

Nervanderinkatu 4A-2
23500 Uusikaupunki
Finland

9th July 1988

Tales from an Itinerant Jobber Letter 5

Dear Reader,

Of my return to Finland and my subsequent sojourn there over Christmas and New Year I will draw a discreet veil of silence – out of respect for you and for my own consideration too. Suffice to say it was the most boring two months of my life. I rehashed my painting and completed it (photo enclosed) which I enjoyed doing, did a few pencil sketches and went swimming often and finally when the boredom was more than I could bear I returned to England early at the sacrifice of a BA ticket for the allotted day!

13th July 1988

So I busied myself at Airton installing my sauna which works a treat and tiling the bathroom and installing a super dooper shower unit. I have yet to create a rest room for the sauna and a bathroom complex in the loft and my Japanese tatami room. All these I hope to work on when this contract expires. Talking about the Japanese, did you see Stephen Spielberg's film, "Empire of the Sun"? Although I didn't see the film yet Julie sent me the book and although I take most of what is written with a pinch of salt it did evoke for me many startling memories especially in some of the names he recalls such as Reverend Matthews, headmaster of Cathedral School who was in camp with us and ran the camp school for all the children. As I was in the final year of my school and considered myself too grown up to go to school in camp I opted out. Well I was going on 16 when I went to camp. He also mentions the notorious interrogation centre "Bridge House" where my brother Ray was held and tortured for some months before he was exchanged and came to England to join the RAF. I was such a naïve innocent then and in spite of the fact that I'd been buffeted by the experiences of life I'm not much better now. Inside this old man is a young man desperately trying to get out. Nevertheless I'm looking forward to our reunion on October 24th at the Oakland Hotel. It's called "Once in a Lifetime Reunion" for all civilian internees in China 1941 – 1945 under Japanese occupation. But, just a minute, even the very youngest will be in their 50's now and teenagers will be in their 60's and those in their prime of man- and womanhood will be in their 70's and 80's and older ones will be 90 or dead so wouldn't it be just a meeting of old wrinklies? Imagine all those beautiful young ladies one worshipped and got all flustered and tongue tied over would be in their 60's looking like their mums. I'd feel like Dorian Grey (perhaps I should behave like him too). Who wants to dwell in the past? I would rather go back to the future but nevertheless I'll be there, well it might be fun!

15th July 1988

As you can see I'm writing this in the evenings, any spare time to reach you before your holiday. I hope you'll call me if you receive this letter before your trip. I'll probably be in Airton although Adrian is now a BA (Batchelor of Arts) he got a second class honour, he has an exhibition in London which I hope to attend on the 7th of August and I'll be returning to Finland on the 12th.

The weather here is truly unbelievable, everyday clear blue skies with ideal temperatures in the 70's. I'm playing lots of tennis and my game has improved beyond recognition, mostly I play in shorts and stripped to the waist – ooh! And the added bonus is that the sun has a lot of

strength even in the evening so I'm really quite brown. Often I'd go down to the sea or a lake for a dip before returning home. I've changed my mind about Finland this year, there seems to be many more beautiful places to see although the scenery is similar and the food isn't much to write home about.

Well dear reader, I'm ending this letter now for two reasons, to catch the post early and I can't do Malta justice as I've forgotten the place names so I'll write when I return to England when I can consult brochures and maps so don't miss the next exciting episode when Frank Waller's exciting adventures in the mists of antiquity and ancient history on the Island of Malta and Gozo will leave you breathless. How he travelled in the footsteps of St Paul and discovered Ulysee's secret in Calypso's cave. His further adventures in Leningrad, city of Russian culture, his encounter with lurid, pulsating, tantalizing Tanya, the Soviet agent - all these will be revealed. I'll definitely start that letter next week, so have a great holiday and sometime I would like to spend another holiday with you.

13th July 1988

So I buried myself at Apton installing my sauna which works a treat and telling the bathroom and installing a super heater shower unit. I have yet to create a rest room for the sauna and a bathroom complex the lot and my Japanese friend room. All these I hope to work on when the contract expires. Talking about the Japanese but you see Stephen Spielberg's film "Empire of the Sun" although I didn't see the film yet Julia sent me the book and although I take most of what is written with a pinch of salt it did evoke for me many stirring memories especially in some of the names the recalls such as Reverend Matthews, headmaster of Cathedral School who was in camp with us and ran the camp school for all the children. As I was in the first year of my school and considered myself too grown up to go to school in camp. Well I was going on 16 when I went to camp. He also mentions the notorious interrogation centre "Bridge House" where my brother Ray was held and tortured for some months before he was exchanged and came to England to join the RAF. I was such a naive innocent then and in spite of the fact that I'd been buffeted by the experiences of life I'm not much better now. Inside the old man is a young man desperately trying to get out. Nevertheless I'm looking forward to our reunion on October 24th at the Oakland Hotel. It's called "Once in a Lifetime Reunion" for all divided intimates in China 1941 - 1945 under Japanese occupation. But just a minute, even the very youngest will be in their 30's now and teenagers will be in their 60's and those in their 70's and 80's and those in their 70's and 80's and older ones will be 60 or dead so wouldn't it be just a meeting of old wrinkles? Imagine all those beautiful young ladies we worshipped and got all flustered and tongue tied over would be in their 60's looking like their mum. I'd feel like Dorian Gray (perhaps I should believe like him too). What wants to dwell in the past? I would rather go back to the future but nevertheless I'd be there. Well it might be fun.

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