

Roll: **19750420-6400**

Film: **Ilford FP4**

Camera: **Zorki4 ZO4**

Subject:

First days with the Zorki.

Notes:

In 1974 myself and Maggie had moved in together and were living in the attic flat on the third floor of 110 Gough Road in the leafy suburb of Edgbaston.

I had foolishly split up with Janet Seiboth during the summer of 1972 when we had been fruit picking in Hereford. I had been wrestling with my sense of angst while smashed and lying on a wooden bridge over a small stream where we had been bathing and trying to express my sense of disconnection with world. I said that she "could be anybody". I could still shoot myself for that. I went back to Birmingham by myself. When I next returned to Nottingham I found she was playing away from home. I went to the Salutation, where Janet was working, to meet with her after the pub closed and I saw her in an upstairs window in a clinch with some bloke.

Back in Birmingham I lived at first in a garage equipped as a bedsit. It was horrible and a rip off so when the opportunity arose to move into 110 Gough Road, where Greg Fox, Colin Spence and Martin Durham lived, I jumped at the chance.

I had moved that year into the 1st floor with Chris Lambert and Terry Conn a couple of long haired dope heads who had developed their own excruciatingly slow disconnected mode of dialogue. I had my own room but we shared bathroom, toilet and kitchen. I hated it. The kitchen was always piled high with dirty crockery and cooking equipment. It took half an hour to clean up before I could start to cook anything.

In the third year, 73/74 I moved downstairs to the ground floor bedsit. It was while living there that I met Maggie. I had noticed her before, she was married to Barrie Hughes who was on the Politics course that I was on and they lived at the top of Gough Road. We were both heading down Gough Road one evening to catch the bus along Bristol Road. We started talking, caught the same bus and sat together at the front, upstairs on a double decker. We talked constantly until, Maggie I think, got off the bus near Birmingham University. We then continued to meet and talk for the next 10 years.

Our cultural life amazes me now. We seem to have seen every theatre performance, main stream or fringe, available in Birmingham. We went to late night film showings often double bills, ate out frequently and drank heavily and often.

At the beginning of 1975 my diaries show that I was having problems with with a committed relationship, my lack of career progress, teaching recalcitrant day release students at Hall Green and an often dissolute life style.

I bought my first camera on Saturday 5th April 1975 from Kandid Kameras in Birmingham. The camera needed to be dismantled, overhauled and have a faulty shutter repaired. It would then reassembled and checked.

Maggie bought car pieces at 5p each and a bolster on the Thursday. That evening we rearranged the room and laid out an "*almost fitted carpet*". I built a shelf under the window and did some wiring.

Greg Fox and Barbara phoned on the Friday they were up in Birmingham from London where Greg had gone to do a PhD at the LSE on the Hegelian dialect. We met in the Windsor and then went to Beer Keller. Me and Maggie went to the House of Calestephus for a meal. "*Not their usual high standard and as a consequence of excessive drinking I could not eat very much of it.*"

Saturday we arose early and went shopping in town. We tried to get more carpet pieces and bolsters without success. Then we went to Kandid Kameras where the camera was ready, a Zorki 4, Russian built with Carl Zeiss Jena 50mm Leica screw lens. The cost was £11 plus VAT and included 1 year warranty and a free film. VAT was introduced in 1973 at 10% but had been reduced to 8% in July 1974 by Denis Healey. Around £86 at today's prices (April 2023) it was a fair old investment,

"Greg came round with some acid (we had) a 1/4 each. Very good, very smooth, very light. The way I had concluded acid should be. No hassle with Maggie disconnection or anything. Went (to the) Firebird. Played pinball. Climbed the BISON. (A huge tower crane on a building site near Bristol Road.)

Fish and chip shop. Acid & drunk very complimentary but no admixture. Barbara freaking when returned. Frightened of Maggie. Started in pub - poured coffee over (once before we got there) kicked one out of Maggie's hand on to my foot, wouldn't listen to or obey Greg. Seemed to want me. All this "non transferable", bed screwed, pictures - all good.

Sunday early rising, chicken liver, mushrooms, egg. Pub - pinball, tensest ever been 4 score replays and lucking in one game 68,000. Bit of sanding, Lot of experimenting with camera. First few shots.

On the morning of Wednesday 16th April I picked up my degree from the annex of the School of Planning where we sometimes had psychology seminars in the first year at Birmingham Poly, in my diary I note that it was *"a somewhat ignoble end to the saga."* I must have walked from there along the canal system to work as I note that I was

"snapping some shots at the top of the Aston Flight when a barge came by. Think it could have been a good session except for inadvertent moving of the aperture.

Recent research suggests this was at Aston Junction, the canal on the right being the Digbeth Branch Canal. After work (I was working at the Aston UBO on the New Earnings Survey) I bought a light meter and a developing tank in the Great Western Arcade. I must have been seriously struggling for the four days I'd spent without a light meter but wouldn't you know it that picture of the long boat at Aston Junction is among the very best I have ever taken.

Saturday 19th I tried but was unable to buy a photographic thermometer but went ahead anyway and did the developing without one on Sunday 20th.

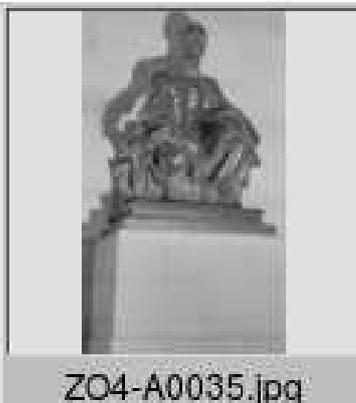
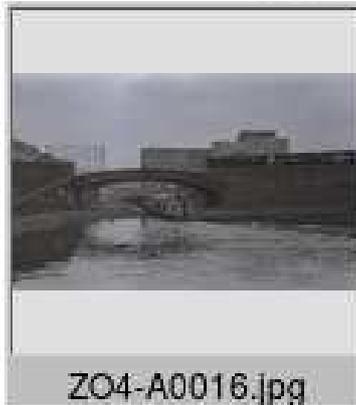
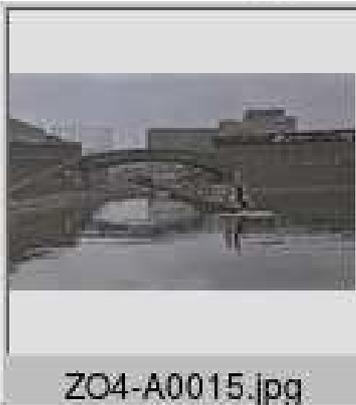
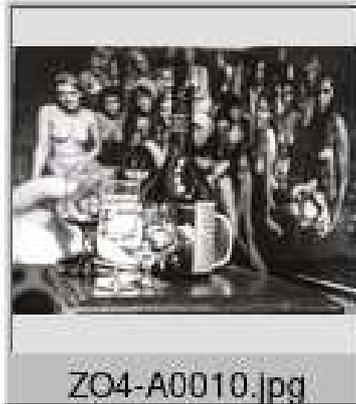
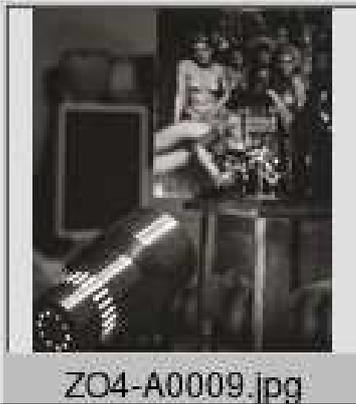
"Results far more successful than I had imagined they would be - now regret taking insufficient care.

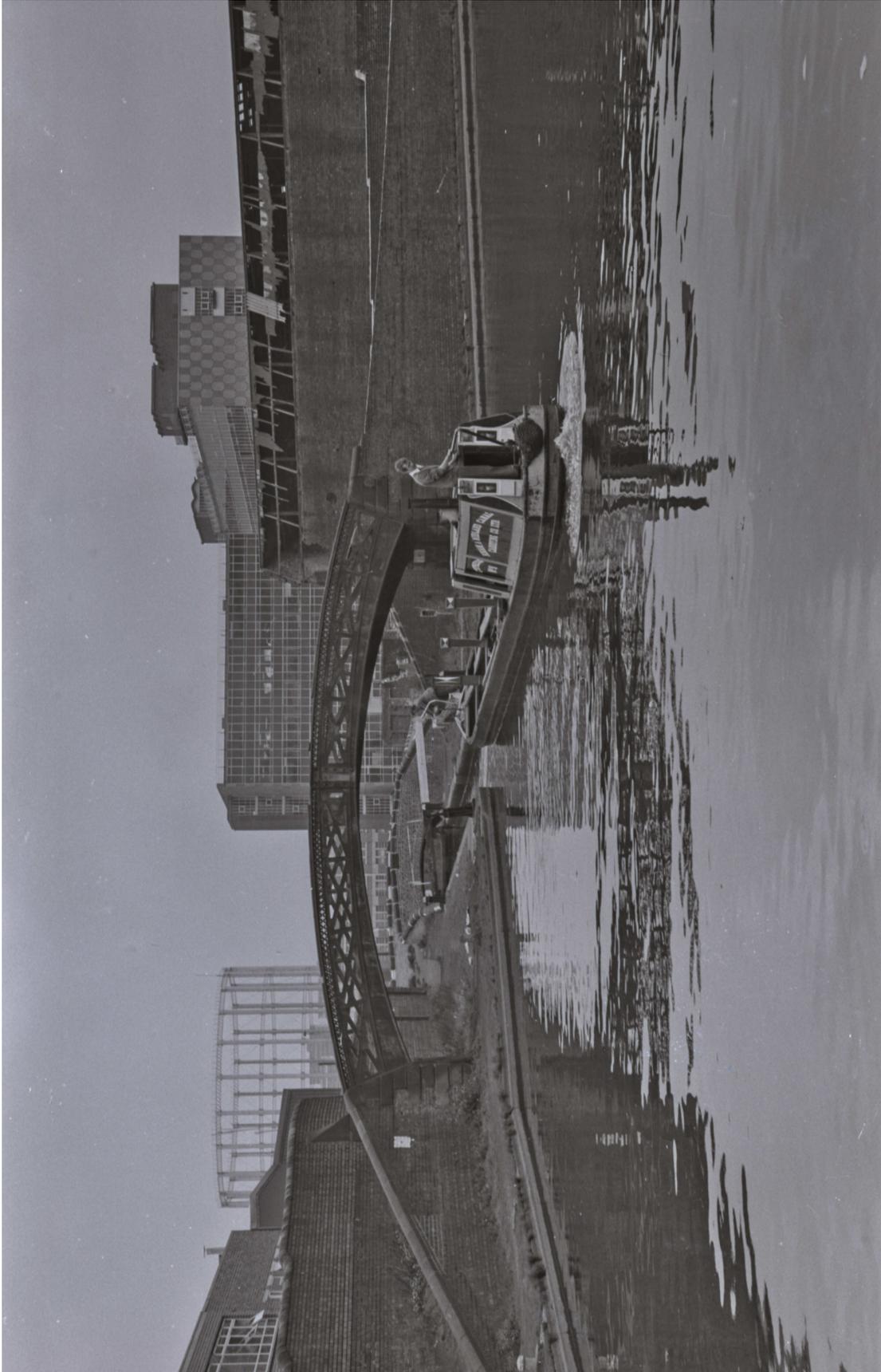
Dates:

Confirmed by diary entries and equipment receipts. The night shot dates confirmed from Maggie's diary.

Frames:

Z04-A0009 19750413 20:00:00 Album Sleeve.
 Z04-A0010 19750413 20:05:00 Album Sleeve.
 Z04-A0011 19750415 08:00:00 Sleepy head..
 Z04-A0015 19750416 10:10:00 Narrowboat entering the Aston Flight.
 Z04-A0016 19750416 10:12:00 Narrowboat entering the Aston Flight.
 Z04-A0034 19750424 10:00:00 Gardens from an attic flat window.
 Z04-A0035 19750424 23:00:00 Army.





ZO4-A0015 - Working longboat