



Bill and OU alumna Penny Isom, photographed in London's Trafalgar Square, were married this summer, after Bill's first year at Oxford.

SOONER AT OXFORD

Bill McGrew, OU's most recent Rhodes Scholar, begins a series of articles on his impressions as a student at tradition-drenched, inspiring, multi-spired Oxford University

By WILLIAM C. MCGREW III

SEPTEMBER 30, 1965. 7:20 a.m. I left Oklahoma City's Will Rogers Airport on TWA Flight 70 for New York, with stops in Tulsa and St. Louis. It was too early in the morning for any significantly profound thoughts on departure. The flight was uneventful, with one exception: just outside St. Louis, the stewardess, while serving lunch, tripped over an umbrella protruding into the aisle. Several passengers got their chicken, rice, and green beans the hard way. We landed at Kennedy at 2:07 p.m.

6:00 p.m. Sailing Dinner. Each year on the night before the latest group of Rhodes Scholars sails for England, the ex-Rhodes Scholars of the New York area give them a dinner. This year's was held at the Princeton Club on 43rd Street. After a somewhat forced cocktail hour, which seemed to consist mostly of repeated introductions followed by long pauses, a rather average dinner was served. Speeches followed, the best of four given by Dr. James Hester, president of NYU. The final part of the program entailed the individual introduction of each of us, accompanied by a short history of our notable achievements thus far. It was given by Dr. Gilmore Stott, deputy secretary of the American Rhodes Scholarships, who warned us not to be dismayed by what we would all be thinking—"How did I slip through?" He knew what he was talking about.

OCTOBER 1, 1965. 10:40 a.m. Our ship was the *Queen Mary*, 81,000 tons of Cunard Lines. Several of our group were already aboard when I arrived at Pier 92 (West 52nd Street), I went aboard with Bart Holaday (Air Force Academy and Exeter). Securely berthed, the ship betrayed no evidence of being afloat, and its interior seemed more like any large, expensive hotel. We were fortunate enough to be given a special deal because of our travel as a group: first-class rooms and tourist facilities for tourist rates. Later I found that most younger people paid little attention to "class" barriers and went wherever they pleased on the ship.

Our cabin was roomy and comfortable, with beautiful wood paneling. We had a private bath and even our own porthole, which opened after considerable unscrewing. My roommate was Rich Nehring (Valparaiso and Brasenose), a nice enough guy but very prone to seasickness. We sailed at 11:30 a.m., amidst cool, gray, light mist and drizzle—more English weather than American. 3:30 p.m. Life boat drill. Everyone went to his assigned station and learned to tie a square knot in his life jacket.

OCTOBER 2, 1965. 1:00 p.m. We had cocktails with the captain and officers before lunch. He seemed a toned-down Gilbert and Sullivan-type. OU opened the football season



A favored pastime aboard the Queen Mary On ship two Rhodes Scholars looking scholarly

“Bill Bradley” displayed his “basketball stick” to British

against Navy today, and Ron Bancroft (Naval Academy and Oriel) and I made a bet, undaunted by the fact that we had no way of learning the outcome on ship.

OCTOBER 3, 1965. 11:00 p.m. Bill Bradley (Princeton and Worcester) and I played a few rounds of bingo tonight, neither of us winning. Unfortunately, this was typical of the entertainment available on board. October is not peak tourist season by any means, and the ship is far from full, which could be the reasons. There *are* first-run movies which change everyday, however. Rich is still self-confined to the cabin, in a green mood.

OCTOBER 4, 1965. 2:00 p.m. After lunch, we were lucky enough to be given a tour of the bridge by the captain. The amount of electronic equipment on an ocean liner is surprising and impressive: radar, weather instruments, gyroscopes, stabilizers, etc. Yet it was *so* mechanized as to be slightly disappointing, until the captain produced a couple of sextants, which he said were still used periodically to check the modern machines.

OCTOBER 6, 1965. 9:30 a.m. Cherbourg, France. Our first view of land in five days was the Normandy coast. Gradually the outer harbor itself came into view—there was still evidence of the heavy Allied bombing during World War II. We were on shore by 10:30 a.m., with three-and-a-half hours for exploring before heading for Southampton early this morning. Most of us were asleep when we berthed, so our first views of England consisted of loading cranes and stevedores. We were put through customs as a special group—among the 30 of us, we had enough luggage for an army. Immediately after clearing customs, the

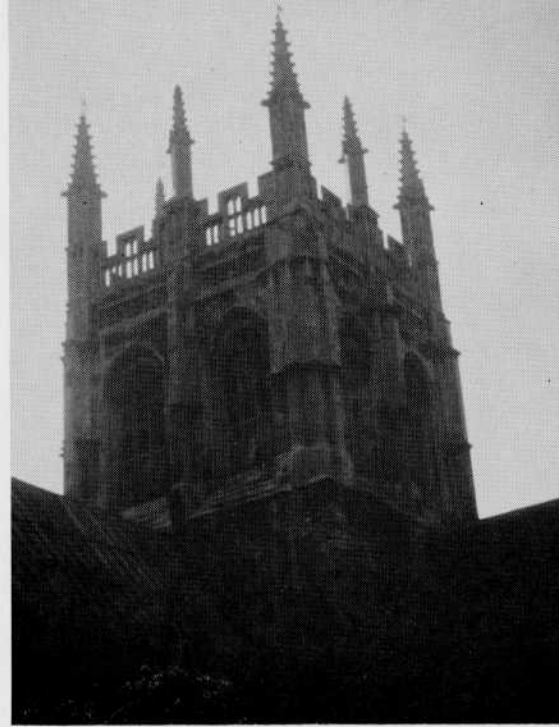
group moved outside to our waiting bus. We were greeted by a group of reporters and photographers, all looking for Bill Bradley. Since most of them knew little about basketball, they had no idea for whom to look. Into the gap quickly stepped Jack Horton (Princeton and Christ Church), a 5'9", drawing Wyoming cattle-rancher and Rhodes Scholar, “surrendering” to their demands for pictures, “admitting” that he was Bradley. The effect was almost instantaneous, as the whole group joined in the spoof. Soon Jack was handed his “basketball hat” (a Stetson) and his “basketball stick” (a cane), and he demonstrated various “strokes” for the perplexed and astonished newsmen. Meanwhile, the whole group was rolling with laughter, including Bradley, who seemed about to collapse against the bus. The joke was soon over, and the newsmen got their stories from a patient Bradley. But this very spontaneous, minor event exemplified the spirit that arose in this group during the voyage.

The bus arrived in Oxford around noon, the first impressive sight being Tom Tower of Christ Church College as we came in the Abingdon Road. To the new arrival, Oxford truly does seem to be a “City of Spires,” from Magdalen’s delicately decorated 16th-century one to Nuffield’s plain, functional-looking new one.

We made the rounds of the colleges, dropping off guys with their luggage. Merton was the last stop, and we were barely in time to catch a hot snack at the Junior Common Room Bar. There are five new Merton Rhodes Scholars this year—from Harvard, North Carolina, Notre Dame, Rochester, and OU. At the Porter’s Lodge, we got the directions to our rooms, which turned out to be in the college annex. This was about a hundred yards east of the main college buildings, on Merton Street. The street was



The great Princeton basketball player, Bill Bradley, indulges British photographers



Merton College's chapel, where Bill married

newsmen while Bradley broke up with laughter

"quaintly" narrow and cobble-stoned, and my room overlooked the "Schools" building, that place where the all-important degree examinations are given each summer. An Oxford undergraduate faces only one "final," but it represents three years of work.

My first caller was Guy Parkhurst (Oklahoma and Lincoln), a second-year Rhodes Scholar from Oklahoma City, reading PPE (politics, philosophy, and economics). An old OU friend was a welcome sight 4500 miles from home.

Freshmen's Dinner. 7:30 p.m. This was my first meal in college, and a very atypical one as it turned out. For one thing, it was delicious (Asparagus Soup, Turbot Mornay, Grilled Entrecote Steak, Cherry Flan, Coffee—to quote the menu). Normally, Merton's is like any other institutional diet—sound and nourishing but uninspired and uninspiring. Also, I sat at High Table, usually reserved for college officers and fellows, but opened just for tonight to incoming graduate students. It is only a six-inch step up from the level of the long rows of undergraduate tables, but it is a very significant one in the tradition-drenched academic hierarchy of Oxford.

OCTOBER 8, 1965. 9:45 a.m. Mr. Lucas, the Principal of Postmasters (the college officer responsible for disciplinary measures), delivered the standard orientation talk for incoming students. It was the same old thing—rules and regulations about drinking, automobiles, sex, and curfew hours. Oxford seemed very liberal (if not unconcerned) except about the latter. The college gates are closed at midnight, which seemed restrictive after OU's unlimited late hours for men.

I "checked in" at the department of zoology this afternoon and ended up tonight in the animal behavior group's first seminar of the term. It was a criticism of some aspects

of the classical theory of natural selection, based on some butterfly research. It was an interesting discussion, laced with contested issues and hard-won critical points.

OCTOBER 9, 1965. 1:30 p.m. A bunch of us went to the O.U.R.F.C. trials this afternoon (Oxford University Rugby Football Club). It was a pre-season try-out match between the tentative "A" and "B" teams, with selection to the starting team based on today's performance. Like all Oxford sports, the O.U.R.F.C. is run exclusively by and for students, the leadership and coaching being supplied by elected officers.

It was the first rugby game any of us had ever seen. After growing up with American football, rugby seems overly simple and brawn-based. There are few, if any, "plays," no forward passing, and a lot of indiscriminate head-butting. The players are completely unpadded and no substituting is allowed. But there is almost continuous spirited action, and we quickly became involved if only curious spectators.

8:00 p.m. Some of us went "pubbing" tonight. The place was The Turf, an old, low-ceilinged pub frequented almost exclusively by students. It is well-hidden from the street, accessible only through the winding turns of Bath Place or St. Helen's Passage, both narrow and almost unmarked. English beer is an institution in itself. Served cool, but not cold, it comes in an amazing array of brands and combinations. One doesn't ask for just "a beer," but rather "a half of pale ale" or a "pint of Guinness." The group swelled as the night progressed, and we drank till closing time.

I have been here only three days, yet the essentials for a pleasant stay seem all to be present: studies, sports, and drinking buddies. It looks to be a good year.