

# THE GREEN PENNANT

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MAGAZINE OF THE COMMONWEALTH EXPEDITION – CHRISTMAS 1969

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Irene De Noronha (one of the Indian members of Comex 3) and Edwin Bernard, proudly hold aloft the Duple trophy which was presented to their contingent – Liverpool by H.E. Mr A. Pant, Indian High Commissioner.



## THE COMMONWEALTH EXPEDITION COMEX 3

Patron: H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T.

01-373 2802

110 OLD BROMPTON ROAD,  
LONDON, S.W.7.

December, 1969

During 1969, the principle objectives of the Comex magazine were: to circulate plans for Comex 3, report progress to all members and supporters, and to record the more positive aspects of the expedition. That it could have been done better I would readily admit.

I am, however, grateful to all who helped in keeping the little magazine alive and active. It will continue, improving all the time, as Comex itself does, and during the Comex 4 year of 1970 will include articles and progress reports from Ceylon, Ghana, Pakistan, India and Singapore. Circulation will be increased to improve the financing of it, and to help Comex 4 and Comex in India. It will be renamed The Green Pennant – as in this edition – to bring it in line with the tradition of flying green pennants on every Comex vehicle.

The text of the current edition has been separated from the colour supplement so that the latter may be used exclusively as a souvenir programme for the Albert Hall on 8 January when the songs, dances and music that became part of Comex 3 will be presented to the public, to families, friends and supporters of all Comexs, including potential members of Comex 4.

There was little publicity on 8 October 1969 but there could be a lot on 9 January 1970. What better start for Comex 4 and the first Comex House? The project has already been launched in India and in the other Commonwealth countries concerned. Perhaps it might not be a bad idea to adapt for our own use a phrase from the inaugural address of the late President Kennedy: "Ask not what Comex can do for you; ask rather what can you do for Comex".

Secretariat Notes contain a few remarks about Comex House. For me the building of this house is synonymous with the building of morale without which nothing worthwhile is possible in our own or any other country of the Commonwealth.

H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh has seen the plans for Comex 4 and has once again confirmed his patronage for the expedition. Comex 4 will be an outstanding success; we have survived war, disaster and criticism – only success is left. In that spirit please accept my warmest good wishes for a happy Christmas and a "marvellous" New Year.

*Prince Gregory*

# The Journey Home

Lionel Gregory

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## The Achievement

Unheralded and unsung, like a forgotten army they returned to their homes, to the villages, towns and cities from whence they came and if nothing else there was at least the satisfaction of knowing that something positive had been accomplished; the job was well done.

They had lived together for three months; five hundred of them! They had undertaken an expedition of over 15,000 miles across two continents, on what must rank as the largest and longest single overland journey in history, carried out every task themselves, contributed towards the cost, presented free cultural programmes before audiences totalling about 100,000 people in ZAGREB (Yugoslavia) KAVALLA (Greece) ISTANBUL (Turkey) TEHRAN (Iran) SHAH PASAND (Caspian Sea, Iran) HERAT (Afghanistan) KABUL (Afghanistan) RAWALPINDI (Pakistan) MURREE HILLS (Pakistan) DELHI, AURANGABAD, AGRA, ALIGARH, AJMER, ALLAHABAD, BENARES, CHANDIGARH, LUCKNOW, JAIPUR, JUBBLEPORE, NAINITAL,

MANALI, KANPUR AND ROORKEE (India) independent of special presentations of Shakespeare in five centres in New Delhi, the Institute of Education in Istanbul and a Zagreb school, overcome innumerable problems and returned better friends than when they set out.

## Ignored

That the advent of their return was completely ignored by the national press, radio and television could only mean one of three things: that the Commonwealth as a news subject is dead and has little meaning in Britain; that Comex 3 public relations needed to be something more than 500 people writing to 500 families and friends and the publication of a monthly magazine; or the onset of wintry lethargy and with it an abdication of interest in what young men and women, so often criticised, are trying to do for their own country and the Commonwealth. Characteristically, however, the Duke of Edinburgh sent a message of welcome.

A few parents and friends, waited while

the customs men searched, happily in vain, for forbidden fruit; Gerry Nixon, leader of St. Andrews, marched up the gang plank, ahead of Durham, the lead coach, to prove that he had not overindulged a long denied taste for duty free whisky; disembarkation proceeded in an orderly manner.

Four hours later the last two coaches slipped away into the night taking with them the sixteen Indian students, five women and eleven men, who had accompanied Comex 3 as the first move towards an East-West expedition in 1970. They stayed the night on a farm, at Hawkhurst, the home of Charles Brinsley, mechanic on the Newcastle coach and brother of Will Brinsley who was killed on Comex 2. Three weeks later, and after a variety of experiences, they counted that night the happiest and most unforgettable.

## Good Ambassadors

While members of the expedition returned to their work or studies, preparations began for the Comex 3 exhibition in Battersea Park which was opened on 22 October by the Indian High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. A. Pant, who also presented the Duple Trophy for technical efficiency to the Liverpool contingent. The Indian party proceeded to Lancaster, where one of their number was presented to the Queen, met the Sheriff of the County at a reception given for them by Mr. and Mrs. Leigh, and then on to the capital of the Beatles empire to see the cathedral and spend a night at the Everyman Theatre. A week later the exhibition was over, the coaches were back with Roger Phillips and the Indians had added to their repertoire a visit to Question Time at the House of Commons, a debate in the Lords, a tour of the Commonwealth Secretariat, a visit to the Lord Mayor of London at the Mansion House, a brief tour of St. John's College, Cambridge and lunch in the Indian restaurant adjacent, a moment in King's College Chapel, a game of football in the back garden of a Commonwealth historian, a night drive back to London in a Comex coach driven by the leader of the Exeter contingent, now known to his friends as Norman, Marquis of Leigh, Bandwagon at the Mermaid Theatre, several visits to 110 Old Brompton Road where they learned to appreciate good wine and sing Baba Noma, had tea with the Indian High Commissioner, disorganised the Air India offices by booking, unbooking and rebooking their flight several times and finally departed for

India, in high spirits, with Carnaby Street gear, trouser suits from the King's Road, a Kenwood Chef and at least one crash helmet. But they were a happy bunch and good ambassadors. Their departure marked the end of Comex 3 and the beginning of Comex 4.

Planning had already begun during the journey home on Comex 3. It was a coming of age of the expedition and, in that sense, perhaps the most successful part of it. Preparations before, the difficulties encountered on the road, selection, food, equipment, visas, sickness, the programme in Pakistan and India and the arrangements at the Rabindra Rangshala in New Delhi, were all discussed on the move and at the various rendezvous, and out of them came the basic lessons for Comex 4. It was, therefore, a continuous conference and the proper introduction to plans for 1970.

## Growth in Stature

How difficult it is to review the chequered milestones of events during the journey home and confine them to the space available. There were so many personal incidents, some amusing others inspiring, or hilariously funny such as the "broomstick tests" at the Afghan-Iran frontier, where trousers and dignity were dropped without protest; or dear old Jack Ennis confronting the authorities at Fariman with the words, "we are in prison" having previously admonished me to remove my trousers without making a fuss! But these things are best remembered and recounted by the individuals involved in them; the atmosphere of the moment cannot be recaptured here. The cholera bug had the last laugh on us when we were carted off to quarantine in Fariman. But how beautifully the Iranians behaved and what hospitality we were shown. This small town in the middle of a desert evacuated its hospital and made it exclusively available to us. The townspeople provided Persian carpets to cover all the floors on which we slept and the laboratory process was accelerated so that the period of incarceration should not disrupt our itinerary. We were helped with maintenance even to the extent of one of the doctors taking two radiators into Mashhad to have them repaired. Our first reaction to quarantine was hostile, our last was regret that it was over.

At Fariman, while discussing the programme in Delhi, I recalled the high hopes with which the first Commonwealth Youth Festival

began and the words I had used to reply to President Giri's inaugural address.

"Comex has come to rest in this place after seven years and more than 100,000 land miles — journeying across two continents. The Commonwealth Youth Festival to be staged in the Rabindra Rangshala is the first function to which this great edifice has lent its splendid facilities. From here, Mr. President, young men and women of the Commonwealth will set up a great noise, agreeable and lasting, to fill the corridors of the Commonwealth with a new spirit of enthusiasm. There has not been a demonstration like it since the new Commonwealth came into existence 22 years ago."

Those words were full of hope, but the monsoon had stopped short, drought came and with it the water supply seized up; the kitchens, showers and toilets were affected. An estimated 3,000 guests per night turned out to be 10,000 and the band of inexperienced voluntary workers were overwhelmed. But this was not failure; it was the true measure of success.

After these events the growth in stature of almost every person on Comex 3 was apparent; the closing of the ranks and the new oneness of loyalty unmistakable.

## Battle Order

Oxford and Sussex were the last to leave Delhi both suffering from airlocks in their fuel systems. Robin Wileman had taken over Sussex from Lee Taylor, who had flown home to register for University in the United States. Graham Smith was in charge of Manchester, relieving Helen White who had gone off to Australia. Norman Leigh was the new leader of Exeter taking over from David Alexander and Graham Hawkins became my aide in place of Robert Gregory who had flown to Malaysia to join his parents as planned. John Holman was the new Lancaster leader, David Haslam, was once more in the saddle bravely leading Birmingham, after a brief spell of illness and Richard Skipper who had started out leading Lancaster took on the role of roving driver wherever assistance was required. John Covell flew home for family reasons, handing over to Hugh Jones and Stephen Stewart took over Yorkshire to give Celia Reynolds a rest as radio operator.

This was not a reshuffle or realignment. It was a natural process and as the coaches drove out, once more in "battle order" (I cannot resist the term) I had not the slightest doubt that the journey home was already safely

accomplished.

I stayed behind to say goodbye to our friends and to reassure the India Committee as best I could. But the press had been harsh and had attacked hard and deep. They were hurt. The whole story of the festival and the background to it had not emerged; the many outstanding successes were marred by a few unfortunate failures. I asked the Editor of the Hindustan Times if he would publish a letter in which I would try to relate, as only I could, the facts fairly and honestly. Much credit is due to George Verghese for publishing my letter, in full, which was later picked up by Chetan Chadda of the United News India and released throughout the Commonwealth by the \*Gemini News Service at their own initiative.

\* Col. Gregory's letter and this article are included in this edition.

## Co-operation

Comex 3 started the return journey with a generous gesture from Mr. Suleman of the Afghan Embassy who, in a single afternoon, at his home, entertained five members to supper and stamped visas into 500 passports assisted by them and members of his family. This gesture was later matched by Mr. M. Shariyat the Consul-General for Iran in Herat, who not only handled passport matters with great despatch but was in constant telephone communication across the frontier posts of Islam Qalah and Taibat making arrangements for our reception.

Moving in threes or fours but always in radio contact with each other, the great convoy stayed first at the Lahore Stadium in Pakistan as guests of Wing Commander Soofi and then at Islamia College in Peshawar where members of staff and students had given up their spare time to receive and guide them. Across the Khyber and into the Valley of Jellalabad is a journey of a few hours but the climate bypasses a season and restores health as quickly. Progress became easier and morale was high.

Tim Sage and the London contingent volunteered to wait for the Comex India party, expected to fly into Kabul, and dispersed 16 of its members onto other coaches. Rumour had it that Fay Sharpley, leader of the Edinburgh contingent, was determined to break away via the Sand Desert and get home by 26 September; but the rumour was illfounded and a joke against me dating from the exploits of the Edinburgh contingent of Comex 2 in 1967. I

found her calmly supervising the preparation of breakfast at the Karkha Dam in Kabul. The Indian Ambassador played host to the London contingent and the Indians. His example was followed by the Indian Consul-General in Kandahar. Forty-eight hours later, appropriately rewarded for their unselfishness, London rejoined the expedition at Fariman.

At Herat airport, turned into a transit camp for Comex, the Manager, Colonel Abdul Mohamad, and his friends insisted on entertaining the entire expedition to supper. During the cultural programme which followed, Malcolm Smalley and the Keele contingent replied suitably by insisting that I lead their singers in a spirited rendering of Baba Noma. It was the first time that the headquarters contingent had participated in a cultural programme!

I called on the Governor of Herat, Hamidullah Enayatusseradje to pay our respects with my old friend Captain Zia ul Haq Waleh. The Governor had sent messages of welcome to Comex on the outward and homeward journeys and invited us to return as often as we liked as guests of Afghanistan. Zia drove with me as far as Islam Qala and the Afghan/Iran border where we exchanged presents; my small brandy flask going into his possession and an Afghan pajama suit coming into mine. The latter was the envy of all the men when I made my first public appearance in it.

From Fariman, Maurice Smith of Liverpool and Graham Smith of Manchester volunteered to take their contingents ahead to Tehran in order to organise the camp at Manzarieh and the servicing programme for all the vehicles. Unlike the outward journey, we were gaining strength and confidence all the time. Problems were handled with great efficiency as they occurred. A passport lost, stores held up in the Customs house in Tehran, a broken steering box, a damaged handbrake, a replacement window that didn't fit and had to be carried all the way home, were all part of routine.

It was Leicester that had the steering box trouble about 70 miles out on the Tehran-Tabriz highway. There I found Sarah West, leader of the contingent, waving on would be offers of help with her blue cap at the back of her head and the knee patch on her jeans more deliberately obvious than ever. Calmly she informed me that they had found a swimming pool nearby in the middle of the desert and that her mechanic had hitched back to Tehran

to have the offending part repaired. Right enough, Suriykant Solanki returned nearly 20 hours later and within an hour they were on their way.

Leicester had found a swimming pool in the middle of nowhere and as unlikely as it may sound, I found a dairy farm and as charming a couple of people who ever lived on a desert, John and Jean Davies. The last thing I had expected to be doing on that night was to be present at the milking of 600 British cows and by the most modern means known to farming. We were offered a bed for the night but declined on grounds of haste. Had I known then that three flat tyres were lurking ahead of us I might have decided otherwise.

When I caught up with Cardiff, suffering from an unserviceable handbrake at Bazargan, the Iran-Turkish border post and the head of the Asian Highway, there was a full moon and the snow covered top of Mount Ararat, only a few miles away, shone like a beacon in the night. But there was work to be done and while the cooks prepared a three course supper, the hand brake assembly, which I had brought from Tehran airport, was fitted. That part of it belonged to an earlier model was more than a nuisance but patiently resolved by the relentless industry of Dennis Cooper before Cardiff ascended Tahir and the other passes that were to follow.

The Chief of Customs entertained some of us to tea and nuts, while passports were being checked, once again demonstrating the special attitude Iran had adopted towards Comex.

## **Thank you is not enough**

There was a police escort on the Turkish side but not enough to go round. Nevertheless, their presence, or news of it, deterred would-be culprits from adding to the damage inflicted on us during the outward journey. Ian MacDonald, leader of Cardiff, and Sarah West agreed with me that we should travel together via Sivas to catch up with the remainder of the coaches moving along the Black Sea. Later accounts confirmed that they had been warmly welcomed by the U.S.A.F. post at Trabzon, at the eastern end of the Black Sea, as most of us had been on the journey out, and we were sorry to have missed the pleasure of meeting those hospitable Americans again. At Ankara, Tom Unwin of the United Nations was waiting to see us through the capital as ready and willing as

ever to help in any way that he could.

Istanbul saw Comex 3 together for a brief spell at the Institute of Education, our hosts during the outward journey also. There was John Bell and beard, looking more formidable than ever, parading around in his white fishing cap and Malcolm Hanson, leader of Bristol and one of Bernard Herdan's leading Shakespearean players, with rapier no less, who was preparing to cross the Bosphorus with several other contingents in readiness for an early start to Kavalla the following morning. Oxford lacking one visa for Greece planned to travel through Bulgaria where they were soundly criticised for untidy beards and long hair. Their coach was searched, but the engagement ended on a friendly note and they were pleased to rejoin the expedition on schedule in Zagreb.

My car had had some repairs done to the electrical system in Turkey which cost me an additional 50 N.D. in Yugoslavia: when the headlights were dipped the rear lights obligingly went out, a phenomenon of which I was unaware until a police patrol that had followed me for miles resolved the mystery. I was grateful, of course, and thanked the officer in charge profusely but my "falla lepo" brought a friendly "molem leap" and a ticket with it.

## Zagreb

In Zagreb, Nena Vrbos took leave of the Cambridge contingent. Her parents had waited anxiously for Cambridge to arrive, the 12th in the convoy, and the expression on their faces as successive contingents rolled in was a study in contained excitement. Not only Nena but the whole of Cambridge received embraces and kisses on arrival, to be followed by a feast the next evening. Our return to Zagreb was an undoubted success. The day after we arrived, Alan Tootill and the Cambridge contingent, Tim Sage and Janet Lowndes of London, David Matthews and Mary Davies from Oxford, Gill Corson of Durham and I had lunch together with Madame Ketty at Puntijarka on Sjieme the hill behind Zagreb. Cambridge had played Shakespeare at Nena's school before coming to join us. The wine and a lot of it, provided by Madame Ketty, and the choral response finishing with Auld Lang Syne, surely left its echoes in the woods for next time.

In the evening members of the Newcastle and Durham contingents gathered together at a side altar in Zagreb Cathedral. It was quite dark but for a single altar lamp as Alan Denny,

leader of Newcastle, and Martyn Ibbotson, a friend of Paddy Irvine's of Comex 2, read the prayers they had written for the occasion. A monk entering from a side door, switched on all the lights and whether by accident or intent became one with that little group of young people. I later got copies of those prayers and reproduce them here:

### Martyn's Prayer:

Lord,

"We are here this evening to honour the memory of our friends who died on Comex 2. It is our earnest hope that their sacrifice was not in vain and that we have lived up in some measure to the high ideals that Comex 2 set itself.

To have undertaken this arduous journey is — in any event — a measure of the faith we all feel in our lost friends — in this, above all else, we are sincere."

### Alan's Prayer:

Lord,

"We thank you for giving us a safe journey to India and back. We are truly grateful that we have managed to face the difficulties of such a journey and overcome them, despite our failings.

We have all shown many weaknesses during these past three months and we thank you that despite bad temper, depression and low spirits, which we all felt at some time, we have managed to arrive here feeling stronger and more together than ever before.

Thank you for the achievements of the expedition, however small. We hope that whatever goodwill Comex has generated may be multiplied many times in the future and are sure that our expedition, as an army of peace, has achieved more than any army of war which has ever marched across these lands.

May the world forget our failings, which have been so well publicised. May they remember only that we travelled as friends to meet friends, and may Comex and similar expeditions continue and succeed increasingly in bridging the world."

## The last lap

At Frankfurt for the fifth time we were handsomely received. Colonel Frank Kim-

borough, the Commander, was away in London and Colonel Tom Taylor was deputising for him. The patience, concern and interest shown by this officer will not easily be forgotten. Following his example, the G.I.s. on station looked after Comex 3 in the most hospitable manner. The spectacle of 500 people, tired, with lots of dirty clothes to wash, coaches and equipment to clean was hardly in keeping with the prim orderliness of a military establishment. More credit to the Americans that this was understood and their help, where necessary, unobtrusively given.

A few coaches arrived in Zeebrugge well ahead of schedule and by the time Anne Murray and Elisabeth Rowell had disembarked from the Enterprise IV to meet them, the majority of vehicles were present. At this point one must ask the question what had Comex 3 done and I would answer it in this way:-

The achievements of comex 3 are:

1. In spite of cynicism and doubt the expedition, almost twice the size of Comex 2 was mounted and carried through successfully.
2. The Comex India Committee found the courage to organise the first Commonwealth Youth Festival around it.
3. Thousands of people talked Commonwealth with pride and a refreshing confidence - inspired by the young.

Over 1,000 young men and women have participated in Comex 1, 2 and 3. They, their families and friends represent a considerable force deployed all over Britain. All must now speak up for Comex not only to help us close the gap in the existing budget but to build

Comex House and to make Comex 4 the best thing that has happened in the new Commonwealth for 22 years. There have been many letters coming into the Secretariat in London. From them I should like to quote one because the author, a member of the Cambridge contingent was in hospital at the time.

"Cambridge, 30 October 1969 . . . . I am at present in an isolation hospital with paratyphoid, the one thing I wasn't vaccinated against but I shall be out in two/three weeks so it's not so bad.

"I was sorry not to be able to attend the exhibition in London but my mother went to it and met many Comexers.

"I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for making Comex 3 happen. I didn't realise until we left Delhi what really great potential Comex has, although I was aware of the immense possibilities, and now I feel the best way in which I can show my gratitude is by doing my utmost within the limits of my coming finals, to make Comex 4 realise its potential in the fullest possible way.

"If I can be of any assistance I hope you will let me know. I shall do all I can to help and I know I speak for other Cambridge Comexers as well; my brother Dave, Sue, Peter Gill, and Richard Haydon. I am sure between us we can accomplish anything.

"There is already one person in Peterhouse who wants to go on Comex 4, George Cole, a third year medical student, whose brother Tim was on the Cambridge contingent of Comex 2. . . .".

Mike Lyscom

If he can think like that, so can we all.

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# Looking Back . . . . .

## DESPITE THE CRITICS, THE COMEX CULT IS CATCHING ON.

Five hundred students of a dozen nationalities have completed the third Commonwealth expedition to India - all the more remarkable since Comex II ended in the disaster of a coach crash in Yugoslavia in which 14 students died. Comex came under some criticism in India, but

one of Gemini News Service's Indian correspondents reports that despite everything it is a success story.

by Chetan Chadha, New Delhi

One of the last acts of Colonel Lionel Gregory, leader of the third Commonwealth



expedition (Comex 3), in New Delhi just before embarking on the return journey to Britain was to write an 1,800-word letter to the *Hindustan Times*, a leading national daily.

And he sent it across in much the same manner as a retreating soldier would his last grenade.

Published prominently the next day in six half-columns, the letter blasted each bit of criticism made in the Indian press against the first Commonwealth youth festival held in New Delhi from September 2 to 8 as part of the Comex 3 programme.

Much of the criticism was against organisational shortcomings of the festival and the main point Colonel Gregory made in his letter was that "Comex is a great idea and the people involved in it are its weakness and its strength."

In retrospect, even the most ardent critics now concede that the Comex idea remains as magnificent as when it was first conceived by the late Mr Nehru five years ago and that the festival, though attended by some difficulties, was not without "the more positive aspects."

The first Commonwealth expedition from Britain to India in 1965 was hardly noticed because it arrived at a time when all eyes were focused on the Indo-Pakistan border; the second one, in 1967, was noticed.

But Comex 3, which left New Delhi on September 10 in its 20 ivory cream coaches, hit the headlines in Indian newspapers for more than a month.

For one thing, it was the biggest expedition ever to cross into India, give or take a few invading armies. Nearly 500 young men and women drawn from various walks of life and belonging to more than a dozen different nationalities (including some from non-Commonwealth countries) came 7,000 miles and mingled with the Indian youth "to organise a new consciousness in the Commonwealth."

The Comex 3 visit was particularly highlighted by the first Commonwealth youth festival in which 300 Indian university students also took part.

The venue of the festival was the sprawling open-air Tagore Theatre — the Rangshala — in the undulating terrain of the capital's Ridge. All 500 Comexers and Indian participants camped together in the sylvan surroundings of the Rangshala.

Inaugurating the festival, India's President V.V. Giri hoped "it will promote a better understanding of the fact that the entire human

race is a family."

The festival indeed provided the participants an opportunity of getting together, sharing ideas and experiences and appreciating each other's cultural activities.

The Rangshala was surcharged with youthful exuberance and the festival programme of music, dance and song held every evening turned out to be a big draw for the young and the old in the Indian capital. It was thrilling to see the huge Rangshala burst at the seams night after night.

But the festival also posed some of the problems of a large family. With the full glare of the national press focussed on the Rangshala, these problems got scandalous publicity.

A spate of criticism followed which, though well meaning, tended to cloud even the achievements of Comex and the festival.

There was, for instance, criticism against inadequate toilet facilities at the Rangshala, against unappetising food served by the caterers. Some critics lamented thin attendance at the seminars, others discovered a "communication gap" between Indian and foreign participants.

To cap it all, there was the story of some Indian boys trying to misbehave with a group of Indian girls and being beaten back by some other Indian boys.

But as Colonel Gregory observed in his letter, "man has the choice in every situation of looking down at the gutter or up at the stars."

Referring to inadequate toilet facilities, he pointed out that the word "expedition" was not adopted lightly and that Comex 3 had already put up its own camp on 15 different occasions on its way to India.

If attendance was thin at the seminars, dialogues continued around the stalls, in the canteen and into the early hours of the morning in the residential area, Colonel Gregory said.

To Miss Gill Corson, leader of the Durham contingent of Comex 3, the living problems at the Rangshala were "secondary" and what was important was "the curious and friendly crowds."

"All this talk of communication gap is rubbish," said Gerry Nixon, from Dundee. "I'll never forget the night we spent dancing and singing with the hill folk up at Manali. There is communication for you."

The report about alleged misbehaviour by some boys was characterised as "exaggerated" by Mrs Sarojini Mahishi, deputy minister and

chairman of Comex India committee. Even if it was not so, it only underlined the need for training in living together, she maintained.

To the young Comex members the 20-day stay in India has been a mixed fare of fun, adventure and experience. The festival was preceded by visits in batches to various Indian universities and places of tourist interest. The most adventurous went mountaineering up the Himalayas.

These visits gave them an opportunity of seeing something of India and knowing its people. And what struck them most was "the same warmth, kindness and uninhibited enthusiasm everywhere." Some of them said they would come back to India later on their own for longer stays.

Colonel Gregory, who also led the earlier two expeditions to India, summed up the Comex 3 visit in Johnson's words: "Much may be criticised but much also has been accomplished."

He announced that after the three expeditions from Britain to India efforts would now

be made to spread the Comex message of "understanding between nations" to other Commonwealth countries as well. Comex 4, he said, would visit West Africa, Singapore and Ceylon before arriving in Bombay for the second Commonwealth youth festival next year.

The Comex India committee, a voluntary organisation, is wiser but not broken by the criticism. It has decided to sponsor a Comex expedition from India to Britain next year.

Meanwhile, 11 Indian boys and five girls are accompanying Comex 3 on its return journey to Britain. Many more are anxiously awaiting their turn next year.

The Comex cult is thus catching on, despite the critics.

**About the author:** Chetan Chadha is a special correspondent of the United News of India, New Delhi. He specialises in economic and political affairs. He visited Britain and West Germany in 1967, when he studied modern farming techniques. Before joining UNI, he worked as a sub-editor with the Indian Express, New Delhi.

## Not Quite What I Expected . . . .

Alastair Balfour — Edinburgh Contingent

"How would you like to go to India for three months?" inquired my personnel manager. The answer was obvious, but not so the exact details of the journey, life on a Comex bus and Comex itself which were to combine to make this "holiday trip" one of the greatest experiences of my life, albeit not quite what I expected. . .

I left the manager's office with snatches of conversation floating euphorically through my head: "Tremendous opportunity"; "three months' holiday with pay"; "travel overland"; "Fortnightly reports back on progress"; "some kind of cultural exchange"; etc., etc.

For one month — all the notice I had — I rushed around Edinburgh buying equipment, helping arrange contingent functions and breaking the sad news to my friends that I was going on a three month jaunt to India costing only £50 and involving the odd Scottish country dance here and there.

The Nottingham camp shattered some illusions — it wasn't going to cost only £50; it wasn't going to be a jaunt and it was going to involve a heck more than the odd Scottish

country dance!

Greg's departure speech at the Duke of York's School at Dover gave me the first inkling that we were to bear responsibilities over and above those concerning the contingent and the cultural programme. The fact that we, the largest and most ambitious Comex yet, were "on trial" as representing BRITAIN to ten countries had not struck me before.

As the miles and weeks sped by — or so it seemed — not only contingents but Comex as a whole underwent a shaking-down process which, it appeared to me, was still continuing at Delhi. Personal initiative, Greg's experience and the hard work put in by Annie in London triumphed over the inevitable snags that crop up when a body of 500 moves across such a huge distance.

Delhi was a personal disappointment — mainly because it was Westernised out of all resemblance to what I — aided by tourist brochures — had imagined it would be. Not until we journeyed to Jaipur and the University of Rajasthan did the "real" India become apparent.

For me, the long trek home was the real highlight of Comex 3. Greg's description of the manner in which contingents have moved smoothly and reliably along the route as "marvellous" is very appropriate, although it is perhaps indicative of the fact that 500 may be too large for a Comex-type expedition hence it took this long for the 20 coaches to settle down to forming a really efficiently-running machine.

Looking back from Frankfurt on the preceding 14,000 miles, I think it is true to say that the expedition has been a fair success. Granted we have had failures along the route, and the Commonwealth Festival in Delhi could have been more impressive, but by the very nature and purpose of Comex most "successes" must be intangible, in the forms of goodwill and friendship.

Personally, I have learned a lot — as my firm intended me to. Self-discipline has been essential and I have gained here. A strong will and sense of purpose are also desirable and Comex does its best to instil these qualities in its participants.

As a training ground — and adventure — for young people new to their trade, Comex sets a high standard. I will certainly recommend to my firm that they send people on future expeditions, and I hope most of the 135 other "workers" will do the same.

As we headed for Zeebrugge and the Enterprise IV, two thoughts predominated in my mind: how pleasant it would be to see the old country again, and what an unforgettable experience Comex 3 has been. But definitely not what I expected . . . . .

## **"It is always the unexpected which causes the greatest pleasure"**

Andrew Granger-Bevan  
Exeter Contingent

Travelling through a foreign country, one is always looking out for objects and occurrences which are peculiar to an alien land. But on Tuesday 30 September, our last day in Turkey, one event took the Exeter contingent completely by surprise.

The time was about 7.30 a.m. and despite the fact that dawn had already broken, most of us had still not emerged from the warmth of our sleeping bags at the makeshift campsite on the coast about 30 miles to the west of Istanbul. But we were rudely awakened from our slumbers by a drumming noise. What could it be? Surely the cooks could not have invented a gong to announce that breakfast had been prepared? Surely, our Indian companions could not be performing one of their magnificent dances at this early hour of the morning? From the depths of our sleeping bags, our minds boggled as we mentally investigated the cause of this sound. Someone even suggested to our leader that we had some early morning visitors, namely two dancing bears girating to the tambourine playing of two young boys, but Norman soon returned to his beauty sleep on

hearing this incredible suggestion.

But, in fact, it was true! As heads sleepily popped out of sleeping bags, in turn we stared in disbelief at the sight of two dancing bears. Our surprise and astonishment soon erupted into laughter at this strange sight. For several minutes, the bears danced up and down, goaded by their keeper's tambourine playing and the shaking of their chain leads. The early birds amongst us immediately scurried around in search of cameras to shoot this unusual scene.

Just one problem emerged. Presumably, our visitors toured villages with their dancing bears for a livelihood. So what could we give them? It was our last day in Turkey so most of us had already spent our liras and kunis. Payment in kind therefore seemed inevitable. Someone rose to the occasion and suggested sugar puffs might be appropriate. Unfortunately, our foodstores were lacking in this commodity, so the only alternative was to sacrifice a tin of creamed tapioca, not so apt as sugar puffs under the circumstances, but still an adequate reward for this unanticipated entertainment.

# Twice Over

Sue Holloway, Sussex

One of the most strikingly beautiful scenes on the journey was close to home — from the Austro-Yugoslav border to Zagreb. We passed this way in early morning and at the evening twilight. Here are relevant extracts from the Sussex diary — of the scene there and back.

## Evening, Friday, 12 July.

Tonight's drive was hazardous but so beautiful! The change came immediately after the border. Mechanisation ceased — machines were replaced by oxen and large bullocks. It was evening and harvest time. Hay wagons with no lights or only romantic lanterns slung to one side, trundled along the road. Sometimes the hay doubled the width of the truck and hung out over the middle of the road — a problem for overtaking. Little brown-eyed children clustered by the gates and windows to wave and stare at the magnificently lit coaches as they

drove along. The sun sets, and mists arise from the river which runs alongside the road.

## Morning, Saturday, 4 October.

Pumpkins among the corn stalks. This is a harvest repeat of the beautiful rural drive we had on our entry to Yugoslavia. And the morning mists are almost as soft as the rolling countryside as were the evening twilight shades of July. Farm-workers are already up and driving along the narrow winding roads in their carts. The schoolchildren gather round in the small villages and towns. Grand church spires and narrow cobbled streets.

Gardens full of flowers, low thatched roofs above rich yellowed farmhouses — farmyards full of geese, one-horse carts and piles of orange pumpkins and vine under the eaves. On the walls, strips of yellow corn and red peppers hung out to dry — everywhere smacks of a good harvest!

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# Life With Kutie

Living with more than 20 people for three months in a 29 seater coach as sole and collective home is a unique experience. Everyone has their own duty on the coach and discharges it to the best of his/her ability. The following are a few flippant comments from the inhabitants of the Keele coach, affectionately known as "Kutie".

## In Command of Kutie

Allan Blackshaw

Settling down on my ample cushions behind Kutie's big, round wheel, I waited patiently while it was debated whether we should have 22 or 23 people on board and whether we actually *had* 21 or 22 people on board. This ever-present problem being resolved, I let out her delicate clutch to avoid another case of violent palpitations, and smoothly roared away for another hour and a half in command of Kutie.

The steady roar of the engine and fan,

and the hum of wheels on the road had a pleasant constancy, but life on Kutie just isn't like that! A strident voice from the rear proclaimed the immediate need for a "Bog-stop", soon swelling into a cacaphony if I don't bring Kutie into immobility within a miraculous ten yards.

Once she had disgorged and re-absorbed her cargo (in full measure?), Kutie travelled on. A passing mountain fort excited the photographers by its eloquent photogeneity, and I

# Remember.....?



Nottingham



Jocelyn Jukes



Leicester



Cardiff

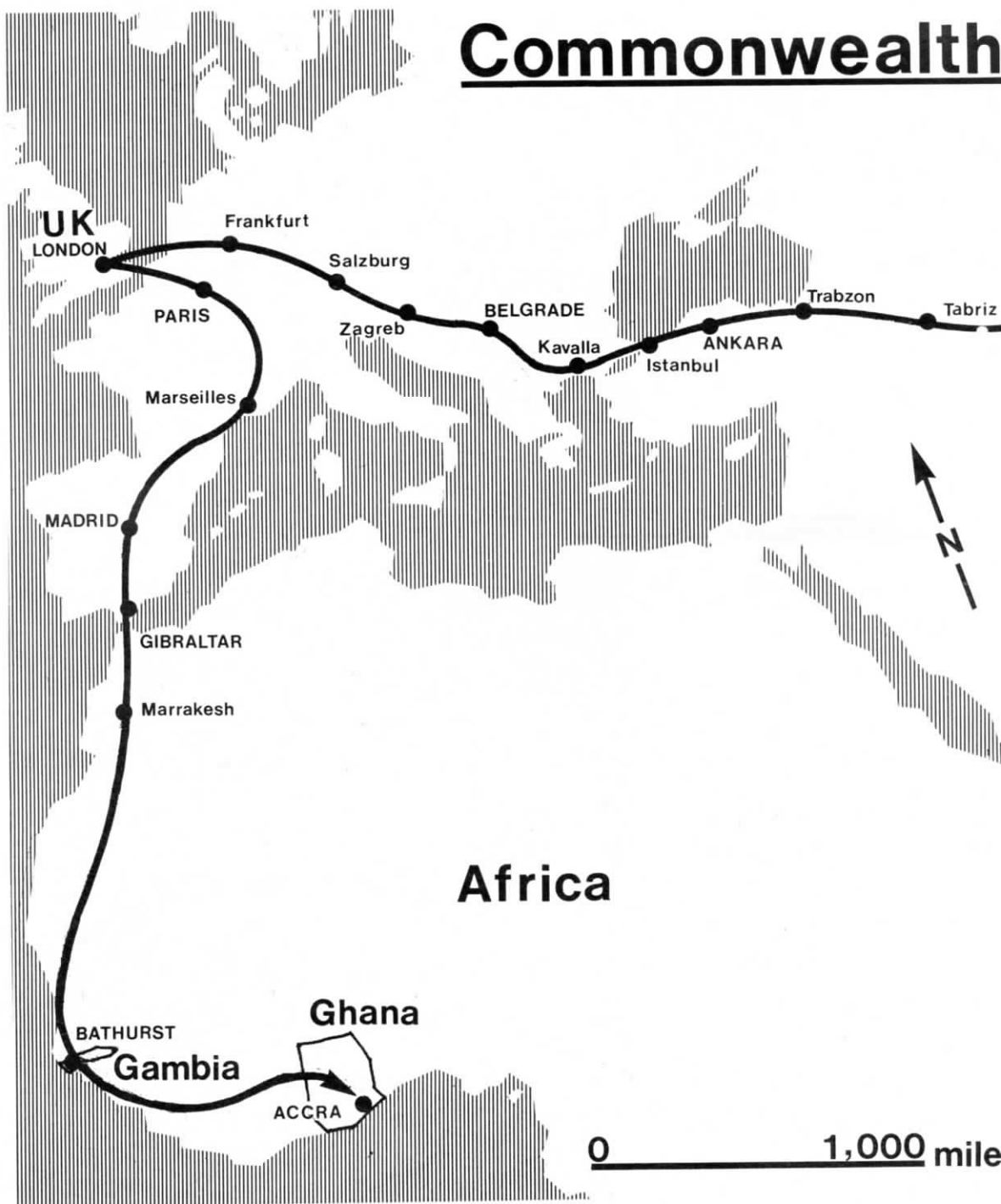


Raj Ghat where Comex 3 laid a wreath at Gandhi's Shrine



The Sikh Bangra Dancers at the Rangshala

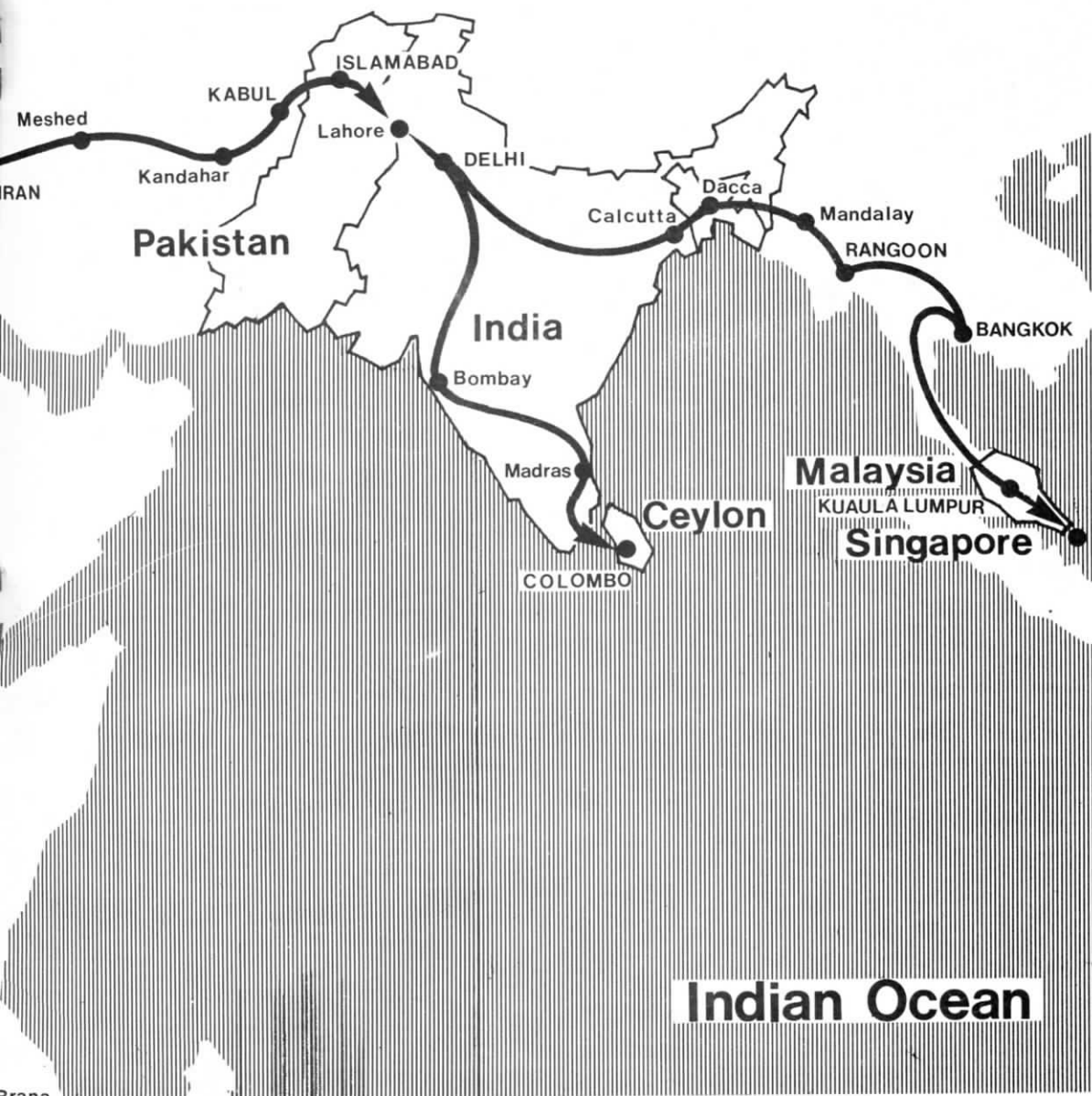
# Commonwealth

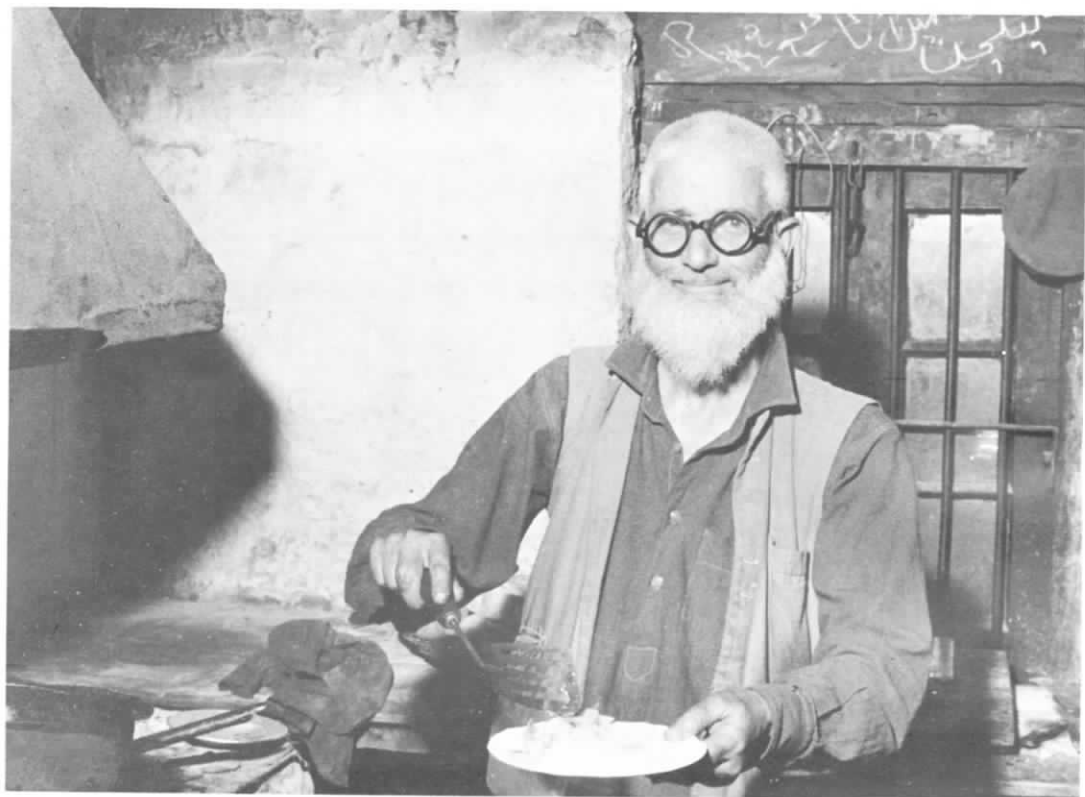




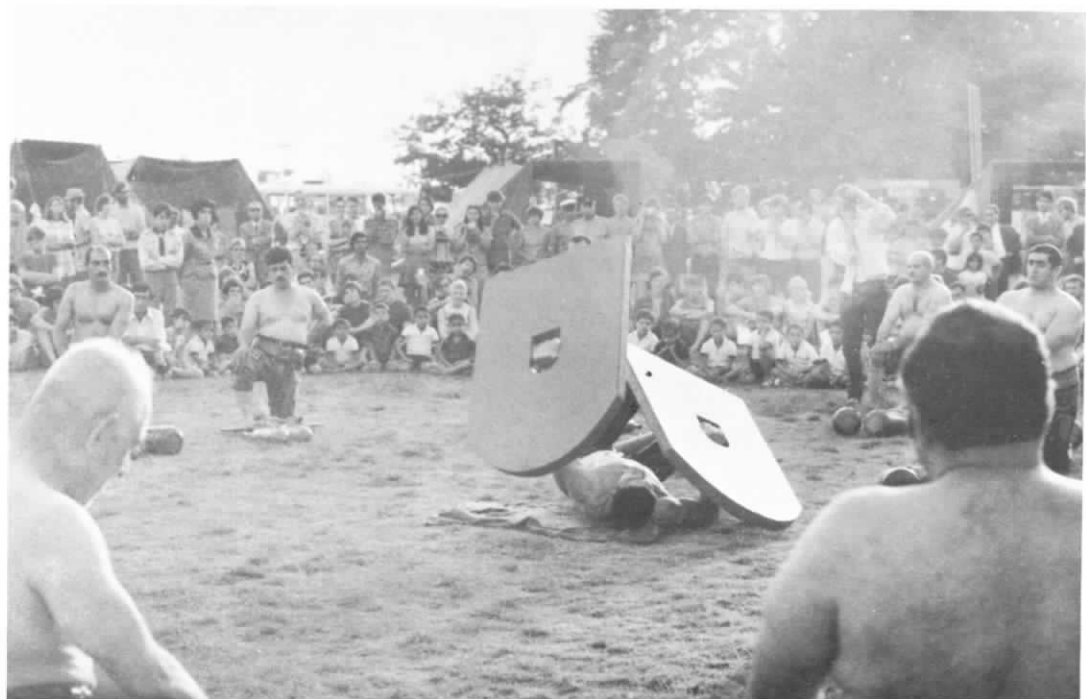
# Expedition 1970 - COMEX 4

Patron H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh K.G., K.T.





The Old Man of Kanspur



Tehran



Frankfurt



Duke of York's School, Dover



Customs



Dover Astern —



Dover Ahead

was again forced to heave on her willing horses for a "photo-stop" Enthusiastic voices argued the merits of a hundred and twenty-fifth at five points six and a sixtieth at eight; I just set to "sunshine", clicked, and waited.

A town approached — a chance for Kutie to start really working. A junction — "Turn left" said the navigator, so we obediently did so, or least started to do so! "No, the sign says right," — my left ear wilted under the assault, and somehow the message transferred to Kutie's driving wheel, passengers in the rear feeling seats sliding to the right beneath them. Fortunately vehicles in these distant townships seem intimidated by Kutie's glaring face, and steer well clear — its a pity that pedestrians

don't have the same clarity of vision!

Leaving the town behind with a lightness of heart borne of relief, Kutie and I again stretched out on the open road, uninterrupted in our journey except for the minor problems of suicidal tribesmen, cows, donkeys and dogs, together with the aforementioned restless Kuties, likely to burst into laughter, song, or command at the least expected moment!

With Kutie's temperature at a healthy 70 degrees, but mine feeling definitely over 98.4, I drew Kutie to a halt off the road for the regulation crew change, handed her over to the tenderesses of her next driving guardian, and sank back in her welcoming upholstery, recovering until Kutie called me back again.

## Navigating on Kutie

Lisa Blunt

The job of navigating for Comex on Kutie ranges from co-ordinating the return journey, in the face of 20 different schedules, a quarantine stop of unknown length, and pre-arranged cultural performances, to trying to persuade 22 normally reasonable people and a suitably temperamental coach to go in the same direction at the same time. Its the timing that can cause differences! Early morning starts can mean rising at four or five o'clock, and it is the concern of the navigator, for whom a travelling day means a tight schedule, to rouse the others by any means at hand — how to be the most popular person on the coach! Only on the completion of getting the tent down, and twenty-odd times washing, cooking, cooking, feeding, and washing-up, can materials and people be packed into the little girl, and the navigator slip into the seat next to the driver.

With the feet on the facia and schedule on knee it might be said that Kutie is just too comfortable! In fact, duties up front vary from shouting directions above the noise of singing and games that go on behind, to thinking what next to say to keep both oneself and the driver awake when there are only inert bodies behind us. There is a limit to the demands of Kutie's passengers: food, drinks, loos, and camera stops make up the list. But this is more than compensated for by the variety of obstacles

encountered along the road, which made us realise that our estimates of travelling time were made in happy innocence in a far-away country called England. Nothing could have prepared us for the trouble that has been taken to baffle, confuse and ultimately lose, the traveller. Navigational hazards such as open drains across the road, animals with a great lack of regard for their existence, and the sudden absence of road can be seen, but what can be done with the non-existent signposts which persist throughout Iran? There is no end to the ingenuity displayed in attempts to disguise information — if a town does not have more than one name, then it has a variety of spellings, and if all else fails, full information can be given in Arabic script! The final blow can be dealt by the country's inhabitants — our problem in Delhi was the profuseness of information offered by different people all determined to direct us to Rabindra Rangshala — in as many different ways! But without these little troubles where would be the joy, the air of triumph, which glows, indeed, positively radiates from the navigator as she climbs stiffly from the seat at the end of the day and the motion of Kutie finally stops at the new camp-site. It has been proved that, for the major part of the day, she has been on the right road!

# An American on Kutie

Mary Lee Abendroth

When I accepted the position of radio operator on Kutie, I didn't realise the added responsibilities I would be required to fulfill, apart from the normal radio operator's duties. You see I am a U.S. American!

Having requested permission to join Comex 3 early in the year, and receiving it, I was looking forward to meeting everyone and finding out what job I could hold down, not having been available for the official job-training sessions. At Nottingham during our pre-departure camp, I was offered the post of radio operator, and soon I was eagerly anticipating the joys of being able to speak in the blissful anonymity which mostly suits my retiring character. It was not long before I realized my great mistake.

On our third travelling day when we radio operators were on the air constantly, frantically trying to remain in contact with, and ascertain the whereabouts of the other four coaches in our convoy — a tight convoy which has since been loosened, leaving the radio operator silent most of the day, to tackle only the most important job, that of receiving instructions to the evening's campsite from the first coaches there — I was in a queue talking with some Kutiies when someone, overhearing me, came up and said, "Oh, you're the American radio

operator on Keele, aren't you?" My voice caught up in my throat, and I realized with dismay that my blissful anonymity was just wishful thinking. From then on I knew that anything I might say would reflect on me personally as well as my country, the U.S.A. What a frightful responsibility!

I also have the responsibility of making myself understood, which, for me, involves more than the crisp, clear phrases usually necessary over a crackly radio. My attempts to give an English ring to my accent often end in complete disaster, however, and I revert to my Americanisms as a last hope of getting the message across. Understanding the various British sounds poses no slight problem either, but there our navigator is available to translate the intent of the message so I'm saved the embarrassment of asking for a repetition, and anyway Kutiies in general now address me in a mid-Atlantic drawl in order to ensure my understanding.

There are rewards in my job, though, as when we were in Belgrade, a voice came over the radio, "Keele, this is Kent. I'm forced to tell you that you have a beautiful voice," which notice, though it brought on a blush, made my day and many more.

## Hostess on Kutie

*"They also serve who only stand (if they have good balance) and wait"*

Carole Cregan

Hostess, they said, and I had an immediate picture of an angel of mercy, myself, of course, gliding about the coach handing out comics, soothing troubled brows, and generally looking beautiful. Well — there were no comics, mine was the brow that was troubled, and I defy almost anyone to look beautiful while preparing lunch at a temperature of 100 degrees, on a coach bumping up and down on a gravel road. Kutie's inhabitants seemed to spend an excessive amount of time in the somnolent state, but strange to say, at the least mention of food I would suddenly find myself confronted by 20-odd open mouths and bared

teeth. To say that they liked food might not be an understatement!

Full of visionary dreams on the weeks before Comex, I had imagined the delicious meals that I would prepare for lunch. Nor were my expectations unfulfilled, for what variety there was — chapatti and tomatoes one day, and another tomatoes and chapatti, or even tomatoes, chapatti and cucumber. Some days I would even pamper the Kutiies by the addition of — an onion!

As for the difficulties of preparing lunch on a moving vehicle, I soon adapted. My arms elongated, my legs bowed, and with padding on

my rear end, I could really be said to have found my coach legs. What matter if my dignity had first been impaired a few times by my head-long collapse down the aisle? At least the navigator had the foresight to stop me falling out of the door (didn't we lose more than a few melons this way?) for who would have prepared lunch then? So not for me the sophisticated walk down the aisle, but the locomotion of a rheumatic crab.

Life was not all hardship though, and being a hostess does give one a feeling of social

purpose, of being wanted — by 20 pairs of jaws. I sometimes wondered if these 20 mouths did have bodies, for all I ever saw of my Kuties were their gaping mouths as they slept, or their gaping mouths as they received the food!

Still there were times which I will always remember, such as when we had such delicacies as cheese or sardines, and then their smiles of contentment warmed the cockles of my heart — I felt fulfilled, especially when I found that in the rush they had eaten my lunch as well.

## The Singing Kuties

Allan L. Blackshaw

"On stage in five minutes," — the battle-cry of the theatre reminds us again of our new identity as the Keele Harmony Group. Known throughout the length and breadth of Colonel Gregory's mind as perfect executors of the Com ex song, "Baba Noma", we muse on the advantages fame has brought. Stage appearances before 10,000, T.V. appearances, cutting radio tapes — we have become quite blasé about all of these, and now we feel quite confident that no-one will notice the odd "bum" note, and applause will be as fulsome as ever!

Originally we started singing on Kutie to the accompaniment of Chris' guitar, and gradually as time grew heavier and heavier, we learnt the lyrics to a greater number of songs, and Chris devised harmonies for them. Since we are almost all completely untutored the ensuing moderately successful sounds were quite amazing. Thus emerged the singing Kuties — known as anything from the "Keele African Folk-song Group", through the "Keele Madrigal Group" (in a vote of thanks after we had just sung two African Folk-songs!), to "that lot

again".

To return to the advantages of fame. . . We have stuffed ourselves at that inner sanctum of Britishness, the High Commission in Delhi, had our voices echo throughout India on All-India Radio, at whose studios we enjoyed trekking through calf-deep water after a cloudburst to reach the canteen, and finally, sat in the Rawalpindi T.V. studio while the Pakistani News was being broadcast.

Problems and frustrations, of course, there are many. We have spent a whole afternoon hanging around at rehearsal to eventually practise walking on and off stage in a straight line; we have messed about with voice balance so much that now we have the problem of persuading bashful altos to come "that little bit nearer the mike"; people who break into "Baba Noma" in their sleep have to be restrained. Most important of all though, we generally enjoy singing, and so become bored very much less often on board Kutie, whose inside often reverberates with songs — though not always the ones performed in public!

## Follow Me Leader

Malcolm Smalley

1st voice: Malcolm, how far is it to Tehran?

Malcolm: I suggest you ask the navigator.

2nd voice: Malcolm, are we having melon for lunch?

Malcolm: That's up to the hostess, you'd better ask her.

3rd voice: Malcolm, are we in contact with Cuddles?

Malcolm: To be quite honest, the radio operator's more likely to know than I am.

4th voice: Malcolm, what are the symptoms of

- cholera?
- Malcolm: I'm not a doctor — ask the first aider.
- 5th voice: Malcolm, what's Steve looking in the engine for?
- Malcolm: Well, perhaps it isn't functioning properly.
- 6th voice: Malcolm, is my sleeping bag in the boot?
- Malcolm: How on earth should I know, ask the flippin' storeman.
- 7th voice: Malcolm, what time's dinner?
- Malcolm: I'm not clairvoyant, ask the blooming cook.
- 8th voice: Malcolm, how much is it to send a postcard to Tipperary?
- Malcolm: Why ask me? If you're lucky the postman might give you a civil answer.
- 9th voice: Malcolm, how many Iranian Rials will I get for 20 Pakistani Rupees?
- Malcolm: Stack me! Why do you think we've got a banker?
- 10th voice: Malcolm, what have we stopped for?
- Malcolm: For crying out loud, ask the bloody driver!
- 11th ghostly voice: Malcolm, why are you leader?
- Malcolm: Well, to answer everyone's questions and to stay calm and patient under stress, I suppose.

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## Secretariat Notes

**COMEX CONCERT.** On January 8, 1970 at 7.30 p.m./8.00 p.m. in the **ROYAL ALBERT HALL, LONDON**, Comex is to present a concert of songs, dances and music as given on the expedition and at the Commonwealth Festival in Delhi. Tickets are on sale through usual agents and the box office at the Albert Hall. Application form for tickets is enclosed in this edition. Proceeds will go towards the building of COMEX HOUSE.

### COMEX HOUSE

Comex House and the Commonwealth Expedition Trust, which is to be part of it, will cost something in the region of £100,000. In his appeal published in the Hindustan Times on 18 November, Colonel Gregory wrote: "Some may argue that this is an awful lot of money when there are other needs so painfully obvious in developing countries; but what is the cost when understanding and co-operation fail? Moreover the need, 'so painfully obvious' will never be met unless the sources from which help can spring are revitalised: I mean the caring and concern for our fellow human beings everywhere without which words such as the brotherhood of man become a mockery" ..... He continues:

"Comex House will represent a voluntary effort in the private sector, with the emphasis on youth and action, just as the Commonwealth

Secretariat in London represents an official establishment with the emphasis on governments. The first house may lead to others, not only in every country of the Commonwealth but in some major cities as well. In the first instance it will provide a permanent base for the Comex Secretariat and a centre from which to mount and co-ordinate annual Commonwealth expeditions. It will operate a Commonwealth Trust Fund to facilitate, where this is considered necessary, the movement of young men and women hampered by foreign exchange regulations, from playing their full part in the Commonwealth. It will take up Commonwealth causes and through its membership — that is, people who have actually participated in or supported any Commonwealth Expedition, a formidable army now well over 1,000 actual Comexers and many times that number of active supporters (the emphasis being on the word active) representing every city and town in Britain and all sections of the community as well as many countries in the Commonwealth — particularly in Africa and Asia — bring the energies and idealism of youth, its influence and help to bear on them. But more important that this perhaps, is the intangible mission of preserving and organising the morale and enthusiasm of the greatest multi-national free association on earth in the belief that from it, an honest contribution to alleviate human suffering will flow."



**MAGAZINE** The new series of the Green Pennant will start from February 1970. To help us make a success of the magazine will you please invite as many new subscribers as possible. Of the old magazine a few sets have been put together and I will send them to those who have not received their magazines. Many subscription forms were collected at regional centres and sent to me after Comex departed which has been difficult to sort out, but we are gradually putting this in order. One of our principle difficulties lies in mailing the magazine. On occasions I had to send out over 3,000 single handed and it takes a lot of time. The G.P.O. have agreed to collect and despatch these regularly for us and I hope you won't have any complaints in the New Year.

\* \* \* \* \*

**TIES AND SCARVES** Colonel Gregory tried to get these done in India but for various reasons the Cottage Industries cannot start unless they have a minimum order for 5,000 with a 50% deposit. We have not given up the idea that hand woven silk scarves and ties would be an excellent Commonwealth-wide advertisement for Cottage Industries in India but in the meantime we will try to have a few ties made to meet the current demand. They will, however, take a long time to manufacture and will cost more.

\* \* \* \* \*

**COMEX 3 FILM** We have had a preview of this with Peter Wolf, and there is no doubt it contains some excellent shots. Colonel Gregory managed to get the original of a 17 minute news film with sound from Indian Television which can be used as a news flash where appropriate, incorporated in the Comex 3 film. So far the film has cost £600 and we cannot undertake to make additional copies of it unless they are sponsored. We hope to send a copy to India to help raise funds for the Comex Committee there and Comex House.

\* \* \* \* \*

**COMEX 4** A day long study on Comex 4 will take place at the English-Speaking Union during February. It is hoped by this time to finalise definite plans for Comex 4. High Commissions of the Commonwealth countries concerned will be invited.

\* \* \* \* \*

We would like to acknowledge the con-

tributions of Ned Yescombe and John Rees of Oxford in preparing detailed reports on contingent banking and navigation respectively. Copies of these will be available to members of Comex 4.

\* \* \* \* \*

Comex 4 will be breaking new ground heading to the extremities of the Asian Highway in Ceylon and Singapore, and to Ghana. The road to Ceylon presents no problems and the intention is that Colonel Gregory should visit Ghana overland early in the New Year. But although the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, U. Nyum, claims that the Asian Highway is a reality, travel through Burma is closed to foreigners, except in special cases. It is our hope that Comex 4 Blue Stream will be treated as a special case. Some general information regarding the road itself may be of interest:-

1. Between East Pakistan and the Western border of Burma the road is paved.
2. Sylhet to Imphae and then on to Tamu at the Indo-Burma border the road is not fully paved or asphalted.
3. From the border to Katewa the road is up to the minimum E.C.A.F.E. standard.
4. The river Chindwin at Katewa is unbridged.
5. Katewa to Ye-u the road is motorable with an asphalt surface on to Meiktila.
6. Burma to Thailand the road is sub-standard.
7. The rest of the road is paved or asphalted but for a few patches in Thailand.

\* \* \* \* \*

We had thought of combining the journey home with the colour souvenir but decided that it would be more appropriate with the introduction to Comex 4. The colour souvenir will be exclusively cultural in that it will be incorporated with the Comex 3 concert at the Albert Hall. The next series of magazines — Comex 4 — will start in February 1970.

\* \* \* \* \*

I once again have the pleasant duty of announcing a Comex wedding. Our very best wishes to Graham and Melloney Hawkins, (both members of Comex 3 — Exeter) who were married on 7 November in Dawlish.

Congratulations also to Anne Marshall and Philip Dobson (Durham contingent of Comex 2) who have announced their engagement to be married on 6th June 1970.

Comex Secretariat  
110 Old Brompton Road  
London, S.W.7.  
Telephone (01) 373 2802

Anne Murray  
Secretary

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# COMEX 4

**AIM** This expedition will be deployed to consolidate and extend the ground gained by Comex 3. Its aim will be the same as the expeditions that preceded it:

TO ORGANISE A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH AND TO DEMONSTRATE IT AS A BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NATIONS.

To do this effectively it will be necessary to build morale among ourselves at home and our friends abroad.

**BROAD CONCEPT** Five expeditions launched simultaneously to: West Africa (Ghana), Pakistan, India, Ceylon and Singapore and an East-West expedition from India with Comex 4 returning, and from Pakistan to meet Comex 4 in Turkey or Iran on the outward journey.

**COMPOSITION AND STRENGTHS** Each expedition will be 105 strong made up of five contingents with 21 members each. For ease of identification the five vehicles of each expedition will have their own colour:

West Africa	Ivory
Pakistan	Green
India	Gold
Ceylon	Orange
Singapore	Blue

Each contingent will be made of up four crews of five each and a leader/representative. Each crew will include a driver, mechanic/co-driver, navigator (who must also hold a normal driving licence), radio operator and cook/hostess. Individuals will double-up on other tasks i.e. banker, storeman, diarist and first aider. One of the latter, on each expedition, will be a qualified medical officer.

The proposed East-West expedition from India is expected to be 200 strong travelling in eight or ten vehicles. Provision for these has not yet been made. Selection will be difficult and should be supervised by the Ministry of Education, Government of India on the basis of a specific allocation to major States and a list of desirable qualifications.

The expedition from Pakistan is intended to preserve the initiative of the Comex Pakistan Committee of two contingents coming as far as the Bosphorus to meet Comex 3. This could now be done with Comex 4 in 1970.

Australia, Malaysia and New Zealand will be requested to send small contingents to participate in any programme planned in Singapore.

Canada might send a few members to join Comex 4 in London following the U.S. example on Comex 3.

East African countries might again consider the possibility of an expedition of 100 from Mombasa to Bombay to extend the Comex 4 operation around the world and with a view to drawing Comex 5 to East Africa in 1971.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Contingents need not necessarily be based on universities and every contingent will include a percentage of non-university students. In particular those establishments who sponsored individuals to participate in Comex 3 will be invited to extend their sponsorship. These include: the Greater London Council, the National Coal Board, The Metropolitan, County and City Police Forces, Imperial Chemical Industries, certain schools and technical colleges.

In the first instance all applications will

be submitted to the Secretariat in London on the application form enclosed with this magazine. Thereafter, personal interviews will be conducted in regions. The next step will be for each contingent to form a small committee and when the contingent is complete elect its own leader/representative.

The following are conditions of acceptance:

1. Once selected, individuals should apply to their local education authorities for a grant quoting Comex 4 as reference. Each individual will also need to find a regional sponsor, but under no circumstances should either the L.E.A. grant or the regional sponsorship be more than his/her own contribution. Copies of applications for grants and sponsorships should be sent to the Comex Secretariat. This reflects a departure from normal practice only to the extent of placing the responsibility of applying for a local education authority grant and securing of personal sponsorship on the individual. Its purpose is to ensure that individual applicants play their full part in mounting the expedition and so not treat it simply as a cheap holiday.
2. There will be no upper age limit — subject only to health and physical fitness. Applicants under 20 years of age will only be accepted if their applications are endorsed by parents. Post-graduates, doctors, teachers, nurses, businessmen, service-officers, and indeed anyone is most welcome to apply.
3. Individuals must be thoroughly conversant with the aims of Comex and be committed to them before, during and after the expedition. Throughout each expedition the interests of Comex as a whole will be given first priority and that will be decided where possible, before departure and by regional leaders' meetings during the expedition.
4. Once accepted, applicants will be expected to stay the course. In the event of an individual dropping out, personal deposits will not be returned unless a suitable and acceptable replacement is available.
5. Every person is expected to undertake a service task and participate in a cultural activity. Each contingent will have its own cultural capability but, as a whole, expeditions should work together in producing plays or a choir.
6. Attendance at the prescribed courses is compulsory.
7. Insurance arrangements for personal baggage will be the responsibility of individuals.
8. Early application for collective and multiple visas will be made for all five expeditions. If these are not granted each contingent will make its own arrangements to obtain visas. Any charges will be a personal liability.
9. An attempt will be made to provide standard size grips and sleeping bags in order to facilitate more efficient loading. The cost of these will also be borne by individuals.
10. Once selection is confirmed individuals shall pay a deposit of £15 and the balance as soon as possible thereafter and before June 1, 1970. This will enable the Secretariat to pay for vehicles and equipment at the various stages of production as required by manufacturers; for example, when the vehicle chassis come off the production line and move to the body-builders.
11. Personal health and physical fitness are essential to the success of Comex 4. It would therefore be in the best interests of everyone to have a thorough medical check up at an early stage. Immunisation against smallpox, cholera, tetanus and typhoid will be a personal responsibility. Health certificates will be pinned into all passports.

#### CONTROL AND CO-ORDINATION

This will be done from London and Delhi if the first Comex House is in operation — even on a tented basis. Colonel Gregory will accompany the Blue Stream to Singapore, which will return to India in time for any centralised programme. Other co-ordinators will be appointed for Ghana, Pakistan, India and Ceylon.

The organisation in Britain will be regionalised with five contingents in each region — one for each of the five expeditions. Regional co-ordinators will be nominated for:

Scotland; the North-East and Yorkshire;

the North-West and the Midlands; the West and South West. A separate representative will be appointed for Ireland to select individuals for the five other regions. Organisations of a separate region for Ireland is precluded for reasons of administrative impracticability.

## TIMING

Timing will be so arranged as to allow for subsidiary programmes in Pakistan, India and Ceylon but these plans will in no way affect the Comex 4 itinerary to and from its various destinations. The programmes in these countries are most likely to be based in universities.

## Tentative Dates

Singapore	Depart	1 July	Arrive	15 August
	Return			
	Delhi	1 Sept.	Dover	8 Oct.
Ceylon	Depart	8 July	Arrive	20 August
	Return			
	Delhi	1 Sept.	Dover	8 Oct.
India	Depart	15 July	Arrive	15 August
	Depart	1 Sept.	Dover	8 Oct.
*Pakistan	Depart	15 July	Arrive	15 August
			Return	8 Oct.
**Ghana	Timed to return	Dover		8 Oct.

\*An Indian contingent might join in any programme planned in Lahore and a Pakistan contingent, together with Comex 4 (Green Stream) might return to join in any central programme in India – whether in Bombay or Delhi.

\*\*The expedition to Ghana though of shorter distance is the first of its kind to Africa. Permission is being sought to travel through countries en route.

## FACTORS

1. The United Nations Asian Highway Committee has offered to help all expeditions to the extremities of the Asian Highway. (A similar facility does not exist for Comex 4 (Ivory Stream) to Africa). The Committee have been requested to endorse a request for safe overland passage through Burma.

2. Distances involved are considerably greater and will affect final timing and co-ordination.

3. Each of the five Commonwealth capitals concerned, i.e. Accra, Colombo, Delhi, Islam-

abad and Singapore may wish to organise suitable programmes to receive the various expeditions and so bring about a spontaneous festival of the Commonwealth.

4. Timing of the expeditions is unlikely to suit all aspiring participants. Dates will therefore need to be examined in greater detail as well as the types of applicant for whom these would be most suitable.

5. Comex 4 India to Britain will need transport which will be manufactured in India providing a unique advertisement for the country.

6. Governments of India and Pakistan need to give early consideration to allowing members of their respective countries to travel overland through India and Pakistan.

7. The reaction of the Spanish Government to Comex 4 (Ivory Stream) travelling through that country will affect the timing, cost and itinerary.

9. In consequence of greater distances, improved design of vehicles and the reduction in numbers the overall cost will be increased.

## TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT

In all cases the Vista 25 Bedford/Duple coach, already well tested on Comex 2 and 3 will be used. In order to facilitate resale they will be of standard design. In addition to reinforced springs and mountings, the following extras and/or modifications will be made.

1. **ADMINISTRATIVE AREA** Rear seats will be replaced with a table over a lockable storage space for daily rations. Next pair of seats on both sides of isle will be reversed.

2. **CREW REST AREA** Centre eight seats facing each other and provided with small detachable tables adaptable for use outside the coach.

3. **CREW DECK** Driver's and four front seats.

4. **LOADING BAYS** One on either side immediately behind (3) above with table tops fitted surrounded by wire mesh or similar protective material.

5. **RESERVE CREW AREA** Four seats facing forward behind (4).

6. **WATER TANK** Opposite fuel tank if possible (former to be of 45 gallon capacity).

## 7. NAVIGATORS LIGHT AND MIRROR

8. **TWO TRAILING LIGHTS** for external use: tents and cooking. In this regard it is hoped that an additional battery can be installed.

9. **VENTILATION FOR DRIVER AND NAVIGATOR** (air scoops and fans)

10. **SEATS RESTYLED** and tilted for better reclining position.

11. **FILTERS FOR FUEL TANK** and larger sediment bowls.

12. **REAR OFFSIDE SERVING HATCH**

13. **REINFORCING MATERIAL ON RADIATORS**

14. **DUSTPROOF BOOT** with stronger locking device.

Note: Bolting of seats to be simplified using butterfly screw tops. Seats may be changed round to suit all conditions.

**COOKING POTS AND STOVES** These will be acquired centrally on a minimum list of essentials basis. The exact items, together with bulk food supplies, will be worked out during the cooks' course.

**TENTAGE** The Comex all-purpose tent will be further developed for Comex 4. Each unit will have light weight poles in sections and the wings reduced by three feet to provide a corresponding drop with stays.

Cooking and latrine screens will be of hessian as for Comex 3.

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT** The possibility of buying grips and sleeping bags in bulk will be investigated. Lists of suggested personal clothing will be circulated at a later date.

**TRAINING COURSES** The intention is to request Vauxhall Motors to arrange the course for all mechanics, as for Comex 2 and 3, and the Services to organise the remainder. Details of these will be published at the end of this year. All courses will emphasise the vital questions of health, loading and good public relations. Selected members of Comex 2 and 3 will be invited to help the instructors on all courses. An instructors' briefing session will be held in London before the commencement of courses which will take place around Easter.

**PUBLICITY** The number of people on Comex 4 and the wide area they represent should provide an excellent basis for nation-wide publicity. This has not been fully exploited in the past and therefore:

(a) Selected important meetings will be notified to the press, radio and television.

(b) Details of all courses will be furnished as above and a press conference called on the final day of each.

(c) Every member of every contingent will be required to give at least three talks on the Commonwealth and the role of Comex in it. These may be at either:

(i) University, technical college or school.

(ii) A Rotary Club or a Round Table.

(iii) A Women's Institute.

(iv) An office or factory.

(v) A branch of a Commonwealth Society

(vi) At home after a sherry or tea party.

For this purpose, slides, tapes, a long-play record (if produced) and in due course a copy of the Comex 3 film may be available.

## COMEX 4 FILM

The Comex 3 film was not sponsored and was only made possible through considerable ingenuity, hard work and with the help of the B.B.C. and private individuals. The co-operation of all participating countries will be sought in making the Comex 4 film.

A camera team will travel in the control vehicle which will also carry the co-ordinator of the expedition. In all cases, apart from the Blue Stream this will be one of the coaches.

## COSTS

Bearing in mind that individuals will be responsible for the total cost of their participation, applying thereafter for relief through industrial/regional sponsorships and L.E.A. grants; that each coach will have fewer members and that regional budgets will include equipment and ferry charges (in order to leave the total amount realised above the 50% resale guarantee of vehicles to meet any overall Comex deficit) — individual contributions can be estimated at:-

Singapore — £200

Ceylon — £180

India and Pakistan — £150

Ghana — £140

These figures will be examined in greater detail when the actual costs of vehicles and equipment are known. Gifts of cash, equipment

and industrial advertising will help reduce these estimates. For example Comex 4 (Blue Stream) to Malaya and Singapore might be "sponsored by . . . "a well known rubber company or Chamber of Commerce" ". These words could be written on the flanks of all five vehicles.

It is also possible that a body such as the Institute of Directors might be approached to underwrite the whole of Comex 4. This could be done at a cost to its members of about one guinea a head. The expedition would then be "sponsored by the Institute of Directors of Great Britain" — a fine advertisement for the country as a whole.

It has further been suggested that firms supplying specialised accessories such as tyres, electrical fittings, brake linings, clocks and radios might be prepared to donate these items. They will be asked to do so.

Reciprocal feeding and accommodation arrangements might be made by host countries for the duration of each visit:-

- (a) to enable individuals to devote all their time to the purpose of the expedition.
- (b) to save loading space and unnecessary expense.

If the co-operation of all the above can be

secured in a truly national effort to arouse the enthusiasm of Britain and the Commonwealth the cost to individuals will be reduced substantially. It is therefore up to members of Comex 4 to win this support.

#### **PROGRAMME ON RETURN TO BRITAIN**

Six expeditions, 35 coaches and 700 plus people, will return to Britain on 8 October. The programme for the first East-West Comex from India will be planned in detail at a later stage, but will include visits to most regions represented on Comex 4 starting with London. A combined cultural presentation, highlighting all the programmes presented en route will be given as a prelude to it by all expeditions at the Albert Hall immediately after arrival in October. This will be followed by exhibitions in all regions to coincide with the itinerary of Comex 4 from India.

Individuals and establishments wishing to offer hospitality to these young men and women visiting Britain for the first time should inform the Comex Secretary in London.

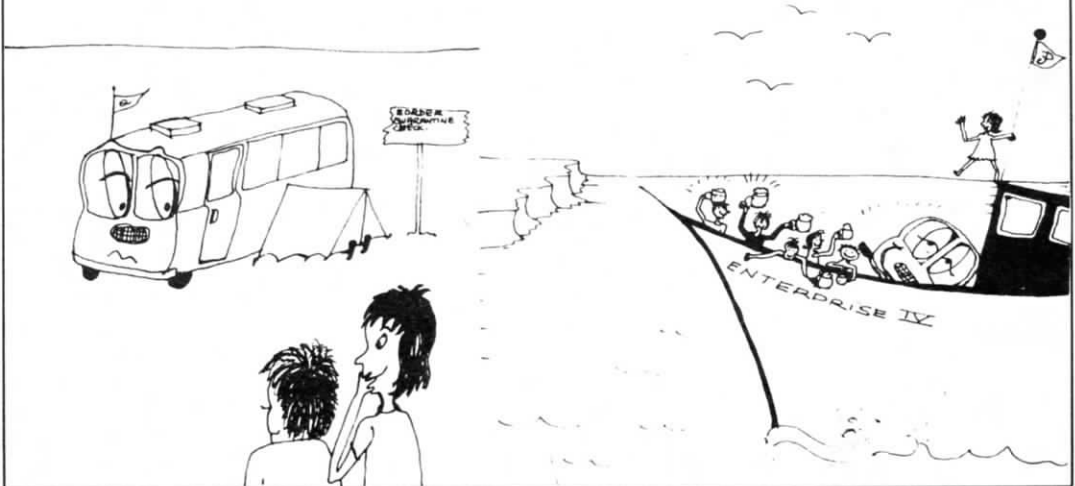
There is a great deal to be done and little time to lose if the full benefits of Comex 1, 2 and 3 are to be realised.

At last Cuthbert started the long journey home: - he noticed quite a change in the appearance of his friends as they climbed on board with all their souvenirs!

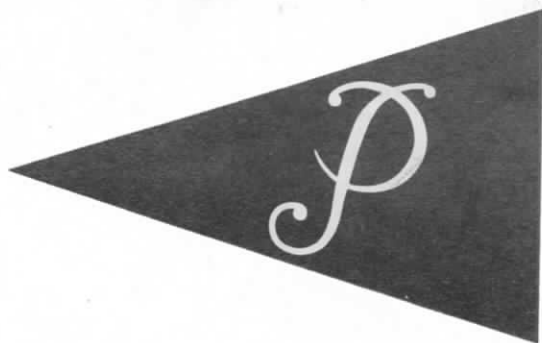


On the way back Cuthbert had to stop for a cholera check-up. He was rather surprised when they examined his exhaust pipe!

Cuthbert gave a huge rev. of delight as he saw the white cliffs of Dover. To celebrate, he had a few pints of best English oil! His occupants rejoiced in similar manner - they had had a fascinating time, but, after 15,000 miles, it was lovely to be home!



# THE GREEN PENNANT



MAGAZINE OF THE COMMONWEALTH EXPEDITION — CHRISTMAS 1969



First in Delhi and first to land at Dover — Gerry Nixon, (St. Andrews) leads Durham ashore.