

Institute for Advanced Study
March 12, 1971

Dear Bill,

I hope that you have received a copy of my Corvallis fairy tale, if not the one I sent then one from Borel. After writing it, I thought I should try to understand what it is all about, and so I have spent the three months since my return to Princeton brooding in the literature on the Hodge conjecture and related matters. Not to any great effect, of course, but I am coming to have some understanding of algebraic integrals and the geometry of algebraic surfaces, about which I had long been curious, and I count the time well spent. To tell the truth, I am growing too old and too tired to worry about profit or loss of time and effort, and have to indulge my exhausted brain in its desire to pass its days in idle musings.

My summer plans are gelling. Bures: April 15–July 15; holiday with Charlotte and two youngest, walking somewhere in France if all goes well: July 15–August 15; and then the ICM. But I still hope you are willing to spend a few days with me in Scotland. I suggest two possibilities. Either I take a few days off during my stay in Bures, or after Helsinki we take the route you proposed back to Newcastle, and then go up into Scotland.

I would like to go into the Western Highlands. There is a road along the north shore of Loch Arkaig, and then, from the western end of the Loch, tracks and footpaths passing south of S [text cut off] and Sguirr nan Cuivewhen Sgurr to Inverie at the mouth of Loch Nevis. This is a walk of about 30 miles. From Inverie we could go into Knoydart, and perhaps onto Ladhar Bheinn. After that we could take the ferry from Inverie to Mallaig, and then go over to Skye, to the Cuillins. I don't know how rainy it is in Scotland in August, but Knoydart is at all events one of the wetter regions of the country.

Let me hear from you,
Bob

P.S. Rather than walking along Loch Arkaig, it might be possible to reach the western end of the Loch by coming up from the south, from the Fort William-Mallaig road, but I don't know if this can be done. We certainly don't want to spend too much time wondering about in bogs.

Compiled on November 17, 2025.