

So David was speedily driven off to the Dorchester Hotel in London where more crowds were waiting for him, and after an unbelievable five days for David, I arrived at the same hotel to meet him face to face!

For the first time in my life I was early for an appointment! I walked through the palatial entrance of the Dorchester, London's most dignified hotel, announced myself to an official, and two seconds later he was leading me to the first floor and David's suite. Reporters are meant to be all cool and calm—but I can tell you that as I knocked on David's door, my knees were knocking too!

But I need not have worried. The door opened swiftly, and there stood David! As soon as that heartfelt, friendly smile lit his face my nerves all disappeared. After introductions (superfluous on David's part!) we went into David's lounge, and he gestured for me to sit down. Though David had been busy all week with interviews and photo sessions, he was so polite and so happy to talk.

The suite was calm, decorated in quiet green and beige, and full of restful furniture. Sitting here you'd hardly realise that outside there were still crowds who'd been coming every day since David's arrival. I asked him how he liked the hotel.

"The hotel and the people here have been really fantastic. It's so comfortable, and what I would imagine to be real English! I don't think they were expecting me to cause so much palava, but they've coped marvellously. The first couple of days the management asked me to leave—I think they were worried in case my comings and goings disturbed the other guests—but my manager Jim persuaded them that things would quieten down. In fact they didn't, and one day a security guard almost had a nervous breakdown, saying he couldn't cope and when on earth was I leaving! So you see, I think it was real good that they let me stay.

"The food is just so great; better than American food. Ah! When I think of the lobster it makes me hungry!" David rolled his eyes to the sky then his face broke into a cheeky grin. He has a face you want to keep looking at, although you know it's not polite! The eyes are hazel, and reflect his moods instantly. His face looks younger than he is (although he doesn't like you to say so!), and his hair has grown right over his shoulders since the early days of the Partridge Family.

We retraced David's European trip which had finally brought him to the Dorchester. The three-week trip that was a special kind of

holiday for David.

"I decided I needed a holiday after working hard on the Partridge Family and having little time to myself. I wanted to get far away and what's more, to go on my own. I chose Europe because there I would be unknown and could do as I pleased. I'm not saying I don't like being well known, but everyone needs time to themselves occasionally.

"So in January, I caught a plane to Rome, hired a red Volkswagen traveller van and kitted it out with everything I'd need for a three-week drive, including sleeping bag, mini-stove, and all. I stayed in Rome for a few days with a girl called Laura and her flatmates. She is a friend of my room-mate in Los Angeles.

"While I was there I was a real tourist, going round all the famous places in Rome. I didn't feel lonely—I like to think I'm an independent person. Don't we all? My first catastrophe—and my last, thank goodness—happened one day when I visited the Coliseum. I parked the Volkswagen a few blocks away, left all my possessions in it, and returned a few hours later. What do you know—the van had been broken into and I had been robbed of just about everything of value I possessed. My camera, travellers' cheques, passport, wallet. All gone!

"Wow, you can imagine I was upset. Not so much at the value of the things, but that I had to spend three days replacing them.

"After Rome I drove up to Florence where I picked up an old girlfriend and took her skiing for a few days. We went through a town in the north-east of Italy called Padova, and then on up into the Alps. I found a really beautiful little town there—so peaceful and unspoilt. But I want to keep it's name a secret so that it will always be my special hideaway! For the first time ever I put on skis and tried the sport. It was exhilarating; marvellous. Of course, I did have a lot of practice during my holiday, but I think I'm an adequate skier now. It was something I'd always wanted to do, and I'm proud I didn't break any bones or make too much of a fool of myself!

"After my secret town, I drove on by myself across Italy and into France. Sometimes I would sleep in the van, curled up in my sleeping bag, other nights I'd check into a small inexpensive hotel costing around three dollars a day.

"Eventually I reached Chamonix, a famous skiing town high up in the French alps. That's where I bought these shaggy sheepskin boots. Those three weeks really sped by, but soon I was glad to be boarding the plane for London."

And David talked about his impressions of