

Bachelor Holidays

IT'S surprising how many single people, when faced with the idea of going on holiday alone, collapse in a heap and decide to stay at home. You are actually far more liable to meet people and enjoy yourself if you are wandering around the world on your own, than if you are always accompanied by a bosom friend—and by the time you've worked out the bus schedules in Southern Turkey, or spent all morning in fighting through a mob in Dubrovnik's steamship office, you haven't any time left to worry about being on your own.

If you are travelling alone, it's best to head for a city, buy a map, and get some vigorous sight-seeing done. By the time the evening comes, you're too tired to do anything but fall into bed and plan the next day. If you plump for a real get-away-from-it-all holiday on a quiet beach, loneliness sets in on the third day. And there's always that awful feeling that if you leave your clothes, unminded, on the beach behind you, they might be gone when you come out of the sea.

For those who still prefer to be organised, there are a number of travel agencies that specifically handle single person holidays. **Bachelors Abroad**, in Porchester Place, London W2, has been going for ten years, and sends mixed groups of about twelve to sixteen people on cruises, and to various holiday resorts in Europe. "We try and arrange for the group to be half men, and half girls," they say. "We have no age limit, but simply ask people to give us a choice of resorts and then we work them into the ones which are most suitable, with people of roughly the same age-group. It's difficult to know which holidays will appeal to whom—sometimes we think a certain one is bound to be jumped at by the twenty year-olds, then find that it's the forty year-old ones that book. We try to be honest: if a girl wants a departure date where there are already enough girls, she'll be told this. In fact, we seem to get a far bigger number of men applying. There is a far greater market than we ever manage to reach, as time and time again we get letters from people saying they wished they had heard of us years ago. Our emphasis is on companionship, but we end up sometimes by being practically a marriage bureau." For anyone who wants to know more before booking they run a film-show every Thursday evening, showing the different resorts.

Murison Small's villa holidays are also in demand by single people. They have villas right across Europe, usually staffed by a couple of 'Muribird' cooks and a mini-bus driver, and provided you don't mind sharing your room with several others and making your own bed, you can have a very informal, friendly holiday. Nothing's too tightly organised, but the driver is usually happy to drive everyone where they decide to go, and you can invariably find someone to laze on the beach with you if you're solely sun-tan minded.

Greek Island Holidays, in New Bond Street, also have fairly suitable holidays for those on their own. It isn't a villa party set-up, but it's more informal than going to a package-tour type hotel, as they have 'taverna' holidays in Corfu, where small groups stay, and they book accommodation for you in Greek houses in Lindos in Rhodes. There's much more of a chance of meeting people this way, than staying in the average hotel. There's no age-limit, but on the whole the appeal is to younger people.

For loners who prefer to explore the wider-open spaces, but are a bit nervous of striding off, unsponsored, into the unknown, there are unlimited expeditions to join. One of these is **Encounter Overland**, Wren Park, Shefford, Bedfordshire, which sends you off on a twelve thousand mile journey via India and Nepal, arranges groups of sixteen or so, with roughly equal numbers of men and women. These treks usually attract fairly independent types in their twenties.

There's no need, of course, to build up an intrepid image by going abroad. There are also a lot of bachelor-type holidays in Britain, like the angling holidays in Ireland and Scotland run by Olley Travel Service, and the gentle ten-day yachting cruise along the Cornish coast, combined with port visits, run by **Cornish Cruises**, Fowey. Not to mention all those summer schools.