.

Summer Holidays 1972

Summer Holidays 1972 – Iwerne: more of the groundwork and teaching...

Iwerne Summer A Camp, 26 July – 3 August 1972

Topics in Romans

- (a) "Sin and Guilt" – Jonathan Fletcher
- (b) "The Atonement" – Mr Gilbert-Smith
- (c) "Justification and Faith" – Andrew Killick
- (d) "The Work of the Holy Spirit" – ?
- (e) "Victory of Temptation" – Mr Swithinbank
- (f) "Hints on Christian Service" – Reverend David Fletcher
- (g) "Consecration" – Bash

My diary written a few years later records (edited):

Summer Holidays 1972 – Farming: time to think and assimilate the past year. Poetry: 20th Century World Symphony – a distillation of all the criticism of Western Society and alternatives to Christian faith. A negative poem, but written for a purpose... Time to pray – on a motorbike on the Wolds...

20th CENTURY WORLD SYMPHONY

This poem was written in August 1972, during the farming season at Belmont:

20th Century World Symphony

A Poetical Work

In Seven Movements

- *To my brother, Nick*

Legbourne & Belmont 1972

20th CENTURY WORLD SYMPHONY

1st Movement: Andante

“The staves of illusion” or “Summer from the balcony”

Life's harmonies collect for composition;
their blind conductor lifts extended arms
poised motionless.

Rich chords fade and freeze,
Life's essence spilling from an empty shell;
philosophies fuse to meaningless conundra;
pretty, perfect, silly and sick.

Orchestral fullness cracks and dies,
Croaking wordless tunes scratched
From an antique music box.

Come, Soul, to the quietness of the balcony,
magic incense rising from the garden flowers
whose humid colours sleep in scent.

You are quite alone.

Shadows deepen where the death-dreams rise and dance.
Swallows swim in soft-toned sunshine,
playing silent in the languid light
whose beams disperse below the sleeping sky.

Sharp pains shoot like static barbs
 stinging the mind with illusion.
 Fantasy can no longer rival Truth.
 Fantasy and Truth are one;
 their slanted planes converge,
 focused in a line
 at right angles to reality.
 Illusion is a pencilled line, once constructed
 To divide real from unreal.
 The shrinking sphere of Time has made them one.
 Reality is itself unreal;
 Illusion itself an illusion,
 Her line an axis for the spiral crawl of life.

Twilight murkens motionless conifers.
 Willow fountains touch the darkening pools,
 mirrored by the shadows of the sky.
 Illusion: life; the end.
 Silent strains of music slip
 fleeting through cracked stone fingers
 which reach and clutch;
 extended instruments of darkened minds.

Untouched sounds,
 real and unreal,
 fuse and fade;
 escaping echoes dying in dusk.

Soul-sickness

2nd Movement: Molto Vivace

“Straightways”, including “Murder: the civilized way” – a Haiku

Truth’s Music of Spheres
 died smilingly in sin.
 Live coals quench themselves.

Repeat, after me.

Yes, Sir.

When I leave University,

When I leave University,

I shall

I shall

apply for a two year course in firm management and business studies,

apply for a two year course in firm management and business studies,

having of course gained my second class honours degree in economics.

... economics.

That will take me to 24, then I shall get employed

as an assistant director of export administration

for International Pharmaceuticals Limited (IPL)...

for International Pharmaceuticals Limited (IPL)...

... earning a basic £28.50 for a five day, 42-hour week,

... *lente, lente con...* hour week,

with a possible 14 hours' overtime.

His soul longed for release.

- By 26 my salary will have increased to £34.50 a week.
Thus I will be able to look down with satisfaction
at poor Johnson who only got a third class honours degree in economics
and who joined his firm later than I did mine
because he wasted two years "hitting it up"
with the American way of life (silly fool)
and who is now earning less as a result

He had determined to be Different,

and yet, when the time came

for him to lunch his ideals,

it was somehow more difficult

than he had imagined;

ten years of straight education

had taught him better.

- with apprehensions, of course, as to his uncomfortably
- good prospects for promotion. I shall get digs in Bromley
- (for economy) and will thus commute by train each day
tread softly thru the crimson water-courts of dawn
- by 29 I will have married a wife who of course shares
the morning sea filled and freshened the air
- my interest in golf and whose father has a fabulously
with the singing of surf spilling in scattered lines.
- rich-income my-salary will-have increased-to-£36.50-a-week

- A foreshore freed from cars and Coca-Cola,*
- *not-including-of-course-family-allowance-by-35-I-will-be-living
And a seas untouched by industrial waste.*
 - *in-a-nice-three-bedroomed-semi-detached-house-on-the-outskirts-of-Guildford
A cracked, dry watercourse fanned out.*
 - *with-two-children-and-a-Vauxhall-Victor-Estate-I-will-make-weekly-expeditions
in arid patterns on the sand,
as fretted tongues of shingle swerved
silently to the open sea.*

*The clear skies which rephrased
the paleness of spreading pools
turned slowly; open, silent – blue.
And yet, somehow, they were not blue.
But they had to be.
Blue is the colour of clear sky;
all clear sky is blue.
Then he realized.
It was only the world that had told him
that all clear skies had to be blue.
In reality, the sky which confronted him was not blue.
Nor was it simply pink, touched by the cradled sun.
Nor could it be described purely in terms of
clear, translucent green, sometimes observed at nightfall.
Again, he realized.
He stopped trying to compress Beauty into words.
He even stopped thinking.
Instead he looked, and lived.*

- *to-the-local-golf-course-and-spend-my-summer-holidays-in-Majorca.*
- *And then?*
- *And then? Why, life will be just fantastic – wonderful!
It will all be – well, just wonderful and fantastic!*
- *At 50 you will have a bigger salary, a nicer house, and two cars!*
- *And then?*
- *And then, at 60, you will retire from work, and live the rest of your days in peace and plenty.*
- *What about – Art?*
- *Art? Well, you will be within easy reach of the National Gallery,
and if you're interested in music, you will be able to invest in a top-quality, Japanese stereo record-player.*

There was a pause.

Music held her breath.

- Well?
- No thanks

3rd Movement: Allegro piu mosso

“Freedom machines”

Student Proposition Number One:

The opposite of a Straight is a Freak.

Discuss.

- Sir, this is definitely true.
The two parties are mutually exclusive.

Coloured kids move dreaming thru distant streets

Lightless eyes gaze, void and blank

- Get turned on to drugs, man
They ain't gonna hassle you

Modern minds speed through blasted stars

Aching music stabs spasms blinding

tearing the bowels of bending brains

A lonely spaceman glaring wildly at blinding lights

spins to the height of his crazy, one-way trip

Dying victims crouch entombed in sacks of gas

toneless voices whispering, extinct “I see Reality.”

Freedom, at the touch of a needle

Mindless dancing to the senseless beat of giant drums

Spinning visions sweep in spiral circles

Sucked screaming in the grinding wheels of death

- Hey, man, get turned on to drugs
They're for real

Lights screamed

Blood rushed

Music maddened

Louder, faster

soul-style

4th Movement: Pizzicato
“A Popular Trivialization”

What can mankind do
 with the problems of today?
 Laugh them off with Limericks
 (to keep the Truth at bay)

A man from the Soviet Curtain
 said – over tea – he was certain
 that a nuclear war
 would open the door
 for our planet to go for a Burton.

The same man – on Waterloo Station
 said – with a hint of elation,
 “The entire biosphere
 will soon disappear
 from the heart-strings of Civilization.”

An empty land, and a dying sea.
 - More tea?

What can mankind do
 with the problems of the Earth?
 Immerse them all with Trivia
 (and hide them from the Truth)

Jack and Jill
 went up the hill
 to fetch a pail of water.
 The liquid was green
 with the Toxaluene
 which had poisoned their childish laughter.

Careless children take the air
 unhappily no longer there.
 What can you do

When you don't know where to turn?
Dance the path of Trivia
(some people never learn)

Civilization missed her footing.
The biophysicist consumed a biscuit.

- so long

5th Movement: Grave

"The Wheels of Armageddon – Aftermath..."

Frozen streams stand, hushed.
Rushes, shaken once by gentle winds, stiffened, still.
Stone fossils leaning silent in the airless cold.
Doom.

I have watched them, the Fearless,
Strolling the idle summer evenings with picnics in the park;
I have seen them waking on the stale linen pillows,
Half watching the white clouds steal across the sky;
Half bored, over breakfast, that the world looked
Much the same today as it did the day before;
(Half wondering whether it would ever be any different).
I have seen them blinded by the collars and the faces,
Paralyzed by the spaces of perpetual paper.
False and fatal days, faded like a dream. Unreal.
Gone.

Yes, I have seen them, too, the Fire-fields,
(Helpless children melting in the fields.)
Trees scream, fierce and full;
Charred branches twist, grotesque, uttering
The last, scarred whispers of extinction.

Cold.
Lifeless buildings rise, shattered;
Huge concrete monuments engulfed in falling dust.

No whisper stirs the scatterings of ashes on the tombs.

Tombs.

Yes, I have seen them,

The Fire-fearers, rushing for the sheltered places;

I saw them, too,

The crushing crowds of panic faces

Pushing for the spaces of exhausted air.

The world in one room, united; condemned.

Drunks, drugged, geologists; priests and pregnant mothers.

They have judged themselves: not one is innocent. NO

ONE

IS INNOCENT.

They had their chance.

I told them. But no one listened.

Soul-silence

I stand;

I listen.

There is no sound.

6th Movement: Allegro Prestissimo

“The Merry-go-Roundabout”

Including “Fairground Entertainment” – a Haiku

You have been born into
a maze from which the
only escape is death.

Pity.

(Escape by death is Vertical:
no horizontal exits have been found.)

Earnest Trumpington called round, last night,
To tell me why he died.

Life's horrors collect for composition.
Their conductor, still blind, is both Real and Unreal.
He exists and he does not exist;
Fixed at a point which has never existed,
And will never exist,
But which always exists.
The square root of Minus One exists and does not exist.
It is represented by a point perpendicular to a preliminary axis,
And placed at a distance of One unit from its centre.
World Symphonies discharge; composed
From Spheres whose centres lie at points positioned
Vertically above the plane of human thought.
Spheres from the Point where all lines intersect;
Where speculative straightness turns, deflected from its course;
Where blind confusion curves extend in perfect lines;
Where Existence and Extinction coincide.

Illusions from the Balcony disperse; and Summer spent.
Waste winters curse and twist the crests of ageing elms.
World Symphonies from Spheres rage merciless
Slicing with the razor shafts of yesterday's fears,
Echoing the empty sounds
which press my ears, and twist my mind;
Till I follow Earnest Trumpington, and no one hears.

Fingers reach and clutch
for silent strains escaping in the storm.
The mind darkens.
Earth hurtles to a stand-still.
Noon fades
Horizons tilt
I see the world slit open...
her predators swept swirling on the rising tide
the TV time-thieves trespassing with super-stars and shows
the money-minds, the wasted brains;
the parasites who played with Power –
I see them swirling, sucked in silence,
Save for the gurgling in the gutter-drains

His mind sickened
 He tried to forget
 But the black Music raged merciless
 compressed by the thudding of the death-drums
 pounding the blooded ground which heaved
 convulsions stretching in the waste
 falling falling falling falling falling –
 from the screaming shadows circling scavengers
 far hideous than the wings with darkness crowned
 rise dancing to the sounds of fractured spheres
 existence twisting cracks as death beats double
 drumming blinding bolts forged chasms stabbed
 to sever silence from the screens of reality

illusion ends cracked
 unreal as existence
 which does not exist
 sight closes engulfed
 in sound sickening
 silence is silent

soul-severed soul soul

7th Movement: Grave con Espressione
(epilogue)

Sound in the stillness,

submission.

pain;

(lente, lente con anima.)

crystal paving:

tread light upon the wings of the dance.

soul-Zion

Letter from Andrew S (11 August 1972)

Letter from Andrew S, dated 11th August 1972 written from Radlett, Herts:

Dear Adrian, Thanks very much for your letter with all its news – I do apologise for not replying more quickly but last week has been pretty busy. I was going to write from Germany but wasn't sure of your address... I don't know how you manage to churn out such long letters, so please excuse a slightly shorter one in return! I'll work through your letter so the more important things may come later. Firstly, I had a marvelous time in Germany; without going into details, we did hundreds of things I'd never done before (e.g. flight in a Cessna over Dusseldorf!). More important, the subject of Iwerne came up. Mr H had been there years ago (!) and Mrs H was very keen for Chris to; apparently up till now his asthma and hay fever have prevented him from doing much in the summer. He's going to Woollacombe next Easter, but might be able to come next summer. Unfortunately he was feeling pretty rotten the whole time I was there, but Iwerne is firmly fixed in Mrs H's head anyway!

Well done on the books you've bought; I should think the one about the Indonesian revival is particularly good. Iwerne sounds marvellous – I'm so glad about Dave B – you know he'll be here next term. I feel very envious that you've seen Chris C again – I've yet to see him since he left! I was very interested (is that the right word?) to hear what Fletcher had been saying about girl-friends!

How about this for a McInnes-style story? One of the lay readers and his wife a few weeks ago went to church about 40 minutes drive away having put a chicken in the oven. The wife put the gas up to high and asked her husband to turn it down before they left. He forgot; and halfway through the sermon they remembered. As it would have been too late they decided to stay, but prayed about it (?!) on the way back. Although when they arrived the house was fully locked and no one could have got in, *the oven had been turned off* and the chicken had another half-hour's cooking to be done, just enough to enable them to prepare for lunch. Since then it's been referred to as "the angel that saved the Wheatleys' lunch"!

Thanks, Adrian, for the wealth of Bible verses you gave me – if you don't mind I'd love to see your notes from Iwerne some time. I'm so glad Pat's coming up again – we must keep praying for him. Well done on reminding R-J about the list of passages! We had a marvellous sermon last Sunday on how you become like the person you spend most time with (related to the revelation of Christ's glory at the Transfiguration), which is an interesting thought. Well, thanks again for all your news – keep up the good work, and I hope you have success with your local churches. See you in a month!

Inverpolly, September 1972

This summer holiday in north-west Scotland in September 1972 was another golden time – I did not keep a diary, but the story of this holiday can be told through these photographs...

As the photographs remind me, the holiday started with some drama, because Mum and I took the overnight train (with car on board) from York to Inverness, but when we disembarked in Inverness in the morning, the car got stuck, and it was several hours before they could get it free and drive off! There's a lovely photograph of Fiona, aged about 9, standing on the quay at Ullapool, with some fishing boats moored in the background - I'm not sure when I took this, it could have been on our way through from Inverness.

There's a picture of Inverpolly Lodge itself, and this is significant as it's the first picture I took, being the first time we had had a holiday at Inverpolly, and there are pictures of Mum and Griselda fishing on a loch with Stac Pollaidh in the background, so fishing played a big part of the holiday. There's also a picture of Griselda and Lorraine (who helped with the cooking and catering), sitting on a bench at Achnahaird, with the backdrop of mountains, Benn An Eoin and Ben More Coigeach in the background. For some reason I associate this photograph with Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, the First Movement.

Pictures of lochs, mountains, waterfalls and waves breaking against a rocky headland are wonderful reminders of the spectacular, wild beauty of the country - 'pictures' of beauty that I

carry in my heart always, and wherever I go. I had been reading the first part of Lord of the Rings, and the magical quality of the descriptions and poems inspired some of my thinking and poetry.

There was the fun and exhilaration of swimming in the icy cold sea, reminded by a picture of Fiona and Griselda surfing in the breakers at Achnahaird beach, and I climbed Cul Mor with my cousin Tim C. And I clearly remember cruising around Loch Sionascaig in a motor-boat with Dad, with dramatic views of Suilven and Cul Mor in the background.

Some of the photographs have special significance, as I made some enlargements and pinned them to the side of my wooden wardrobe next to my desk in Kenya, so that I could look at them there, and remind myself of the magical beauty of the Coigeach during the long, lonely months in Africa - the pictures of Inverpolly Lodge and Loch Sionascaig were among those I displayed in Kenya.

But all good things come to an end, and in some way - I forget whether it was a telegram or a phone call - I was told I had been called for an interview at Cambridge, and I had to get back south, fast. We wondered how this could be achieved, then suddenly remembered that we were living towards the end of the twentieth century and there was such a thing as air travel! And so it was arranged, a drive to Inverness, a four-engined propeller plane to Glasgow, then a jet across southern Scotland and England (including 'the Potteries') into Heathrow... And so to Cambridge for an interview with Dr Lowe and Dr Maloney.



Fiona, on the quay at Ullapool



Inverpolly Lodge



Mum and Griselda fishing, with Stac Pollaidh



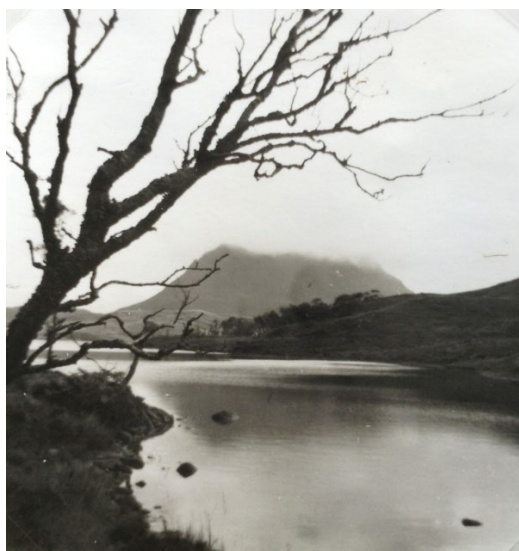
Griselda and Lorraine, Achnahaird



River between Inverness and Ullapool



Car finally free after getting stuck on the overnight train



Loch with Cul Mor in the background



Tim C, summit of Cul Mor



"White water falling from the rocks..."



Tim C, footbridge



Fiona and Griselda, Achnahaird Beach



Waves breaking on rocks...



Departure from Inverness Airport



Flight from Inverness to Glasgow



Loch Sionascaig with Suilven in background



Glasgow Airport



Loch Sionascaig with Cul Mor in background



Dad with Cul Mor in background...

Mountains of the Coigeach...

An untitled and unfinished poem written after the September 1972 holiday in north-western Scotland. The exact date of the poem is not clearly remembered – it was probably written in the summer of 1973, during the farming season just before my departure for Africa. The title was added later:

Mountains of the Coigeach

I long to see the morning rise
and spread like silver through the skies;
White water falling from the rocks
and paleness mirrored in the lochs;

And through the myrtle let me tread
to find the mountains clear of cloud;
And see where shapes before my eyes
stand sharp against the sloping skies;

And where the sinking sunlight seeks
the shadows playing on the peaks.
I long for still and sleeping trees,
and evening silence on the seas...



Michaelmas Term 1972

My diary written a few years later records (edited):

Cambridge interview and starting as a DP [Dormitory Prefect]. Increasing opportunities, and necessity to trust in the Lord for everything. At half term I re-read *How to Pray*, and experienced a breath of new life and a new burden to pray – particularly for family and for revival within the school. The Lord gave many of us similar burdens. There was great encouragement at Bash's talk, with 60 present, but the storm really broke with the visit of Richard Wurmbrand (who had been imprisoned in Communist Romania for 13 years). He made a deep impression on many (at a voluntary chapel talk you could hear a pin drop), and there were conversions – and much joy in seeing the Lord at work...

Oxbridge exams, followed by epidemic (counter-attack?) The joy of risking one's own safety for the sake of serving Christ. End of term meetings in Melvill and with older Christians. Never again to be in one room together, but now these brothers in Christ were to be scattered all over the world: Dave B to Hong Kong; Tim B-C to Pakistan; myself to Kenya. A fantastic end to an amazing term...

72 Reflections

Waking dream (written on 20 August 2016):

"This morning I had a waking dream or reverie - I remembered a particular event that occurred towards the end of 1972. I had finished the Oxbridge exams with mixed feelings, some papers going better than expected, some not so good. Then, as a final end of term event, David B and I hosted a Bible Study and prayer meeting for all interested boys, which took place in my bed sitter study. I remember there were more than the usual number who turned up, and the room was crammed. I forget how many were there, and the details of what we discussed and what we prayed about, but I do clearly remember the overwhelming feeling of joy and relief that SO MANY had gathered together for the last time this term, and the feeling of thankfulness and excitement, resolving that I would pray for those who came.

But in the aftermath of relief and tiredness and exhaustion, I succumbed at last to the flu virus that had been rampaging through the school, and soon I was to alert my friends to the refrain "I've got the flu-uu", and I retired to the San. I sensed that this was more than just physical tiredness, but it was a "tiredness that is not of this world", to coin a phrase that Justin Welby (now Archbishop of Canterbury) would use a couple of years later in Kenya - a spiritual tiredness. This is what triggered the memory, because this morning as I lay awake, I felt a similar tiredness arising from several heavy weeks of ministry with the Flinders Street and GHD Bible Study groups - a "ministry-tiredness".

Back in December 1972, as I lay in bed in the San, recovering from flu, my Housemaster Mr Rhodes-James came to visit me, and gave me the welcome news that I had gained an Exhibition to Clare College, Cambridge! What relief and joy, as suddenly the next five or six years fell into place. I seem to remember that Virginia picked me up and drove me up to Legbourne, detouring (for some reason) through Cambridge.

What was significant was that in 1972 the success of the Bible study and prayer meeting was for me much more important than getting a successful result in the Oxbridge exam, and perhaps even at the age of 17 the Holy Spirit was teaching me the importance of eternal things, and how spiritual work was more important than worldly matters.

Maybe this is a reminder today that the Flinders Street ministry (and other pastoral ministries) are more important than success at auditing, and that I need to seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and everything else will fall into place..."

Skiing Holiday in Kitzbühel, Austria – December 1972 to January 1973

My diary written a few years later records (edited):

Christmas Holidays 1972 – Austria: shared with Robert C about being bold in prayer. In the Spirit you can pray for big things – even crazy things (like the whole of Hailey being converted)...

I remember... (written on 8 October 2016):

“Boxing Day and the following day were cold and wet, and we went to some horse racing in Lincolnshire. Then we took the train to London, and met the skiing party at Gatwick Airport. I remember it was a 2-hour evening flight, courtesy of Britannia Airways, to Munich, but when we disembarked, there was snow everywhere and the temperature was about minus 10! Dad said “Brrrrr!” in a happy, appreciative way, meaning he was glad it was cold, and snowy. Presently we climbed aboard a bus, and travelled south, crossing the border into Austria at Kufstein, and then soon we reached Kirchberg, and then we arrived in Kitzbuhel. I remember that bus journey, with Dad and I sitting up near the front of the bus, with mounting excitement as we neared our destination. Finally, we arrived at the ‘Pension Hummer’, and were welcomed by Herr Hummer, an elderly, portly gentleman, who spoke with a thick German accent and made some joke about the best wine (champagne, Gluhvein?) being left over from Christmas.

The ski party consisted of my parents, Donald and Anne K, with their elder son (whose name I forget) and James (a year younger than me), Bob S and his son Meaburn (my age), Sally S (a cousin), my close friend Robert C (at Oxford), and one or two other friends. Robert did some skiing, I recall, but then went down some bad flu, and spent much of the fortnight in bed – my mother looked after him.

The skiing was fun. Dad, Bob and Sally and perhaps one or two others were experienced skiers, and so they disappeared up to the main ski slopes around the Kitzbuhel Horn, but I was a novice, and so spent the first week on the nursery slopes, being tutored by a young Austrian ski instructor. I learned how to ski down gentle slopes, inclining my skis in a V, like a snow plough, to go slowly, then parallel, to go faster. Turning and tacking down steeper slopes was the next challenge, with the ‘half Christie’ and ‘Stem Christie’ turns. The weather was wonderful, with crisp sunny winter days and blue skies, followed by cold clear nights, and even the nursery slopes were exhilarating!

Later, as I became more proficient at skiing, I was able to tackle the real Kitzbuhel slopes, and this meant many rides up the slopes using the cross-bar ski lifts - the trick was to get off at the top, without being turned around. Then some thrilling, exhilarating downslope ski runs, ‘tacking’ down the steeper slopes, using the Christie turn techniques, then smooth, straight rides with skis in parallel on the gentler slopes, past forests of fir trees, and ending at the restaurants (like Die Wienerwald and ‘The Red Bull’) and chalets of Kitzbuhel...

Then there was the après-ski, the night life, the Gluhwein and the dancing. I remember, I was very earnest, spiritually, in a good way, and was ever eager to share my Christian faith, and deeper things like Torrey’s book, ‘The Power of Prayer’. This was not always appreciated, and I sensed some wistfulness among my peers, like Meaburn saying he wished it would ‘just happen’. On one occasion, I recall, I had a really good long conversation with Sally (a ‘deepie’), but I felt towards the end that I was getting fuzzy and losing concentration. I put it down to the wine, and reproached myself afterwards, reminding myself of that verse, “Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit”. A few years later Sally sadly died of cancer, so I can only hope and pray that some of the spiritual truths got through – this is God’s work, not mine.

Then there was the evening I ‘got lost’. I wasn’t really lost, of course, but due to a misunderstanding and mix up, I caused my parents and the ski party a lot of anxiety and consternation. Towards the end of the day, Dad decided to call it a day and go back to the Pension, and he called out to me “Stay with Bob”, as Bob S was still skiing. I wasn’t

concentrating, and didn't take in what he said, but just said "OK!". I wanted to have a Quiet Time, and walk into the woods, with the view over Kitzbuhel, and meditate and pray. Time passed, and I realized it was getting dark and I needed to get the cable car down, but I had left my skis at the upper cable car and restaurant near the Horn. It took me longer than I thought to walk the distance across the snow slopes. Then there was a delay, and I had some chocolate cake and coffee, before taking the cable car down, and walking across the streets of the outskirts of town, in the dark, and back to the Pension. Dad met me, and was very worried that I had not come down earlier, with Bob, and using the lower cable car. My parents and others had worried that I had had an accident and was left on the slopes, but Sally assured them that the professional skiers always checked the *piste* at the end of each day, and make sure they were clear. Imagine the relief, when Dad and I walked into the Pension!

There were some highlights, too, such as the day trip to Salzburg, via Berchtesgaden, Hitler's Lair, and New Year's Eve 1972, when professional skiers 'slalomed' down the slopes in the dark holding torches..."

Après ski...

A poem written after our skiing holiday in Kitzbühel, Austria, December 1972 to January 1973:

Après ski

Pushed pressing crowds
 dance relentless
 stamping the clamour of clubs. Outside
 I sense
 the Alpine stillness freeze
 the floodlit town
 the fun-filled streets –
 like a cat shut out at night.

Dark trees screen the glare;
 pale paths draw into the night.
 I cross last gardens steepening in fields
 and sense the darker forests
 waiting;
 watch the lights receding like a port.

Above, the stars sweep frozen tracks
 falling behind sloping shapes that rise,
 tense.

Cold skies pass
 oblivious;
 while far below the dancing swirls unseen.



Britannia Airways aircraft at Gatwick



View towards Kitzbühel



Getting ready for skiing



Austrian chalet



Pension Hummer





View from Kitzbuhel Horn



Bob S



Dad skiing



Mum, Dad, Donald and Anne K, James and elder brother, Sally S, Meaburn S



Berchtesgaden, West Germany



Kitzbühel



Salzburg, Austria



Hitler's Lair, Berchtesgaden



Salzburg



View from Kitzbuhel Horn



Skiing on the nursery slopes



Kitzbuhel Horn