

move of the freeze

Having the weekend off meant us returning to our yard on the Monday morning in a very good frame of mind. The Contract Manager for our new job was also very amenable & gave us a ~~very good~~ briefing on what was to be done. It was only a small roofing & cladding job that would take approximately three weeks & was to be done in aluminium sheeting. This suited us well as ~~the~~ Aluminium was far lighter to work with than A/C sheet & came requiring no preparation. He also told us there were centrally heated digs nearby that ~~would~~ ^{would} almost certainly be available.

We should have smelt a rat by this time as everyone was being far too helpful. We even

started the day with a brand new van a rare privilege indeed with its storage for tools a cab with heater & a radio.

On arriving at the site it was easy to see why all the special treatment. The steel frame was complete & everything ready for us but the building was on a peninsular of land bounded on both sides & one end by canals with virtually no land between.

The canals of course were also frozen solid. After a quick discussion we decided as there seemed to be no chance of a weather change in the foreseeable future we would

stack our materials along & on the frozen canals keeping them spaced well apart.

The ladders were supported in the same ^{way} but the spikes were driven into the ends & ~~holes drilled into the ice~~ ^{GRIP} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~depth of the spikes into~~.

Having prepared thus far & with the short winter day drawing to a close we went off to find our digs. The address & directions given us were both accurate so in a very short time we found ourselves turning into a drive way through large iron gates with a sign board simply saying Hostel. From the outside in the gathering gloom we all had the same thoughts. It's a prison or at least a young offenders institute

still having got this far.

We drove up & parked in the forecourt walked up to the huge front door duly heaved on the bell pull below the sign that said Ring & Enter & did so. Inside was a small reception area & ^{ANOTHER} ~~again~~ a notice ring for service complete with arrow pointing to button on counter ^{AGAIN} ^{PRESS} ^{DOWN} frosted glass panel flew back & a young lady asked what our requirements were.

Yes it was possible to book for three weeks. Dinner was at six rooms to be vacated by ten a.m. each day & breakfast was from six until nine AM.

Having duly signed & paid for our first week we were each handed a huge key with a

numbered card attached token
past a large dining area &
shown the start of a long
corridor down which our
rooms were situated. We had
consecutively numbered rooms
which meant we were within sound
of each other. The doors to each
cubicle were of very solid wood not
steel as we had imagined &
there was a wash basin, wardrobe
chair & iron framed bed inside
each. The decor was standard
government issue, mid green wall
up to half height & light green
above divided by a 50mm
wide black stripe. The heating
was from a 100mm diameter steel
pipe running the length of
the cubicle & continuing on
through the rest. The iron

bed straddled this looking like an animal on a spit but allowing the occupant maximum warmth. There was a narrow glazed window above the bed with a metal grill fixed to the wall outside. Curtains were of psychedelic Government issue as ~~all in all very acceptable.~~ were the chair cover & bed overlay. all in all very acceptable.

Shower & toilets were just along the hall, The whole place smelt of ^{carbolic} soap.

Just after six we went along for our evening meal took a tray & passed along the line of hot plated food. Starting at the meat dish which was served to us & along the veggies & gravy that we helped ourselves to all the time being jostled along by the ever increasing crowd behind

You didn't need a good ear in all the noise of talking & laughing to realize that we were the only English speaking group amongst them.

Having sat down to eat we also realized that we had not collected soup as well as sweet on the way through which seemed to be the system. This was also the reason for some of the laughter as instruction had been offered but not understood.

We found out during dinner that the majority of the (immigrants) were Hungarians escaping political oppression. Working in heavy industry in & around Coventry & Birmingham. After dinner most of them retired to the lounge which was a hall alongside the dining room with tables & chairs scattered around & with a stage at one end.

With the weather not suitable
for wandering abroad most of
^{our} free time was spent in the
lounge where we had film shows
three times a week. Once a
month ~~we~~ live Sing Professional ^{VARIETY}
~~group would~~ ^{shows were} performed ~~variety~~ which
were very entertaining. The only problem
being knowing when to laugh
when they had a stand up
Hungarian comedienne. Not wanting
to offend of course. Such a large
vociferous group of people.

This same group on pay days
would gamble their wages away
on the turn of a card. So much
money it looked like a bankers
convention. We never joined in.

Back on site work proceeded
quite well with snacks being
provided by the firm we were

working for:

Lunch was obtainable at a working mens cafe just down the road where they also had a juke box which suited the younger lads.

They also had two very large Bull Terriers. Both white & identide from the front end but were in fact a dog and a bitch.

The bitch was a very docile animal & would sometimes be allowed into the cafe behind the low counter. Customers would invariably lean over & pat her which everyone enjoyed.

The Proprietor though had a sadistic streak & would occasionally let the dog into the cafe instead whenever a customer would lean over to stroke him & the dog would fly at them scowling

them half to death. Nobody enjoyed that except the proprietor. One of our lads fell into this trap & suffered a badly grazed hand & ripped jacket sleeve. We held ourselves in check it being the only cafe around. From then on ~~the dog~~ we taunted the dog who was usually charged in the yard by kicking the gate & making faces at him every time we went by. We hadn't quite finished the job by the third weekend so come back home as normal having left the job neat & tidy but with some sheets still stacked on the ice. Overnight on the Friday a thaw was predicted & sure enough it came & continued on. Returning

Returning to site on the Monday
it was as we had feared. Water
now surrounded the building ^{ON} ~~ON~~
both sides & one end & bright
shiny rectangular shapes could be
made out in the depths of the
still water. Fortunately most
corals are not too deep & there
were no exceptions. By joining
a bar into the coral bed at
one end of the sheets we were
able to drag hook the other
ends & gently raise & twist them
towards the bank where they could
be grabbed. Easy to say but very
slow to do. This meant our
job would not be complete
until the Thursday which suited
us just fine. We would probably
get a long w/ end off but
more importantly retribution would

be meeted out. The radiator
Cafe owner & dog lover always
went to the Cook & Curry on
thursday mornings locking up
the place & leaving his dog inside
to guard the place. The bitch
was always left tied in the
yard. Having taught the dog
to hate us while it was tied
up it was a simple matter to
taunt it on the other side
of the plate glass window until
in a frenzy it started tearing
down the curtains & ripping up
the seats. We came home ~~with~~
satisfied with both jobs well
done.