

Michael's Travel Diary

March 16

I arrived in the UK. The flight was good, uneventful. British Air food is pretty good, as airline food goes, and I was able to get some sleep. We touched down just before seven-thirty after an overnight flight. Things went exceptionally well at the terminal. Passport control was not crowded, my baggage was in baggage claim when I arrived, and the paperwork for the rental car only required my signature. I reached my hotel by nine o'clock, was able to check in, and I was on my way to Windsor Castle half-an-hour later. Traffic was relatively light, since it was Sunday morning.

I'm not sure that anyone knows why the British drive on the left, while most of the world drives on the right. You hear explanations. For example, in the middle ages, knights rode on the left since they held their lances in their right hands. Therefore, the British drive on the left.

Of course, French knights, Spanish knights, and German knights would have ridden on the left, too, but the French, the Germans, and the Spanish drive on the right. It is said that Americans drive on the right because wagon drivers held their whips in their right hands, and they did not want to hit a passing driver. Of course, this would have been true in England, too. Who knows?

Driving on the left is bad enough, but most cars have manual gear shifts, and shifting with the left hand is awkward. I drove in the UK two years ago, though, and it did come back to me. Back then, I was so timid that other cars tried to run me over, but this time, well, I was more assertive! At least, I didn't hit anything!

I reached Windsor Castle just after opening time. As one approaches the entrance, there are seats, lines of seats, for people awaiting their turns to enter. Two years ago, we sat for an hour, waiting out turn. Today, the seats were empty, and I walked right in. The weather is very cool, still, in March, and few tourists are around. In fact, I heard very few American voices around the Castle; most of the visitors today seemed to be English.

I spent most of the day photographing and sketching the Castle. The White Tower is what one generally thinks of when thinking of Windsor, and I was able to record it at different times of day, in different light. At one point in the afternoon, dark clouds gathered, and I just had time for a quick sketch of a shaft of light, breaking through the clouds, shining directly on the White Tower. I would never have been able to imagine that image!

I had supper at a pub. We found, when we were here a couple of years ago, that pub food is quite good, and relatively inexpensive. Bangers and mash were delicious. I thought about Allison as I sat at supper. Well. I thought about her much of the day, as I drew. We had such a good time when we were here; planned to come back, actually, this year. Never thought things would turn out as they have, that I would be back, but be back, alone.

March 18

St Paul's Cathedral is so large that it seems smaller than it truly is. I always find it strange that most English cathedrals are empty; there are no permanent places to sit in the nave. So unlike American churches, even American cathedrals, with rows of pews. I understand that, historically, there were no pews or chairs, that the congregation stood and talked, perhaps transacted business, during the service, but I still feel surprised when I walk into an empty nave.

Often, there is no need for seats in the nave. Attendance is so small that worshippers can be accommodated in the choir. Those cathedrals with active parishes are different, I know. I recall one, northeast of London, which not only had pews filling the nave, it had monitors so those in the back can see what is taking place at the altar.

I climbed into the great dome of the Cathedral and looked down at the high altar. A different perspective, to be sure!

March 21

It's after midnight. I just returned from the Tower of London, where I witnessed the Ceremony of the Keys. The ceremony is the official closing of the Tower for the night, when the gates are locked and those inside the walls can safely go to sleep. There were about twenty of us there, tonight, for the Ceremony. One of the Beefeaters explained the purpose, told us that it had occurred continuously since the eleventh century. As we waited, a guard slouched at his post by the entrance to the castle. Suddenly, he heard the sound of men walking toward him from the outside gate. He sprang to attention, his rifle ready. "Who goes there?" he cried. "The keys!" was the response. "Whose keys?" "Queen Elizabeth's keys." "Queen Elizabeth's keys may enter!"

The British feel that ceremonies are important, even those like the Ceremony of the Keys that are mostly symbolic. I mean, the outside gates were not locked for the night at that point in time. The visitors, at least, were allowed to leave! On the surface, Americans appear to have lost their need for such things. I say, on the surface, because underneath, we all crave order and tradition. Ceremonies help us satisfy those cravings.

As I reached my hotel, I wanted to tell Allison what I had seen. I realized, quickly, of course, that had she been with me, she would have seen the ceremony, herself. I made some tea and checked my email. You know, Allison doesn't even know where I am, tonight or what I'm doing. I shouldn't be thinking about her, but it's early in Charleston, just after seven, and I wonder where she is, what she is doing.

March 22

I went back to the Tower this afternoon. I took the tour. The crown jewels are magnificent! The oldest part of the Tower is almost a thousand years old, built by William the Conqueror. It was used as a prison into this century. Some of the cells had been "decorated" as they might have appeared during medieval times. Not very inviting. A scaffold stands in the courtyard near where, it is believed, one stood during the sixteenth century, where Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard, Henry's wives lost their heads. As angry as I am at Allison, I think that's a bit extreme as a punishment for adultery. Of course, adultery against the King was considered to be treason, so I suppose it was different! Allison has never spoken to me about what happened. Never said she's sorry. Maybe she isn't. I wonder if Henry's wives behaved like Allison.

Most of the afternoon was spent sketching the tower. I drew it from a number of perspectives. I even drew the ravens that live there. The story is that, if the ravens ever leave the Tower, then England will fall. We were told that a prudent administrator had the staff clip the birds' wings so that they could not fly away! That's cheating!

I was leaving at dusk, and I photographed the Tower as the walls were illumined for the night and lights began to appear in the windows. Night scenes are some of my favorites.

March 25

When Americans speak of “the changing of the guard,” they typically refer to the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, complete with a military parade and a marching band. Just as interesting, although smaller in scale, is the changing of the guard at the Horse Guards Barracks. I was there at eleven this morning. The ceremony was impressive, but my attention was drawn to the guards who sat, mounted, in front of the gates. They sit, immobile, looking neither to the left nor the right, ignoring the throngs that pass in front of them. As I watched, a teen-aged girl, an American, judging by her accent, approached the guards shortly before the ceremony began. She wanted to know if, in fact, the ceremony was to be held this morning. She walked up to one of them, a young man who might have been three years older than she, and she posed the question, “Will you have the changing of the guard this morning?” Looking closely, I noted no change in the guard’s expression. He did not turn toward her; he did not smile or frown; there was no movement of his eyes, just the slightest tip of his head. “At eleven o’clock?” He gave the same sign.

March 27

Buckingham Palace is a fairly new building, by English standards. Queen Victoria was its first occupant, in the 1800’s. It is, though, the official residence of the Queen. It is a massive structure; the White House is a log cabin by comparison. The Queen’s flag was visible above the Palace, indicating that she was in residence, today.

The Palace is surrounded by an iron fence and, in front, a parade ground. It is not an ornate building, just a massive, stone structure. As I stood by the fence, I noticed a small guard house, in front of the Palace. There was a soldier, red coat, black pants, and a tall bear skin hat, pacing back and forth, a rifle over his left shoulder. The soldier’s red coat stood out as the sole bit of color in a monochromatic scene. As I watched, I was struck by the discrepancy between the lone guard and the massive building. How could something so small protect something so large?

The British seem to pay less attention to security than do Americans. Tourists standing outside of the Palace, as I did, see only a handful of soldiers. While you know that there must be more guards than you see, the comparison with the White House is dramatic! At St James Palace, pedestrians walk within a few feet of the building, and I saw a lone sentry standing guard. Do the British feel less need of security, or do they feel less need to show that it exists?

April 1

I rented a car and set out toward Salisbury. First, I drove west, to Bath, and visited the Roman baths, for which the city is named. As I stood beside the pool in which Roman soldiers bathed some fifteen hundred years ago, I was reminded of how sacred places have remained sacred, even when religions have changed. The Church recognized this principle and used it when it located churches, designated holidays, and adapted customs. The baths were dedicated to Sullis Minerva, a name that honors both a Celtic deity and the Roman goddess. As I stood beside the pool, I looked up. The spire of the cathedral loomed over us.

April 2

I'm in Glastonbury, tonight. It's a mystical place, full of history, magic, and legend. It is said that King Arthur and Guinevere are buried in the ruins of the abbey. Their tombstones are there, where their bodies were re-interred during the reign of Edward the First. The king and the queen were present for the burial. Glastonbury Tor is a large, round hill near town. It is said that Arthur and his knights lie buried under the Tor – multiple legends can co-exist with ease in Glastonbury – ready to rise to England's defense should they ever be needed. The Holy Grail, the cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper, is said to have been brought to England by Joseph of Aramathea. Legend says that it lies, buried in a well at the Tor.

My hotel once served pilgrims who came to the abbey, and part of the building is over 500 years old. In America, we would have demolished it long ago to build a Quality Inn, or something. The beef and ale pie at dinner was outstanding.

April 3

I rode out to the Tor this morning. Shrouded in mist, it seemed as though Arthur and his knights might ride across it at any time. A footpath winds up the Tor, and I could just make out a tower at the top.

I drove to Salisbury and sketched the cathedral, then I headed north, across the Salisbury Plain to Stonehenge. I'm not sure what I expected. I rounded a curve, came over a small hill – and there it was! It looked like a set of toy blocks spread across the plain, much smaller, it seemed, than I had expected. Again, the size was a perceptual issue. The stones are massive. Archeologists have all sorts of theories about Stonehenge, what its purpose might have been. Allison once suggested that they should pay attention to the functions of our important buildings, today. The major structures in Charleston are there for government – the courthouse, the post office - for commerce – office buildings - and for religion –the multitude of churches. Wouldn't ancient humans have built for similar purposes?

I'm staying, tonight, in a small hotel in Avebury, not far from Stonehenge. Avebury is a town, built around an exceptionally large set of standing stone circles. Many see the entire plain stretching north from Salisbury as a mystical place. Residents seem simply to accept the past and to get on with their lives.

April 10

“Mind the gap!” Everyone who rides the London underground knows the phrase. It is a warning that, when you exit the car, you will find a gap between the car and the platform. It means to pay attention to the gap! Don't fall! The phrase reminds me of my mother. “Mind the time,” she would say, or “Mind me,” both phrases meaning the same thing, “Pay attention.” I had always thought it was a Southern expression.

As an attorney, I'm reminded that British society is less litigious than ours. The simple warning to mind the gap just wouldn't fly in America! If anything, it would indicate that the transit authority was aware of the problem, but had failed to correct it! Law suits would follow. At the medieval castles, the ancient ruins, one seldom sees a guard rail or an entry barrier. Small signs might warn visitors of danger, but it seems to be the visitor's responsibility to avoid it.

April 15

My last night in London. I'm pleased with the work I have completed, a number of drawings, so many sketches that I haven't counted them. Enough to keep me busy for months! I'm leaving for Canterbury in the morning.

I hope that my accountant filed my income tax return! He was attempting to obtain Allison's cooperation in filing a joint return, but I'm not confident that he was successful. Allison wouldn't speak with me; I doubt she was willing to talk with him!

Whatever. I need to eat supper and get to bed.

April 16

Cell phones are wonderful. I called Charleston. Tax returns were filed. My accountant convinced Allison's attorney that both of us would be better off with joint filing. Honestly.

Canterbury is only a couple of hours from London! I've always been surprised when I've planned trips, here, at how quickly one can go from one place to another. It makes things convenient for travelers! And you use less gasoline, petrol, as they call it. The prices are awfully high, and the exchange rate between dollars and pounds is terrible. I've never actually calculated the price per gallon. It is sold in liters, so the calculation would require at least two transformations: liters to gallons and pounds to dollars. Anyway, I found myself spending the equivalent of seventy dollars to fill the tiny Ford that I'm renting!

Had a call from Charles Dawson, the art dealer in New York. The drawings I left with him have sold! He seemed interested in what I'm doing, here, and asked me to send him samples!

My hotel is located in the medieval wall that surrounds the Cathedral. My room looks out on the Cathedral close, almost as if I can reach out to touch the gray stone walls. The windows open for an unobstructed view. I'll make a sketch before heading off to dinner.

April 17

I met an American at the pub last night. Mary McDonald is an art professor from UGA who is here on sabbatical. She looked at my sketch book and seemed to like what she saw. We arranged to meet later this week so she can look at some of my other work.

April 19

I drove to Dover for the day and sketched the White Cliffs. I'm not certain, but I thought that I could see land – the coast of France? - as I looked across the Channel. Then, I visited Dover Castle, high on the cliffs, overlooking the Channel. The Castle was used as late as the Second World War. The British military had a command post built in tunnels underneath the castle. Fascinating tour!

The railway and the highway that pass through the tunnel under the Channel surface near Dover. As I returned to Canterbury, I noticed the road signs, reminding drivers that they were now in England and that they were driving on the left side of the road. A bit late to find this out, I thought!

April 20

Canterbury Cathedral is the “mother church” of the Anglican Communion, including our Episcopal Church. Like St. Paul’s in London, the nave was empty, although I was told that chairs are in place at certain times of the year. To one side of the chancel is chapel that marks the place that St. Thomas Becket was murdered by several knights who were fulfilling the wish, if not the specific command, of King Henry II. Becket had been Henry’s friend before he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. However, once he became Archbishop, he opposed Henry’s attempts to exert control over the church. I am reminded that friends who cease to be friends often become the world’s most bitter enemies. Ask any divorce lawyer!

April 22

I met Mary McDonald tonight for dinner. I took several of my sketches and three completed drawings for her to see. I felt strange, walking into a pub with my portfolio under my arm. I could have asked her to come to my hotel, I suppose, but I didn’t want her to have the wrong idea. She seems like a very nice person, and I did enjoy talking with her the other night.

Again, she seemed to think that my drawing was quite good. It feels really good to have an art professor praising my work! It always surprises me when someone thinks that my work is good. I don’t know why; no one has ever laughed at it. Not since middle school, anyway. There was a teacher in middle school, an English teacher as I recall, who picked up my sketch pad as he walked around the class one day while we were writing an essay. He happened to turn to a page where I had experimented with a cubist’s interpretation of a basketball game. He laughed at my drawing and showed it to the class. Some of the kids laughed, too. I cried all of the way home. I learned later that my father went to school the next morning. The teacher never mentioned my drawing, again.

Mary gave me the name of an art dealer in Atlanta, Carl Williams. Said he would give me a better price for my work than the dealer in New York was offering. Said she would email him to introduce me.

Mary asked about Allison. Told me a story about her and her husband, so similar to what happened to us. She and her husband reconciled. He is in London, on sabbatical, and she is going there for the weekend. She suggested that I chase Allison down like she did her husband, make her talk to me. Of course, Mary was the one who cheated. She should have apologized! Why should I fly home to try to talk to her – again? She wouldn’t listen, anyway!

April 25

I stopped for the night in Lincoln to draw the cathedral. My route took me past Nottingham. As I sped along, off to my left, I saw clusters of nuclear power plants. I counted eight units in one group! I’ve never seen such a concentration of nuclear power in the United States, never more than one unit, maybe two. I would feel uneasy if I lived near eight!

My directions to the hotel took me into town through one of the ancient gates. I turned left beside the cathedral. The hotel was “right at the next light,” according to my directions. I turned right, but did not find the hotel. I back tracked; I didn’t see it. I parked and walked along the street. Finally, I spotted the sign. The hotel was at the intersection! “Right at the next light” meant “Right there at the light, exactly at the light,” just as it would have meant at home!

I spoke with Carl Williams. Mary had already emailed him. He told me that his company had a special interest in images of the British Isles. He asked me to send examples of my work. The Royal Post takes forever; where can I find FedEx?

April 28

York Minister, the great Cathedral of York, is across the square from my hotel. The Archbishop of York ranks just behind the Archbishop of Canterbury in order of precedence, having the title, “Primate of England” in contrast to Canterbury’s title, “Primate of All England.” With such distinctions are conflicts often settled!

April 30

I spent the day wandering around the city. A large section of the Roman wall still stands around the old part of the city. Americans don’t seem to appreciate the past as much as Europeans do. When a building is “too old,” we tear it down! Preservation of American history, particularly preservation of historic buildings has been an uphill battle in many places. Charleston has done an exceptional job of preserving its past, but not all cities have been as lucky. Our house sits on the edge of the historic area, and we have all sorts of restrictions on what we can do – what color paint we can use, alterations we can make to the house. Some people find the restrictions to be irritating, but I think, overall, they are for the best.

May 1

“The shambles’ is a particularly old section of town, with building dating from the sixteenth century. I sketched a little girl playing in front of a butcher shop, there. It will make a good drawing, showing off the architecture, but providing human interest at the same time.

May 4

Durham Cathedral is set on a hill, a high point above the Tyne River, next to the Castle. Durham Castle now houses the University of Durham. In the south door of the cathedral is a round, metal plate with a handle attached. If someone was accused of crime, was running from the law, touching the metal plate, grasping the handle attached to it, conveyed sanctuary. The person was safe. I am not sure that reaching the door would afford the same sanctuary, today! When did churches cease to provide protection like this? While a police officer, or a police department, might hesitate to invade a house of worship to make an arrest, the hesitation would be in the name of public relations rather than the sanctity of the building.

May 7

I passed Hadrian’s Wall this morning. The Wall was built by the Romans to keep the wild inhabitants of Scotland out of Roman Britain. Sections of the Wall still stand. I stopped at the ruins of a Roman fort at Housesteads. Standing on the wall, looking out to the north, one might imagine the feelings of a Roman soldier as he stood guard. The Celts were vicious warriors. With their blue-painted faces and their battle cries – screams – they frightened even seasoned soldiers.

The wall stretched all of the way across Great Britain and protected the Romans and the British until the Roman army withdrew. Then, the Celts were free to plunder. “Put not your faith in princes” is surely true.

May 8

I reached Edinburgh. I’m totally exhausted, and I decided to take the evening off. After checking in at my hotel, I walked to the “Royal Mile,” a street that begins at Edinburgh Castle and runs down hill to Holyrood House. We associate Holyrood with Mary, Queen of Scots. It remains a royal residence.

May 9

I had an email from Carl Williams, the art dealer from Atlanta. He bought my drawings! He plans to use them in a series of prints; he offered me a contract, and he sent me a list of other drawings he would like to have! The reimbursement rate was more than, well, more than I had dreamed it could be!

Is it possible that I could actually make a living as an artist? I’ve dreamed of that, of course, but I have never taken it as a serious possibility. My purpose in attending the Art Institute was to determine if I had the talent to pursue a career in art. Afterwards, well, I knew that my work was good, but being good in school can be different from being good commercially! Commercial success depends on so many other factors than simply being good – choice of subjects, marketing, contacts. Would Carl Williams have looked at my work if Mary McDonald had not emailed him? A full-time artist! Perhaps it could happen!

I spent the day at the abbey in the Firth of Forth. Elizabeth took me out on her friend’s sailboat, and we spent the day there. Her mother owns the hotel where I am staying, and Elizabeth is an art student at the University. When I received the email from Carl Williams, I wanted to tell Allison, but, of course, I’ll never find myself telling her about this or anything else that is important. I thought of Elizabeth, and I realized she would understand how I felt. She had invited me to come to her room to talk, tonight, and I did go upstairs, but I hesitated to knock. Then, I heard voices from her room. I’m happy that I heard the voices. Elizabeth is slightly older than Alicia, and I had no business going to see her at that time of night. I’ll tell her about the email in the morning.

May 10

I toured Edinburgh Castle, and I saw the crown jewels, the “Honors of Scotland.” Americans think of Scotland and England as a single country, We think of “England,” the “United Kingdom,” and “Great Britain” as referring to the same country, the same entity. We forget that the union of the countries did not occur until the seventeen hundreds, long after the colonies were established in America. Scottish nationalism is alive and well, and Scotland now has its own parliament and governs at least some of its own internal affairs.

I reviewed the list of subjects that Carl Williams sent me. I have drawn a number of them and I had planned to draw several others. I revised my schedule. I don’t think that I will make it to France if I want to go home before the end of June. I sent seven additional drawings to Carl this morning, as well as the contract. I’m so excited, I can hardly stand it!

May 12

It is difficult to escape the shadow of England as one travels across Scotland, since so much of Scotland's recent history has been bound up with the history of England. Driving across southern Scotland, I visited the ruins of two abbeys, Jedburgh and Melrose. Both were active until the mid-fifteen hundreds, until the reign of Henry VIII. Henry "suppressed" the monasteries in his realm. In the name of correcting abuses, he closed the monasteries, confiscated their land and property, pensioned the monks, killed those who resisted, and left the monasteries to fall into ruin. Although located in Scotland, not England, the border abbeys were in territory that was controlled by Henry. The abbeys at Melrose and Jedburgh are among the most well-preserved of the abbeys, Jedburgh, in particular, could almost be used as a church, if someone would replace the roof and the windows. Both survived better than some of the others because they continued to be used as parish churches for some time after the monasteries were closed.

May 14

I stopped this morning at the "Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond." Americans know the song as a simple love song about a man and a woman who are deeply in love, but who will never see each other, again. Other versions place the lost love in the seventeen-hundreds, when the woman's love marches off to fight for Prince Charlie.

This morning, the loch was shrouded in fog. It seemed mysterious, other worldly, perhaps. The fog was thick, but I could just spy a single boat, a red boat, bobbing in the water. The scene didn't lend itself to a drawing, but it did make a good photograph. I drove along the loch for some time, and, gradually, the fog lifted.

May 16

I drove through Glen Coe this afternoon. It was the site of one of the most treacherous episodes in Scotland's long history of one clan rising against another. High mountains stand on every side with narrow valleys between them. Back in the seventeen hundreds, the Glen was occupied by members of the McDonald clan. One night, they gave shelter to a group of travelers, all of whom, it turned out, were members of Clan Campbell, the McDonalds' sworn enemy. During the night, the Campbells rose and killed the McDonalds as they lay in their beds, men, women, and children. Even in Scotland, it still is remembered as an horrific event. Today, rangers will guide you back into the Glen to the site of the massacre.

May 21

Spent the night at Inverness, and then drove east to the battlefield at Culloden. Hopes for Scottish independence died at Culloden when the English army decisively defeated the Scots who supported Bonnie Prince Charlie. No drawing, this morning, I could not do justice to Culloden. I drove on east and visited Cawdor Castle. It's a magnificent building. The gardens will be beautiful in the summer. Americans know the castle, or know its name, from Shakespeare's play, Macbeth. We recall, in the opening scene, how the three witches hail

Macbeth as “Thane of Cawdor,” “thane” being a Scottish title of nobility that most of us find unfamiliar.

May 23

Driving north, I passed a field with a massive wind farm. I couldn’t count the wind mills turning in the breeze! There must have been a couple of hundred, though. I pulled over to sketch them. The drawing is not exactly one of historic Scotland, but it is striking, nevertheless.

I have not heard from Carl Williams concerning the last drawings that I sent, and I’m feeling a bit anxious. I reached Thurso shortly before dinner time. I’ll take the ferry to Mainland, the largest of the Orkney Islands, tomorrow. We sail at six-thirty in the morning, and I’m staying on board, tonight. I checked in, pulled my car into the ship’s hold, and went looking for dinner.

May 24

The crew said that the crossing was good, but I was almost sick at my stomach. The waters between the main land and the island are treacherous, and we were tossed about like a toy boat or so it seemed to me! I was certainly happy when we docked!

May 25

The Ring of Brodgar is one of the largest rings of standing stones. Stonehenge is better known, in part because it is more accessible, a day-trip from London, partly because it is unique, with the large stones lying across the uprights. The Ring of Brodgar is massive, with about 27 surviving stones in a circle 104 feet across. The tallest ones reach fifteen feet. It was about to storm this morning at sunrise. Clouds covered the sky, and I was about to head back to the car. Suddenly, a shaft of light broke through, illuminating several of the stone while casting others into shadow. I managed two photographs as the wind rose. I grabbed my supplies and barely reached the car before the rain! The drawings turned out well! Perhaps a bright, colorful sunrise would not be the most appropriate background for this scene, anyway.

May 26

I had three emails when I returned to my room, tonight. The first was from Stephanie. She recounted a visit she had from Allison. Allison went to apologize for sleeping with Steph’s , husband. She has “guts,” as the saying goes, I will give her that. Stephanie told me that most of what she had told me about Allison and her husband was a lie. There had been no continuing affair.

I’m furious at both of them! At Stephanie for lying about something like that and at Allison. I mean, she refuses to even speak to me, and she apologizes to Stephanie?? She has NEVER apologized to me, never said she’s sorry, never said a word!

A second email was from Brad Wilks. He told me that Linda’s husband had a heart attack and died last week. I feel terrible for Linda. When I saw her in New York, she talked about her husband all of the time. She seemed to love him very much. I’ll have to find something to say to her.

The third was from John Worth. Our divorce hearing has been scheduled for June 21. The waiting has been painful. I'm still married, but not really. I cannot make plans for my future, not firm ones. I've been in limbo. But it's all coming to an end, just over three weeks! I've always imagined, hoped, I suppose, that something would happen, that, miraculously, Allison and I would reconcile. It won't happen, though. It's obvious. She's apologizing to Stephanie, not to me. She obviously wants our marriage to end, and she will have her wish! I can now plan my life, plan my future. What do I want to do?

June 4

I'm on my way south, back to London. My plan to visit both Great Britain and France was a bit optimistic; a visit to France, even just to the area around Paris, would take another month. I want to go home to see Alicia.

Carl Williams continues to buy my drawings, and I shipped another twenty as I reached the mainland. My career is promising, if the prints sell. It's one thing to sell the drawings to a dealer, another for the dealer to find buyers for the drawings, and another for prints to sell well. There are three audiences, here, and they may not like the same things.

My leave of absence is almost over, and I need to decide what to do, now. I see three choices: after returning to Charleston: 1) I can resume my law practice, and draw at night and on weekends. With no wife, I can certainly devote a great deal of time to my work. 2) I can work until Alicia returns to school, then turn to art, full time. 3) I can reduce my work schedule to four days each week. If my work sells, I could then cut back to three days. Art is lonely work! It may be good for me to maintain a reduced practice for some time. Since each scenario takes me home in a couple of weeks, I do not need to make a final decision, yet.

June 7

I am on the island of Harris. Circles of standing stones abound on Harris. One of the most unusual groups is at Calanish. The stones are arranged in an avenue with upright stones on each side; rows of stones going off to the right and left, forming a cross; and a circle of stones around the cross at the top. Taken together, they roughly form a Celtic cross. I visited on a sunny morning. The clerk at the hotel told me that I was fortunate. He has visited the site numerous times, he said, and he never has seen it in full sun!

The conclusion of the divorce process will give me the money to pursue my drawing however I choose. The prospect is exciting. At night, though, as I lay in bed, I think of Allison. I wonder if she is alright. I wonder what her plans might be. Sometimes I fear that I've been hasty, and that I will regret divorcing her. I wonder if I there was anything I could have done.

June 15

The cathedral in Coventry was destroyed during the Second World War. Although a new, modern building was constructed next to it, the ruins of the bombed out building have been left standing as a reminder of the horror of war.

Coventry was the home of Lady Godiva. The story is that Godiva's husband, the Earl of Mercia had imposed heavy taxes on the populace. Godiva protested the taxes and her husband told her that the taxes would be abolished if she would ride naked through the streets of

Coventry. She took the dare, and the taxes were rescinded. It's hard to believe, but Allison once went to a masquerade as Lady Godiva: a long, knee-length blonde wig and a flesh-colored leotard were a perfect costume! No one who knows her, now, could even imagine Allison dressed like that! Alicia would die if she were to ever hear that story!

June 18

I am spending the night in Oxford. It deserves a week, perhaps, if I were to draw it, properly, so I suppose that will be on another trip. I have either drawings or sketches of most of the buildings on Carl Williams' list. Most of the others are in or near London and could be drawn during a visit of a week or two. If I continue to practice law, perhaps I can come back in the fall.

I feel badly that I will not be in Charleston for the hearing. John assures me that there is no need for me to be present, but it seems like the proper thing to do! I was present when the marriage began; should I not be there to speak for myself as it ends? In any case, I will miss the hearing. I will be a single man when I return to Charleston.

Tomorrow, I drive to London. I'll spend four days there, drawing, organizing – sleeping! – before flying home.

It has been a good trip. I had hoped to spend my time immersed in my work, and I have. I had hoped to spend less time thinking about Allison, and, as time has passed, I have. I had hoped to think about my future, and that, too, is becoming clear.