

The Road Not Taken

It was the early 70's and I was enjoying a yearlong stay in Europe. Every day was an adventure of new people, places and foods. I usually stayed in Youth Hostels, of which there were many, and got around by cycling, walking or hitchhiking.

It was at a stay at a London hostel when I saw an ad for a 6 week overland trip to Nepal by land rover. It was to leave London in the fall, which was 6 months away. I signed up immediately and paid the two hundred dollar fee.

It was at the same hostel, the next day that I met a Canadian woman from Winnipeg. We struck up a conversation and she said she was planning to cycle through Scotland but was looking for a companion, as she did not want to go alone. I thought that would be a great trip and we started planning together.

Within a few weeks we had gathered up camping supplies (I still have the sleeping bag I purchased in Black's in London) and headed to Scotland. We bought our bikes in Glasgow, packed up our saddlebags and 'hit the road.' We headed west and cycled and took ferries through the Inner Hebrides.

It was on the Isle of Iona that I met another Canadian woman, she from Vancouver. Within a few minutes of speaking I learnt she was trying to find a way to Nepal. At this point I's been traveling for over 10 months and was feeling a bit homesick. Plus if I didn't use my return ticket back to Canada I would need to buy another from Nepal. I decided to sell my ticket to the woman and forfeit my trip to Nepal.

One can't help wondering what adventures I missed out on by giving that trip up. Could I have ended up in a commune with hashish smoking hippies in Kathmandu? Might I have converted to Buddhism and joined a Buddhist nunnery? Or maybe I would have joined a local NGO and worked as a nurse to help the poor?

Finally no one will ever know, good or bad, what wasn't to be by the road not taken!

The End

Postscript: I returned to Canada and within a year was planning to leave to South America to work as a volunteer nurse in Paraguay. But that as they say, is another story!!

Written by Sheila M April 2021