

spent most of the evening first at a 'Jazz Jamboree' at the Midland Institute and then at the Birmingham University Students' Union, before heading towards Moseley:

We walked along in a colossal line spread out across Bristol Rd - all except Joy and Bernard, who walked ecstatically in front, embracing each other every few yards. Then I got mad. I went completely berserk and walked bang into the headlights of a car approaching along Priory Rd. I was utterly, utterly despondent... I dashed off after Joy, croaking in a reedy hoarse treble that I was taking her home and that I would slit both their throats if they didn't stop. Of course, they didn't. They stopped, *laughed at me* (O Christ) and proceeded to neck in front of me in the middle of the road.

It took eight of them to stop me from strangling the filthy bitch and that low bastard.

A provincial wannabe being laughed at: a terrible moment, but he would soon enough be on the fast track to exact cosmic revenge.

About the same time as Tynan's humiliation, the Chelsea-based Mass-Observation investigator was returning home. She had spent the evening in the West End, mainly outside Buckingham Palace watching the crowds waiting for a balcony appearance and eventually getting it at about 10 p.m.: "Doesn't the Queen look lovely?" says F.J.C. "The princesses were among the crowd last night, only nobody recognised them," says somebody else. The gates were closed at both Piccadilly Circus and Green Park stations, so she walked home. Her report finished with a post-midnight vignette: 'On a piece of waste ground in Flood Street ten or twelve children are silently gathered round a bonfire. They look tired but happy and absorbed. One says in a low voice, "It'll last a long time yet." A man at the end of the street is striking matches and says he is looking for a shilling he has dropped. Throws match away angrily, saying, "They don't last long enough."¹²

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Broad Vistas and All That

Britain in 1945. No supermarkets, no motorways, no teabags, no sliced bread, no frozen food, no flavoured crisps, no lager, no microwaves, no dishwashers, no Formica, no vinyl, no CDs, no computers, no mobiles, no duvets, no Pll, no trainers, no hoodies, no Starbucks. Four Indian restaurants. Shops on every corner, pubs on every corner, cinemas in every high street, red telephone boxes, Lyons Corner Houses, trams, trolley-buses, steam trains. Woodbines, Craven 'A', Senior Service, smoke, smog, Vapex inhalant. No laundrettes, no automatic washing machines, wash day every Monday, clothes boiled in a tub, scrubbed on the draining board, rinsed in the sink, put through a mangle, hung out to dry. Central heating rare, coke boilers, water geysers, the coal fire, the hearth, the home, chilblains common. Abortion illegal, homosexual relationships illegal, suicide illegal, capital punishment legal. White faces everywhere. Back-to-backs, narrow cobbled streets, Victorian terraces, no high-rises. Arterial roads, suburban sensus, the march of the pylon. Austin Sevens, Ford Eights, no seat belts, Triumph motorcycles with sidecars. A Bakeite wireless in the home, *Housewives' Choice* or *Workers' Playtime* or *ITMA* on the air, televisions almost unknown, no programmes to watch, the family eating together. Milk of Magnesia, Vick Vapour Rub, Friar's Balsam, Fynnon Salts, Eno's, Germolene. Suits and hats, dresses and hats, cloth caps and mufflers, no leisurewear, no 'teenagers'. Heavy coins, heavy shoes, heavy suitcases, heavy tweed coats, heavy leather footballs, no unbearable lightness of being. Meat rationed, butter rationed, lard rationed, margarine rationed, sugar rationed, tea rationed, cheese rationed, jam rationed, eggs rationed, sweets rationed, soap rationed, clothes rationed. Make do and mend.