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Comments on Biography

I decided to write my biography as a retirement project after thirty-eight years in the aircraft industry, followed by more than ten years in the nuclear field. I planned to rough out the contents before I retired, but unfortunately, I got interested in the text and was finished long before I retired. Still, there are plenty of other jobs to be done, and hopefully even other chapters of this book to be written.

The purpose of writing, other than to fulfil an urge to try my hand at writing, was to put down on paper what I had done. In this way, I hoped that my children could learn something of my life before it was "Dad, can you lend me twenty dollars".. I don't think either of the children are at present interested, but maybe when they slow and settle down, they may wonder "what did Dad do when he was my age."

I have tried to set some of the aspects of life which are different now. In a way, I hope to indicate the differences in attitude, living conditions and material things that the affluent society of today has not experienced.

In some places, where I have mentioned actual people, I have only given the initial of the surname, just in case anything I have written could cause embarrassment to them or their families. In a couple of cases I have completely altered the name. Of course, both family and very close friends have been fully identified.

Much of the earlier occurrences was either told to me or I have had to rely on memory. I have a large number of photographs, many of which were notated, which has helped keep the record straight. I have kept a diary for more than forty years and even before, made a journal on the longer holidays. So I believe that my record is fairly accurate both in date and detail. However, if there is any mistake, please bare with it and treat it as the way I remember things.

I hope that the reader will get some enjoyment from this book and a wider appreciation of the values of the middle and latter part of the twentieth century.

Don Joseph

Dedicated to Madeleine, and all wives who live
in the shadow of computers

This version of my biography has been revised to include some illustrations, which I hope will increase the enjoyment of the reader. They are not generally family photos, but are relevant to the adjacent paragraph. Other chapters have been added to bring newer happenings in.

NOTE: the word “contents”at the end of each chapter is used in the computer version to return to the contents page, in the WordPerfect version.

IT'S A GREAT LIFE AND THE ONLY ONE I HAVE.

Chapter 1 Fore bearers & Early Life 1700 to 1935

This is the autobiography of Don Joseph. You may ask why someone who is unknown and has not done anything out-of-the-ordinary should have a biography. Well, I have lived through some very interesting times, but I am writing because I want to.

Before I say anything about myself, a little about my family. The Joseph family and the Davis family (my Mother's) were both originally Jewish families that came to England from Europe in about 1700 and 1650 respectively. I know little of their early history, except that my great-grandfather was a toddler at the time of Waterloo (1815). My paternal grandfather was born in 1848 and my father, Harry, was the eleventh of 13 children and was born in 1896. My mother's father was a wealthy jeweller, and her name was Frances (known as Frankie). She was the youngest of seven children and was born in 1900.

Jews in England in the latter part of the 19th century were beginning to be completely assimilated in to British society. Before this, few jobs were open to them and many had employment in traditional work like tailoring, running pawn shops, and money lending. However, after the example set by Benjamin Disraeli, who became Prime Minister of Britain in 1874 and was later Lord Beaconsfield, many established Jewish families moved in to other fields. My father's siblings went into a number of trades. Several stayed in the jewellery business, one went into the merchant navy, two went in the forces (Navy & Army). Two went into companies in London (Stationary & Wholesale Hardware) and were on the board of directors of their respective companies before they retired. On my mothers side one brother was a bookmaker, another ran a small grocers shop, Her sister was in the leather trade (both wholesale and manufacturing shoes, luggage and accessories).

The first world war broke out in August 1914 and changed social ways in England completely. My father was apprenticed in a candy factory, but on the declaration of war, he and a friend enlisted immediately in the army, joining the London-Scottish Regiment. Fortunately, his friend was not accepted because of medical reasons. My father didn't want to go alone, so he went to the navy recruitment office and joined the Royal Navy instead. Being the senior service, there was no trouble with the earlier enlistment, strictly speaking he could have been listed as a deserter. I say fortunately because the London-Scottish Regiment suffered decimation in Flanders the next year, and it would have been unlikely he would have survived the war unharmed.

Instead he became a mechanic in the Royal Naval Air Service, which had just been formed. His service number was 792, within the first thousand of the many, which eventually became the Fleet Air Arm. After three weeks training, he joined the crew aboard HMS Empress that was one of the first seaplane carriers, and given sort of on-the-job training afloat. On Christmas day 1914, he was in the North Sea on HMS Ben-Ma-Creeafter launching the planes for the world's first naval air raid on a port facility. While returning to their home port, Harwich in England, the ship had to dodge bombs from a Zeppelin sent from Germany to sink them. The damage from both the raid and the bombing was a big zero, but war in the air had started!

PO Harry Joseph RNAS

Later, Father served on both HMS Ben-Ma-Cree, & HMS Ark Royal while in Wing 2 in the Aegean Sea and Gallipoli. During 1916, the RNAS became short of trained personnel during the Gallipoli campaign so they asked some Petty Officers to volunteer. Dad did so, and was one who became a pilot. The training was marginal, he soloed after 3½ hours and obtained his wings at 16 hours. There was little war action, and his main duty was acting as pilot in a rebuilt Sopwith one and a half strutter doing observation flights. In 1917, he came home and after the RNAS & the RFC were combined into the RAF. He spent the rest of the war as a flight sergeant at Turnhouse air station, which protects the Firth of Forth and Edinburgh.

My mother started work at the old age of 16, many kids at that time worked at 12. She was in the Ministry of Supply, and to quote her, spent the war ordering toilet paper for the forces and government. After demobilization, my father spent some time buying and selling. After the 1939-45 war, he would have been considered a bit of a spiv, but after getting a little money behind him, he went into a partnership in a jewellery shop. It was successful and they soon opened a second shop, the partner ran the first and Dad & his brother ran the second. He then took over a public house and got married to Mother.

A public house is an English creation and although it has the same purpose as a Canadian tavern, it is completely different. In some ways it is more like a community centre or working man's club and in this period. It was a main entertainment for the middle and lower class men & women. The first pub he took was the "City Arms" in Tidal Basin. The pub was in the London Docks and consequently had special opening hours. Unlike other London pubs it opened at 6am for the dockers' breakfasts. In fact Mother spent the first year of her married life cooking breakfasts & dinners for 70 hungry dockers.

The City Arms was right on the river, with steps from the yard at the back of the building leading to a landing stage on the water. The front was on a street of the type that runs parallel to the river and had a railway line (track) running down its centre. My father used to complain that when returning home in his car, he would often find a train blocking the entrance. He would then have to get out of his car and walk the length to the engine to see if the driver would shunt the train sufficiently for him to drive in. Sometimes he had to search for the engine driver and in more than one time, found him having an illegal drink at the City Arms.

Early in 1927, they moved to another pub called the "Victory" in Albany Street. There, on 29th May, my mother's 27th birthday, I was born. The Victory was a smaller pub, only having two bars, but after the docks they wanted a pub that was less hectic, and a smaller one was attractive. Albany Street is only one block east of Regents Park, so I spent much of my first year in the pram in the park. Of course with the Zoo being so close and many zoo employees being customers of the Victory, I was often wheeled into the Zoo. My parents were sometimes asked if they were sure that their son didn't get exchanged in the zoo, but I treat that question with disdain.

I was born at 11am on a Sunday morning and as Bow Church is less than 3 miles from the Victory. I am sure you could hear the bells, so I am a cockney. Just before I was born, my parents bought a puppy, a Kerry Blue called Terry. He and I were to grow up together for the first 12 years of my life. We nearly didn't, as when I was only a few months old, I had been left on a low chair. Terry thought that the end of a shawl that I was wrapped in, was a good play thing, and I ended up on the floor with the pup licking me. There was a great panic, with everyone but Terry & me being very upset. Fortunately Terry was forgiven and he helped me when I was a toddler by eating the foods I didn't like and had craftily dropped on the floor.


Nags Head

My father decided to spend full time at the pub and change to a larger one in the south of London, the "Nags Head" in Clapham. His brother, Arthur carried on at the jewellery shop. The "Nags" had the usual number of bars for a London pub, three. The public bar, which had the cheapest beer and had usually a license for singing and dancing, the small Private bar used as a quiet place for drinking and natter by pensioners and older people. The Saloon bar with more comfort, and slightly higher prices, was used by the regulars and business people. Also there was a Billiards room, with a full size table. Like many pubs, games nominally of the non-gambling sort, were to be found in both saloon & public bars. Darts, skittles, shove ha'penny were usual, but billiards or even more exclusive, a bowling alleys, could be found in a few pubs. Dad introduced something that was not found, to that date, in the Clapham pubs, he installed a radiogram in the bar. The word "Radiogram" at this time did not mean a communication, but was simply a radio & gramophone combination. In the late 1920s, few families owned a radio, and even crystal sets were only owned by a few enthusiasts, so it became quite an attraction.

Wandsworth road, where the "Nags" stands, is a main exit road from London to the south-west and even in the 30s was completely built up. It may be surprising today, that there was a Smithy on one side of the Nags, where the main business was shoeing horses, and a butcher shop where slaughtering was still done, on the other side. There were motor vehicles on the roads, but by far, most of the deliveries were made by horse cart or bicycles or hand-pushed barrows. I remember, as a child of about five, travelling to visit friends of my parents in a Hansom Cab, with the cabby high on top driving the horse.

All the streets near the Nags Head were filled with houses and there were no parks nearby. Clapham Common was about a mile to the south, while Battersea Park was about the same to the north. It was too far for a three-year-old to walk, but two of the barmaids had preteen daughters, Gracie Skilton and Joan Lee. They regularly took me to Battersea Park in a pushchair. The park had (and still has) an enclosure with deer, peacocks and other exotic animals and a playground with different kinds of swings, seesaws, & roundabouts. I loved the latter but always came off


Hansom cab

feeling sick!
One of my most vivid memories is going to the park one day and looking up in the sky to see a silver cigar-shaped object. The people all around became quite excited. It was the flight of the "Graf Zeppelin" over London. Many people were not very happy as the last time Zeppelins had been over, they had been dropping bombs. Another memory I have, was being taken to the embankment in Lambeth to see King George V officially open Lambeth Bridge. Years later in the 80s, I was working at the International Maritime Organization Building on the embankment where they have a roof-top cafeteria looking out at the river and bridge. The view triggered the memory of the opening.

I started school at the age of three, going to Greggs School on Falcon Road. This was a private school, mainly for girls who hoped to become secretaries or typists. They had three groups of students; one for those who had left school (above 14, which was the school leaving age) and were taught typing, shorthand & office work. The second was for 9 to 14 year olds, who learnt the standard subjects (English, Arithmetic, Geography, Religious Instruction) and Clerical Work. The other class was for pre-school (less than 5) where teaching the letters and numbers occurred, but most of the time was spent having stories read. I realise now that most were history texts, fables, and extracts from the children's bible, but at the time it was interesting.

The school operated in an old large house of the type that surrounds the commons. It had a carriage drive that formed a semicircle from the road with a play lawn in the middle. Falcon Road was on the processional route from Westminster to Epsom. Each year at Derby time, the kids from Greggs would be taken out to line the road, given Union Jacks and told to wave them and cheer when the King & Queen went past in their open car. I didn't really understand what it was all about as the gentleman with a beard in the car was always wearing a top hat and never a crown. The lady, however, really looked like a queen.

One of the local families was named Belasco. It was a large cockney family, who were in the furniture and used item trade. The society of that time was not affluent and bought few new items, not even the middle class. Most household items & clothes were cycled through three or four owners. Families like the Belascos had a shop where the new & better conditioned pieces were for sale, a yard where one could browse for most reasonable items and a garage/stable where the junk was kept. They also had both motor & horse vans, used for house moving and collection of stock. Their operation should not be confused with that of the Rag-&-bone man who pushed a barrow and purchased junk for its raw materials. My father was very friendly with old Mr. Belasco and the eldest 'boy', Dave. The large room on the first floor of the Nags (that is the floor above the ground floor), intended as a club room, was generally used by the family as a living room. One day there was a commotion there and a complete marionette stage, scenery and 30 marionettes appeared. Apparently the Belasco's had obtained it but could not find a buyer. They thought if it was available in the club room someone would learn how to give performances. They were wrong. It stood there for over six months with many people trying to use it, all unsuccessful. Even I tried, but my hands were too small to control the strings. Finally a gypsy showman who was at Clapham Fair heard about it and made a deal for it. It was still doing the Fairs in 1946 when I saw it again at Mitcham Fair.

Old Sargeant

1932 saw us moving again, this time to a pub called the "Old Sergeant", which was in Garrett Lane in Wandsworth. Garrett Lane was originally a lane leading south from Wandsworth. Over the years it had been built up and extended until in the 30s it reached Tooting Broadway three miles to the south. It was a fairly wide road with trams (double deckers) running in the centre. It was a terrible street to find an address because it was numbered from Wandsworth on the west side to its end then back on the east side. Consequently, houses opposite each other could have numbers several hundreds apart. Each time the road was extended during Edward VII's time, they used another batch of numbers. It took a long time to get the inhabitants to agree to renumber in the usual odd on left, even on right, and wasn't completed until after the war (WW2).

This part of London was approaching a slum. In fact one street near the Old Sergeant, Wardley St., only consisted of wooden shacks and gypsy caravans and was always violent at night. Many other side streets had old cottages or terraced houses built in the time of Victoria. Industries grew up along the River Wandle and at the time that we arrived there, a rehousing programme was under way. This meant moving families, sometimes forcefully away from the old Victorian cottages where whole families

were living in a single room, too new but soulless apartments that soon became just as bad. Even as a child I could see that in many cases it was not the environment making the people, but the people making the environment. There were those who would have liked to change, but the large numbers of those refusing to change, brought them down to the slum level. Today it is difficult to believe that families that finally got inside plumbing and a bathroom frequently used it to store things, even animals, but this did occur as late as 1937. Since then I have believed that improvements without the education to use them could be a disaster.

Many of the customers and their children, with whom I became friends lived in what was known as the "Buildings". These were a development of flats. Each "building" was in the form of a hollow rectangle, the centre of which contained the "court" and the stairs. At each level of the four floors was a balcony served by the stairs and from which the only entry door to the flats opened. The court connected to the street by an archway, took the place of a flat on the ground floor.

Flats like the “Buildings”

Most of the flats had three rooms each. The door opened directly into the kitchen, from there, another door went to the passage where clothes were hung and often boxes that held the few possessions of the family. To one side of the passage was the bedroom. At the end was the parlour with windows that looked out on the street. In all the houses I visited this served as a second bedroom used and was for the kids. There was no washroom and a single toilet served two flats and could be entered from the balcony. All personal washing and clothes were done in the kitchen sink, with water heated on the kitchen range. The range was coal fuelled and served as the main and often the only heating for the flat. Baths, used once a week, were of galvanized steel brought in from the balcony and filled when needed.

There were also some larger flats, which were the size of two of the smaller ones. In these there were three small rooms on one side and a large Kitchen and Front/Bed room on the other. The entry was still through the kitchen. They may have been larger but so were the families inhabiting them, often a dozen or so people. Washing was hung to dry on lines stretched across the yard from one balcony to the one on the other side. The people who inhabited the "Buildings" were poor, but would be very upset if they were called slum-dwellers, as each home was clean and had the maximum amount of comfort that they could afford. Most of the men had jobs and worked hard for their existence.

I mentioned in the last part that having a bath at home was difficult for many. I did not intend to imply that these people never bathed. In British cities, the municipal baths contained not only an indoor swimming pool for sport, but also several baths, where for 2d or whatever the price of the time was, you could soak in hot water, wash and dry on a supplied towel. Watching football matches was a cheap entertainment only costing a couple of pence. And of course there was always the pub for a drink, a natter, and a 'ding dong' (sing song).

The River Wandle ran immediately behind the Old Sergeant, but it had become highly polluted, as for many years, it was used in the Wandsworth area as a dump. It was full of scrap metal, dead animals were thrown into it, and industrial wastes drained from factories into it, from its source in Croydon to where it joined the Thames, north of Wandsworth High Street. Fortunately after the war a clean up took place and it is now a sweet river with clear water running over a rock bed. I am told that in the last decade, fishing is again available due to restocking.

On moving I had to change schools, this time to a kindergarten that was in a private house on Wandsworth Common. An elderly lady ran it, helped by three younger women. Only four subjects were taught; Music, Religious instruction, Arithmetic and English. Unfortunately the lady in charge had a bee in her bonnet about writing. She would not permit script to be used, only block printing. This left me with quite a disadvantage when I next changed schools because the speed that I could print was much slower than my classmates' writing.

As the journey to school was all on quiet residential streets, I was soon allowed to walk the mile to the common alone. I still had to cross Garratt Lane, but an arrangement made with the people in the sweetshop (candy store) opposite the pub, saw me across safely. It used to take a half an hour, but the return was usually much longer because of playing on the common. There

was one area that collected a big puddle after each rainfall. This was ideal for making mud pies, canals & splashes, much to the disgust of the mothers who had to wash the resulting clothes. Also, the grass-covered slopes of the railway cutting were lovely for rolling down.

The only distraction on the way to school was a little general store that sold toys. It stocked the cheap things like noisemakers, lead soldiers, and the new craze, the Yo-yo. It wasn't long before I had persuaded my parents that I was old enough to have a weekly allowance. I believed that it was initially 2d a week, but at least this allowed me to develop skills in budgeting and saving in order to buy the things that cost 3d or 4d.

My parents did not worry that I took longer to return, as they knew that I would be in, without fail, by five o'clock so I could listen to the Children's Hour on the BBC. Children's Hour was as popular for us as Coronation Street (or Dallas in America) became in later years. My favourite segments were "Toytown" with 'Larry the Laaamb & Mister Mayor' and Commander Campbell's adventures. The latter always closed with "well children, be good, but not so good that your parents ask 'What mischief have you been up to'." The programme was very friendly with the announcers given family names like Uncle Bruce & Aunty Joan. Other programmes that I listened to, were ones playing newly written songs. The music of the day included many catch songs, like "The music goes around and around"; "Three little fishes" and "That was a cute little rhyme" (the limerick song). There was also the musical equivalent of the top ten hits, which played many of the tunes that my mother sang from shows she had seen in the west end.

One advantage our new home had over the others was that King George V Park was just the other side of the Wandle. There was a footbridge across the river into the park only 150 feet from our front door with no roads to cross! The park was a big one having a playground, tennis courts, playing fields (soccer & cricket respectively in winter & summer). Also there was a lake with row boats to hire and ducks to feed. Around the lake were gardens, walks and plenty of seats for the old people to sit and chat. English sports are played by even the poorest or weakest kids. As long as someone had a ball all could join in. Even cricket only needed a bat and a ball, the wicket could be chalked on any wall. In having those three pieces of equipment meant that I was usually welcomed to play with the other kids. I am afraid that class was quite defined in the thirties. Normally the son of the "gov'nor of the pub" would be considered too stuck-up to be invited to join in with the "kids from the buildings", no matter how he behaved. Looking back, I suspect that I was accepted because my father had arranged for me to take boxing lessons with a local professional boxer, Bert Hooper, who matched me with other small kids from the area, so I became known, and there is no better way of making a friend than being with someone with whom you have a good fight.

In 1934, the borough council sold some land adjacent to the park and the Wandsworth Stadium was built. An inflow of trade to the local shops and pubs resulted on the nights that there was dog or dirt-track (motorcycle) racing. I remember going to a military tattoo there, soon after it opened, with some older friends. After the show I was introduced to a new jellied eel shop that sold mashed potatoes with eel gravy over them. I had the bad luck to be seen by a customer who reported it to my father. Not that my parents objected, but I could no longer make a fuss and not eat my potatoes at home that I had claimed to dislike. I believe that the council must have felt guilty over the stadium, because a couple of years later they built an open air swimming pool on the other side of the park.

Living in a pub was somewhat different from the normal family life. For one thing the working day for my parents spread over much more of the day than most jobs. The pub was open from 10am to 3pm, but the cleaning had to be done before opening. The second period was from 5.30 to 10.30. The shelves had to be restocked with bottles after each period. One or both of my parents were in the bar from 9 in the morning until 11 at night. Their only break was a couple of hours in the middle of the afternoon. Sundays had a longer afternoon so we had dinner together, then went to visit family. Fortunately many of both my mothers and father's family had moved to Acton. So the gathering was always at the home of my three maiden aunts who shared the house with their two unmarried brothers. Going to “Emmanuel Avenue” or later to "Chatsworth Gardens" was the norm almost every Sunday afternoon until the war started.

I don't want you to think that I had a deprived life, far from it, I was a fairly happy child. But I did grow up with the ability to entertain myself. In spite of being very spoilt especially in getting the material things I wanted and being an only child, I don't think I made many demands on my parents. At night, after being put to bed, I was usually by myself until closing time. Having a bedroom above the bars meant that I wasn't really alone. Not many kids could say that they were serenaded every night by a choir of many voices singing such lullabies as "Nelly Dean"; "Daisy" and "Knees up Muvver Brown". It was not so good

however the times I was sick, although my mother came upstairs several times during those evenings. I can remember on one occasion, crying for her, it seemed like hours, until she arrived to comfort me.

I think it was my first visit to a hospital that put me off them for life. I had to have my tonsils removed and went into a private room in Battersea General Hospital. It was fine until I was taken to the Operating Room and without warning a cotton wool mask was put over my face and I couldn't breathe. Nobody had thought to explain what was going to happen. Doctors wouldn't even explain to adults at that time, "they wouldn't understand anyway." If that wasn't bad enough, on the day I was leaving the hospital, the surgeon came round looked in my mouth and decided that a piece of adenoid had been missed. He proceeded to remove it, with what appeared to me to be a pair of scissors. I screamed my head off and left the hospital still slightly bleeding. A long time after, my doctor told me that they had cut nothing and the blood was probably caused in my struggles. To me it was plain butchery.

Two very special events occurred while we were in Wandsworth, The Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 and the Coronation of George VI in 1937. The celebrations were great for both. Flags and bunting were put up everywhere, decorations appeared in every shop window and most private homes also were decorated. There were a number of community events like street parties, fireworks and parades. All the kids had gifts given at school. I got a mug with the king's & queen's portraits on it and a book emplaning the history of the event for each. I still have a slim book from the coronation in my possession, one of the few things that I did not lose, after I came to Canada. On the day, we had a holiday, but few people saw the ceremonies or parade because that was in Westminster, and television had not started then. I went to a street party for kids in the street opposite, Alfarthing Lane. I don't remember very much about it, except a huge jelly the ladies had made, using a bathtub as the mold. I also remember military band music being played from loudspeakers that were place in the street. I do not know if this was broadcasted from Westminster or from records.

It was very noticeable that the poorer the district, the more the decorations and community parties were visible. Parts of Battersea, Wandsworth, and Tooting had visitors from the more affluent areas coming just to see the festivities. A similar observation noted during the blitz, was in that the comradery of the poorer areas brought the community closer together. This resulted in surviving under the most terrible conditions, sort of comrades in misfortune, both physical and financial. In addition to the kids' parties during the afternoon, there were parties for the grown-ups in the evening. These had dancing and drinking as well as the goodies to eat, and as always the singsong. A few had a fireworks display.

About the time of the Jubilee, I started going to the cinema regularly. Most Saturday mornings the smaller cinemas that did not belong to a chain put on a show for kids for the cost of two pence. The 'tupenny rush' predated the well organized childrens' shows later put on by the Rank Organization in the late forties. The programmes usually consisted of a couple of comedy shorts (Chaplin, Our Gang, Laurel & Hardy, etc). Then a feature film, usually of the adventure type, musical or comedy. My favourite was Eddie Cantor. The show always closed with a serial like Tarzan. The serials were only about 20 minutes long, but always ended in some breath taking situation that made you return next week to find out what happened. Some of the feature films were not exactly suitable for young children. Even at this early date, violent events, like Earthquakes, Volcano eruptions, floods, and fires, often appeared in films. One particular film that showed a disaster in a tunnel where water was pouring in. This left me with a feeling of being scared every time any train I was on, went into a tunnel. Still, I loved the "flicks" at the Supershow, Earlsfield, in spite of managing, all too often, to get a headache that put me off my lunch.


Entrance to Sinjuns

Chapter 2 Pre-war Schooling 1935 to 1939

My parents realised that I was not getting a good education at Ivanhoe, so they put me in a Public-Secondary School. This was situated in Battersea, and was called Sir Walter St Johns School, but was abbreviated to "Sinjuns". Public Schools in Britain are not as their names suggest, but very exclusive fee-paying schools. The Public-Secondary was one level below Public schools and was fee-paying also. Most, however, had a proportion of their students who had been awarded scholarships. Needless to say I was not bright enough to get a scholarship, so poor Dad had to pay. As I mentioned my limitation on writing caused trouble initially, and left me with very bad handwriting for the rest of my life. In the test they gave all new-boys, I did fine in the oral and the maths, but found I only able to write the first 3 or 4 words in each sentence on the dictation.

Sinjuns was a boys-only school, for those between the ages of seven and nineteen. Before the war, about 600 boys were enrolled. The main school was in five levels with a prep form for those under nine years old and a group of pre-university classes at the other end of the age scale. The first to forth forms were divided into three classes, usually with about 35 students each. The fifth form had four smaller classes and was subdivided into Science and Modern Studies, two classes in each. It was in the fifth that one sat for the University of London's General Schools Certificate, which also granted the "matriculation" level. When a student entered the second form, he was placed into the "A" class if he appeared to favour languages (Moderns) or the "B" class if he was science oriented. Those who had received lower marks during the first form were placed in the "C" class, but could adjust the next year.
My record was 2A to 3C to 4B and finally 5B Sc. As I left school when I was sixteen, after taking "generals", I did not go into any of the sixth forms.

The school day started at 8.45 with prayers and an assembly where notices were read and lunch disks distributed. Each day was split into eight periods of 45 minutes, and there was a 20 minute break between the second & third period of both the morning and afternoon. The break for lunch (or dinner as it was called) was between 12:15 and 1:15 and school usually finished at 4:40. The subjects taught varied both by form and stream. In prep, the basic subjects were; Arithmetic, Geometry, History, Geography, Literature, English Grammar, French, Wood working and Religious instruction. For reasons not known to the students the last two subjects were replaced by algebra & science in the first form, and Chemistry & Physics were added.


Gym at Sinjuns

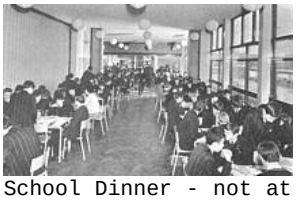
There was a double period of Gymnastics once a week up to the fourth form, and sports, a double period, once a week and some Saturday mornings. As the sports ground was 20 minutes by bus, you were expected to stay until after 5pm.


Gym slip

In the latter years of the "moderns" stream, Latin and German were extra. While the "science" had Mechanics & Applied Maths (which included an introduction to Calculus). You can see that by the time a boy reached the Fifth Form, he was taking the twelve subject minimum for General Schools Certificate. The 40 periods a week, reduced by four for Gym &/or sports meant that some subjects were taught every day, but others had as little as one lesson a week.

During the 1930's, schools in England were much more disciplined than today. All children wore a uniform, although in the poorer schools it was restricted to shirts and trousers of a certain colour combination (the girls wore either gym-slips or skirts with a blouse). Both boys and girls wore a tie and a belt (or sash) of the school colours. The older boys wore long trousers instead of shorts, while the older girls were allowed stockings instead of socks.
All pupils had to stand when a teacher entered the class and the teachers were addressed as Sir (or Madam). Talking in class was very limited and only in whispers as it would be punished. Permission had to be asked to leave the room, even for the toilet. This was done by raising ones hand.
The punishments were usually writing "lines." This was writing out a sentence in your best handwriting 50 or 100 times. I can remember having to write "Toujours la politesse" a hundred times because a master thought I had been cheeky in giving an answer. The next level of punishment was the ruler or slipper applied to the seat of ones pants.
In my school beyond this was the stick (on the hands), which also meant reporting to the headmaster's office and having your name inscribed in the punishment book. The extreme was expulsion, but this would affect a child for the rest of its life, so was

rarely used. As a result of the depression, those with blots on their character had little chance of a job. Consequently, expulsion was used seldom for a single offence. The higher the school level, the more was the disgrace in expulsion. At Sinjuns, it was only used half a dozen times while I was there, and only for violence, theft and in one case, getting a girl pregnant.
Other rules varied from school to school. Many did not allow running except in the playground. The children were just as high spirited as today, but were more careful not to get caught. There was an unwritten code you did not split on another, when asked who had done something. You were, however, expected to own up if someone else was liable to be punished for your crime. Most followed the code and those that didn't sometimes were ostracized by their peers. Of course, there was both bullying and toadying but at least in my experience, it was light.


School Dinner - not at Sinjuns

Most of the pupils stayed at school for the school dinner. The gymnasium was converted into a dinning hall with a long table across the end where the masters (teachers) eat. The boys sat at shorter tables sitting about 10 boys a side with a sixth former at each end to enforce discipline. The meat was always served on a plate from a trolley, but the potatoes & vegetables were in large dishes along the table. The monitors assured that every boy took and ate the meat, spuds & veg, even whether he liked it or not.
The meals were quite filling, but not gourmet. Roasts, both hot & cold; stews; rissoles, bangers (sausages), and once in a while, Toad-in-the-hole. The deserts were rice pudding & similar dishes like semolina; prunes or other fruit; or yellow peril (a custard dish). There were Tea and water to drink and sometimes in the cold weather, the meal started with a soup. Most people in London had the main meal of the day around noon, so it was important for the children away from home to be well fed at lunchtime. Whatever the complaints were about school dinner, quantity was not one.

The sports that everyone had to participate in were Football and Cricket. Swimming was also compulsory during the summer at the Latchmere baths (about 10 minutes walk from the school). Other sports and activities took place after school or at the dinner break. I took Boxing, Fives, and was a member of the chess club.
I had my first experience with death, on the soccer field.
While I was in prep, the class was split into three teams and we played one another. During one such match the opposing team had just scored against my team when one of their forwards named Terry B. fell down and did not get up. I was playing half back and together with the back tried to help him to his feet. He was unconscious and the master who was referee called an ambulance. We heard the next day that he had died on the field and that he had an unknown heart condition, which had been triggered by the exertion and excitement of the goal scoring. Fortunately I had not been a close friend but the incident had a long term effect on many of us.

The school was situated in Battersea High Street at the end by the River Thames. At that time it consisted of a group of buildings lining the High Street and other buildings on the opposite side of the property. In between were the play grounds and a green space named "The Priory". We were not allowed on the grass there, but could walk on the periphery path or sit (& study) on the many seats around it. The playground had a rifle range and bicycle racks on one side and a couple of five courts at the end. In the summer, cricket slips were placed on the edge by the Priory and there was a woodworking room in a temporary building between the school and the Priory. The science building was at the back and had three floors, and the upper ones could only be entered by external iron stairs. These and the balconies were perforated, so that when you looked down you could see the ground many feet below. I hated having to go to the chemistry lab on the top floor because I had no head for heights. Even later in life, when I had to climb high scaffolding on the aircraft production line I held on with both hands whenever possible.

Most summers were spent at Bognor Regis in Sussex. I was usually taken down there by both of my parents, then my Mother would stay a week to see me settled and after that I would be in the care of one of two families who were friends of my parents. One was the Howells who had several houses in the Elmer Beach area, near Littlehampton. The other was Mrs. Davis (no relation) who kept a boarding house called Goodwood House in Bognor. Her daughter, Lily who was a work friend of my mother, ran a seaside clothes and beach shop on the front. I would spend most of the time with Lily only sleeping and eating breakfast and dinner at the boarding house. If it was fine, I was on the beach, playing with the other kids, watching the Punch & Judy, or racing Dinky Toy cars down sand tracks that we built on the slope of the promenade breakwater. On rainy days I "helped" Lily in the shop. I have difficulty now in remembering how I spent my time there, but know it was a happy place as I was glad to go each year.

At the other end of the year, at Christmas, it was fortunate to be in London. Each year, either my mother or one of my aunts would take my cousin and myself to Bertram-Mills Circus. The big-top was assembled in the exhibition hall at Olympia, and the full slate of Clowns, Horses, Animals, Acrobats and high level artists performed. I was also taken to either one of the children s' shows (Peter Pan or Where the Rainbow Ends) or to a pantomime. The pantomime is another typically British entertainment. It is supposed to be for children yet the humour is often very blue and not understood by the kids.

It takes the form of a child's tale like; Cinderella, Babes in the Wood, Jack & the Beanstalk, Ali Baba & the 40 thieves, or Aladdin, but tells them in a light and very musical way. Traditionally the "Principal Boy", the main male part, was played by a girl and the "Dame", The elderly female part, by a man. Considerable audience participation was normal, the villain had to be hissed and booed, warning of danger given to the hero, and above all joining in singing the songs was encouraged. The latter often with one part of the audience singing against the other (men against women, left against right, or stalls against 'gods' (balcony). We would come away feeling very good, the hero got his girl, the villain got his come uppence, but all appeared in the finale to sing the most catchy song in the show, to the audiences rhythmatic clapping

Although we were a Jewish family, nominally, we celebrated Christmas and in fact I was being taught in Church of England schools so I was being brought up Christian. I received a fair amount of presents, having so many aunts and uncles. Each Christmas eve I went to bed with a pillow slip, not a stocking, tied to the bottom of the bed and most years there was an overflow. The presents were the traditional toys; building sets, motors, soldiers and games but I enjoyed them to the full.

I was given my first bicycle at this time, it was what was called a "fairy cycle" (no comments please!) and was the equivalent of the 17" wheeled bike for kids in Canada. Garratt Lane was a main road with Trams running down it, so I was not allowed to cycle anywhere other than the park. To get to school, I had to use the number 12 tram getting off at Battersea High Street, which was the end of the line.

London Transport, at that time, had a schoolboys return ticket for 1d (one penny). Of course womens lib' was well into the future, so no girl asked for a schoolgirls return. The trams were all double deckers and there were two bench seats immediately above the driver, so everyone tried to get one of the front seats to get the same view as the driver. It was very easy to drive a tram as there were only two controls, a stepping motor control that did the normal acceleration & braking, and a wind on mechanical brake. There was a stud in the floor, which if stamped upon would ring the warning bell once. The driver stood all the time on most trams and required some skill in choosing the correct speed especially on corners and over points.

In the County of London's area, power was supplied to the trams by the three- rail method. The central rail had a slot in it through which the "plough" passed to touch the live part that was below the ground. In the suburbs an overhead wire was used the tram having a pole with a pulley on it to contact. At the boundary of London there was a change over point operated by a retired driver who would slide the ploughs into a slot on the side of the tram. It was the conductor's job to raise or lower the pole or to replace it if it jumped from the wire. It was not a job for the unsteady as the wire was 20 feet above the ground, the pole was spring loaded with the only control was a long rope from under the pulley.

1937 was a very eventful year for me. It was at Easter that I had my next visit to hospital, this time because of an accident. I had gone out with two of my friends to play on Wandsworth Common. In the course of the morning we got into some mischief and in trying to climb a gate that swung open, I fell and broke my arm. We were a couple of miles from home and I knew I was in trouble because of the pain and that I could not move my arm so I walked to a nearby doctor's house. Although he was not in surgery, he put my arm into a sling and told me to go to the hospital that was about a mile away. We walked there and I was taken into the emergency ward.
In the mean time one of my friends had walked to my home and had, very white faced, told my parents of the mishap. My father was able to get to the hospital and give his release for the operation. I was given an anaesthetic and the bones were set and the arm put into a cast. At that time only the larger hospitals had X-ray machines. Bolingbrook Hospital had one, but only one technician and he was on holiday. The result was that the bone knit slightly out of true and I can still feel the fracture point in my arm.

Fortunately I was back to my normal self by coronation time in May, but was in a cast for six weeks. It was my right arm that was immobilised so I trained myself to write left-handed. My mother said that the quality of hand writing was no worse than normal, which doesn't say much for my penmanship.

Terry, the Kerry Blue, had grown to be a mature dog and was kept during the day in the yard at the Sergeant. This yard opened to the road at the side of the building but extended in an "L" shape around the back, so he often could not be seen from the gate. He was on the whole a very friendly dog, but hated uniforms. Many of the customers had the unpleasant habit of going into the yard to urinate against the wall. Normally Terry was pleased to see them and welcomed them with a wag of the tail. However, three men, a Postman, a milkman and a bus driver, all in uniform found that he wasn't friendly at all and left pieces of their trouser legs in his mouth. A complaint was made, someone was sent to investigate. It was the local police inspector, in uniform. My mother explained that the men were really entering private property and Terry was only being a good house dog (I suspect with her fingers crossed). The inspector then requested to see this vicious beast for his-self. Mother thought this would be the end of Terry as uniforms set him off barking and growling. The inspector walked into the yard with my mother following expecting the worst, and up came the animal, tail wagging, and licked the hand of the officer. All was well, but my father installed a padlock on the gate to prevent any repeat tempting fate too much.

In July, we finally left the Old Sergeant. It was the end of the lease, and my father considered that he had built the trade to the maximum a pub of that size could do. We could not move into the new pub until September, so we finally had a holiday all together.
Because of the pub being open every day of the year, one or other of my parents had to be there, and although we had some days together, when my uncle looked after the pub, up to this time I had never been away with both of them. We started with a week in a central London hotel (my first experience of hotel living). We stayed at the Strand Palace, and I can remember spending time looking at the stamps in Stanley Gibbons shop a few steps down from the hotel.

I had started collecting stamps a couple of years earlier mainly from my uncle and aunt in the city. I also bought stamps from the little shops in Garratt Lane. Many of the little general stores and news agents would get stamps from customers and place them on a card for sale. They had little knowledge of their worth so it was not impossible to get a bargain. I got my copy of the Penny Black (The first stamp issued) from such a shop.


August in Edinburgh

After a week of visiting museums, galleries and parks for me and theatres and restaurants for my parents, we got in the car and went to Scotland. We took four days to get to Edinburgh where we spent several days. Then we went to the friends that my father had made during his stay at Turnhouse, the Jamiesons. Mr. Jamieson had been the golf professional at the links near the aerodrome and now owned the "Cross Keys" hotel in Kelso. We spent a few days with them and then went to visit their son Donald, who kept the "Cross Keys" in St. Andrews.

I have been told that it was the example of Donald Jamieson's name that my parents chose it for me. While in St. Andrews, which is the golf capital of the world, I entered in a local putting competition for children. By a complete fluke I came in forth and the only Sassenach in the top twenty. Needless to say I kept quiet about my true ability, but avoided playing any more games in Scotland.
We returned to London by roads on the west side of the country. We passed through the Lake District, but there were low clouds or rain the whole time we were there, so I can't say that I enjoyed.
The weather for most of the holiday was good but cold. In my family photograph album there is a photo of my mother and me walking down Princes Street (Edinburgh) in August. We are wearing heavy winter coats and look quite chilled.

Soon after getting back from Scotland, I was taken sick. There had been an outbreak of Typhoid Fever at Croydon and as Croydon is only 4 miles from Merton, it was feared that I might have it. In 1937 there were no antibiotics and the sulpha drugs were not in common use so typhoid was often fatal. I was taken in to Putney Hospital and kept there three weeks with dozens of blood, urine and stomach pump test being done. Finally they diagnosed a form of jaundice, however some time later my father was speaking to the specialist who had treated me and he admitted that they did not know what I had. It was probably some kind of hepatitis. I arrive home very weak and was sent on a three-week convalescence in Bournemouth.
What with one thing and another I lost two thirds of a year's schooling in 1937 so I went from Form 1B to 1A in 1938. I don't think it was a bad thing as I consequently got a good grounding in all the basic subjects which helped to negate my natural laziness in later years.

Most of my fellow students did not have much in the way of money, but I was given 3d. a day allowance. Most was spent during the morning break at the school Tuck Shop. There you could buy chocolate bars at 1d. each or rolls and cheese at 1d. Orange or lemon drinks were also 1d. and the big luxury was a "Double Six" bar at 2d. (this had 12 pieces of six different flavoured creams in it). During the summer, we would buy an ice-cream cone at 1d. from a shop in the High Street or a "Fruit ice" from the Walls stop-me-&-buy-one tricycle.

Occasionally I would save up and buy the toys that kids had used for decades from the little sweet shop. They sold tops, marbles (a small bag without reds only cost 1d.), five stones and cap guns (4d.). In the autumn, conkers were available to be knocked out of the trees and hardened by many different formula, few of which worked! The more practical would make scooters from two planks of wood, some old skate wheels and a few screws or "soap-box cars" from wood and wheels scavenged from the dumps or banks of the Wandle.

Looking back, we always had things to do or games to play. We probably spent more time in street sports than is done today and as the toys were comparatively cheap most had some. The poorer getting the hand-me-downs often swapped for a stamp or cigarette card. I do not remember ever saying or hearing my friends say "I am bored," there was so much to see and do.

Cigarette cards were another free entertainment, in the first half of the twentieth century, there was a card in every pack in Britain. Most men smoked, and kids would go up and ask anyone opening a pack if they could have the card. There were not too many refusals. The thing about the cards was that they issued in sets of usually 50 cards. The sets were all on a theme like animals, film stars, ships, motors, to name just a few. There was a lot of trading in order to complete sets. For a couple of pennies you could buy an album from the main manufacturers (Players and Wills), with a space for each card in the set and the text that was on the back of the cards printed on the page. The size of the card for most brands was two & a half by one inch. On one side there was the picture, while on the other was the series and number, and a description or elaboration of about 150 words. In a way they were very educational. After the coronation set of the "Kings & Queens" was issued, I could list them all from William I on. Something my history teacher could never have made me do.

One of the more expensive brands of cigarettes issued little squares of embroidered silk with badges, flags or flowers on them. The kids didn't stand a chance to collect these, as their mums wanted them to sew together as cushion covers. I saw a cushion in London made from the flower set in the 1980s in one of the decorating speciality shops. Its price was £72!

One set issued just before the war was about the ARP (Air Raid Precautions, ie Civil Defence) and gave information like putting on a gas mask or digging a shelter. When the war started it was used by some as a training manual. Cards were both decorative and instructive.

My journey to school from my new home, The "King's Head" in Merton High Street, was much longer and involved taking the No2 tram to Tooting Broadway about 2 miles, then changing to the 612 trolleybus that had replaced the 12 tram to Battersea (5 miles). As there was no transfer allowed on London Transport vehicles, two tickets had to be brought, a 1d. & a 2d. schoolboys return respectively. I would often arrange to meet a friend at Tooting and travel on the trolleybus with him. It was said that the trolleys had all the disadvantages of trams, all the disadvantages of busses, and no advantages. Certainly the LTPB tried them but did not extend the system and phased them out very soon after the last tram ran.

The Kings Head was a large pub. It had five bars, the extra two being called the Dart Bar & The Lounge. The lounge was an additional room onto the saloon bar with no counter but waiter service to the tables. The dart bar joined the public bar and had both a piano and a couple of dart boards. At weekends both of these bars had music, do-it-yourself in the dart, but a two-lady "orchestra" played in the lounge. Miss Thomas played the violin, and "Madam", an artificially redheaded lady of many years played the piano. Many of the popular songs both of radio and music hall were sung by all, usually led by "Donald the singing

milkman" who was the weekend waiter.

The Kings also had a hall on the first floor that was used for Saturday night hops (dances) for the young people, a union hall, the meeting place for the local Old Contemptible (veterans of the 1914-18 war) and was also rented out for dinners and wedding parties. A large kitchen adjacent made it possible for catering to be done, the largest of which was a dinner for 120 people.

The Kings was on the site of a medieval inn and there had been a drinking house there since 1497. The building was comparatively new, having been rebuilt in 1933. While they were digging the foundations and cellars they discovered some old tunnels leading in the direction of Merton Abbey. We don't know if it was for the monks to have a sly drink, or for the innkeeper to raid the abbey's cellars.

The local newspaper printed an article on the History of the Kings Head. I suspect that much was uncorroborated but it made good reading. A couple of monarchs were said to have visited the inn in medieval times. It was also supposed to be haunted by a servant girl who had been murdered there, and by a priest slain during the civil war. We blamed the electrical difficulties of light going on during the night and the scream-like whistle of the wind on the ghost of the grandmother of a previous publican who had died of burns from a household accident. No-one in our time there saw anything closely resembling a ghost.

The architect was not very good. He intended it to be a hotel, but he only put in six bedrooms and no other rooms. While we were there, my family used four of them the other two being used by staff that slept-in. There was a big car park at the back. So large that it was used during the war for outside parking of 12 single deck busses. There was also a little building at the edge of the car park called "the women & childrens room". No one under 16 was allowed in a pub, but a loophole allowed drinking in a building separate from the licensed area providing the drink was not purchased there so that where the mothers had their drink and natter. It consisted of a room the size of an average living room with chairs & tables with an attached washroom.


Wimbledon Palais - Beattles queue

Although the cinema and the pub were the main entertainment for many people, they were not suitable for meeting people of the opposite sex. In the cinema, you had to keep quiet and few girls went into pubs without a male escort. The main meeting place for youngsters was the dance floor. Girls and men each went there in groups, met there, and the lucky ones came away as a couple or arranged a date at another time. A couple of hundred yards along Merton High Street stood the Wimbledon "Palais de Dance". It was a long low building that had seen better days, but had an excellent sprung dance floor. The Kings Head was the nearest pub to it and consequently obtained many of the "occasional licence" to sell drink there for functions.

A new owner took over and spruced the place up. He also increased its scope of operations. Not only were there weekly dances, but several times a year boxing and wrestling tournaments were held there. He also turned it into the Wimbledon "Roller Rink". This was roller skating, but with special skates with rubber wheels (so not to damage the dance floor surface). You could rent skates or if you decided to be a regular, could buy a pair. I used to go to the Saturday afternoon session. Rink discipline was enforced, skating around only in the anticlockwise direction. The session was split into five periods; Free skating, Dance and couple skating, Speed skating, Figure skating and a final free period, so everyone had some time. The skating use was discontinued at the start of the war and never restarted after it. Other uses were wrestling, orchestra concerts and later a jazz and pops venue. It finished its days as a Bingo Hall & then a furniture store, but not before hosing one of the great Beattle concerts.

2d Blood

I am a very keen reader of books, but in my childhood hardly read anything. I attribute my love of books to the enjoyment I got from reading the "Tupenny Bloods". My first introduction to reading for pleasure was "Comic Cuts" that was the kids' comic paper of the day, but the only reading needed was the speech balloons. In 1938, a new weekly appeared called "Modern Wonder". This contained illustrated articles, often with cut-away drawings of wonders such as trains, ships and aeroplanes. It also had a number of articles that were not really scientific, but told how things were in other lands or towns. The bloods, however, consisted of a number of weekly papers that had adventure, sports, western, and school stories. One company published most; the Hotspur, the Skipper, the Rover, the Wizard, with the Champion was from another company. I was reading all of them by the time that I was evacuated. When I think of

my parents' initial opposition to the Bloods, I am glad that they did not forbid them.

For the summer holiday of 1938, I went with my father to Scotland again. We were accompanied by Dave Belasco. Unfortunately he was convalescing after he had been very sick, one of his lungs had been collapsed because of TB. It's dreadful to think that in the 30s, catching TB amounted to a death sentence and many people in the poorer parts of the large cities became victims. We drove up stopping one night at a hotel in Darlington. In the restaurant there was no children's menu and the only steak available, was a 16oz. with chips and vegetables. The waitress persuaded my father to "get what the boy wants, he can always leave what he doesn't want." When the meal came it was on a 15" oval plate, the largest steak my father claimed to have seen. I got through it completely and the Darlington Steak entered the Joseph folklore.

After visiting the Jamiesons in Kelso, we went on to Glasgow where we went to the Empire Exhibition, the first of a number of Exhibitions I have enjoyed. We returned to London after a short stay in Edinburgh. Six months later, Dave's other lung was affected and he died in a matter of weeks.

The radio had become very much more widespread. Most middle-class families had one, and even some of the poorer families. Few of these used the mains' electricity. Instead, power came from lead-acid accumulators. These had to be taken to the local garage to be charged about once a week, though many people had two accumulators. The programmes were all BBC, such favourites as In Town Tonight, Monday Night at Seven, Desert Island Disks, The Askey Show, & Ralph Reader's Gang Show, all started in the years before the war. My family tended to listen to show music, light music and the more lively classics. In the spring of 1939, we lashed out and bought a television set. The BBC had started the world's first TV programme the previous year, with transmission every evening from 5 to 11 and Saturday & Sunday afternoons. The BBC pioneered outside broadcasts and the first we saw on the new set was the Boat Race. I remember that my boat Oxford (Dark Blue) lost. Occasionally they would present a show from the west-end theatre. To do this, all they did, was to place a camera in the front row of the balcony and a microphone in the front of the stage. The result was literally the view of a person in the balcony, no close ups or other effects. Sometimes the mike picked up unwanted noises. I remember watching a ballet that sounded like a herd of elephants! I was allowed to stay up one night to see "Me and My Girl" which was on its initial run at the Victoria Palace. The Lambeth Walk was my favourite song at this time, sung with my best cockney accent.

There was a different attitude in this period to singing and whistling. People on the streets would often either sing or whistle and no one would take any notice except perhaps to smile at them enjoying life. If you did the same sort of thing today, you would be asked "are you some sort of nut?". Many of the sporting events were preceded by community singing. I used to get a lump in my throat to hear the crowd at a cup final belting out "Land of Hope & Glory" as though they meant every word of it.
Men and women in factories or construction sites would often sing, and this was before there was any piped music in the work place. The music was very singable with Berlin, Rogers, Kern, Gershwin & Porter all turning out songs, most of which are still played today. Its amazing how many lyrics I knew, and even today I can remember the words of several hundred songs. I think that maybe because it was a less complicated existence, people were happier and it showed spontaneously in singing.

People were in general more musical than today. Few middle class families did not have or have access to a piano. Even amongst the poorer families, a few pennies a week were spent so that one or more of their children could have piano lessons, who when older became the players of the pub's piano. For those without pianos there was always the mouth-organ, or the penny whistle, or even the jews-harp to give the accompaniment to a sing-song.

I have always had an interest in aviation and wanted to join the Air League (Cadets). They had a minimum age of 12, so instead I became an Army Cadet at Sinjuns. We paraded after school twice a week, drilled, and were instructed in the use of rifles, and even were able to fire them on the range. Once a year they held a field day for all the schools in south London that had cadets. The first I went to was in Richmond Park. We were taken by bus to the gates of the park, then marched to an assembly point, then on to our "Battle Positions". Sinjuns was in the defending side, so we were arranged behind trees & hedges, in hollows and other places where our officers (all World War I Infantrymen) decided. I had been given the smallest weapon in the armoury, an 1882 Martini-Enfield carbine. But its seven pound weight seemed more like a hundredweight before the end

of the day. The uniform was made from 1914 type army serge that was very rough and left us very chafed especially as it had the neck collar, and riding britches that laced below the knee. To make things worse for me, the puttees that are put on by winding around the leg between the boot & the upper calf, were too long and had to be wrapped double. I must have looked really strange. Still I came home tired out but happy, we, the defenders had won, and I hadn't been "shot". The days of play battles were coming to an end as August 1939 approached. **Contents**

Chapter 3 War & Evacuation 1939 to 1943

As an eleven-year-old in 1938, I did not follow the international news very much. But it was quite obvious that things were serious. The news boys (usually men in their fifties) made placards like "War Clouds Gather" and "Threat of war increases." Then suddenly, the prime minister (Mr. Chamberlain) returned from Munich and it was "Peace in our Time." Things did not return to the way they were before Munich, the ARP (Air Raid Precautions) recruited wardens, and other war plans made. Gas masks were issued for every man woman and child in Britain. Those for young babies had a hand pump to push air through the filter and fitted the baby around the whole body. We had games during gasmask practice to see who could blow the noisiest farting sound.

In what was to be the first company I worked in, Hawkers, TOM Sopwith gave production orders prior to getting RAF orders. This meant that when the Battle of Britain started, there were 400 fighter aircraft available that would not have been there if he had waited for government approval. The authorities asked the parents of all children to sign to allow their kids to be evacuated in the event of war. My parents signed for me.

I had gone to Bognor for the end of July 1939. There was a message from the school, in the middle of August. Pupils who were to be evacuated should go to school each day with one day's food and drink and gasmask, also should have a bag with clothes packed. For two weeks we went to school each day. There we played, picnicked and waited. Here, I had my first introduction to the new rage game Monopoly. On the 31st. August we were sent home and told to return with our bags and the gasmasks at 5:30 am the next day. They gave us labels to be tied on both bag and person, which had a code identifying school, area and group.

We arrived at the stated time and had the labels, bags, the daysfood checked, and formed up into a line. Four hundred boys make quite a long line and after much running up and down by the masters we started to walk. Looking down side streets we could see other lines of children coming from other schools. We all converged on the big railway station of Clapham Junction. Here was organised chaos, groups were let on platforms a few at a time as soon as trains came in. The trains loaded, then set off and another train pulled into the station. I believe that only the special evacuee trains ran that day as those train passing through Clapham Junction from Waterloo or Victoria on the fast tracks were full of kids. It was nearly 11 before I got on the train. We had been given some drinks and food some kids had drinks, but the toilets were limited and we went to them in groups, not always at a convenient time. Finally the train moved off through the suburbs and into the country. After about an hour the train stopped and the porters told us to get off. The station sign said "Farncombe", but nobody had heard of such a place. Most of the kids at the front of the train were formed again into lines and marched off. My group, who were at the rear of the train, was ordered into busses, ten of which were standing in the station yard. We started off in a convoy. As we went through villages, some busses stopped, until there were only three busses left. These finally came to a halt outside a church and they ushered into the hall. We saw several tables and a lot of ladies waiting. We were each given a carrier bag containing packaged, canned and wrapped food and drink.

The children disappeared in ones or twos, each with a lady until there were no ladies left but there was still 30 boys, all from my school with two masters. After some discussion and a long wait a number of cars appeared outside the church and we crowded in to them. After a short ride we were unloaded out side a long building where some men were carrying several beds up some stairs. We had arrived at Ellens Green! All thirty of us were to put up on the estate of a Major in the Army and his wife who was a Belgium countess. The building was the stables and stable boys quarters. A dozen racehorses had occupied the ground floor, but above there were eight bedrooms and a large kitchen. The men had placed extra beds in the rooms but the smaller boys had to sleep two to a bed, as there were not enough beds. A garage, which normally held ten cars, was half emptied and benches & tables put there. This was our dining room and living area.

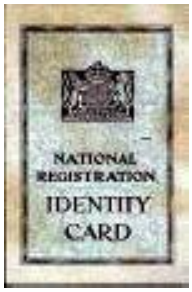
After a hot snack we went to bed expecting to have a party with the remains of the food. I guess we were all so tired that sleep came quickly, even in a strange bed and in some cases, a strange bedmate. The next day Saturday 2nd. September we spent digging an air raid shelter in the field along side of the garage. The next day at 11 o'clock we heard the prime minister declare war with all the boys gathered around the Rolls Royce that had a radio in it. A little after noon the air raid siren sounded and we all dashed to the unfinished shelter. It was a false

alarum, but we spent the rest of the day completing the shelter. In the early evening we were invited over to the main house and with the Countess, her family and her servants we heard the King's speech on the radio.
The main kitchen only supplied two meals, breakfast and an early dinner but there was bread and butter in liberal quantities left in the garage/dinning room. It was the first time of living in the country for most of us boys but we caught on fast! The estate had several orchards and a chicken farm. The blackberries were ripe in the hedges, so we soon made extra meals. I learnt to cook omelets, apple & berry pies and to "scrump" fresh fruit, so I never went hungry.

The Two masters with us, lived in the local school house about half a mile away. They spent much of the day with us but did not attempt to give lessons. Instead they were available for advice whether it was on the countryside or on our letters home that we were supposed to write at least once a week. The nearest village was Rudgwick about three miles away where there was a grocer, a general store and wonders, a fish and chip shop! The latter was open four nights a week and by pooling pocket money we were able to eat civilised food some evenings. The two big problems were, that some of the food was eaten on the way back and that the rest of the food was cold by the time we had walked back. As I usually went with the buyers, it did not matter to me.

All good things must come to an end. The rest of the school was in the town of Godalming and it was decided that school would restart in borrowed classrooms the third week of September. The few students who were living in other places would be bussed in until billets in Godalming could be found. I was the second youngest at Rudgwick so on the 28th. September, two other boys and I were driven to Godalming and placed in billets. The other boys arrived, in dribs and drabs, over the next four weeks.

I was taken to a small semi-detached house on Queens Street, near the High Street. This was the home of the Scott Family, consisting of Mr. & Mrs. Scott and their two children, Laurie (aged 12, my age) and Mary (aged 10). For the next four years this was to be my home and I grew up as one of the family. Being an only child I was quite spoilt and really did not know how to live with other children. The month at Rudgwick, being one of the youngest, little in the way of sharing was instilled. Laurie & Mary soon taught me that you had to consider others when you lived together.



Although evacuation was very similar to a Foster Home, there was a different terminology. The home was a "Billet" and the foster parents became the "Host & Hostess". I arrived on the day that was the registration for the first Identity Cards ever issued in Britain. On that night everyone was assigned a number that contained four letters (designating an area in Britain), and a number indicating the house in the area, with a slash followed by another number showing the individual in the house. My number was DMNM 13/5, the 5 showing that the evacuee was the last in pecking order! The identity cards were only a piece of cardboard with your name and number on it. At a time when many continental countries used photographic cards, it did seem a bit ridiculous.

The Scott's house had two floors, three bedrooms and a WC on the upper, and a living room, kitchen/scullery and a best "Front room" on the ground floor. Like many middle class families the Front room was only used to entertain special visitors. In the whole time I was with the Scotts, they only used it half a dozen times. One of those was to give tea to my parents when they came to see how I was living early in 1940. There was no bathroom or hot water, so all personal washing had to be done in the scullery sink with water heated in a kettle on the gas stove. On a Friday the bath would be brought in and filled from the gas heated washing boiler. Mary would take the first bath, then with some extra hot water, either Laurie or I, followed by the other. The bath was emptied by a syphon tube to an outside drain and after we kids had gone to bed, the adults took their baths.


Charterhouse crest

School started immediately under difficulties. We were loaned ten classrooms at the County School and four at Charterhouse (One of the Public Schools of England) and the rest had to go to the various church halls around the town. Because of travelling between these locations the school day was extended, from 8:30 to 5:00 with an hour for lunch. Godalming is a small town and none of the halls were more than two miles apart. So with some good scheduling no one had more than one change a day. My billet being in the middle of the town, I could return for lunch every day. To make up for lack of the parents' overseeing discipline for homework, each boy at Sinjuns had to report every week to a master and show he was up to date. This probably saved my education as I am sure without this I would have got further behind in my work. At the Scotts immediately after supper & washing up, the table was used for homework with one child on each side. Mr Scott who was a hairdresser and medically unfit for the army, would read the paper while Mrs Scott did other jobs. In the good weather I would take my homework up to the recreation ground and do it there, afterwards playing.

The recreation ground was quite a social centre for the evacuees. Although many of us were treated as one of the family in our billets, the homes were small, and overcrowded with the extra member, so the children seldom entertained or played in the home. Instead the rec' became our meeting area. The pavilion was a large building with men & women's changing rooms down each side. The space between them (about 30' wide) was fully roofed and closed at one end but open at the front. It had benches at the end and along the walls of the changing rooms. The centre was an open space sheltered from the weather where several dozen kids could play or natter when the weather was bad. Of course in the summer there were seats and the grass to use. The rec straddled the top and sides of Hollaway Hill. The top had the open playing fields, pavilion, and courts, but the side of the hill grew wild, with just a couple of paths running through it. This is where the cowboys and indians fought or where the brave explorers travelled. When you don't have formal games, the imagination supplies even better ones.

The different sports we played were wider than in London, Charterhouse had tennis, squash & badminton courts that we could use. There were cricket and football fields at the schools and the rec'. A portion of the River Wye was designated as a swimming area, though it was a bit too weedy for my liking. The county school had a field hockey and netball field. Our school took up hockey but after the first game against the County School girls, there were so many injuries that we never played a return match. Those girls were rough! The cadet corps also had use of the Charterhouse armoury and rifle range, but more on that later.

Just after Christmas 1939, I had a message at school to return to my billet. When I got there, I found my mother waiting and looking very tearful. She had come down to tell me and explain that Terry had become very ill and they had to have him put to sleep. It was the first great loss I had experienced. Needless to say I was very unhappy and cried a lot. When I was older, I realised how thoughtful it had been of my mother to make the 30-mile journey by train to tell me. I can imagine how much worse it could have been to learn of it by letter. Dad soon purchased another dog, Bruce, a cross Alsatian and collie. I said that he would never replace Terry but I was wrong, when I returned to Merton, I walked Bruce every evening and while I was at home we were seldom apart.

After I had been at the Scotts for nine months, Mrs. Scott had to go into hospital for an operation. Laurie & Mary were put up at their grandfather's home, but I had to go to the Temporary Accommodation. There was something like this in every town intended as a holding house for children between billets. As the Scotts had said that I would be going back in three weeks, I was sent to one. It was an old disused mansion named "Vril", which had over 40 rooms. Unfortunately although only intended as temporary dwellings, they soon became permanent for the unfortunate; the violent children, the bed-wetters, those with criminal tendencies, and a few that just did not fit (including a couple of coloured children rejected by people who were colour prejudiced).

Vril was set in the middle of a very large garden, which through neglect, had been allowed to grow wild. The spring of 1940 had exceptionally good weather, so we spent more time in the garden than in the house. The kids had managed to clear one of the tennis courts and find some not too broken rackets, I learnt to play a form of tennis. The garden also had a large bed of Strawberries that were lovely and sweet and partially made up for the uninteresting food served.

It was run at that time, by a rather sluttish woman, helped by several younger ones with babies. The one that was supposed to look after my wing slept all day and spent most evenings with a soldier. I was quite innocent at that time, but a girl of my age, who was there also as a temporary, explained things to me. I cannot remember her name but she organised the cleaning and making of beds in our wing for the two weeks she was there. I often wonder if she got on in later life as she was an evacuee from one of the Battersea council schools and from a very poor family. Still it did not stop her from making the best of things for herself and in doing so, the best for the rest of us. Still, I wasn't sorry when Mr Scott came and said that I could return.

I was at Vril during May & June 1940, the Dunkirk period. It did not affect Godalming very much, but we did see a number of hospital trains going from Portsmouth towards London. Immediately after Dunkirk, however, the war came to us. First the Home Guard, or as it was initially called, the LDV was formed. There were no military firearms available and they trained with a few shotguns and with pikes. After discovering that our cadet weapons had at some time been re chambered for the .303 bullet, the cadet corps lent them to the Home Guard. The cadets had to show some younger members how to operate the Lee-Martini carbines and Metford Rifles. Many Home Guard were old sweats from the First World War (known then as the Great War), who were probably better infantrymen that many regular

soldiers. Later in the year, the Ross Rifle was made available to the Home Guard and we got our antiques back. However, the Sinjun's cadets had a very close association with the 2nd. West Surrey (Queens) Home Guard. So we received training in modern weapons as they went into service with the HG and we supplied them with messengers (mounted suitably on bicycles) for the whole time I was in Godalming.

As the summer of 1940 progressed, so did the Battle of Britain. There was not much in Godalming, occasionally we could see vapour trails in the sky and heard gunfire in the distance. One day we saw a Hurricane shoot down a barrage balloon that had broken away. At home in Merton a few bombs were dropped but on the whole action did not get further north than Croydon. Then the night raids started! Night after night London was bombed but Godalming was out of it. The sirens sounded on many nights but no aircraft came. On those nights all three children slept on a spare mattress, placed under the stairs, which was supposed to be the best place for survival if the house was blasted.

Early in the next year, my parents rented a room in a house on Queens Street so that they and their friends could sometimes come down by rail and have an undisturbed night's sleep. They kept it until the end of 1942, by which time things had improved. During the nearly four years I was in Godalming, only two bomb incidents occurred in the area. One of these was a jettison that by chance, hit the local gasometer (tank for the supply of coal gas), which meant cold meals for nearly a week while repair was made.

I started to go home for weekends in 1942. Officially this was not allowed and masters patrolled the railway station at Godalming & Farncombe. However, no one was stopped taking the bus to Guildford and that was the end of a Green Line service from London, a cheaper way to travel. I would sometimes hitch hike the 30 miles especially if I were still in cadet uniform after the Saturday morning parade. I found that wearing Khaki made people offer rides more than being in civvies. I would try to do it in three stages, the first to Guildford as there was a lot of local traffic. Then I would start off down London Road and could often get a ride all the way down the A3 to the Kingston By Pass at Malden. Then I would try for the remaining three miles home, but was not often successful on this stage, so I would lash out on a bus fare, All of 2d. I seldom had to walk more than 15 minutes before getting a ride, so I was often able to get home for tea, stay over night, have Sunday Dinner at home and return to the Scotts in time to do my homework that evening. When the raids started again, I was forbidden to come. I really missed the Sunday Dinner.

One weeks ration

Food was rationed for the whole of the war. Butter was 2oz. per person a week, marg. 4oz. , cheese 8oz. , bacon 4oz. , and meat 10d. worth. Canned food was on a point system, but were generally in short supply. Fortunately milk, bread, potatoes, and restaurant meals were never rationed so that we never got hungry. Fish & chips were always an emergency meal providing you had the money. Because of government support of the fishermen, you could get a piece of "Rock Salmon" for 4d. and 1d. worth of chips suitably wrapped in an old copy of the News of the World and nicely sprinkled with salt and vinegar. A meal fit for a king! Clothing rationing started toward the end of my stay as an evacuee. You were given a number of points to last for a year. Things like socks would require only one point, but a suit would take a full year's supply. People were quite shabby and there was much "make and mend." Parachutes when found, were quickly hidden by ladies who otherwise were perfectly honest, and the silk used to make underwear. The sweet ration was probably the hardest for us kids. It was a terrible decision whether to buy the Gobstuffer (hard candy, which lasted a long time and only needed one point for half a dozen) or a bar of chocolate, which also took one point but you could eat it in a minute. I think that we were given 12 points a month at the start of rationing.

The radio was the main entertainment for most people. Shows like Garrison Theatre, Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh, and of course ITMA were listened to without fail and the catch phrases used at every suitable time. ITMA, standing for It's That Man Again, was Tommy Handley's weekly show that lasted through out the war and until he died in the late forties. Many of the catch phrases became installed in the English language. Colonel Chinstrap's "I don't mind if I Do"; Handley's "TTFN" (Tat Ta For Now); The diver's "Every penny makes the water warmer" & "Don't forget the diver"; and Mrs Mopp's "Can I do you now sir!", can still be heard by people two generations from wartime. The humour in these programmes, like that in later years of the Goons, is British and not easily understood by others. Many years later I took a record of one of the Goon show to a ski chalet and played it there. All of the British were rolling with laughter, while the Canadians and others just look puzzled. They had tried to make sense of it rather

than just seeing how each character appeared in each episode, and the fast patter of the dialogue.

I used to enjoy the radio dramas. There were a number of spy adventures early in the war, including a rather tongue-in-check one with Basil Radford and Naughton Wayne. they played the traditional Englishmen abroad, stiff upper lip, imperturbable, but always able to muddle through. Somehow your imagination took over and resulted in an even more vivid adventure than the movies. Television stopped broadcasting the day war started, because there was only one station at Alexander Palace and this could be used by the Germans to find the position of their bombers during night raids.

I spent a fair amount of my spare time at cadets. The school corps had been incorporated into the Army Cadets and every cadet had a war office identity card. Our old affiliation to the 23rd. County of London Regiment still stood, but as this had developed in to the 42nd. Royal Tank Regiment, there was little contact. We were being trained in more modern weapons and had been issued with both Lee-Enfields and Sten guns.

The area around Godalming had taken a much more warlike appearance. There was an anti-tank ditch running across the meadows by the river, and strong points and there were pill-boxes built into the side of many roads. Trenches had been dug to cover a number of the cross roads, but these were replaced by concrete pill boxes. In exercises with the Home Guard, we usually had to defend these against an "attack" by others, often from the army at Aldershot. At this time some quite unusual weapons were developed. There was a smooth bore cannon called the "Smith Gun" that could tip over on one wheel to be fired. Anti-tank weapons like the Sticky-bomb and the Northover Projector that was a poor man's mortar for projecting Molatov Cocktails were much more dangerous to the user than the enemy! Of course, all sign posts and place names had been removed "to prevent the Germans knowing where there were if they landed." This had the effect of causing army convoys to get completely lost and gave the excuse for delays in delivery of post.

The training given in the cadet corps was varied and useful in other aspects of life. Square-bashing, Drill, taught both team work and control. Weapon training and range work gave most cadets a healthy respect for danger and safety. The idea that the bomb you were supposed to throw would kill or maim you if you dropped it, had a sobering effect on high spirits. Many cadets got their first taste of managing and giving orders during their training as pre-NCOs. I can remember being placed, in turn, at one end of a football field, with the remaining squad at the other end. The idea was that you acted as the drill sergeant and commanded the squad, bringing them by wheeling and turning to your end of the field. It must have been funny to watch, as we were barely five feet tall, and many had voices just breaking. I found it difficult to remember to reverse the direction of turns when the squad was marching towards me. The squad was usually helpful as they knew that their turn would soon come.

During the summer for the last two years I was at school we went to camp. To Derby in 1942 and to the regimental depot of the Glosters in 1943. Between the two camps I had obtained the War Office Certificate A, which was supposed to reduce the time spent at call-up in preliminary training by four weeks. One thing about these camps was that boys came from all over the country this resulted in us losing some parochial attitudes. There was also a very big market in cap badge swapping. As Sinjuns had a special school rather than a regimental badge, ours were in great demand.

The camps were usually one week long and supposed to give an indication of army life. We were woken in the morning to the bugle call "reveille", meals were marked with "cookhouse", and parades were preceded by the call "fall in". In the evening, "last post" and "lights out" closed the day. We spent most of the week on parade, and weapon training, with more emphasis on battle drill, but fatigues also had to be done. I was lucky (or cunning) as I avoided all latrine duties and most of my time was in the cookhouse. The second to last day was an all day manoeuvre, with all units participating. We went off in the morning with water in our water bottles and food in our haversack and did not return until late afternoon. One group attacked while the other defended. There were usually over 1000 cadets in the camp so it was like a battalion war game. After the "field day," the corps padre put on a camp concert. During the week, some cadets were given "day passes" to visit the nearest town. A group of cadet sergeants was designated as MPs to keep them under control and see that they got back to camp safely. The final day was mainly parades and those who had passed "Cert A" or other qualifications had their documents presented.

During the war, Britain had conscription (known as "the draft" in the US) for both sexes. On reaching the age of 16 for boys or 18 for girls, one had to register for service. There was a great shortage of miners, so some on leaving school were directed into

the mines and were known as “Bevin boys”, the rest were called up just before their 18th. birthday. Many, however, volunteered in to the service of their choice before call up because if you waited you went where you were sent (usually the Army). Single girls were given the choice of joining one of the women's services (WRNS, ATS, or WAAF), the Land Army, the Police or Civil Defence, or take a job in one of the war industries. Married women without children had a little more choice, but were directed to work if they were young. On reading history later, I discovered that more people in Britain were actively involved in the war effort than in any other country, including Germany. I registered at 16 but had a deferment because I was still at school. Even when I left school, my apprenticeship in an aircraft plant together with the education I was getting at evening classes deferred me from being called up.

In May, before leaving school, I sat for my General Schools Certificate. This was the first formal exam that I had taken. There were some difficulties that I had not experienced before. The exam was held in the Main Hall of the County School with temporary desks being set up. Looking up from your desk for inspiration would result in an exam-monitor coming over and asking what the trouble was. We also took the exams with the fifth form of the County School. We found it quite disconcerting seeing girls along side in adjacent desks for the first time, particularly as they seem to be busily writing, while we waited for inspiration. The greatest difficulty was that we took the exams during a period of daytime air raids. We had two warnings during the exams, one during the algebra exam and the other during French. Normally, when the warning went, everyone would leave class, stream across the playing field to the buried shelters on the other side. There we would sing, natter, make jokes and just generally let off our high spirits until the all clear sounded. For those taking exams, it was different. We had an escort to the shelters, and sat with officials and masters between us, in groups of about a dozen. We were not allowed to speak or make any noise on pains of being disqualified. The photo shows boys preparing to put on their gasmasks. Although we were checked on having taken gasmasks to school, we never took them to shelters as everything was forgotten in the rush to get there!

There is no worse torture than making a kid sit still and keep quiet for twenty minutes or so, particularly when worried about being able to finish the exam any way. I was OK in my algebra as I knew the subject well, but the French was terrible. When the results were published, I had got one mark below the pass and French is a compulsory subject. They must have made some allowance because I was awarded the General Schools Certificate in Science.

After returning from cadet camp in July 1943, I had a week of holiday in Bognor. It was not the normal seaside holiday as the beaches had not been cleared of the invasion defences. If you were staying with local people, you could get a pass from the military command. This allowed you to go on one tiny section of the beach that was free from barbed wire and mines. Even there, pill boxes and anti-tank obstructions were reminders that the war was still on. Still, it was nice to swim in salt water again. I returned through Godalming collected my belongings and said good bye to the Scotts then returned home to Merton.

Because of my interest in aircraft, I wanted to leave school "and get on with my life" (Does that sound familiar to you parents?). But at sixteen, I was too young to volunteer for the Royal Air Force, so after discussion with my father, we decided I would try for an apprenticeship at an aircraft factory. There were two possibilities; Vickers at Weybridge where my father was friends with the managing director; or Hawkers at Kingston. As both companies sent their apprentices to Kingston Technical College and if I went to Hawkers I could live at home, I decided to try there. The interview was minimal, I think I was only asked to name some Hawker designed aircraft. This was not difficult as I was proficient in aircraft recognition and had gained the R.O.C. (Royal Observers Corps) certificate while at school. My father signed the indenture papers and in the September I started at Hawkers.

Contents

Chapter 4 Apprenticeship & last years of war 1943-48

One Monday morning in September, I presented myself at the main door of Hawkers in Canbury Park Road in Kingston. I was ushered to the office of the Managing Director where I signed the papers and then became an apprentice. Hawkers had two different kinds of apprentices; Trade, who only were trained in one aspect like Fitting or Tool Making; or Aircraft & General, who went through a number of departments and usually obtained jobs at the end as Draughtsmen or in one of the technical departments. I was an aircraft apprentice. My agreement was as a 4-year apprenticeship extended an extra nine months to have the time to my seventeenth birthday. The schedule was for me to spend time in Fitter, the Machine Shop, the Wing Shop, the Erection Floor and the Final Line. In addition I had nine months in the D.O.School, as well as time in both the Experimental and Service departments.

Because of the war, the number of hours worked by everyone including boys was 54 hours a week minimum. This was from 7:45 in the morning until 5:30 in the evening six days a week. We had alternate Saturdays and Sundays off, which meant that one week we worked seven days but the next only five. I also went to the Tech' three nights a week, initially taking first year national certificate. I also joined the local Army Cadets as a corporal so I did not have much time for external entertainment. I ate lunch at the Hawker canteen and there were frequently ENSA concerts on while we were eating.

My day started about 6 am when I got up and had breakfast then took the tram to Wimbledon Station. From there by train to Kingston and a short walk to the works. Sometimes, especially when I was short of money, I would cycle the seven miles. The trouble with this was the return at night after evening classes. It was bad enough cycling through the Black-out, but sometimes there was a raid on and shrapnel from the A.A. guns would be tinkling down. Not too good for the old tires on my 'bike. I would get home a little after 10 pm, help in the bar or cellar, then take the dog for a walk and go to bed. I never had any trouble sleeping even in the noisiest raids.

On the few nights I came straight home, I was in at a little after 6 pm and could get out in time to see the last show at one of the Wimbledon or Tooting cinemas. Officially I was also supposed to do firewatching one night a week (firewatching was a duty that required you to be on hand in buildings with flat roofs, so that if an incendiary bomb landed it could be smothered before the building caught fire. As the Kings Head had a flat roof I was listed as on duty when I was asleep in my bed. Fortunately no bombs landed while I was at home, although two had been dealt with at the height of the Blitz by my parents.

My first day at work was taken in going through the induction process. Getting a temporary pass, being shown around the plant and being taken to see Vic Butler who was in charge of the fitting sections and consequently the initial two years for apprentices. I was also issued with a power tool card, which had to be surrendered to obtain either a pneumatic drill or rivet gun, and a set of disks with my works number (10935) on them. These were exchanged at the tool crib for tools, dies, taps and reamers. Drills were obtained by requisition and after the job went into your own toolbox. One other use for the disks was to go to the toilet. The W.C.s in the washrooms all had key locks on their doors, and to obtain the keys you had to leave your disk with the attendant. He also marked time in and time out to discourage the slackers. Unions would not stand for this today, but then it was expected. At least they did not deduct from your pay for the time, as they did in some companies.


Bib & Brace

I started work the next day when I went with my brand new "bib & brace" (overalls) to the first section of fitters. The first few weeks were taken up with exercises. We were shown how to use tools and the method to do the job was explained - ONCE! We were then given material and told to get on with it. The exercises were all similar and taught the use of lay-out instruments, drilling and cutting tools and above all the use of files and finishing tools. The exercise consisted of two pieces of steel plate on which one had to mark-out, cut and finish in a selected geometric shape. Squares or equilateral triangles were usually first. One plate was made to the shape while the other had a hole the same size and shape. The proof of the exercise was to fit the plate in the hole and hold it up against light. If no light passed through the join of hole & plate, it passed the first stage. The plate was removed and rotated one edge and the check repeated. The exercise was considered complete when it had rotated all of its side without light showing.

The final test was similar but using a circle. If nothing else, the exercises taught patience. It was hopeless to expect to be able to get the accuracy with files alone. The use of very fine emery cloth, or even lapping with jewellers rouge, a little at a time was necessary. That degree of accuracy was seldom needed in other work, but it was a most important start.

Section No1 was a mixed section, where the men did a lot of the large and heavy parts, while the women did more of the fiddlely assembly jobs. Everyone, except Aircraft apprentices were supposed to be on both flat rate and a completion bonus. The latter was an encouragement to complete the job quickly and accurately. Each job was rated for a time to finish and a 10% extra was added. If you got the job done in less time than the rated AND all parts passed inspection, you were paid the difference between the rated time and that you took. In this way it was possible to earn double the flat hourly rate. If you were very slow or made mistakes you would at least get the flat rate.

When you start as a new person in fitters, the first thing the old-timers would do, would be to chose a name for you. It was fine if your Christian name was unusual, but when your name was the same as others in the section, a nickname would be chosen. I had the misfortune to go to a section with two Dons. Joe was also used a couple of times. My hair when young had a ginger patch at the back and on the front so Ginger was suggested. A RAF fitter who had a complete head of red hair had the use of this name. Finally it was decided that I would be called "Dark-ginger". This soon became "Darkie," but by the time I left fitters I knew enough to get called "Don." All you have to do, is refuse to answer to any other name, but that is difficult when you are inexperienced.

On my first pay, I discovered that I had more than the 20 shilling less deductions I was supposed to have as an aircraft apprentice. The foreman who gave out the apprentices pay, checked it out. Apparently a mistake had been made on the indenture forms the company and my father signed. Instead of the usual fixed amount, it said as "agreed between the company and union for boys." I continued to get a higher pay until I was 18, the difference being between 25 & 35% more. I did not complain.

As it was, there was very little money left over for luxuries. My average salary was about 25/- on flat rate, of which I took home around 22/6d. I gave my mother 5/- for my bed & board (a real bargain). My tram & train fare was 6/6d a week and I spent a shilling on my lunch and sixpence on drinks and snacks every day, more on the nights that I was at the tech'. That comes to 20/6d. minimum and leaves no more than 2/- for clothes and other spending.

You can appreciate how I looked forward to any job that paid bonus. These were not too frequent, as the Union insisted that the higher paid workers got the first choice on bonus jobs and the boys were left with the finishing and reworks, which although requiring more skill were not rated.

Lido, Tooting - one of my swim pools

I could not consider treating a girl often, as the cinema seats were 1/3d, 1/9d & 2/6d. Fortunately most of the girls I knew were working and earning a good deal more than me, so they paid their own way. I did not dance, so the cinema was my main year-round enjoyment. Swimming and Cycling were reasonably cheap and were used to the full, especially in the summer.

The people that I met when I started work at Hawkers were a real mixed bunch. There were a group of old time fitters, some like Nobby Clark had been working at the factory since before the name of the company was changed from Sopwith Aviation in 1924. Others were serving RAF mechanics who had been posted to Hawkers, and a few were young men who could not serve in the forces because they were considered medically unfit. Amongst the apprentices Bob and Harry Hart were respectively, the aircraft and trade in the intake before me, and Ernie Earthwald was the trade in my intake. Later Ken and Denis arrived but by then I was an accepted member of fitters.

The girls worked in an area all together and were also all types. Lil & Phil were 18 years old and had just got married to soldiers when I arrived and were still getting their legs pulled. Today this would probably constitute harassment, but then it was expected, taken in good part, and was even considered an indication of popularity. The only girl near my age was Emmy, who was one year older. She was good looking with long black hair, and was treated as the baby of the section by both men and women. Although she was teased like a younger sister there was never any flirting or coarseness presented to her.

There was a woman leadhand officially in charge, but the person who the girls all looked to for help and advice was Mrs L., a lady in her late 50s, obviously well todo and by her accent, of the upper class. She in fact, was the den mother for the whole section and acted as adviser for the men as well on domestic matters. I think that the class distinction was still very noticeable then, but her nature in working the same as the others, not interfering or throwing her weight about and being generally helpful to all, placed her in the position of section advisor.

One of the two other girls that I remember well, was a circus strong woman. She was able to work on the 55 lb cross tubes that were normally considered only suitable for the younger men. The other was Flo, a local prostitute, "retired for the duration of the war." She was almost a stage character of the good hearted cockney tart. But when ever she felt that any man had gone to far in leg pulling one of the girls, she would take him to task with language that, as she said, no lad should hear. Few offenders would not slink away squashed and embarrassed.

Hawkers was unusual in that most aircraft companies are situated in the outskirts of towns on an aerodrome. The plant and offices of Hawkers until after the war, were in the heart of Kingston, only two minutes walk from the station or five minutes to the main shopping area. This enabled us to go out at lunch time and window shop or when finances allowed, purchase things. Kingston market operated four days a week during the war and it was possible to buy fruit and baked foods straight from the stalls. This was often my evening snack on the way to the tech' as their canteen was both poor and comparatively expensive.

Because there is no aerodrome near Kingston, test flying was always done at Hawkers second plant. Originally this was at Brooklands near Weybridge, which it shared with Vickers. The war time production and the need for shadow factories to avoid bombing caused the other plant to be shifted to Langley near Slough, where it stayed until the enlargement of the new London Airport at Heathrow, in the post-war period, forced the closure of Langley. Hawkers then moved to Dunsfold. The Kingston plant made most of the detail parts and small sub-assemblies. A few of the major sub-assemblies like the control surface, undercarriage, engine mount and centre fuselage, which was assembled from struts, were built in Kingston then shipped by lorry to Langley. Major components like wings and rear fuselage were built on the erection floor at Langley then assembled together on the final line. Shadow factories often in garages or small manufacturing companies produced the parts and assemblies as a separate source from Kingston in event of war damage. Actually the Kingston plant was free from bombing except for a very small bomb early in 1941.

The canteen at Hawkers was on the north side of Canbury park Road, opposite to the main building. The upper floor of this building was the hot meal canteen. Here two course lunches were served together with hot drinks. There was a choice if you got there early enough, but generally if I walked around Kingston first, there was only Spam & Chips left by the time I got there. The middle floor was the snack canteen and used by those that brought packed lunches from home. Dishes like Cornish Pasties or Beans on toast were available for around 6d. and tea was only 1d. It was here that the concerts were put on, because unlike the upper floor that had the kitchen, nearly all the floor was available for seating. Occasionally I would eat in Kingston town (usually at Lyons, where I could get an individual Steak & Kidney Pie for 9d. or a plate of Welsh Rabbit for only 5d.). The tea trolley came to your work station in the morning and afternoon. From it, you could buy Cheese or Ham rolls at 2d or Biscuits at 1½d and a full mug of strong sweet tea for a penny. Nobody worried about caffeine in the 40s, my average intake of tea was seven 10 or 12 ounce mugs a day, and I was not considered to have a large consumption.

After the training period was over, I settled down to the main work that apprentices did in fitters, the design and making of "rough" tools. These were the smaller tools that could be made away from the tool room, without which the smaller parts could not be made. There were cutting & filing templates, bend & joggle blocks, drilling templates & nests and occasionally stamping tools. We enjoyed making new tools as we also had to prove them. This meant doing two pieces for the "first off inspection" and rate fixing respectively. The first off was inspected with very much more care and accuracy than production checks to see that the tool would make the part required by the drawing. The second one was done after the inspector had passed the tool and was timed to fix the rate for the job. A ratefixer timed how long it took to make the part while a shop steward also watched. If you worked too fast, the union took you on one side and explained the facts of life. The ratefixer and the steward then debated if you were a fast worker or an average worker and the rate was adjusted. Then you were given the first batch of usually 100 parts to make. This was a good opportunity to make a good bonus as it was recognised that the apprentices were faster than production workers.

My best paid job was a set of tools for a cowling bracket for the Typhoon. This needed a blanking tool, a joggle press, and a drilling jig and consequently three rates were involved. After the tools were proved, the foreman with the stewards approval asked me to do the full batch of 1000 parts. Apparently the girl that normally made brackets had left due to pregnancy and the parts were needed before a new worker could be trained. My take-home pay was double or more for the three weeks the job lasted.

When not making rough tools, the apprentices were given ordinary production jobs, usually drilling that did not have very good rates for bonus. We had to join the union but we could not take any active part in its activity. This meant that our flat rates were set by agreement between the union and the company, but we (the apprentices) had no input to either side. There was also open raiding of members between the Brass & Sheet Metal Workers that I was in, and the larger but less specialist Amalgamated Engineering Union. This came to a head about 1948 when the AEU managed to take over, but by that time I had started in the D.O. that was not unionised.

Hurricane

As I remember things, life in the fitters shop was quite fun. There was no "music while you work", but singing or whistling was normal. There was a fair amount of leg pulling. New people were sent to the tool crib for a long weight (wait) or to the stores for some striped paint. It always amazed me that so many fell for these old japes. The work was varied because the production was done in batches so no-one had to spend years drilling a hole in the same place as I understood happened on some production lines. In spite of batch work, Hawkers was rolling out 24 Hurricanes a day during the peak production.

I did three evenings a week at the tech' initially, but after 1945 production had been cut right down and we only worked five days a week, I was abl e to do two evenings and Saturday morning. It was very difficult trying to concentrate after a day's work especially with the windows blacked out and closed, which made the rooms very stuffy. Fortunately the subjects were mathematic or scientific, which did not give me too much trouble. Many of the pupils doing the ordinary National Certificate course were apprentices from Hawkers and Vickers. A few came from General Aircraft at Felpham or Faireys at Hayes. I worked with and sat next to the only girl in the class in third year, Heather May P., the distractions were such that I only just squeaked through the Strength of Materials exam. Heather was training to be a designer at Faireys, but I understand that she interrupted her career for marriage in 1952 and I never heard if she went back later.

Richmond Ice Rink

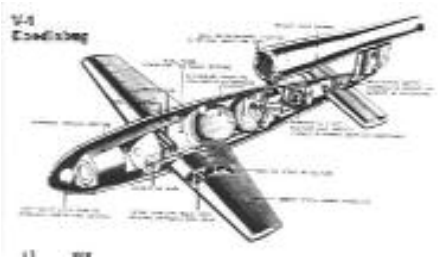
Sometimes a group of boys and girls from Hawkers would go to the Kingston Baths and swim the whole lunch time. It took a whole hour plus the walking time to the pool. Fortunately the foremen generally looked the other way when we got back. Another group activity was to go to Richmond Skating Rink occasionally in the evening. It was quite expensive so we were only able to go once or twice a year. None of us could skate properly, and the rented skates were poor, old and never sharpened. The result was bruises where they could not be seen. I was just able to catch the last train to Wimbledon if I stayed to the end of the session at 10:30, so I did not get to bed until midnight.

I did not get much time for reading, but still managed to read at least one book a week. There was the rail journey in each direction. In the canteen over lunch, I usually had a book on the table. The most difficult thing was finding time to get to the local library in Wimbledon. This I did on the evenings I came strait home, as the library was only a short distance from Wimbledon Station. At this period, one could only take out a single book on one's ticket. I did get a number of Penguin Books from a second-hand stall in Kingston Market, but even although the price was only pennies, my budget would not allow for too many. Fortunately I could sell the books back to the stall (at a lower price) which did help a bit.

After returning from Godalming, I found that there was a new member of the family, Betty Hammond. She and her husband, Ted, were married on the 31st December 1938 and as Ted was an army reservist, they were parted on 1st September 1939. Ted had one leave at Christmas before he was sent to India. They did not see one another again until autumn 1944. Of course this was common during the war, but the disruption was terrible. Firstly, Bess had to give up their apartment as the rent was too high on Army pay, and return to work. Her mother had moved to a very small flat after she left home to get married, so she could not return there. My parents offered "temporary" accommodation in one of the staff bedrooms not being used. Bess stayed on until after the war, helping out in the bar at night. She was like an elder sister to me and in fact I was more than once called by a younger customer "to ask if my sister would go out with him." Bess confided in me after the war, that the hardest time was when Ted returned and it was like living with a stranger. This aspect is seldom considered when the war is being discussed.

My main other entertainment was the cinema. I would go when ever I had the time off and the money for it. There was a huge choice in films, at Wimbledon as all three chains (Odeon, Gaumont, & ABC) had theatres there and each ran double feature programs. There was also an independent and a Grenada at Tooting, so in

all I had the choice of about 10 films each week. Inside the auditorium there was a sign each side of the screen that when lit up, read "AIR RAID IN PROGRESS." Nobody took any notice of it, and it was lucky that few cinemas were hit by bombs during a performance.



I remember one film about the war in the Pacific, where a young soldier sharing a foxhole with the hero, was going to pieces and screaming that he could not stand the bombardment. Suddenly a bomb landed near by and the blast blew open the emergency exit doors. The film was spoilt by laughter at this dramatic place! A few people did leave that night but I sat and got my moneys worth. On the whole, Londoners did not take kindly to histrionics while the Blitz was on.

Its strange that I don't remember too much about the war. The raids continued irregularly until summer 1944, when there was a big increase due to the 'V' weapons. Some things stand out in my memory, like one tuesday lunchtime while walking through Kingston suddenly people poured out of buildings cheering. On inquiring, I was told they we had landed in France. It was of course, D Day and although the end was nearly a year away, it seemed to be a huge step towards Victory.

The doodlebug was the first operational guided missile ever to be used. It was designated V-1 by the Germans, the "V" being the initial for the German word for "Terror weapon". Basically it was a small airplane driven by a pulse jet with a one ton bomb in its nose. It was very fast and flew close to the ground, so few piloted planes could catch it and the guns had difficulty in spotting and firing before it was out of sight.

The V-1 could not manoeuvre, but flew in a straight line. Before being launched it was set to come down at a specified distance. An air driven propeller calculated the distance flown and when it reached the selected range. The engine would be cut and the elevators pushed down resulting in a dive to the ground and the explosion.

Like every Londoner I have my own doodlebug story. I was walking along Merton High Street one afternoon, when I heard the putt-putt-putt of a doodlebugs motor getting closer. Suddenly there was silence, and I looked up to see the nose swing down. It seemed to point straight at me. I did not keep my dignity or my cool, but threw myself down in the gutter with my hands over my head - scared! There was a very loud explosion and I realised that I was unhurt. As I got up, I saw a dozen or so people all getting up and looking sheepish, we had all seen it heading at us. In fact it landed half a mile away, not close at all.
At work, we did not go to the shelter if the siren sounded. Instead there were rings of spotters some ten & five miles away, who plotted the approximate direction of any V-1. If the plot indicated Kingston, we were given an "Imminent", and we had about two minutes to get in the shelter before it was overhead. Our worst day had 23 "immanent". The extra exercise kept us trim.
After the doodlebugs came the rockets, the V-2s. I found these much more scary as they did not give any warning, if you heard the explosion you were all right. There was no accuracy, but with a target as big as London, someone would catch it. Because the rocket hit the ground nearly vertical and at supersonic speeds, they went in deep before exploding and consequently did very much more damage than the V-1s. The first V-2s were reported as being gas mains that had blown up, as the type of damage was similar. Because they exploded deep, the shock wave from them did some strange things. One sunday, I was laying in bed when suddenly I was thrown up and on to the floor. A V-2 had landed over a mile away and the shock wave hit the foundations of the Kings Head causing the vibrations.


Sten gun

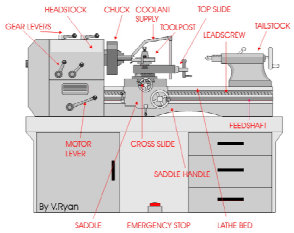
We escaped major damage during the raids, although the windows were blown out three times and we lost a few tiles from the gabled roof. We were lucky as a V-1 hit the board-mill opposite 100 yards away and there was a small bomb that exploded in the High Street only 30 yards from us. In both cases we were shielded by other buildings that took the brunt of the explosions. Repairs to the walls were necessary after the war because of cracks and the windows never did fit properly after it was all over.

Generally speaking the morale of those around me and others I saw was high. The bombing did not interrupt our work very much nor our play. Although I did not realise it at the time, there was a social revolution occurring. With the majority of the men away in the forces, more and more of the jobs and duties previously done by men were being done by women. ATA girls were delivering the Hurricanes from Langley to the squadrons, women were testing, by firing, Sten guns being made at the old Lines Toy factory, and heavy lorries had girls who could hardly see over the steering wheel driving them.

The biggest change was in the home. The women had their own wages and could spend more on themselves than when they had

been allocated housekeeping by their husbands. They also had to deal with the officials from the borough offices, do tax, and make repairs in the home, which previously would all be done by the men.
Not only work and spending was affected. The fact that not only the fighting men were in danger but the entire civil population did not know if "the next bomb had their name on it." This created a live-for-today attitude and resulted in them making use of most of their free time for socialising and entertainment. It also made for a loosening of sexual morals. This was enhanced by married couples being separated, and by women and men working along side one another in the factories, on the busses and in many other areas of life. Communal living in the shelters and Underground stations made for a more open attitude towards the opposite sex. Walking the dog in the evening could be an embarrassment while in the parks and passing shop doorways, where the more uninhibited couples made love. Those with some inhibitions would go into the air raid shelters at times when there was not likely to be a raid.

As the spring of 1945 came it was obvious the war in Europe would not last much longer. I finally moved on at Hawkers into the Machine Shop, where initially I worked on the automatic lathes. These machines had turrets with tools attached at various positions. The feed speed, the movement limits and the drive gearbox were all controlled by an array of hydraulic valves. The cutting was lubricated by a spray of oil. This resulted in the operator being soaked in oil by the end of the day.



Centre Lathe

I used to strip to underclothes before putting on a boiler-suit, but my skin soaked up the oil into the pores and resulted in blackheads all over. It took a couple of months after I left the section before I got my skin natural again. The apprentices were trained as operators then as setters, who set the machine to make a particular part. Before the advent of digitally controlled machine tools, which were invented in the late fifties, the hydraulic controlled machine tools were the most complex in the machine shop.

For the rest of my time in the machine shop, I was on centre lathes, except for some instruction on milling and grinding machines. Centre lathes were the one machine that you worked from a drawing rather than setting up the machine to do a sequence of operations. In the quiet period after the war ended, we were allowed to make ourselves tools and even model aircraft engines that were run on ether. We did attempt to make a jet, or really a rocket engine, but we did not find a suitable slow burning solid fuel so it was not successful.

I had continued to go to cadet parades and had been promoted to sergeant. Because of the technical training, I was able to obtain Certificate "T" and I was promoted to staff-sergeant armourer. In the August of 1944 I went to camp at Calshot on the Solent, and was lucky to survive it. One of the advantages at camp was that it was the only time cadets could fire live ammunition. I with an armourer from another battalion were looking after the butts where cadets were allowed to fire Sten guns. A small cadet was to fire. As he squeezed the trigger we saw the muzzle rise up and the cadet start to fall backwards. The young fool kept his finger on the trigger resulting in an ever higher spray of bullets as he fell.

Fortunately the magazine was only partially filled and ran out of ammunition before the spray went in a dangerous location. I don't know why he fell as Stens do not have much of a kick, but I know that I was scared, soon after, no cadet was allowed to fire without one of the armourers behind him. It was a little after this that an accident in another camp made the War Office ban cadet firing except for .22 calibre.


Fishery protection ship

While at Calshot I did my one day of active service during the war. The invasion of France had taken place in June and personnel were short in the U.K. The senior cadet NCOs were asked if they would volunteer to man anti-aircraft Bren guns. I overcame my natural way of never volunteering for anything and the next day three other NCOs and I were marched down the quay and told to board a small boat. We were taken to the guns on either side of the bridge and proceeded out of the Solant and into the Channel. The boat was a fishery protection vessel and was armed with a 40mm gun (and the Brens). Its duty was to sail to the east of the fishing fleet and fight off any E boat attack. It wouldn't have stood a chance in a gun fight with an E boat, but could radio up air support very quickly. We stayed out all day and got back to camp tired and sunburnt. We had only seen friendly ships and aircraft all day, but that was expected at that period of the war. Before leaving the Skipper called us to the bridge and gave us messages to give to our respective COs and told us that we had been registered as serving in a war zone. I was in more danger at home in bed!

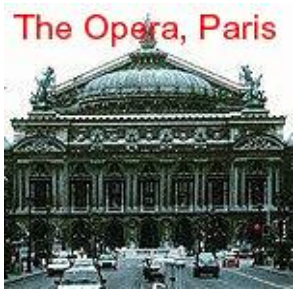
In May the war ended in Europe and on VE Day we had a holiday. I went to the West End of London with a haversack of food & drink in the morning. I met a number of friends and we wandered around as

a group. There was much singing and dancing in the streets. We went with the crowd to Downing Street, but did not see anyone of note. After resting in St James Park, we went to Buckingham Palace and were there to cheer the King with the Royal Family when they came out on the balcony. Winston Churchill joined them to wave to us.
Later we were in Piccadilly Circus when a singer came out and sang "I'm going to get lit up when the lights go on in London", which was a popular song during the war. It gave me a strange feeling to see that the lights on again. All the lights that had not been turned on for five years were burning that night, but unfortunately many had not survived and most signs were incomplete. I remember thinking how apt the sign on the pub called the "Sussex" was. The first three letters were not lit but the remainder shone out in red light. Later in the evening I found it very scary, due to the crush of thousands of people, You had little or no control on where you were going and I hate to think what would have happened if someone had fallen.
We decided it was time to leave, but getting home was easier said than done. The surface transport had stopped due to clogged roads and the central Tube stations were also closed to prevent dangerous overcrowding. The only thing to do was, to walk outside the central area and get a train in a station that was open. It took about three hours to travel what was normally a 25 minute journey. When I got home, I found that every last drink, including tea, had been sold at the Kings, but the customers were still singing in the bars. It had been a hectic evening for my parents and the staff, but everyone including them was in good humour. Not so the next day as there was no beer until the brewers made a delivery.

In the summer again I went to cadet camp, this time to Nodes Fort near Bembridge, Isle of Wight. I held the combined rank of Staff Sergeant Armourer and CQMS (Company Quarter Master Sergeant) and between the two jobs was able to have a pretty soft time. At the drill hall, it was another matter. The armoury had 20 Bren guns come in, all brand new. They were issued through my armoury because A company was used also as battalion HQ. They were thick with oil and preservative and I had to get them clean before issuing. Wiping was hopeless, but someone brought in an old steel bath and by placing this on a gas ring I was able to boil all the parts in water. The gunk melted and floated to the surface of the water. A real case of necessity being the mother of invention! One of the jobs of the CQMS was manning the internal telephone exchange that both taught me the workings of telephones and allowed me to spend time in the company of the two young ladies who did the clerical work, but as neither cycled, it was only a one night a week friendship. I continued with cadets until my 19th birthday and then resigned.

I did not have my main holiday in 1945 until August when I went to Scotland again with my father. We only had a week, and as the Railway Air Service was again operating, it was decided that we would fly. My first flight. Civil Aviation before the war was only for the very rich and even at Croydon there were only a couple of dozen flights a day, only the activity of a few minutes in the London Airport of today. I was very excited (and a little bit apprehensive). We entered the terminal building and had our luggage weighed, then they weighed us! We walked out on to the tarmac and waiting for us was a D.H. Dragon Rapide, which is a two motored biplane made from steel tubes and canvas covered. It had seven seats (other than the pilot). One of the passengers was a huge man, when he stepped on the scales it went over the graduated section of 20 stone (280lb). After some discussion he was placed in the side with three seats, the sole woman on the flight behind him and myself in the aft seat. The other four men went on the other side. He was so wide that they had to let down the side arm of the canvas seat. Anyway all was settled and we took off. Like so many airfield, Croydon had H.T. cables near by and many aircraft had to land over the cooling towers of the adjacent works, which was good for bumps.

The flight landed at Liverpool before going on to Glasgow where we and the big man disembarked. After I had learnt to fly, I realised what a bad flight the pilot must have had, because the earlier planes did not have aileron tabs.
During the week before, there had been news of the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan. Earlier that year we had heard rumours of the Germans developing a new super-bomb, which could destroy a complete city. Fortunately for London, the rumour did not materialise, although after we heard that they were working on an atom bomb. From Glasgow we took the train to Edinburgh and as we left the station we heard that Japan had surrendered and the war was over. Our hotel was adjacent to the Wavelley steps so we were kept awake all night to the sound of revelling and BAGPIPES on Princes Street. We met with the Jamiesons, took in the sights and returned home by air at the end of the week



For the summer holiday of 1947 I was given my first trip to another country. My mother accompanied by a friend took me to visit my uncle in Paris. We stayed at the Grand Hotel by the Opera, which was one of the best hotels in Paris. That did not mean very much as they had not recovered from the effects of the war. I was

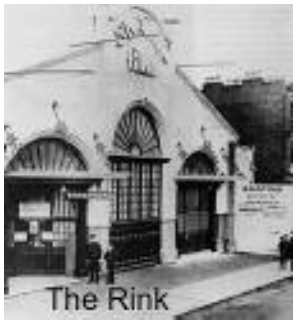
awakened the first night with screams from the other bedroom in the suite. I found my mother standing on the bed while a parade of cockroaches went across the floor. I killed a few but had to call for assistance. The suite was changed the next morning, but I suspect that my mother had little sleep either that night or the rest of the week. My uncle had got tickets for us to go to the Moulin Rouge, at that time considered very forward (with nude dancers). I thought it a good spectacle but the only difference to the variety shows at the Kingston Empire, was that the girls moved. Later we went to the Casino de Paris, that show however was very blue, I did not understand the french spoken in the skits, but understood them perfectly, so did Mother and her single lady-friend both of whom were laughing at things I felt elderly ladies should not have known about! Coming back to England, my first time through customs, I didn't exactly lie, but I declared my Armagnac as wine. Obviously, I was too young to know the difference.

At Hawkers, from then to the end of my apprenticeship in 1948, my 21st birthday, I went through a number of departments. After the machine shop I had my first spell at Langley, in the wing shop and erection floor. This was the noisiest area in Hawkers, where up to a hundred rivet guns were in action on sheet shells, which acted like drum amplifiers. It is strange that visitors could not make out even shouted conversations, but the people working there developed a low volume talk that was completely intelligible.


Langley from the air

Because Langley was over twenty miles from Kingston and there was no bus service, Hawkers supplied transportation between the two. Each morning a couple of dozen coaches left Kingston at 7 am, and left Langley to return at 5:30 pm. The journey took 45 minutes as there were intermediary pick-ups. This was fine unless you were late or had to return early, when the only way was to bum a lift on one of the lorries carrying the parts. More than once I had to return lying on boxes at the back of a truck in order to sit for an early exam at the tech.

Langley being far away from any other habitation, was well equipped for looking after the workers. There were three canteens, one of which was a manager's canteen where drinks could be purchased. There was a sports area by the landing field with even a 9 hole golf course. A pavilion that was also licensed had changing rooms and a very comfortable lounge. There was also a worker's hostel about a mile away on the main road, but it was being slowly phased out. I visited it but was glad that I did not have to live there as it was rather dismal. We often used to lie on the grass at the side of the landing field at lunch time, but we had to be careful as some of the test pilots took delight in landing or taxying close to anyone there.


The Rink

After Langley I returned to Kingston to the experimental and then spent nine months in the Drawing Office School. This was run mainly for ex-servicemen returning to Hawkers, who wanted to go into the design departments. Only eight students were taken on at a time as the school was located in a shed on the flat roof of the Tool Room.

The original Sopwith Works on Canbury Park road was an old skating rink and had been demoted to the shop where jigs and fixtures were designed and made. Our shed over looked the back of the Regal Cinema where the only window was the usherettes room. We got friendly with several and this resulted in a number of shows after work being seen without charge.

I passed out of the D.O.School with a bare pass mark, and moved back to Langley to complete my apprenticeship on the final line and in the service department. By the time I entered the service dept. I was the most senior apprentice and I was placed in charge of the workshop of the Instruction School. Hawkers was again selling aircraft to all countries and most of them sent a group of mechanics to be trained in servicing. The duty of the work shop was to make demonstration models and teaching aids as the detachments on most of the courses were not proficient in English. My job was to go over the dump and extract parts and assemblies, then either section them or make a rig to demonstrate how they worked. It was interesting work and greatly needed as while I was there, groups from Holland, Iraq, Portugal, Egypt, and Iran went through, each with their own language. There was also courses from the Royal Navy and from the Canadian Navy which used different terminology to each other.

I had learnt to drive during the last days of the war, although I had been driving in the car park for several years. There were no driving tests being done so I was "passed out" by a friend of the family, Ted Hammond who later became chief driving test inspector in one of the London test centres. Just prior to this I had squandered my savings in buying an old Ford Prefect, 1936 vintage. This enabled me to get a supplementary petrol ration and have the luxury of driving in each day. Normally I went

through Kingston to pick up a couple of friends. One advantage of having my own car, was that the extra petrol could be saved by economic driving and thus adding to the mileage I could have for pleasure driving. My earliest driving was not too fast and in the best gear possible. My supplementary allowance was for 300 miles a week, and by tuning and driving I could save the equivalent of nearly 50 miles.

While I was in the S.I.S. (Service Instruction School) a man came to work with us. He was supposed to be a relation of one of the top people at Hawkers and had been badly burnt and disfigured in an aircraft crash. He had been demobbed from the RAF, and needed some time to recuperate and adjust before going into business. He was a very pleasant person but was at that time sensitive about his appearance. He soon became part of the S.I.S. and after about six months felt confident enough to face the public, so he bought a garage near Hazelmere. He was a keen motor racer, and with the help of the workshop converted an old Austin Seven into the Brooklands racing version and raced it successfully. Ken, one of the apprentices in the workshop found three old Morris cars of the 1929-31 period, he bought them from the farmer for £50. I towed them for him to the workshop and we worked on them after working hours. We cannibalized one completely and got the first working in reasonable condition. This he sold for £150 and using some of the profit for new parts, got the other car in splendid condition that he used as his own car until he was called up two years later, when he sold it for £280. I believe that the profit from this little deal went a long way to setting him up in South Africa after he left the Air Force.

George Bulman

One of the things that I found very good about the upper management at Hawkers was that they made you feel one of the team. Two people who were very good at this were TOM Sopwith who was president of the Hawker-Sidderley group, and George Bulman, the test pilot, who had become one of the directors. They both made a point when walking around the plant, in talking to the workers. The first time it happened to me was while I was in the Machine Shop. George Bulman stopped beside my machine and chatted to me about the part I was making and asked me how I was doing at school. I was puzzled because he called me by name and although he had been pointed out to me previously, I could not think how he knew my name. After he left I asked the leadhand and was told that he always asked the foreman about the names of people that he had seen but had not previously talked to. After that time, he always addressed me as Don when ever he passed by. Some of the university taught managers could learn something from this, as too often they treat workers as part of the furniture.

I finished my apprenticeship at the end of May, but there was no job open for me, so I was allowed to carry on in the S.I.S. with a small increase in pay.

Contents

Chapter 5 Hawkers D.O. 1948 to 1952

I was now getting the princely sum of £3 a week in the S.I.S. Although there was no guarantee of employment after the apprenticeship ended at Hawkers, I do not know of anyone that did not get some sort of employment. It was usual to submit a list of up to three preferred departments and they would try to fit you in one of them. I chose the service department, the experimental, or one of the technical offices. My first choice was in the service dept. as I liked the idea of travelling to the various bases and countries that had Hawker aircraft. However, Bob had got a position in that area. My next choice was refused, fortunately, as my experience was thought to be wasted in the experimental and I was offered and took a job in the design technical office as a stressman at a salary of £6/0/6d a week.

The technical offices of the Drawing Office at Hawkers consisted of the Aerodynamic Dept., The Weights and Dynamic Dept., the Test Dept. and the Stress Office, all of which were housed at the eastern end of the first floor of the old Bentall's furniture depository between Canbury Park Road and the railway line. It was not a good working place because of the noise from the railway and because it was cold in winter and very hot in summer. The desks were all designed and built at the carpentry shop at Hawkers, but dated back to about 1930 and did not have any of the newer innovations.

Calculations were made either long hand, by 5 figure log tables, or by using the extended (spiral) slide rules, which gave extra accuracy. Just after I started there the office obtained its first desk calculating machines. These were all mechanically operated, even the carriage. They later obtained half a dozen hand mechanical calculators called "Curtas". These looked like and were the size of a hand grenade and were operated by a crank that was pushed in for addition or pulled out for subtraction. They were all very slow, taking about a minute to multiply two five figure numbers together.

The D.O. was headed by Sidney Camm, who as chief designer had been responsible for all Hawker designs since the "Tom Tit" in 1930. He was an old time designer with little formal education and had started his working career as a carpenter. He was not educated in his speech, in fact, at Hawkers, it was always sprinkled with a number of swearword in it. He was, however, very knowledgeable and was not afraid to make decisions. I have been in groups around a drawing board, where each person was required to give his opinion on the way to solve a problem. Sidney Camm would listen to them all, then one by one give limitations in the solutions and then chose one that he considered as giving the least trouble, or propose a way that no-one had thought of. He was more often right than wrong. Unlike many of the later design groups where design-by-committee was practised, things got done! I heard him give a lecture, years later after he had been made Sir Sidney and was president of the Royal Aeronautical Society. He was a much better speaker, but I thought he was still uncomfortable in having to keep his words polite.

In the time I was at Hawkers, their aircraft developed from the piston engined, fabric covered Hurricane to the supersonic jet of the Hunter, and experimental rocket driven planes like the P1072 and P1078. I worked in some capacity on all of them, but in the design office mainly on the Hunter or P1067. Actually this aircraft should have been numbered P1066, this would have been impossible not to name it the "Hastings", which Handley-Page had already used on their transport aircraft. Consequently P1066 was never used at Hawkers. My first jobs in the stress office were in preparing "Type Records". These were basically summary sheets containing information on the critical areas in an assembly and the design case in which they were critical. It was a tedious job going through all the design calculations to find the lowest Reserve Factors and then tabulating them, but it soon made you familiar with the various types of calculations used. Afterwards I was used in design stressing of fuselages and control surfaces.

I was reasonably familiar with Strain Energy Methods that had recently come to the fore in design, so I was given the job of stressing several of fuselage frames. This required developing the equations, measuring and calculating the parameters, then solving simultaneous equations with up to six unknowns (usually requiring long hand calculations to get sufficient accuracy to have a balanced solving. I was doing the Nose Spar Frame, the third most important frame when I was taught a lesson the hard way. It was don't be careless with your writing. I had taken about three weeks to set up and solve this frame and had started to do the detail stressing. Everything I did seemed over-strength, but the structure did not seem over large. A check appeared necessary, and I found that in transcribing a load from one page of the calcs to another, I had copied 300000 pounds as 200000 pounds. I reported it to the chief stressman, Joe Barratt, expecting to be sacked or at least sent to the print room, the Devils Island

of the D.O. All he said was "Well you better do something about it, hadn't you." For the next six days I worked like a nigger (this racial description had not been censored then), and at the end produced a set of calcs that had the right loads and appeared correct for stress. Not a word was ever said to me either by the chief, by the technical office supervisor or by Mr Chaplin (the assistant chief designer) all of whom I am sure knew of my blunder, but I have been careful in transcribing all numbers since then.

The work at this time was very interesting as new developments appeared with each aircraft. One of the jobs I had, was the work on the Aden Gun Package. Before this, fighter aircraft guns had to be reloaded in the aircraft between each sortie. This was both time- consuming and awkward. Someone had an idea, lets place all the guns and their ammo' in a removable structure and supply spares. A good idea with plenty of difficulties, like how do you assure that the guns are sighted properly. The solution was to have the barrels of the guns not removable and the package with the mechanisms and ammo' removable. As the Aden gun was new, and classified secret, much of the work was done at Farnborough. I was surprised when I was selected to go there on the team, as I was one of the junior men on the section. Afterwards I found that there had been trouble with the exhaust gasses of the Aden, and an installation on another type of plane blew up killing a couple of engineers. Could this have been the reason for my selection? The other state-of-the-art job I was given was on the two rocket installations (P1072 & P1078), on which I did the stress work on the mounts, the plumbing, and the tankage. The difficulty with this design was that the fuel and the oxidant had to be kept apart until they met in the combustion chamber, otherwise an uncontrolled explosion took place.

The people in the Hawker D.O. were fairly young, a few were from before the war, but the majority were between 20 and 35 years old. Not too many had scholastic qualifications other than those obtained from evening classes. However, most were good designers and had an excellent grasp of the theory involved. The technical office had about a dozen stressmen, and aerodynamics about the same number. While I was there, women were first introduced into the technical offices, there had always been Print Room Girls and Lady Tracers but now there were Weights-women and Female Aerodynamists. I don't know if there was any thought behind the terminology, but it did seem as if equality of work meant lowering of description. In my second year in the stress office, a new man came to work as a stressman. I won't mention his name as he later became a leader in the Aircraft Industry. He arrived at Hawkers direct from the College of Aeronautics (also known as the "College of Knowledge") with all the latest in the way of techniques for analysis. He was given the job of checking the swept wing of the P1081, but the theory taught at the college was for straight wings as no production aircraft with swept wings existed at this time. He tried to adapt the new methods, but eventually reverted to the first principal methods used in designing the experimental P1052, which was the first Hawker (and British) aircraft with swept wings. Needless to say, his leg was pulled about the College. He later became Chief Designer!

With the war over, the pace at Hawkers was a lot slower, and even with evening classes I had more time for entertainment. Nearly every Saturday, I would travel to the West End by bus (the cheapest way) and meet an old school friend, Ron Fryatt., there. We would wander about window shopping, have a snack and take in a film at one of the first-run cinemas, though not necessarily in that order. We were not very adventuresome in our food choices, in fact it tended to be one of the Lyons in the area or on the occasions when money was more available at the Corner House. The latter had just introduced the salad bar concept and you could have as much as you could pile on a plate. Being a structural engineer helped considerably, as reinforcements of diagonal celery meant I could pile higher than normal, even if I did not enjoy the celery.

One eatery that I always enjoyed were the old coffee stalls that were still dotted around London. There was one outside Charing Cross Tube Station, which overlooked the Thames. They sold excellent Ham & Cheese Rolls and their Tea was not exceeded either in quality or quantity at the best restaurants. The clientele was strange; a mixture of the rogues of the west end and off-duty coppers from Scotland Yard, which was a few hundred yards along the Embankment. The fact that they talked to one another in a good humoured way, made Ron wonder which were really the rogues. In actuality, most of the customers were west end characters, the buskers, the stall owners, or people like myself that just liked the food and atmosphere, but sometimes when I had out-of-town visitors with us, the other clients took on an exotic appearance. It was a convenient place for our late night snack as Ron took a bus from the Strand, while I took one from Whitehall, both close-by. Public transport did not run very late, but as the Kings Head was next to Merton Bus Garage I was able to take busses "running in" until after 11 o'clock at night.

My parents had always had pets, usually a cat and a dog. When Terry was put down at the start of the war, they got a puppy that

was part collie and part Alsatian and call it Bruce. At the same time they obtained two kittens (a female and a male from the same litter). They were tabby and Black & White respectively so they were called Tabby and Buchanan (the makers of Black & White whisky), who was shortened to Buchy. Bruce unfortunately, chased cats and had killed more than one, but both of our cats had no fear of him and he did not harm them. In fact they would often come in the parlour where the dog was sleeping in front of the fire and push in front until Bruce moved from the favoured spot. At various times we also had canaries and even goldfish, but some how they never survived very long.

The growth of T.V. was very great in this period. When the war ended, TV transmission was restarted. We received a letter from HMV, the maker of our set, saying that as the warrantee on the set had not expired at the time that TV was stopped because of the war. The letter offered that if we paid for an initial service and repair if needed, they would extend the warrantee for another 12 month from the service date. We took the offer, and although the set did not need repair, felt that HMV had shown very good business morality. In London, the skyline took on a completely different appearance. Every chimney had the letter "H" in rods attached to it. It was said that even families that did not have TVs, placed an ariel (antenna) on the roof, to keep up with the Jones. By 1952 nearly everyone had a TV, made possible by the reduction in set prices, and the rental companies, or taking advantage of credit - "The never" - neither of which were available for the poorer families before the war. I did not watch very much TV, but both my parents would watch the sporting events, which were shown most afternoons. Their favourites were Soccer, Cricket, Tennis and Horse Racing, but as more sports were shown, their interest extended to Show Jumping, Rowing, Sailing and the other racquet games. Occasionally the BBC would show a film or a play in the evening that I would make a point of seeing and I enjoyed the Ballet and Operetta when on, but I did not watch any of the dramas or serials.

Hawkers had one of the few aircraft-testing rigs in Britain during the war. It was called "The Abbey" and was a large structure of steel "I" beams in which a complete fighter airplane could be hung. Wiffletrees were attached to the plane and connected with capstans on bridges from which volunteers balanced the loading. Other wiffletrees were bolted to actuators mounted on the floor. A large number of strain gauges were used to find the stresses that had been developed, while the pressure in the cylinder of the actuators determined the actual load applied. Later most companies did static tests, but Hawkers were at least a decade ahead of most.
When a test was being performed, the members of the technical offices would man the measuring instrument, Resistance meters for the strain gauges and levels to read the deflection rules. The tests were run by the Test Dept. and were prepared by a small group of men from the experimental department The loading volunteers were apprentices and senior craftsmen. There was quite a picnic atmosphere during a test. The Abbey was at Langley, so in the time between loading or measuring, those people not needed could go outside.

There was quite a close association between the experimental and the D.O., in fact every Christmas there was a party with challenge dart, table tennis and skittle tournaments held. Early Christmas eve, a delivery of barrels and crates would be made from the pub on the next corner (In spite of the annual memo that said no alcoholic drinks would be permitted on the premises). Then at noon the Works Director and the Chief Designer would throw the first darts and open the party. There was some nosh, but rationing, which extended a fair time after the war limited this. Soft drinks were available for the young, and beer for the others. Sidney Camm kept a fatherly eye over the girls and occasionally designated trusted people to escort the odd one home when he thought that she had tippled too much.

After I started in the stress office, I still could not afford very much in the way of holidays. So the first couple of years were spent on camping holidays, both with Johnny Saunders (another apprentice of my vintage). One was spent on the Isle of Wight, on the other, we toured the west country. The cost of the ferry to the island meant that we did not have too much left for petrol, so we decided to stay in one place near Sandown and just take a few trips from there. We found an empty field with a good hedge to protect us from the wind and went to the nearby farmhouse to get permission. This was granted and the farmer showed us where to get drink/cooking water. We pitched our tent and then went down to the beach for the rest of the day, getting back just after the light failed. The next morning we got up earlier than we had intended because of the sun coming up, and found we had forgotten to shop for breakfast food. I went up to the farm and asked the lady if she would sell us some eggs to boil. She said she would, but why didn't she cook them with some bacon as the farm's stove was always on. I did not need any persuading and I called Johnny and we sat down to an immense breakfast. We had difficulty in getting her to accept money, and when she did it was on the understanding that we would have breakfast every day there. We both came home with

extra pounds on us, both weight and money!

On our trip to Devon, we had trouble with the car. We had come down Porlock Hill, one of the steepest roads in the area and were driving on level ground, when suddenly the steering wheel came loose and would not steer. We started heading across the road, I used the brake fiercely and manage to stop on the grass verge only inches from a telephone pole. The steering arm on the wheel had fractured and both the steering and tracking rod had disconnected. Judging by the skid marks it was this that saved us. Both the wheels turned in and sort of snow-ploughed us to a halt. We had to stay locally while it was repaired, but we were so thankful that it held during our descent of the hill as there would have been no way of surviving if it had happened there.


Flying Standard

Before setting out in the car for any long trip I would do a grand service. I could often find troubles in the various systems, but it was always the structural failures that let me down. It was not easy getting spare parts for prewar cars, but many repair garages could copy a part for you. Things like filters, spark plugs, make-and break points (distributor contact breakers) could be taken out, cleaned or reset (using a carborundum stone) and reinstalled. Most cars carried a repair kit and levers for repairing punctures in the tires and inner tube, so those break downs were corrected by the road side.

Our equipment for camping was quite Heath-Robinson. The tent was a cotton pup-tent from the surplus store, and the groundsheet was a piece of sail canvas waxed on one side to be waterproof. We made sleeping bags by getting old military eiderdowns and sewing them to form a bag. Johnny had a white petrol one ring stove and I had a few surplus items like a canvas bucket and a couple of pans. We could survive, but it was terrible when it rained hard as the tent gave little protection in spite of having gallons of waterproofing applied.

This period in Britain was one of great increase of personal possessions for most people. Rationing was slowly removed, one item at a time, but shortages were as effective in preventing overspending. One of the last items was sweets, which had been removed from the ration just before I went to Canada and I believed that petrol (gas) was the last to be freed.
As mentioned, by 1952 most families had a TV set and all had radios. Small portable radios had come on the market, but were expensive to keep running as their miniature radio valves (tubes) required high voltage and the layered batteries were not cheap. The transistor was not yet in common use so the size of the personal radios was large by later standards. They could be held by one hand but would not fit in any pocket, let alone a vest pocket.

The motorcar was more and more becoming a family possession in the middle class, and was extending and replacing the motorbike in the lower paid working classes. Of course there were few new cars available and even the pre-war cars required a lot of work to make them road worthy. Companies like Halfords did great business in the various preparations for engine or car repair and overhaul.

Before the war, very few women could drive cars, and those were mostly from the upper crust. The war changed this with many girls learning to drive in the services. Even the Queen had been taught driving and maintenance while she was in the ATS (Auxillery Territorial Service, ie Woman's Army). With the new affluence more and more were learning to drive their husbands or boyfriend's pride & joy. None of the girls that I knew, however, had licences and I did not find a girl friend who could spell me at the wheel until I was in Canada about 1960.

At the end of the war only clothes with the "CC41" label of "Utility" were available and they were not very pleasing to the eye. The "New Look" came in with the dropping of the hem line and fashion returned, at least to womens' fashions. The newer man made materials like Nylon and Terylene were suddenly everywhere. The price of things like nylons (stockings) reduced to a level that even the lowest paid shop girl could afford.

I spent most of what I earned on photographic materials. I had purchased a new 35mm camera with a tele-lens and had turned a cleaning cupboard into a dark room with a secondhand enlarger on a shelf over the sink. As there was plenty of unwanted blackout material in the house, it was not difficult to make it light proof. I spent much of the time cycling around London with my camera taking photographs of unusual buildings and architecture. I would then return home, develop the film and print the photos. By 1952 I had a very good collection of the unusual, unfortunately I did not bring them with me to Canada and they were lost when my parents moved from the Kings.

I did buy a personal radio, which I carried in a surplus haversack to have music when I went anywhere by either bike or car. I did not skimp on my holidays, but even the camping holidays were not cheap as there was petrol and oil to pay for, and as I was driving a car that was 15 years old, there were sometimes repair bills.

In 1950, Johnny was called up, (there was conscription in Britain until the late fifties). I decided that I would take an easy holiday where the food was good and I could meet people, and get entertainment without much effort. I booked to go to a Butlins Holiday Camp, the one in the Republic of Ireland. As Eire did not have rationing and austerity, the food was a joy. I do not go for regimented activities, and once the monitors realised that I was not being shy, when I said NO, they left me alone. The people at the camp came from all over Ireland, Ulster, and Britain and I found plenty to do, chatting, swimming, and taking in cinemas or other functions that appealed to me. Many of the visitors were teen-aged and the first time away from home. The monitors tried to keep order but with booze being cheap they had great difficulties. A young goon in an adjacent chalet seduced a girl he had got her drunk, but all they could do, was throw him out of the camp. Generally, most of the campers behaved. Eire was the second foreign country that I had visited, but did not seem a lot different from England, except for the busses and the letter boxes being green instead of red. Some of the boxes still had the monogram "E vii R" on them.

1951 was the one hundredth anniversary of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. To commemorate this a new exhibition, The Festival of Britain 1951, was put on. The whole of South Bank between Waterloo Station and the Thames was cleared of the bomb damaged structures, only the old shot tower was left standing. The site had the new Festival Hall in its middle. The Festival Hall was a concert hall designed and built to scientific requirements to enhance the sound and was the first of many new concert halls in Europe. Around the hall, pavilions depicting different aspects of British Life were assembled. Science, Technology, History, Health, People, Achievement, Sport, Humour, and Culture were just a few of the themes of pavilions. Between the pavilions there were band shells, demonstrations, fountains and above all, gardens for the visitors to rest in.

The festival showed other aspects of Britain, such as; the development of new housing at sites on the outskirts, both apartment blocks and homes; and the Festival Pleasure Gardens at Battersea Park. This was a giant funfair with gardens and nightly fireworks. The symbol of the festival was called the Skylon and was a cigar shaped structure supported vertically by a set of cables so at night when it was floodlit, it appeared to float in the air. Some wits said it was the symbol of Britain, "High above all, with no visible means of support!" I particularly enjoyed showing around the visitors that came up to London to see it. Mrs Scott and Mary had a day there with me, and Laurie came and spent an over night to go for two days. I went to the various sites about 20 times during the summer that it was opened. It did a good job of giving the war weary British a lift.

I have always enjoyed exhibitions and garden parties and during the summers often spent days at the various events that occurred around London. Each year I went to both the Farnborough Air Show and the Royal Aeronautical Garden Party. In the later years, I went to the Film Garden Party, where you were able to hobnob with the starlets and see (sometimes speak to) the Filmstars of Britain and the odd visiting Hollywood personality. This was held quite close to the Kings Head at Mordon Hall.

Poster for Hendon

One year, the Armed Forces Days were held at Hendon. A crowd of us from Hawkers went to see it and picnic on the grass. I got talked into participating in the Airborne display, which was a parachute training tower. It consisted of a built-up structure made of scaffolding that was about 50 feet high. There was a pulley on an outrig through which a cable passed. At one end there was a parachute harness, and at the other, was a braking device in the form of a paddle windmill. The idea was that you jumped off the tower and the brake slowed you down to the level of an actual parachute jump. Unfortunately, I was the first of our crowd to try it. It did not look too bad from the ground, but on the platform, the drop was immense. Two hefty Airborne Sergeants strapped the harness on me and led me to the edge, I hesitated. One of the sergeants said " you don't have to jump," but someone in our crowd said "He's freezing." I don't know how, because up to then I had been thinking of chickening out, but I stepped off into space. There was no jerk as I gained speed, but I can recall thinking that it was slowing me down. It seemed to take a long time to reach the ground, but I hit the sand with bended knees and although I fell, it did not feel much of an impact. When I was released from the harness, I then discovered the others had all chickened out. I rested on my laurels, but I will never be persuaded to take another jump. It was too terrifying!

By now I had got the travel bug and wanted more and more to see the world. 1952 was the year when I was able to satisfy this

urge. In the spring, British Rail advertised a long week end excursion to Ostende in Belgium. It was very cheap and the only condition was that you did not return within two days. I chose the Easter week end and went straight from work to Victoria and took the boat train to Dover. There I embarked onto a paddle steamer. Unfortunately I did not know the ropes. There were bunks in the lower deck for about 100 people and lounge space for an equal number, but all were first come, first served. I had to spend the complete night-crossing on a seat on deck, which was both cold and uncomfortable.

We landed at Ostende about 6.30 on Good Friday morning and immediately caught the train for Brussels. I had the name of a cheap hotel near the north station and rented a room for three nights. I spent the day sight seeing, and went to a cabaret at night, so did not get to bed until 3 am. The next morning I was awakened by the hotel manager who explained in broken English that I would have to change rooms as I was in a double that had been let on Saturday. I was out taking photos by 9 am and much to my surprise bumped into a couple of people I knew. We arranged to meet that evening for a meal and a show. Again it was the early hours before I got to bed as we went to their room for "a" drink after the show. On sunday I managed to lay in until 9.30, the latest possible for the continental breakfast supplied. Sunday was taken fairly easy just looking around and watching the people go by from sidewalk cafes. I finally got to bed at a reasonable time but was up early to catch an early train to Ostende. It was warm enough to spend most of the day on the beach and now knowing the ropes, lined up for the midnight sailing at nine. This time I got a bunk! We got into Victoria at 7:30 in the morning and I went directly to work. I don't know what I did that day but I got home and slept the clock around. I calculated that I had only had 24 hours of time in bed in 132 hours. I had dozed at other times though.

I had decided to try my luck at working abroad, so I applied for several jobs. The first one that I got an interview, was in the stress office at SAAB in Sweden. They wanted someone with five years experience, NOT me! The second job was a bit of a fiddle. The advert was from an oil company in the Caribbean. I went for the interview and passed only to be told that their Caribbean branch was full but they had several good jobs in the Persian Gulf. No thanks! Another job I got an offer without an interview was with the Mufelira Copper Mines in Northern Rhodesia. I investigated and found the climate bad, the facilities primitive and there were only 40 white girls in the town and 4000 men. Again I refused. I had applied for an engineering job in Canada under a box number, but after three month had heard nothing so decided to wait and try again another time.


Vik Stave Church

My main summer holiday was a lot less hectic. I booked on a two week tour in Norway. I had taken the early tour in June to keep the cost down and was there for the longest day in Ulvik. There were bonfires and partying all night as the weather was very warm. I tried swimming in the fiord and then understood why no local went in. Although the air temperature was approaching 30°, the water, fed by the glaciers was only 8°! The trip across the North Sea was on one the Bergen Line ships that carried 750 passengers all in staterooms. The crossing was very rough and there were not too many people in the restaurant for breakfast. I had the misfortune to sit at the same table as an American who ordered two soft boiled eggs. They were really runny and one by one the others at the table turned green and fled. I stuck it but only had fruit and toast, and there was a wonderful choice. Our tour landed at Bergen, had time in Ulvik and Balastrand, with day trips to the glaciers, Vik (the Stave Church), and some of the smaller branches of the fiords. The travelling between the centres was mainly by boat with busses interconnecting.

Most of the Norwegians we met had a good command of English, but you can be let down if you use the old English custom, of when in a foreign country, you speak English slow and loud and you will be understood. One of the girls in the party had been in the sun and was afraid that she would get burnt. She and a friend went to the general store in Ulvik. The salesgirl did not speak English so they reverted to the method. "Tan TAN" they said. The salesgirl said "Ah tan" and hand them a small tube with the word "TAN" in a predominant position. When they got to the hotel and in their swimsuits, they opened the tube. Before applying it they tried to smell if it was perfumed. It was, - with peppermint! They realised something was wrong and asked the hotelier, who burst out laughing. He explained that "TAN" was Norwegian for Tooth and they had been about to rub toothpaste on their skins. It was quite an embarrassment for them as it got around the tour circuit and at every stop we were asked who the peppermint girls were. The crossing home was much calmer and nearly all had good meals.
When I reached home, I found my parents in a state, as a telegram had arrived for me asking me to confirm that I would go for an interview on the next Tuesday. I sent off a telegram saying I would be there.

On the next Tuesday I presented myself at Saville House on Piccadilly and was escorted into a room with three people in it. After giving my experience, some questions were asked and I was asked to wait in another room. One of the gentlemen joined me there

to ask a few more questions and tell me he was Mr Larratt and was chief of structures in a Canadian aircraft company called Canadair. He went on to describe the company and its products. A second person came in the room who explained about immigrating and gave information about Montreal and the aspects, including costs, of living in Canada. I was then offered a job as a stressman at $80 a week. My salary at Hawkers was £10/5/- a week and the average annual increase about ten shillings a week. The exchange rate stood at approximately five dollars to the pound, so it appeared a good increase. I was given two weeks to make a decision, given expense money (including some for a meal) and all the necessary forms for both the job and immigration. I returned home to study the notes I had made.

The next two weeks were murder. My parents wanted to be fair and not influence me, and in doing so, made me very confused. When I was veering towards rejecting, it was "are you sure, you may not get another offer and it is good experience." When I was talking of accepting, it was "It's an awful long way and you have to agree to stay there two years"..I just could not win.

I finally decided that I would give it a try as it would be a new experience and I would see some more of the world. The next couple of weeks were very hectic. Interviews at Canada House, medicals, making arrangements with the travel company all took most of my spare time. I gave notice at Hawkers, who were very good about letting me have time off to do some visits, which could only be done in working hours. I had my leg pulled about having to practice running, in order to get to safety when being chased by the packs of wolves that I would find in Canada. I was also given some RAF reports, illustrated in colour, on the effect and treatment of frostbite. The photos were frightening.

One thing I had to do, was check how I stood about National Service. I had not heard from them since I was deferred when I was 17. I went to the local labour exchange from which call-up papers were usually sent and explained that I was emigrating to Canada and did not want to be pulled screaming off the boat to be sent into the army. They told me to take a seat and I waited for about an hour. They then requested that I returned in a few days time. I did this and was ushered into the manager's office. He then explained that my file had been lost. It was believed that when the old exchange was bombed by a doodlebug, some files were not transferred and mine was one of them. They had got a duplicate file from the central records, but up until the time I went in, they had not realised that I should have been on their books. Anyway as I had not been called up when I was 21, they would not do so at 25, so all was well for Canada.

At last came the day when I was to sail to Canada. It was to be a night departure from Liverpool on the Home Line ship "Atlantic". Late in the afternoon, just before leaving home I heard on the radio that there had been a crash at the Farnborough Air Display. The DH 110 had crashed into the crowd killing a number of people. This put even more gloom on my leaving as many of my friends were going to Farnborough that day. I learned afterwards that none were hurt. My father and Ted Hammond took me and my worldly possessions to the station, looked over my fellow passengers on the boat train, and commented on some girls near my age. They wished me the best of luck for my new adventure, and said that judging by the other passengers I would not be lonely and reminded me not to forget to write. The train then left London to take me on the first part of the journey to the place that I would spend the next 23 years, Montreal.

Contents

Chapter 6 To Canada 1952 to 1955

The sea voyage to Canada took six days and although it was fairly rough, I discovered that I am a good sailor and not prone to seasickness. The "Atlantic" was a fairly large passenger ship, about 22000 tons and carried 850 passengers. I shared a stateroom with three other men, two of whom were also new Canadiar employees. I soon discovered the lounge and the library where I spent much of the voyage. I felt a little out of place as we had been booked in first class accommodation, where as most of the other young people on board were in tourist class, still the food was good. We arrived in Quebec City and were faced with the custom and immigration procedures. It was here I had my first brush with the bureaucracy in Canada. I had filled in the landing form stating "Religion = Jewish; Ethnic Background = British." The officer did not like this and tried to alter the Ethnic to Jewish. After some argument, a higher official was called and my stand was permitted. I do not know if it was anti-semitism or just plain ignorance. After it was over, I was surprised that I had argued, as like most Englishmen I did not normally challenge officials.

We landed and took a train from the quay side to Montreal. I must say that my first look at Canada was disheartening, as the area around the dock at Wolfe's Cove, was tin-roofed shacks and dirty Coco Cola signs, and looked run down. Even on the approach to Montreal from the East, there were oil refineries and old dwellings having a slum-like appearance. I travelled with the two cabin mates that were going to Canadair. We were met at Windsor Station by a friend of one of them, who suggested that we cancelled the booking made for us at the Queens Hotel and go into rooms. The cost for one week in a room was less than a day at the Queens. He took us, after cancelling, in a huge car (Buick), to a place in St Laurent and found rooms for us in two houses on the same street. He also took us for a drive that evening, mainly on the "main drag", Decarie Blvd. that was then a collection of drive-ins and car dealers.

The room I had, was in a house on Rue Cardinal in Ville St Laurent and was not very comfortable. There were no meals available so on my first morning there, the sunday, I got up and wandered along the main streets of St Laurent. I saw a shop that looked like it might sell food and went in. There was a man behind the counter who I asked if he was open for breakfast. He replied "What do you think I'm here for?". In spite of his briskness he cooked a good meal and over the next four weeks I became a regular and we chatted about the difference between life in Montreal and London. On the Monday I reported at Canadair early and was allowed into the cafeteria for breakfast. It took all of the morning to go through the intake procedures and after lunch I was taken to the Stress Office.

The structures department at Canadair in 1952, consisted of about 30 stressmen, 6 weightsmen, 4 dynamists and a test section of ten. They were all nationalities, even two Canadians. The first person I saw was the secretary of the chief of structures, Eileen Wyke., her husband, Ron, was also in the department as a stressman. Eileen's accent was schoolgirl home county, almost identical to her opposite number at Hawkers. I saw the chief who placed me in the stress-liaison section and Eileen took me around and introduced me. The first thing I noticed was that everyone was called by their first name, even the chief. The next, was the most pregnant woman I had ever seen. She was a dynamist and an immigrant and did not have very much in the way of money, so had decided to work as long as possible. She lasted two-and-a-bit weeks after I arrived, left Canadair on the Wednesday and had the child the next day! She really had the pioneer spirit.

Both chief of structures, Ben Kaganov, and chief stressman, Ted Larratt, were Americans and I discovered that most of the senior positions in Design were held by Americans. This was because the production aircraft were adapted from American designs. This soon changed as there had been a large increase in staff by employing trained people from Europe, in 1951 & 1952 including some quite senior people. There were 72 new people within four weeks of my arrival and had been over 50 the previous year.

The aircraft industry was fairly close knit in the period immediately after the war. In Britain most companies did not have large design staffs, and those, at least in senior positions, got to know one another. In the area west of London, there was Vickers at Weybridge, Hawkers at Kingston, General Aircraft at Felpham, Faireys at Hayes and Miles at White Waltham. Even the younger and less senior got together at the Technical Colleges, or at the R.Ae.S. meetings. Then every year in September, technicians day at Farnborough was a time to renew acquaintances. Starting in 1948 there was an exodus from the European Industry to Canada. On arriving an immigrant engineer or designer found that he knew several of the people at his new company, be it Canadair, Avro-Canada, or DeHavilland-Canada. He also had mutual friends with others. This did help to blunt the trauma of the move.

Amongst the arrivals in the Canadair Structures Department in 1951 & 52, there were stressmen from Avro, Gloster, Shorts, Vickers, Westland, Faireys, DeHavilland, Bristol, Rolls-Royce and of course Hawkers. There were also people from Germany, France, India and Holland in the same intake. It was a small wonder that no matter what type of aircraft was tackled, skilled engineers could be found.

Canadair was working on two new designs, an Orenda engined F-86 Sabre and the T-36 that was a two engine trainer being designed with Beech in Kansas. Production on the T-33 Shooting Star trainer was also under way. This had been re-engined for the Nene before I arrived.

The work of stress-liaison was really production support; deciding if defective parts could be reworked or rejected, authorising material changes and design and part modifications. It was rather looked down on as less important than working on new designs, but I liked it, as each job was short in time and completely different. One day you would work on Landing Gear, the next on Fuselages, then on Hydraulics. It was, for me, the foundation of becoming a Generalist (instead of a Specialist). One stressman, John Southwell, worked on Wings the whole time I knew him, over 30 years. That would have driven me completely barmy.

One job I got involved in, was on the Sabre. The fuselage was built in two parts, the front and the rear, which were joined with bolted connections, with the shear being carried through four special shear pins. A sharp eyed inspector snagged one aircraft for having the pins loose in their holes. Another stressman, Stan and I, investigated the trouble and found that a workman had been drilling the holes oversize to ease the fit. I immediately stopped work on all aircraft , which effectively grounded them and stopped delivery of finished aircraft. The foreman threatened me with sacking if I did not tear up the rejection. I took no notice as he did not have any say on my employment and the aircraft with loose pins were completely unsafe. On contacting the Chiefs of both Design and Production, it was decided to examine every aircraft and in doing so found the point of production where this bad practice had started. Fortunately most of the completed aeroplanes were OK, but nearly 100 in various states of finish were affected. Each aircraft had different damage and consequently required a different rework.

We were told that we would have to give design support for the reworks on a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week basis. Stan and I for the next four weeks did back-to-back shifts. Stan's wife was a nurse who worked the late shift (4pm to midnight) at the hospital, so Stan opted for the nights. I came in at 7am and worked until 7:30pm, there being a half an hour overlap at each shift to pass on information from the previous one. After a couple of weeks I felt really stale as I was living only to work, eat and sleep. At the end of the forth week Stan was near to divorce, and I was snapping at every little thing, as I was extremely tired, but was not able to stay asleep. My mother said that my letters home during that period were unreadable. Any way after the four weeks the night shift was cut and we went back to 8 hour days with sunday off. It took six weeks to finish and to check that new production was all right. We did not even get the thanks of the management and had to squabble to get the overtime we worked because some pay clerk decided that such overtime could not be paid. Fortunately the vice-president had authorized the rework program and we collected nearly triple pay for the weeks worked. The foreman was sacked because he tried to cover up the mistake.

I can not say I enjoyed living in a room, it was too uncomfortable, and even when the landlady invited me into her kitchen to play cards, it was not my idea of comfort. I was glad that meals were not supplied as her kitchen had bright yellow walls and a blue ceiling so that everything took on a greenish hue. I decided to move out as soon as I had saved enough money to pay for my fare back to England and the penalty if I could not take Canadian Life or Canada could not take me. This amounted to about $400 by the cheapest ship. I was getting $80 a week and found that I could save about half. I soon found that apartments and even new houses were readily available and as I was spending $11 a week on a room and the rent on a two bedroom apartment was only $80 a month, if I could find some one to share an apartment with I would be better off (not to mention the savings on cooking my own breakfasts and other meals). I let it be known that I was looking for an apartment-mate. Someone introduced me to Reg Ringrose, who had let the same thing be known. We decided to take an apartment in the Park Royal development on Tasse Street in St Laurent. This was the start of a friendship that lasted until Reg died nineteen years later.

In talking with Reg, I discovered that we had both been to Norway for a holiday before coming to Canada. Then I found out that Reg was one of the other 700 passengers with me on the ship to Bergan. We had not noticed each other, but that sort of coincidence cropped up with other people I met in Canada. I shared an apartment with Reg for twelve years, and although I went on long weekends with him to the states, I never took a holiday with him. We had a large circle of mutual friends from Canadair, but in fact had completely different entertainments and friends beyond that. I enjoyed the cinema, where as Reg

liked socializing in the tavern. It probably made our association last because we were not in each others hair all of the time.

Park Royal was a group of seven buildings, each with 24 apartments in them. They were in the process of being built when we moved in at the start of November. In fact it was nearly a week before the toilet seat was installed and the living room was painted. The latter did not matter as we did not have any furniture for it. The former was not good as it is surprising how cold the ceramic bowls were, even in a well heated room. We had each purchased a bed and arranged for their delivery and the installation of our telephone on our first day there. There was a bit of a panic as no bolts for assembly were delivered, but a neighbour (also at Canadian) knocked on our door and said that two boxes of bolts had been delivered with his beds, one with our address on it. The first weeks we eat using a table made out of the boxes the beds came in, sitting on my cabin trunk, but then bought a three piece kitchen set.

By Christmas I had saved the emergency return fund, but thought it would be unlikely that I would need it, as I was settling in nicely. Having a place of our own, was a real plus, as in England at that time, if you put your name down for a flat when you got married (impossible for singles), you would be lucky to get one before your child started school. The waiting list for a telephone was also measured in years. Ron Fryatt., who worked for the GPO and needed a phone for emergency repair calls, waited nearly a year before they could give him a line. All the exchanges were filled and new exchanges took time to build and commission.

In Montreal, however, there was a great urban expansion in progress. St Laurent, which five years earlier had been an outskirts village with a population of 6000, now was a suburb of 24000 and still expanding. Park Royal was right on the edge of the built area. From the next street you could look out on waste ground (and city dump) that extended uninterrupted for two miles to the Prison on the north shore of Montreal Island. The next year I hunted rats there with a .22 rifle only having to hold fire when the Cartierville train signalled by a whistle that it was coming on the open section of the track.

My first impressions of Montreal were not very good. The use of wood in the exteriors of buildings gave the place an air of non permanency to my eye. The overhead electric and telephone cables made the city untidy and unfinished. There were not even any skyscrapers (except for the huge Canada Life Building in Dominion Square), these did not get built until around 1965. Another factor that hit my eye was that in the suburbs, none of the front gardens were fenced or hedged. Coming from England this was different. On the other hand, except for Mount Royal, Westmount and a couple in the east, there were few public parks and no recreation grounds. Even in St Laurent, some of the roads were not made up. For nearly a year I walked approximately a mile to work with over a half being on graded, but unmade roads, which were very muddy in spring.


Fall

My first trip outside of the Montreal area was made to the Laurentians on the first long weekend in October. I went up there by bus and was amazed by the blaze of colour of the foliage. It was more vivid the I had expected, but I was disappointed because everywhere was private property and one could not get off the road to hike in the country. I had expected paths like in Surrey that could be walked.

Because 70 families arrived at Canadair in September, and we all were trying to find our feet in a new country, this group stuck together and became close friends. There were over two dozen of us living at the Park Royal, including eight from the stress office. Even on the first Saturday in Canada, I went downtown to see the "bright lights" and bumped into several of the group. Later I walked over the Mountain (Mount Royal) and bumped into a draughtsman, John Kerr, from Hawkers, who had flown in the previous day. I did not know that he was thinking of leaving Hawkers. Most of the people had come from the aircraft factories further north in Britain, the largest contingents were from Avros and Shorts, which were reducing their staff in 1952.

The number of nationalities among the new people was quite amazing. It seemed that where ever there had been an aircraft industry, there were people who immigrated. In the ski club with about 80 members, there were 17 different nationalities represented. I had lead a very insular life in London as we hardly ever had contact with foreigners. Suddenly I was forced into daily contact with French, Italians, Indians (from India), Dutch and Americans, to name just those who lived adjacent to me at Park Royal. I also had to work with Germans, with whom seven years earlier we were at war. I learnt that stereotypes did not really exist. You had to treat folks for what they were and not what they were called. Consequently I became quite friendly with a couple of Germans, but on the other hand there was another German who I could well imagine in Jack Boots or running a concentration camp. Fortunately he didn't last long at Canadair but he was a horrible person.

I received a very pleasant surprise with my second pay cheque, a $3 increase, which in my way of thinking was twelve shillings. The old hands all advised to forget about pounds when buying, because some things would appear to be very expensive, but when considered as a fraction of your take-home pay, were actually cheaper. This was much easier said than done.
During the week, I ate mainly at the cafeteria. A cooked breakfast only cost about 30¢ and a three course lunch was around 60¢. Of course all food was highly subsidised by the company. At the week end I usually cook the main meal and breakfast at home, which only left a sandwich lunch to be purchased. At the snack counter of Kreske's you could get a grilled cheese sandwich and tea for 20¢, though the tea was usually made with warm water. Because of this, I was soon drinking coffee.

One of the biggest impact on English newcomers was the difference in food. Bar B Q chicken was unheard of in England in 1952, but was most popular and cheap in Montreal (I was introduced to it the first night in Canada). Because it was eaten in the bare hands made it more exotic. It quickly replaced Fish & Chips, which was not to be had in Montreal. One disappointment I had, was the "Hot Roast Beef Sandwich", which when it arrived consisted of some sliced cold roast beef with a very thick hot gravy poured over it, between two slices of dry bread. It was impossible to eat as a sandwich and with a knife & fork was still messy. Burgers were another staple diet. MacDonalds had not yet been thought of, but every drug store had a food counter that did a very passable Burger, particularly to one used to the foul taste of the Wimpy.

I like my eggs really well done and initially had difficulty getting them cooked firm enough. I solved this by having a Toasted Western sandwich instead of toast and scrambled egg, It was cheaper and had the right texture. For the first year I was in Canada, I seldom eat in a restaurant instead preferring the cheapness and more familiar foods of the counters. Reg introduced me to eating at deli's where I soon got to like Smoked Meat Sandwiches, Lox on Cream Cheese, Club Sandwiches and the cole slaw that came with them. On pay day, I got into the habit of cashing my cheque at the bank and having Smoked meat and coffee for the heavy price of 25¢ + 5¢ tip. Not as filling as the canteen, but more flavorable. Montreal is famous for its restaurants. There are over 5000 of them and almost every ethnic and style is to be found. More to the point, very few had poor cooking, unlike those in Britain where good food was often spoilt by the preparation. The range of prices was huge, not that I ever went to the middle range. A meal with BBQ chicken could be had for under a dollar and steaks with salad, desert & coffee for under $2.00. Much more affordable than England.

The first Christmas in Canada came along and suddenly homesickness hit Pack Royal. Three of the lads from the stress office, Bill Whiteside, Roy Hoffman, & Ted Piper, had all married a week before coming to Canada and were living with their wives in the apartments. We were all missing home at this time of year, so decided to have a wonderful party to forget it. It did not work out that way, the radio only played Christmas music and the talk was only about HOME. We had stocked in plenty of food and drink, but the latter only made me more morose and although I was quite drunk when I went home from Roy's apartment where the party was held, I was not happy. Neither were the others when I left one was sick and two of the girls were weeping. Still, you get over homesickness or maybe are able to control it better. It was comparatively easy for people working, but the wives who were at home all day suffered a lot. Many had to take "the $1000 cure". This involved sending the wife back to their family in England for a couple of months. Most came back cured, the shortages, the dreariness of the weather and minor irritations were usually sufficient. I was surprised at the number who told me that on their return, they found themselves to be the "expert" of the family because of their "wide experiences". This generally meant that they got all the troubles and complaints heaped upon their shoulders. Most were glad to get back to Canada.

I found that I appreciated home and family a lot more. When I was away before, my parents were lucky to get a post card with five words on it in two weeks. After arriving in Canada, I was writing an aerogram twice a week and Mother was replying. The post was much quicker that today. An aerogram from London to Montreal never took more than three days (even when posted on Sunday). I was sent a roll of the London evening papers once a week by sea and this took about a week. Today with jets going three times the speed of the piston-engined aircraft of 1952, the airmail takes 7 days and sea mail up to 6 weeks! So much for progress.

One difficulty for new comers to Montreal was the lack of places that one could meet friends. There was no equivalent of the pubs, where men and women could gather and chat. The only public dances were in the down-town area and except for the Y, were too expensive. Most could not afford to eat out and even in a restaurant only adjacent people could talk. As the shops stayed open until 9:30 pm every Friday, most people were soon meeting and chatting at the shopping center. Norgate, in St Laurent was one of the first shopping centers in Canada. It was a rectangular parking lot with stores

forming an "L" on two sides.

It was the Drug Store and the Supermarket that held the most attraction for Europeans. The latter with rows upon rows of foods and supplies was an Aladdin's cave for people used to rationing and small one purpose shops. In drug stores, unlike chemists, you could buy almost anything you needed, have a meal, and make your selection of reading matter from the racks of pocket books. There were no branch libraries in Montreal and the only book shops were on Ste Catherines street, 10 miles away. You could even go just to shelter from the rain while waiting for a streetcar. This I found difficult as my upbringing was that you did not enter a shop unless you intended to buy something. Anyway Friday was the time we found out what was happening, where it was happening and to whom it was happening.

Because of the difficulty in meeting people, we tended to have our social lives revolve about Canadair. Most of the 70 people in my intake at Canadair were married, the few bachelors were mainly living with their families. I was fortunate to be taken pity on and obtained quite a few invitation to meals. I went with a group a couple of times to dances at the Y, but it was hopeless. Even George who considered himself God's gift to women was put down. When you went to ask a girl for a dance most of the time you got a cold "NO" and the cold shoulder. It appeared that you had to be known to them before they would condescend to dance and there was no way of getting to know them except through mutual friends. I was unfortunate with the introductions to people living in Montreal, that I had been given in England. I contacted two of the three I had been given. The first was snobbish and prejudiced to an unpleasant level and the other family although friendly were obviously uncomfortable with my visits. I visited each twice, just enough to write back to the people who had given me their names. Other immigrants were much more successful, at least one at Canadair marrying into the family of his initial contact. I did not have a regular girl friend during the first years in Canada. I dated some Canadair girls and a few I met skiing, but there was none with whom I became serious.

The main means of transport for me was the streetcars (Trams). There were a few bus and trolley routes but most were single deck streetcars. In the suburbs and along Decarie they ran on private ways that parallelled the road. One such track ran by Canadair and it was not unusual at quitting time to see one pull away from the stop, full inside and with as many as a dozen on the steps and rear bumper. The police turn a blind eye as at the end of the private way (outside the Texas Tavern) many got off to change or have a drink. To go downtown, it took half an hour, changing from the #17 to the #65 at the double loop terminus near Snowdon. The service was good and frequent and ran until after midnight.

I, being careful with my money (ie mean) did not buy a car, but for many, it was the first big purchase. You could get a used Ford that, with a bit of help, would run for $250. Reg, like many others bought a British car, a Vanguard. Unfortunately they were not designed or equipped for Canadian winters and were bad starters, did not stand up to the pot-holes and were very cold. To make matters worse all spare parts were excessive in price. A group of engineers discussed this with a visiting UK car company executive, only to be told, rather snottily, that British cars were designed by experts who knew how to make the best cars. In other words we (in Canada) did not know what we were talking about. The result was that the next car to be bought was not British. I grew quite annoyed with the attitude of "British is Best" as I believed that, by not catering for the conditions in other parts of the world, many export orders were lost.

The attitude of the Englishman to his car was different in the middle of the century. It was probably his most cherished possession and at a time when most homes were rented, his most expensive one. This resulted in the car being less a transport and more a loved one. Petrol rationing helped to make the car's use a special occasion. Each Sunday morning in the streets of suburbia, you could see the man of the house in the driveway washing and polishing. Then he would walk to the pub and discuss the merits of his car over those of his listeners. The "little woman" would stay at home cooking the sunday dinner. After eating, as long as it did not look like rain, the family would take a ride and probably visit family or friends. After immigration, in Montreal, this attitude of the Englishman soon changed. The car became only a means of transport. With an accident rate of 1 in 4 cars per year, and salt limiting the car's life to 5 or 6 years, very few cars survived without at least dents. Somehow a car with a bash-in mudguard (wing) didn't seem more cherishable that anyone else in the family, even the wife.

I obtained a Canadian drivers licence just after I arrived. At that time there was no test in Quebec, but an enterprising reporter had caused a scandal by getting a licence for his dog, so tests were introduced. The back log was immense, so those holding an old licence for more that three years or holding a licence from another country or province did not get tested for 18 months and were allowed to drive on their old licence. I did not find it too much bother in not having a car as extra drivers were always in demand because of the distances involved in trips.

There were few very old cars on the streets in Quebec. The climate, particularly in winter when salt is applied liberally to the roads, is very hard on cars. In addition, the north American's love of speed, coupled with the Gallic tendency to be impatient resulted in many accidents - fender-benders as they are called. The insurance companies stated that in the life of the average car, six years in 1954, each owner would have 1.7 claims. Things have improved a lot due to driver education but the statistics are still very high.

The summer of 1953 was notable for two reasons, Firstly television came to Montreal and secondly the USA opened its borders to Canadian landed immigrants without need of visas. The coronation of Elizabeth II was the first program shown and as only a few people had TVs, the radio stores all set up their windows with TVs and had loudspeakers outside for the sound. There were crowds around those stores all day. The store owners did not do badly either as it was a tremendous advertisement. Reg and I invested in a TV just before Christmas but other activities prevented its over use.

Soon after the border to the US was opened, I took a weekend trip into Vermont, seeing the mountains and doing some shopping, but my big trip was not until July. My vacation was two weeks so I decided to visit my nearest (in geography) relation, my cousin Vera, now living in Milwaukee. She was in the WAAFs during the war, and met her husband, who was in the USAF, when his group arrived at the airfield where she was stationed. After the war she went to the states as one of the first GI brides. I bought a Greyhound Bus ticket to do the big circle route; down through Toronto, Windsor, Detroit & Chicago to Milwaukee; then returning through the Sault, North Bay and Ottawa. I had a few days with Vera and her family. Her daughter, Jillian, was about four and an image of Shirley Temple, typically American to my eyes. She had just started day school and the teachers thought that she had "a cute English accent," if she did I couldn't hear it!

It was quite easy getting into the states if you were a landed immigrant and were born in western Europe or Britain, but quite sticky if born elsewhere. Our next door neighbour, Joyce Broughton, was a widow of a RAF officer, so that her two children were born in England and Malta respectively. When we used to go for a picnic at Plattsberg beach, the youngest was told to keep quiet at the border. Even with this, frequently the officer would ask the youngest "what's your name - how old are you -where were you born" and out would come "Malta", leaving Joyce the job of explaining. The border patrol was a different matter. They would stop cars acting in a storm trooper manner, and take the attitude that you had no right to be in the USA. It was up to you to explain and give documentation or they would arrest you. Getting back to Canada meant just showing your drivers licence or immigrants card. I tried to cross the border at Windsor-Detroit while I was there on the job. I did not have documentation. There was no trouble getting into the states, but returning I was asked my birthplace, so I just said "London," expecting the guard to assume this was London Ontario (only 50 miles away). But no, he said "London England?" Which left me with a lot of explaining to do. I did not think that my accent was that detectable.

Much of my spare time centred around Canadair, I was in the Soccer and Cricket clubs, and had taken up range shooting again, having bought a .22 Mossburg rifle. There was no registration of rifles necessary in Canada. I did not join a team but preferred to build up my accuracy. The range was downtown just opposite the Montreal Forum, the hockey arena that was the home of the "Canadiens", so I had to go on the streetcar. I always carried my rifle in a plastic carrying case, but often got some very nasty looks from the drivers or the police outside the forum. Montreal has been the city with the worst record for bank robberies, most of them with firearms, so it was a wonder I was never stopped.

That winter, I took up skiing. I had thought that it would be magnificent to gracefully slide down the slopes, but little did I expect the pure terror of the descent of the slopes, only partially in control. I outfitted myself with the middle price equipment of the day; solid maple skis, bear-trap & cable harness, and wooden poles, but used existing clothing. I had a heavy waterproof golfers jacket, and a pair of army trousers, I used pyjamas trousers instead of long-johns and several sweaters. I certainly didn't feel the cold even though it was as low as -25° F that year.
The Canadair Ski Club had a couple of instructors who had been in their respective country's Olympic ski team, Mark Malek was from Jugoslavia and Fotis Mavripolis from Greece. Between them they managed to get my ability to do parallel turns on up to intermediate trails, but I was never a red-hot skier.

Generally I did not feel the cold while out in the open the first couple of winters in Canada. What did effect me, was the extreme dryness inside houses and the temperature set at over 72°F, which was much higher than was comfortable for me. There appears to be something in the theory that after a couple of years in high central heating, your blood becomes thinner and you feel the cold more. Nearly everyone from Britain experienced this. Mind you, Britain when the only heat was from coal fires and no windows or doors fitted properly was certainly not a healthy place. I don't believe anyone survived the

winter there without several colds or worse. The third winter I had outfitted myself in suitable Canadian winter clothes, light for inside and very warm and windproof for the outside.

Politics in Canada were completely different from what I had been used to in England. These were the days of Duplesse as the premier of Quebec and Camilian Houde as mayor of Montreal. Both were larger that life figures. On 17 March you would see the mayor in a parade along Sherbrooke Street in a green top hat and being driven in a green Cadillac. Even the streets of the parade route had a green stripe along them. It struck me as being strange that the Canadiens should make such a fuss about an Irish holiday, that was before I met a number of the priesthood many of whom were Irish. I found the attitude of the man in the street deplorable, he expected all politicians to be corrupt, and this could not be changed because "you can't fight city hall!". I believe that this attitude creates or encourages corruption, so what they think, they get! All levels of society get affected. I knew some people whose driving ability left a lot to be desired and could not have passed the test, going to a bureau in the townships where for an extra ten dollars no test was taken. Also some drivers kept a two dollar bill in their drivers licence, so that if they were stopped by the police, the licence alone would be handed back and the driver just given a warning. I must admit that I was not all together honest on the sales tax. The city of Montreal had a 6% tax on most items, but the lakeshore only had 2%, so I had an address of convenience in Point Claire and saved 4% on each transaction.

My parents had left the Kings Head soon after I went to Canada. After a three month stay in Reigate taking it easy and a three weeks holiday in Switzerland, their first holiday abroad together, they took over another pub in Brixton. It was called the Bickley Arms and was situated in a back street, where the stage door of the Brixton Theatre opened. The clientele was largely from the flats and private homes nearby, but many artists playing at the theatre also came in. The inhabitants of Brixton were fully cockney and had not changed to west indians in 1953. A couple of the most popular artists who played at Brixton regularly were two of the Crazy Gang, Nervo & Knox. My father had known them in the early days of the Crazy Gang, when he spent much of his spare time at a club near the Prince of Wales Theatre. Unfortunately, Bruce (our dog) did not survive the moves. He developed a very bad cough while at Reigate that got progressively worse and he had to be put to sleep. Bruce was the last pet that my parents owned.


Mother's shop

In February 1954, had a call from my Mother, Dad had been taken to hospital with a severe heart attack. By the time she got to phone me, he was out of danger, but it was unlikely that he would be able to work in the pub for at least a couple of years. My Mother ran the Pub for several months until they could sell out. She decided to take a small women and children's clothing shop in Mordon. It had a nice flat over the shop where she and my father lived. Betty Hammond, who was living at Mitcham, helped out behind the counter. I discussed if I should return but she persuaded me to leave it until later.

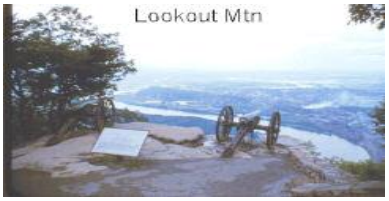
At Canadair, I was still working in stress-liaison, but was doing other design work as well. I had spent a lot of time on the landing gear for the Sabre, so when there was work to be done on gears for other aircraft, I was called in. The North Star (C-54) had an increase in weight, so new calcs on both the gear and the wings were required and I was part of a three man team that did them. Looking back on this period, I cannot remember much of note. I had no regular girlfriend, but took out girls from the design office occasionally. Much of the time I spent with Reg and a French Canadian stressman named Jean-Louis. I skied most weekends in winter and during summer found a couple of beaches on the "Back River" where I could swim and sunbathe. My other main entertainment was still the cinema, which was cheap enough for me to treat a girl, We went to the Lucerne Cinema in Ville St Laurent nearly every week, as it had a double feature program and was only 65¢, while the downtown theatres only showed a single film at $1.25.

In the middle of 1955, Father wrote that he thought that he would be getting another pub in the spring of the next year. I decided that I would return to be in England before Christmas to help out. Because I did not know if I would ever return to North America, I negotiated a three month summer holiday so that I could take a trip to see some of the continent.

In the June I went to the bus station on Dorchester Street and purchased a ticket on the Greyhound System. It cost $99 and for this I was allowed to go around the USA and Canada in a clockwise direction. The limits were that I could not double back and all the travelling had to done in three calendar months. The ticket I received was 11' 8" long with four sections a foot. Some sections had to be exchanged for other tickets. For example, I only had one section along the pacific coast, all the way from San Diego to Vancouver that was exchange for six intermediate sections. I packed very carefully in two pieces of luggage, a Bergen type rucksack and a folding nylon case. The

former was packed mainly with things for immediate living, while the latter had the long term gear. I made a point of checking the bag to "await my arrival" at the next stage and only claiming it at the point of moving on so I was not unnecessarily laden during the stop over. I had collected about twenty of rolls of colour film and took a fair record of my journey, I also kept a journal.

I had chosen my route carefully to give me a great variety of scenic, historic and other places. I started by going down the Atlantic coast (New York, Philidelphia, Washington). This was largely indoor visits, theatres, museums and buildings. The next stage was to the south-west through the Blue Ridge Mountains, Kentucky, to Chattanooga and Atlanta. Here I took side trips into the Great Smokey Mountains and the various Civil War battlefields. New Orleans was the next stop where I spent several days washing clothes as well as sight seeing. I stayed in a cheap hotel right on the edge of the Vieux Carre, so I was able to get some very good Louisianan meals and heard plenty of jazz.



The next stage was north up the Mississippi to Natchez, Little Rock and St Louis. I found the dwellings were very rough and many of the people crude in this stretch. From St Louis I went down old highway 66, called in at Carthage, Mo. to see another cousin, June, who was also a GI bride. I stayed there a couple of days and made it into the local paper as "a visitor to a local family from far away Canada." Carthage was the nearest thing to a cinema rural town that I have ever seen. Travelling on I went through Oklahoma, the Texas Panhandle, New Mexico to Arizona where I took a side trip (not on the ticket) to the grand canyon.

On the bus going there were two English nurses, who had just worked for three years in a US hospital and like myself, were seeing the land before returning to the UK. I teamed up with them for the next ten days. While we were in the Canyon area we hiked down to the plateau, some 5000' below the rim where we were staying. It is like climbing a mountain in reverse, as you start at the top, walk downhill to the oven-like heat of the plateau then when you are hot and tired you have to climb up the trail. Every day the rangers have to collect people who have collapsed from the climb, who then have to pay a rescue fee. I had water bottles, food, and suitable clothing and a pack, so we went down in the morning, eat, rested and refilled water at the only shade in the canyon, Spanish Spring. Then we climbed out in the evening when it was cooler wearing the change of socks that I had carried down. We got back safely but were all very stiff the next day.

From the Canyon we went on to Las Vegas, there I spent 3 days basically gambling. I set myself a limit of $5 to lose, but never quite getting there. At one time I was $11 ahead, but finished on the last day being $3 out of pocket, which I considered good for three days entertainment. One of the girls won a Jackpot on a one-armed bandit and came away $38 to the good. On evening I went down the Strip (the road where all the fashionable hotels are on) and called in one of the hotels. I was taking photos in the casino when a security guard came up and said "I'm sorry sir, but if I see you taking pictures I will have to confiscate your camera." Of course he knew that I had taken some photos. I apologised and he explained to me that not everyone there wanted a photo of the people they were with. Too many Husbands away on business with their 'secretaries'. He recognised my accent and said that a co-patriot was performing in the theatre. It was Noel Coward and the guard took me to the back and I was able to see the complete show. This time I really struck lucky.

The next section was down to San Diego where the girls went off to visit friends. I spent most of the time there on the beach. The wind was cooling from the ocean but this is far south and the sun is so much stronger than I was used to, which resulted in a fearful sunburn. I also spent time at the zoo and its gardens, and in spite of the burn, I liked San Diego. One of the days that I was staying in San Diego was spent in Mexico. Tijuana is actually just south of the border and the San Diego busses run to the immigration post. I spent a full day and packed in many things. While I was there I went to the bull fight, saw a Ji Li game, went to a casino and finished up at a sleezy night club. The bull fight did not upset me as I half expected, but I was cheering for the bull.

Up the Pacific, I journeyed to Los Angeles, where I was rather limited as there was a bus strike in progress the whole time I was there. I did, however, manage to get up to Hollywood where I saw a couple of the famous studios. I returned later that night, to go to a concert in the Hollywood Bowl that I found lovely in the cool of the evening, but the music was tempered by the sound of trucks rumbling up the roads below the Bowl. The next stop was San Francisco. I saw the usual tourist sights like the Golden Gate Bridge, Seal Rocks, the Harbour front, the cable cars and Chinatown (where I had my first chinese meal that wasn't spare ribs). The next stops were Portland, Seattle and finally Vancouver, Which was another washing stop. I also met people there, who I had known in Montreal. I had always felt that I would like to settle in the Vancouver area, but there were few jobs available. I

visited a new housing area near Capalano Heights and looked over a house set in the hillside. It had a balcony from the living room that look out on to Vancouver harbour and a little stream run along the edge of the property. Its cost; just $16000. Today it would run to a couple of million, do I wish I had purchased it as an investment!

Vancouver was the beginning of the return part of the journey that started through the Rocky's to Banff where I arrived in time for the Indian Days, where I went to the rodeo. An accident occurred during a riding event that resulted in a horse breaking its leg, being shot. I found that this upset me far more than the bull fight, yet it was done for humane reasons. Its strange how illogical one can be. I walked in the Rockies on either side of Banff and swam in the hot springs, then on to Calgary. I then turned south and went into Yellowstone Park on a four day special tour (with accommodation & meals included). I think I eat better here than any other part of my trip as there was nothing extra to pay if you had everything. From there I moved on to Salt Lake City.


Mt Rushmoor - Black Hills

I had sent my parents a schedule of certain cities where I would visit the "general delivery" post office. At Salt Lake City I found some bad news awaiting me. My mother's sister had died suddenly and I felt very bad as I had written her a letter on the day she had died. It rather dampened things for the next few days. The following stage consisted of a lot of bus travel around the Colorado mountains, Denver, Rapid City, and the Black hills of Dakota. This was still very much the cowboy country of the western movies.

The Last part of the trip I rushed through as I was getting weary of travelling. This took me through Minnesota to Milwaukee and Chicago, spending time again with Vera and her family. Then back to Montreal only stopping a few days in Toronto visiting some of the people I knew who had gone to Avro-Canada, the other major aircraft company of Canada. I arrived back to Tasse Street tired but with over a thousand slides with which for the next few months I bored any of my friends who would look at them.

There is a great advantage in seeing a country by bus. You go through the centres of cities and villages and usually there is more to see from a road than from the railway, especially in the open country. The biggest advantage is that you meet people, especially if you are travelling alone. Every day you have someone different sitting beside you. Sometimes when you are on a non-express bus, you get several different people by you as people get off and on the bus. The folks in North America are very much more outgoing than their British equivalent. Most will engage in conversation with others (without introduction) met on transport. I travelled with a varied group. There was the Marine returning to base who chatted about Korea rather condescendingly, until he heard that I had been through the Blitz. There was the Mormon gentleman who explained all about his religion to me. The Dutch girl travelling around the USA on a student's visa learning English as she went. There were Grandmothers, fishermen, schoolgirls, a history professor, a musical director, and a rodeo rider to list just a few. Some people like the nurses and the Dutch girl I travelled with for more than one day, but most were 2 to 5 hour acquaintances. Its remarkable how much one came to know about a person in such a short time.

Even today there are some memories of this trip that stand out. My first visit to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington. Seeing the clouds come in over the Smokeys giving them almost an impressionist appearance. Children dancing to a banjo in a back street in New Orleans. The aircraft "Spirit of St Louis" in the museum of that city. The changing colours during different times of day of the Grand Canyon. The look of concentration of the old ladies feeding slot machines in Las Vegas, and the million dollars set in glass in one of the casinos. The sudden appearance of a chinese city on Grant Avenue in San Francisco. The peacefulness of a walking trail near Banff and the unexpected meeting of a bear on another trail in Yellowstone. I have never regretted the time and money that this holiday took and would advise anyone to find out about where you live when ever you have the opportunity.

At the end of October I saw the chief of structures who gave me a two year leave of absence rather than accept my notice, in case I decided to return to Canada. Reg decided that he would live alone but said that if I returned I could again share the apartment with him if he was still at Tasse street. I felt that I would like to return but did not think that it would be practical. I did not burn my bridges and even left the $4500 that I had saved in my Canadian bank, just transferring $500 to the London Branch of the Bank of Montreal where I could leave as dollars but draw from it immediately if needed. Once again I packed my gear and boarded the "Saxonia" in Montreal Harbour for my return to England.

Contents

Chapter 7 - Interlude in England 1955-56

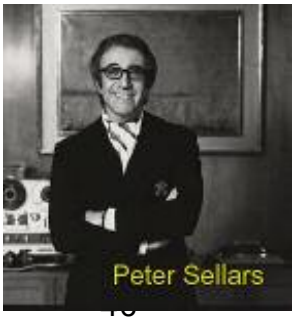
The journey I took on the Saxonia was the last sailing from Montreal in 1955. I was surprised how few passengers there were. The crew outnumbered the passengers and the resulting service was wonderful. There was only one sitting in the restaurant but snacks were available at all times, even into the small hours. The passengers were largely young people and soon got into a friendly group.

Coincidence are strange, a girl who was returning to her husband. He had been stationed in Canada, as a UK serviceman and was now in Germany. On two separate later visits to London, I bumped into her as she was moving homes. She recognised me each time and even remembered my name. Once seen never forgotten! The trip was comparatively smooth and we landed in Liverpool. I had no trouble with immigration or customs until I declared my rifle. Then forms, declarations and bond arrangements nearly made me miss the Boat Train to London. The officials were in their own way quite helpful but very pessimistic, and thought that I would not get a gun licence from the Metropolitan Police as I was going to be living in London. Actually it came through in three weeks and I was able to get the gun from bond, but did not use it while I was in England because I was unable to find a club nearby. I was met at Kings Cross Station by Ted Hammond who took me home.

It was obvious that my father was not fit enough to take another pub, so I immediately started to look for a job. I wrote to Hawkers and after searching the technical press applied for jobs at the London offices of De Havilland and Saunder-Roe Aircraft as a stressman. Much to my surprise, I got interviews at all three and offers from them. It was amusing the difference between the three companies. At Hawkers, I was remembered as an ex-apprentice and there was no trouble in offering a job, the only trouble was it was less than the amount I had put as my minimum (£950 pa), probably because I was remembered as a junior and the extra 3 years experience was just discounted. De Havillands were interested in my Canadian experience, but made the comment that it was a pity I had not worked with D.H.Canada, but my experience was high enough to work for a good company like De Havillands. The salary they offered was less than Hawkers, presumably because I would obviously take less to be able to work for such an exalted firm. Saunders-Roe (Saro) were interested in my work in Canada but said "of course we don't work like that here." Anyway they offered me £1000 a year plus lunch vouchers worth another £40, so I took this job to start immediately after the Christmas holiday. The general impression I got from all the interviews was one of complacency (the British is Best Syndrome). Of course the designs in Britain were quite good, but they could have made them better, especially in the production and cost areas, if they had been willing to consider some of the better innovations from across the Atlantic.

The "British Disease" was beginning to appear. Militant Unions were both fighting each other for members and enforcing stupid decisions on industry. A stupid example of this was in ship-building, and caused through the resulting strikes, many orders for new ships to go to the continental builders. It appeared that in finishing off ships holes had to be drilled through steel bulkheads to attach furnishings. Some bulkheads were faced with wooden panels, these gave trouble. The woodworker's union insisted that drilling of wood must be done by their members, the steelworkers said "no this is a steel drilling and our members must drill." The result a three month strike with penalties and loss of further orders to the company, followed by the lay-off of all workers. After a lot of bitterness, the unions agreed to let some workers join both unions and thus be able to conform to these rigid conditions. As many union leaders were card carrying communists, it was wondered in the press whether it was a Russian originated plan to cause strife in Britain.

I soon settled down at home, but with some differences, I found that I was much more critical and did not accept things that I thought inefficient or wrong easily. People went out of their way to be kind to me, sometimes with unfortunate results. Almost the first week that I was at home, we had a leg of lamb for dinner. I commented how good it was, and that lamb was almost impossible to get in Montreal. Betty Hammond was there, so the next week when I ate at her home, it was lamb. As the weeks went by and I was invited to various friends and family for dinner, every one was lamb! It appeared that word had got around that Don had not had lamb for three years and everyone thought they would do me a favour, but after six months I was almost baa-ing.



When I started at Saro's in the new year and discovered my desk was next to Alan Dickson. who had sat in front of me at Hawkers. He had changed jobs a couple of months earlier. There were seven other stressmen in the office, but I only got friendly with two of them, Reg Platt. who sat in front and George L. who sat behind me. The rage of the day was the Goon Show, which had recently started on television after an initial run on the radio. I did not watch it myself, but got a repeat performance every week from Reg who would mimic out the interplay and catch-phrases with the others helping out. I found it funny but not the way the others in the office did. Spike Milligan was better as an author. Whereas Peter Sellers came into his own as a comedian and

I believe was at his height when he teamed up with Sophia Loren.

After taking the medical for Saro's, I had a nasty shock. I had started to get high blood pressure. My mother's family generally suffered from it and although the pressure was not very high, I was only 28 years old. I started taking pills to control it and to this day am still taking them. I must admit that it was frightening to begin with, but one has to live with it, and after a couple of years are used to the idea. One thing I did do, was to reduce the level of my drinking, which had crept up to a fairly heavy amount while I was in Canada. I also watched my diet, but did not go as far as to have a strict regime.

The work in the London office was very varied and quite interesting. Saro's were at that time designing a compound fighter aircraft. That is an aircraft powered by both turbo-jet and rocket motors. My experience on rockets at Hawkers helped on this. Two other jobs that I did work on were ground equipment for the Black Knight Rocket and design of the hydro-foils for an experimental naval vessel for the RCN. Saros had their works and main office in Newport on the Isle of Wight. At that time the design office was in part of Osborne House (Queen Victoria's holiday residence). I got down there a couple of times, but most meetings were held in London. This allowed the senior people at Saunders to come to London, have the meeting and then shop or take in a show.

The secretary for the London office was housed in the same room as the stress office. She also had to operate the manual telephone exchange that served the whole floor. Reg and myself learned to operate it and take over when she was busy or out of the room. I cannot remember her name (I think it was Janet), but she was known, behind her back as "Tweety-Pie", because of the way she treated a supervisor, who was known to be a bit of a rover (both in eye and hands) was similar to the way the cartoon character treated the cat (Sylvester). Tweety-Pie was in her early twenties was slim, had long hair but her face was rather plain. You can imagine the surprise of the office when she told us she had taken a part-time job as a model. We were even more surprised when a member of the office who was a keen photographer, took a course at the Polytechnic and found that the model was Tweety-Pie - In the nude! Her popularity increased immensely, but she did not date from the office. I heard that she became a professional model the following year.

Reg had married just before I joined the office. A couple of evenings each week, he was teaching at the technical college both maths and engineering subjects. He was also building a house on the northern outskirts of London. The next year he left Saunders and became a full time teacher. So he was able to get students to help him at the weekends. He completed the house in four years, but admitted that the living in a small section while work was going on elsewhere was not something he would have done if he had known how bad it was. The house when completed was large and luxurious and was worth ten times more than it cost him (in money, but not time). He and Jean, his wife, adopted the three girls of a relation whose marriage had broken. And they were very comfortable until, sadly, Reg died suddenly a few years later. He was only in his mid thirties.

I had not been in England very long before I was thinking about returning to Canada. There was no one thing that made me think that way, rather many little niggles, together with the old attitude that "its always greener on the other side of the fence." I had renewed my friendship with Johnny S, but he now was married and had twins, with the result he was unable to see me very much. Ron Fryatt. was still single but was living outside London and was commuting with an hours journey, so he was not a regular companion. I went out with a couple of old girlfriends but found that we had now little in common (except being of the opposite sex!). I noticed that after they asked about Canada, they were not listening to my replies. When I tried to ask about their news, all I seemed to get was what other people were doing, most of whom I couldn't even remember, and that life was the same as when I left. There were few people who were single at work and although I made a couple of new friends by talking to people on the tube each day, I did not have the opportunity to get into any new circle and found that I was more and more doing things alone.

In Canada, during the three years that I had been there, prices were very stable. The cost of living was not increasing anywhere near my increases in salary. In fact I don't think that most food and accommodation prices had increased. Gas (petrol) had actually reduced in Montreal due to a price war. Britain in 1955 & 56 was in a period of large increases. Almost every day there was some increase noted in the paper and although they were small, the overall effect was to diminish ones buying power. I also found little things got blown up to major irritations. For instance, I went into Lyons one bank-holiday and found that every price had an extra penny or tuppence on the price. I got the comment "You can't expect the same prices on a holiday" and when I said that I did, I was looked on as though I was mad. Another irritation was that some time of the day you could buy tea and other times coffee. If you asked for Tea at Coffee time (or vice verse), you would be told it was impossible. The question if they used a special type of boiling water for coffee that could not be used for tea went unanswered. To make matters worse, they usually only had instant coffee and the tea was seldom properly strained.

Another thing I found was that as I worked in the west end, it was convenient to stay there after work and go to the cinema or to dinner. This was very pleasant but I found that it was very much more expensive than in the suburbs and that I became short of money at the end of the week. I enjoyed the westend and got to know some of the characters that dwell and work there, the Buskers, the barrow boys, the spivs and even a few "working girls" though I was careful not to spoil my amateur status. One aspect of the time that I did not like, was the increase of homosexuals in the Westend, particularly in the early evening. Certain cinemas were meeting places, and one in the Haymarket was bad. They were quite militant, although most would move away when rejected. Sometimes force was required, such as a strong kick, before they would leave you alone. I avoided the main meeting places but even in others, you could be accosted if sitting by yourself.

I found living at home in a private house quite different for me. I got to know several of my parents special friends, who before I had considered just customers at the pub. There was Ben R, the local inspector of police who would often call in uniform at night for a chat (and a drink!). Charlie J was an LPTB driver, until he started to run several garage sports and loan clubs, which were full time. Unfortunately Charlie was an alcoholic, and although he never showed any signs of being drunk, it affected his health. I discovered one of the causes was his daughter who was my age. He had skimped and saved to send her through university, only to find that she had turned into a snob and was ashamed of "her common parents."

Two friends from Brixton were Charlie & Hilda B. They were true cockneys. Charlie had been on the barrows and in bookmaking, while Hilda worked in shops. They both had families from previous matings (not Marriages), and all their children were rogues. Even two of the girls done time and usually one of the boys was doing a stretch. Harry & Hilda themselves were as straight as most, but I suspect if they got something for you, it was by way of their offspring. Probably "fallen off the back of a lorry."

The most welcome of Dad's friends was Stan Gardner. Stan was an ex-soldier, ex-policeman, ex-chauffeur who because of war wounds had to find a less active job. Just before things got bad, he was driving the President of a very large international company with its headquarters in London. His boss thought very highly of him, so that when he could no longer do full time driving, he was given a special job. This consisted of part time driving and night-time office minder. The President's office at the top of a large office was outfitted as a suite with bed, bath, kitchen and lounge. Stan had, Monday to Friday, to spend the night there, answer the phone and forward important calls to his boss or other officials. There was a large non-fiction library in the suite and to help pass the time Stan started to read. His Boss soon discovered that Stan had more or less self educated himself, and encouraged it still further by buying books and having discussion when they were in the car. Stan was also given the tickets to the firm's seats at the Royal Albert Hall when no-one else was using them. Often for boxing or other sporting events, as there were two tickets, my father would accompany him. My father enjoyed conversations on all subjects, and he and Stan would read a book or article then discuss it thoroughly. I also liked reading and was often able to join in their discussion. Stan was more knowledgeable than most university graduates I have known and finished formal schooling at the age of twelve when he lied about his age to join the army in the first world war.

Mother's friends were fewer and seldom visited the house. She still would occasionally go to the theatre in the west end, especially when her work friend Peggy Cook was visiting London from the Isle of Wight. Of course Betty Hammond was very close and was in fact, the daughter she wanted but never had. Because of the shop, she was seldom able to go to the horse races, which was another of her activities before. There are several tracks very close to the area that we lived. Epsom, Sandown Park, Hurst Park & Kempton Park were all less than a half an hour by car, so racing had been the one entertainment that my parents could fit during the afternoon closed time, when in the pubs. It was through racing that Mother got to know another friend, Stan Wilkingson. He was a policeman, a sergeant in the gaming section. You would never guess him to be in the police, as he was quite short and had a nondescript appearance. He never wore uniform and in his younger days had done much undercover work. We knew him just before he retired and at that time he was well known in the racing and gambling community. Similar to Stan Gardner, he was a self educated man, and could talk intelligently on many subjects.

By August 1956, I had decided to return to Canada, but not until I had taken a good holiday in Europe. I planned a journey at Cooks by getting a rail ticket that took me to the places I wanted. At the end of September I started by taking the ferry to the Hook of Holland and went the few miles to the Hague. After two days I went through Hamburg to Copenhagen where I spent several days. Two of these were in the Tivoli with which I was a shade disappointed. It was too much like the festival gardens, but of course predated it by a century. Denmark was famous at that time for having public beaches that allowed nude bathing. I went to one, but it was a cool autumn day and everyone was well wrapped up. I had not planned to go to Sweden but went across on the ferry to Malmo, just for the afternoon. Other than saying I had been, there wasn't anything of note.


Oktoberfest at night

I took a night train across Germany to go to Nuremburg, which I found fascinating. They were just beginning to rebuild the war damage and I was glad to see that they reproduced the same architecture as the adjacent undamaged buildings. Even so, the new stonework stood out like a sore thumb. On my next visit there, some twelve years later, the old buildings had been cleaned and the new ones had matured, so it was difficult to tell one from the other. I thought the new Transport Museum was very well produced. My next stop was Munich, which was having the Oktoberfest. It was a very lively place and I can't remember seeing so much beer drunk in such a short space of time. Drunkenness was a problem, the police left alone those asleep on benches or on the grass, but removed the violent ones and those who had fallen in the roadway.

I moved on into Austria, hiking in the Tyrol around Innsbruck. In Salzburg, I went to the operetta, visited the castle and did some more hiking. The music festival had closed but I did go to some recitals at the cathedral. I also hiked in the hills around the town, shades of "the Sound of Music". My journey took me then into Italy with the first stop, Florence. Here I mainly visited the several galleries, then on to Roma. I had up to this time slept in small hotels, except the nights that I travelled, but in Rome I rented a room in a private house. I did it through the tourist bureau, who wrote all the instructions to the landlady. The room stood alone on a flat roof but was entered by way of the main house. It was small but clean, only on my second day there, it was invaded by a column of large ants, over an inch long. I had visions of being carried off by them like Gulliver, so I found the landlady who could only speak Italian and said "FUMI", which I though meant "ant". Of course she didn't understand me, but realised something was wrong. She looked into the room and said the correct word. I left to do my sight-seeing and when I returned the ants were gone. The only trouble was that every time she saw me, we had a conversation, me in English, her in italian, neither of us understanding. Still it was fun. I spent the best part of a week visiting the ancient sites and ruins trying to remember the history that at the time of teaching I found un-interesting.

I was behind my schedule, which was controlled by my booking on the boat to Canada, so I missed out my intended stop at Pisa going directly to the Riviera at Nice. I had expected a good beach there only to find it is all pebbles. The weather was hot and the swimming good and there were even a few bathing beauties there. The funny thing was that they were all English, as the locals wont swim in October. I spent a day in Monte Carlo and was thrown out of the Casino because I was not wearing a tie. Earlier on the holiday I had been asked to leave a Casino in Salzburg, that time I had been wearing a tie but did not have a jacket. I guess I had to be barred, they were scared that I would break the bank!

I was now on the last part of my holiday and I went to Geneva through the mountains on the little diesel car. While in Switzerland I spent time in Vevey, Bern and Zurich, mainly in the towns. I returned home visiting my Uncle Mick in Paris. I spent four weeks on tour but as I had visited eight countries in that time, it was a bit like "If its Tuesday, it must be Belgium." One advantage was that I travelled by train and found the other passengers very friendly. Many spoke English, but those that did not, used a polyglot of English/German/french/italian and over the hours of the trip it was possible to have a "conversation".

The few days that remained before sailing on the "Empress of Britain" were spent at home or visiting family. Canadair had notified me that I could start on my return with a 20% increase over my leaving salary. This sounded wonderful until I got there and found that the average increase that year had been 33%. I don't remember much of the voyage back, except it was very rough and the gentleman that was sharing my cabin was so sick that he was removed to the sickbay, so I had most of the voyage with a cabin to myself. We arrived in Montreal on a weekday when Reg was working, so I took a taxi from the dock to Tasse street, let myself in with a key left with a neighbour and waited for the gang to assemble after work. The return of the Prodigal.
ontents

Chapter 8 Return to Canada

I soon got back in to the swing of things, meeting old friends and more or less taking up where I had been a year earlier. I returned to the Stress Liaison Group, but there was very much more work being done on design and the group also looked after the design work on the systems (Mechanical, Hydraulic, Control, Landing Gear, and Furnishings).

As the winter progressed and the skiing started, I was given the job of treasurer in the ski club. This entailed organizing the weekly trips and arranging for reduction at the tows, hiring the busses, and seeing that instructors were available. There was some difficulty with the latter, as the two instructors of that time didn't like taking the real beginners. I found that I was also conscripted into being the beginners' instructor. This was not as bad as it sounded, because I could sympathise with them, as I had experienced the same problems a couple of years earlier. I was told that I had patience and even if my style was not good, my hints on how to ski worked.

In the spring of the next year, 1957, I brought a car. It was the first new car I had ever owned. It was a Volkswagen Beatle, the one with the original 1100cc engine. They had been introduced into North America the previous year and were still sufficiently rare on the road that you waved to another when passing. One disadvantage was that there was still a fairly large anti-German feeling around. The early owners had to put up with quite a bit of malicious damage in parking lots, scratched & dented body work, broken lights & windows and deflated tyres.

There was another menace while driving, especially in the USA. This was macho drivers in large Detroit cars who thought it fun to force any smaller car off the road. I had a couple of nasty experiences while driving on holiday in Kentucky and West Virginia. Fortunately my friend, Peter Bone. was driving and he was a rallyist. In fact after he left Canadair, he worked for Shell Oil, organizing the Shell 2000, cross Canada rally and could handle any small car like a sports car. When the menace started to crowd him, he would go down through the gears and using the brakes to slow down, so that the other car was miles ahead before it could get down to our speed, then Peter would turn into the narrowest side road he could find, although one car stopped and backed, it did not follow us. We reported it to the police in the next village, but were told that foreigners must expect some "hazing". So much for the police in the southern US.

Battlefield

The holiday referred to in the previous paragraph was the summer of 1957. We just got in the car and headed south. We spent time in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, before heading into the country and touring around the many areas with US civil war associations. We spent a whole day touring the battlefield of Gettesburg, as we had both read a lot on the battle and there are many markers on the site.

Touring in the 50s was much more of a planned operation than it is today. For example there were few dealers in foreign cars in the US, so the wise took some spare parts with him. Credit cards were in their infancy, and the US gas companies did not recognise the Canadian equivalent. Visa and MasterCard were a decade away, so one either had to carry US dollars, which was unwise in amounts for a two week holiday, or carry travellers cheques in US denominations. Even then you were caught since, except in the border states, few merchants would accept them and you had to change them at a bank. Most banks would not change even American Express, without taking off a percentage "for service," often as high as 5%! It got to be a fine art in buying just sufficient to last the holiday. Many times I have had a hamburger diet for the last few days and even had to sleep in the car to have sufficient for the return journey's gas.

I was saving fairly hard that year. I had invited my Mother & Father to visit me in 1958. I had arranged with the only hotel in St Laurent, the Texas Hotel (owned by the owner of the Texas Tavern) for a three month rent on a double room. I negotiated a very good rate as they had just reopened after an extensive renovation. It had been a real dump before and had yet to live down that reputation. It was only 5 minutes on the local bus to our apartment with stops outside both, so my parents could cook, eat and sit at the apartment. The library had just been started in St Laurent and Dad was able to continue his reading with quite a good selections of new books. My Mother kept a journal of this trip, which was given to me after her death. It was an eye opener to see Canada through her eyes. Of course I had written about many things, but often the actuality was different from how she imagined them . Reg and I had made a special effort to clean the place up before they arrived, but the journal remarked how rough and dirty it was, but "probably not bad for bachelors."

I took my holiday in the middle of their stay and we went by car to New York and Boston, then around New England, returning via Quebec City. They both said that it was an experience they had wanted, but never expected to have. Judging by the letters after,

I think they enjoyed the trip, especially meeting all the people that they had about through my letters. Somehow it is much more personal once you have met and got to know someone. They crossed the Atlantic by boat in both directions, and even my Mother, who could get sick on the dockside, enjoyed the return trip even though it was rough. My father always liked ships so there was no trouble with him. He had brought a new blazer before coming and had treated himself to an RNAS badge. On the second day out, the purser came up to him with the officer of the watch's compliment to ask if he would like to go to the bridge. He went to find that the Captain was also ex RNAS (although commissioned). My father did not tell me what they talked about, but did say that he had several sessions with the Skipper over a drink.


Y-Flyer

Canadair had started a yacht club in 1957 and I joined. At that time I did not know one end of a boat from the other, but soon learnt the terms, while helping to build three "Y Flyers" scows for the club. I learned to sail as soon as they were available, and passed out as a Skipper by the end of the summer. I was not very good and usually was in the last few in any regatta that we entered. Still practice makes perfect they say and I soon became perfect. Often making a perfect ass of myself! The club was situated on the shores of Lac St Louis, which is actually the St Laurence River where it widens out above the Lachine Rapids. An old building in Pointe Claire was used as a summer hotel and had an out-building on the lake with a balcony and a couple of docks. Again work parties were called for, and we built two changing rooms with toilets, also a bar with two fridges for beer and soft drinks. Even though we could not afford was professional help for many jobs, there was always someone at Canadair with the know-how and plenty of hands (not always willing) to get things done. Boat-building, carpentry, plumbing, stonework, electrical and mechanical jobs, not to mention the fine art of finding articles at sufficiently cheap prices, were all done by members.

The work at Canadair at the end of the decade was much more oriented to design. The CL-28 Marine Reconnaissance Aircraft had been designed and built and the CL-44 Transport was well under way. A completely new trainer, the CL-41 had been started and an experimental V/STOL was in project. There was a small nuclear division, but the sister corporation of Electric Boats, which made nuclear submarines was objecting to possible competition within the corporation (General Dynamics). Other divisions dealing with buildings and vehicles were also being formed. It was an interesting time to be there.

About this time I realised that my whole life was being centred around Canadair, both during work and in pleasure. My friends were from Canadair, had worked at Canadair or were in some way connected with Canadair. I had the offer to join a group to rent a ski chalet in the Laurentians. Even here eight of the 22 members were from Canadair, but the rest were from other fields. The members were approximately equally men and women. Most of the men were in Engineering while the girls were mostly either in the medical or teaching professions. We were all in our 20s or 30s and single except for one married couple.

The first thing we had to do, was to go to the Laurentians and look over several chalets. After deciding, we negotiated with the owner, signed the lease and made all the arrangements for fuel, snow clearance and cooking gas. This was my first exposure in such dealings, which I did in association with Ron Halliday. and two of the other men. The chalet was financed putting a down-payment for the rent, and each time we went we put money into the kitty for food. There was an honour system bar that worked well and made enough to have a payout after the season had ended. Guest could be taken at a fee, but limitations were made on the number of visits by any non-member.

I was in a ski chalet every year from 1958 to 1969. Each year a few people dropped out while others took their place. In 1968-9 Ron and myself were the only two that were in the original chalet. During this time we had rented chalets in Ste Marguarets and Ste Agathe in the Laurentians, and at Montgomery Village and Center, near to Jay Peak in Vermont. Most of the time we drove up on the Friday night, with one couple bringing some groceries. Most got up early on Saturday, to be at the slopes when the tows opened, and skied all day. We then returned to the chalet with someone doing the extra shop on the way back. Two of the girls cooked and the men washed up afterwards. The evening was spent in the living room in front of a log fire, or else on a visit to a near-by hotel that ran dances. Sunday was a little more leisurely, the more religious went to church and the others had a cooked breakfast then went to the slopes. When the ski centre closed, we returned, had dinner, then did the cleaning and winter protection (the water system had to be drained or have anti-freeze in it, in case of heating failure). We drove back to Montreal, usually arriving about 10 pm.

Although we were a mixed chalet, both in sex and nationalities, there was very little scandalous behaviour. There were often five or six to a bedroom, where there were usually bunk beds or mattresses on the floor. The chalets had five or more bedrooms and

the largest was held for the latecomers regardless of whether they were men or women. The others were designated for either men or women. We tended to party a lot, with invitations to and from other chalets and probably drank more than we should. For the Saturday meal as much as three US gallons of wine were consumed by an average of 25 people, but little wine was served on sunday when we had to drive. None of the chalets were near public transport, but more that half the members owned and drove cars. Those without could always get a ride up.

Travelling in winter was not without its troubles. The Laurentians needed a 65 mile ride to get there, and Jay was over 110 miles. We set out regardless of the weather, frequently in snow storms and even in freezing rain and fog (the worst driving weather). Because of this, most drivers preferred to have a passenger or two. If you skidded into a snow bank or ditch there was weight and strength to get you out. We packed special equipment into the car for all kinds of possibilities. Towing ropes were a must, as were wheel chains. I often carried a spare battery with a charger, as when the night temperature dropped to -35°F, the efficiency of the battery in the car was very low, which coupled with oil frozen to the constituency of tar, made starting impossible. When I look back, I realize that we were crazy to attempt these journeys every week for "pleasure."

Events were often quite dramatic in this decade. It had started with the Korean War, then our king had died and we now had a young queen, Elizabeth II. The reign of her great-great-grand mother, Victoria and that of the first Elizabeth had been very good for the English, so there were great hopes for the future. On the negative side of peoples hopes, the first H Bomb was exploded, so now it was possible to wipe out the largest cities with a single bomb. There was interference by the great powers with their smaller neighbours. The successful Russian invasion of Hungary, while that of the British/French in Egypt was unsuccessful, mainly because of political back-stabbing by the USA. With help from the US, Papa Doc was firmly entrenched in Haiti, but Castro in Cuba would not let the US have its way there, and thus earned the hatred of the rulers of the US. The decade was finishing with technological changes. The space age had begun with Sputnik in 1957 and the transistor was revolutionizing radio and mathematics. The transistor calculator was so expensive that it was far from being in general use.

In 1960, I joined the Canadair flying club and managed to get my licence. It was easier then than today, as we flew Piper Cruisers that had fixed undercarriages, no flaps and only LF radio with no navigational aids (except for the compass and a clock). The Canadian government was encouraging people to get their licence by returning $100 if you obtained it in a single calendar year. I soloed after 15 hours and got my "wings" at 36 hours. The total cost to me after getting the $100 was only $200. I am told that today the average is $9000. I was never a good pilot, although I was fairly safe. My landings were very bouncy, so much so that one instructor accused me of being mean, because I did "ten landings & take offs in one circuit." Still I was able to do my three hour cross country flight landing at two fields that I had never been to before and finding my way in spite of discovering a second landmark at a turning point that had just been built and was not on the map or in the NOTAMS.

The course consisted of ground school in the winter and flying in the summer. Great emphasis was made on safety, the pilot's walk around, the use of carb heat, and emergency landings. It was just as well, as a Dutch girl who got her licence at the same time as I got mine, was taking her parents up for the first long flight after getting her licence when both her magnetos went out. She made a perfect emergency landing in the only field nearby with enough length, and phoned of her misfortune. The instructor on duty bitched about "these young girls who can't remember to switch over magnetos, when one goes out!". He had to eat his words when he found both were gone, a very unusual occurrence. The aircraft was repaired in the field but had to be towed to a highway as the field was too short for safe take off. Like other Canadair activities, the flying club was worked by the members. Several had mechanics licences so they did all the repairs and overhauls. Other members like myself did servicing like filling gas tanks, checking and stripping under the eye of one of the mechanics.

I had also had to take my aeronautical radio licence, as Cartierville Airport became a radio controlled airfield, late that year. Being a pilot in addition to being a design engineer certainly put a different aspect on aviation. Suddenly you realised that placing a switch where the pilot would have to unstrap to reach was a real no-no. Even excessive reach was bad, and having controls far apart was asking for trouble. I have never regretted learning to fly in spite of only flying two years. I soon found that it was expensive and good flying days were also good sailing days, and the latter was free.

I also found that with the range of the Cruiser or the Cessna 172, which replaced it, there were only 14 airfields that we could get to. And many of these were in the US, which meant going to one of the custom airfields like Plattsburg first.

In the spring of 1960, I had more bad news from home, my mother had fallen in the shop and broken her hip. A subsequent pinning operation had gone bad and she would have to spend the rest of her life in a leg brace. Of course she had to sell the shop and with

my father, went into a rented house in Southfields (near Wandsworth) while looking for a suitable house with no stairs. I decided to have a long holiday in the fall in Europe, three months two at home and one touring by rail.

At the end of July I packed up and went to Dorval Airport for my first Trans-Atlantic flight. The airline had recently started to fly Boeing 707s on the Montreal-London leg so I was able to get home in about seven hours instead of the seven days it had taken by boat. There was a disadvantage in that the first week I was very tired. The term "Jet lag" had not yet been invented, but the physical discomfort did not need a definition to be experienced! It had been arranged with my father that while I was at home, I would help to buy a lower maisonette that they had found in North Cheam. The term "maisonette" only meant a semi-detached house that was split again with two dwellings on each floor. The house was situated on a tiny cul-de-sac called "The Spinney". It was very close to Nonsuch Park and was surrounded by little parks on recreation grounds. Each homes had an individual garden, a postage stamp sized lawn with flower beds at its edge. In all it was a very bright and pleasant place.

One fly in the ointment was the financing. When I went to my bank I was told as I was not a resident of Britain, they could not grant me a loan to cover the down payment, even though I was willing to place securities covering the principal of the loan. I was furious, so I went up to the city and stormed into the head office of the Westminster Bank. I demanded to see the Managing Director and got to see him (probably because of the Canadian address on my card).

I was ushered in to a wood panelled room, more like a club than an office and the secretary brought us tea. I had calmed down and was able to explain the difficulty. My father could have afforded the down payment but that would mean the quick sale of his securities at a very bad time on the market. The Director was very apologetic and explained that the bank was forced in to this limitation on loans for houses by the Building Societies, which held very large holdings in the bank. He would however give my father a short term loan (under a year) at an extremely low rate of interest, which could tide him over the bad market. I agreed to this as I knew that I could transfer dollars as I earned them to both pay the interest and some of the principal. When I went with my father to our branch to sign the loan arrangement, we were bowed into the office like royalty. It became apparent that people did not just walk into the M-D's office in Britain, so obviously I must be an important customer. This treatment lasted through two changes of managers at our branch. I had learnt in Canada that it is no good seeing underlings when things go wrong, You must go right to the top!

I spent the middle four weeks touring the continent again by rail. For the most part, I visited the places first seen in 1956. But this time starting in Amsterdam where there were two art exhibitions that I wanted to see. The most important was an international collection of Rembrante's paintings. They had been lent from many European and American galleries to form the most complete collection every to be shown. I believe that this exhibition was the first, in what became the art circuit. I spent best part of the day viewing it and a smaller collection of Rodin's work. Although I do not consider myself to be very clued up in Art, I have always enjoyed visiting galleries. In fact I have visited the main gallery in every town in which I have spent a couple days.

I next revisited Nuremberg, I spent some time in the area, visiting the famous transport museum also Durer's house that had been reopened as a gallery of many of his works. The main square in the old town is a market on several days of the week. They had a number of food stalls where I would buy my lunch, often smoked salmon rolls on which I would pig-out because they were very cheap. Politics had encroached in the market, in the corner of the square was a brick wall topped with barbed wire and the motto "Germany shall be one." I stayed at the same hotel as the first visit, but in the four years it had been completely renovated and after passing through the medieval entrance, there was a US style hotel.

I passed through Munich only visiting the Alte & Neue Pinokothek galleries and the Deutches museum and went to Salzburg in Austria. The opera was performing the "White Horse Inn" in German, which I enjoyed but was limited in understanding the dialogue. I used this stay to do many hikes in the local hills. The next stop was Vienna, my first visit. I found a comfortable and fairly cheap hotel not too far from the West Station and proceeded to sight see. That evening I went into the coffee shop of the hotel for an end of day drink and was pleased to see a few good looking girls drinking there. An ugly fat man, with no neck at all, came in, and much to my surprise one of the youngest looking got up and went out with him. The girl sitting with her came across and asked something in German. I stuttered "Ich spracke keinne deutche" and was surprised that she spoke English. After asking if I would like to "sleep" with her and my gentle refusal she chatted with me until a customer came in. All of the girls were prostitutes who had an agreement with the hotel. I found it even more strange the next day when I discovered there was a police post only a couple of houses away.

During the week I lashed out and took the expensive guided tour, "Vienna by Night." This was almost a pub crawl as you started by visiting the cafe in the state park with a glass of wine, then went on to the Prater (the amusement park of Vienna) where we were given a ride on the giant Ferris wheel (of Third Man fame). From there up to the Vienna Woods for a glass of sherry on a balcony that overlooked the town of Vienna and the Danube. Next stop was a wine cellar in Grinzing with a pint of "new wine" in a tankard. The tour finished up at a night club, the Moulin Rouge, for a show with all the continental trimmings, fan dancers, strippers, chorus line and the rest. A half bottle of champaign was given for two people.

I often play the game of trying to guess the nationality of a person, while I am abroad. I tried this on the tour, where the only girl by herself and my age was a fair haired, slim, good looking girl with peaches & cream skin. A typical English girl I thought - I was wrong - Mitzi was Swiss from Zurich and spoke as little English as I spoke German. We conversed in fractured french and odd English and German words. We teamed up for the rest of the tour and the next day and a half until she left Vienna.

The rest of my holiday took in Innsbruck (for more hiking), then to Berne in Switzerland. I next spent a few days in Zermatt, and hiked up to the Hornli Ridge on Matterhorn. It was fine going up on the direct route, but very steep. However it turned to sleet and snow while I was on the Plateau. I was advised at the hut not to attempt the descent alone, but there was a pair of German school teachers, one with his wife, who wanted to chance it so we joined forces. The time I took to climb up the 1500 metres to Hornli was about 2 hours, the descent took nearly five, but we found a farm and stopped for a Tee-mit-ruhm, which really hit the spot! That evening I did not venture from the hotel as I ached everywhere. I sat and watched TV, the White Horse Inn in Italian. I returned home through Geneva and Paris, where I again watched TV - yes- the White Horse Inn in french.

It was very pleasant being in London again, particularly as several of my friends from Canada visited Southfields to see my parents during their holidays in England. Both Reg and Stan came around and we went to a pub dinner with them. Keith Walker and his new wife Joyce were in London for the first time so I borrowed my father's car and gave them Don's guided tour. Joyce mentioned that she needed to buy some good walking shoes that she could use in her job (she was a nurse). I foolishly volunteered to show her some shoe shops in central London. What I didn't know then was that she had the narrow Canadian type of foot, and nearly all the stock in London was for the broader English foot. We finally found a pair, but the effort had exhausted me. Keith had known enough to have an easy day at the science museum. I took in a number of shows at the theatres. The last week of my holiday was spent on the ocean as I had booked my return on the Empress of Britain. During this trip I met a couple of English nurses who were immigrating to work in Canada, initially in Montreal. I became very friendly with Liz and Maureen, who alternately I took out over several years.

Back in Montreal I immediately started work and the arrangement for the winter's ski chalet. In other activities, I had extended my weekly shooting to pistol as well as rifle. This meant purchasing a .22 semi-automatic, for which I obtained a licensed with character references from my bank manager and the local police chief (who did not know me, but gave it as I had no record of being in trouble during the time I had lived in his manor). It was much more work to get a permit to carry needed to take it to ranges. I had to go to the Quebec Provincial Police, get fingerprinted and have a "mug-shot" and a "P" record sheet made up. I was assured by the desk sergeant that this was NOT a criminal record and the "P" stood for "particulier", which I understand means "private citizen" (or alternatively "odd person").

Canadair continued to bring over and employ engineers from Britain and Europe. The company was quite good in making the initial impact easier. Everyone who was brought over was assigned to an earlier immigrant who knew the ropes. This person was given the day off to meet the new arrival at the dock or airport, and was expected to show them around and help them find accommodation. Expenses were paid including a dinner at one of the cheaper restaurants (usually chicken Bar B Q) for both families. I was asked to meet Geff Semark at the dock, the difficulty was that nobody could describe him and the only thing I could find out about him was that he played the bagpipes. I didn't think that would be much use. As there were four exits from the terminal and boats carry 900 passengers, I was in trouble. I explained the difficulty to a supervisor of the customs and showed him the letter from Canadair and was taken in to the custom shed and put in the area where they were piling the luggage for people with the initial "S". A home-made sign was all that was then needed. Later when his family joined him I became friends with the whole family.

Being a single man amongst so many families meant that I was often invited to dinner at my friends homes, especially at Christmas. I was "uncle" to several children, which always made Christmas eve very busy, going from one house to another

delivering my gifts for the kids. 1960 was memorable because I had been invited to a turkey Christmas dinner with Peter and Jeanne Harridine. I got to their home and found Peter very worried, Jeanne was sick and Appendicitis was suspected. He asked me if I would look after their two girls, while he took her to emergency. Of course I agreed, the girls age 6 and 8 showed me the bird all prepared and ready to go in the oven. I had never cooked a bird before but the girls found me a cook book, so we bunged it in the oven and I organized them in peeling spuds and laying the table. Three hours later, the smell seemed to be OK, the spuds were in, peas and beans were ready to be turned on but there had been no sign of Peter and I was getting quite worried especially as the older girl kept asking when her Mum and Dad would be back. Suddenly there was a car in the driveway, both parents had returned. It had not been serious, but the diagnosing had taken a long time because of interruptions for accidents. Jeanne was put to bed and Peter got out the Scotch for a drink that we both needed. About 5:30 we decided that the meal was ready and everyone was ravenous as it had been planned for 2:30. The cramps that Jeanne had been having were gone, so she came down and we all sat down to one of the best tasting Christmas dinners I had eaten (even if I say so myself). This episode made me realise how much we immigrants were alone with no family to turn to in an emergency. Fortunately the friendships that were made tended to take up the slack as far as an extended family was concerned.

Reg and myself had been living at the Park Royal Apartments for over eight years and there had been little work done to them by the owners. We had painted the living room to try and brighten it up but the whole place was run down. Our lease ended in September so we decided to move then. We looked over several new developments and the choice was between a new group of apartments in S Laurent and another group in Dorval. Both had swimming pools and gardens, but the Royal Dixie in Dorval had a greater number of parking spaces to apartments, where as the other had less. We chose the Dixie that consisted of twenty buildings, each with three floors. There were either six or eight apartments on each floor dependent on the mix of two bedroom, one bedroom and bachelor apartments. We took a two bedroom on the third floor on a street named Galland Blvd. There were two swimming pools in the grounds, one of which was limited to adults only.

Because of its closeness to the airport at Dorval, many residents were from the airlines. We overlooked two different apartments, each with 4 to 6 stewardesses. Stewardesses could do this as there were seldom more than four (the number of beds available) in town at any one time. I am afraid that the Dixie had the name of being a swinging place, with many weekend parties and pool parties every second week during the summer. It was the newest development in the lakeshore area and consequently attracted a lot of young people, most of them single.

At Canadair, I had become involved with the running of the Motion Picture Club. There was not very much available in Montreal for seeing the classic and foreign language films so McGill and the National Film Board had each formed a film club and were importing the classics from the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. They gave us some assistance in forming the club. Officially, I was the program director, who planned arranged for, picked up the films and prepared program notes. I was soon acting as treasurer and even projectionist (I was the only one who had been given instruction on the operation of Canadair's projection room and consequently the only one permitted to use it). We tried to do it democratically by having a questionnaire on films to be shown. From the sixty members there were 37 selections, so I decided myself and when questioned would say "it came out high on the poll." I was careful not to disclose what was actually in it.

My career at Canadair was developing, I had started as an Engineer "B", and Was promoted to Engineer "A" in 1955. This had special privileges such as being able to use the canteen at any period. During the early 60s, the architectural division (Canarch) was expanded and needed a stressman for much of the time, so I was sent over to plant 4 for nearly six months and after that I was spending about a third of my time on it. They had secured contracts for the curtain wall on several high rises buildings in down-town Montreal. The biggest job was for the FAA in the US, the structural design and manufacture of control tower cabs for all the FAA controlled airfields. These were to be prefabricated in aluminum and glass then hoisted on to a 100 foot concrete tower. Because they were to be used all over the US and at high levels, the climatic conditions of their design were extreme; 120° to -40°F, winds to 100 mph, heavy snow and rain. We also designed a portable control cab for advanced airfields

I was dealing with one of the top group of architects in the US, and was not very impressed with them. The cab had to have five sides and clear vision and I found that the people in the building professions (both architects and engineers) only seemed to be able to think in four sided buildings. I had used strain energy methods with an iteration method of assuring balance, but it was obvious that it was not understood even though it was set up from basic principles. Still it was completed and the customer was happy with it, probably because of the test we performed. The previous cabs had always leaked in rain with high wind. Canadair arranged that the customer witness a test where the built cab was subjected to the wind from a F-86 Sabre engine's

blast into which the Canadair fire department poured water from the fire hoses. It was a practical demonstration of conditions similar to those of a hurricane. I left Canarch with the knowledge of another type of engineering and my Green Badge - the "Senior Engineer" title at the supervisory level (or monthly staff as it is often known in the UK).

Because of pressure of work I had not taken a long holiday in the summer of 1961 so I decided to go on a skiing charter to Switzerland in the spring of 1962. The flight went direct to Zurich but because many passengers had wanted a visit to France, it also stopped in Paris on the return. I went to Grindelwald and skied for one week, there took a single flight to London. I had not let my parents know as I did not plan it until I was in Switzerland. The skiing was different from anything I had done in Canada as the trails were long and the vertical descents about five times as much. Taking the cog railway up from the village to the station before the train goes into the tunnel, through the mountain, to get to the top of the Jungfrau, I was only able to get three runs in the day. But what runs they were! Near the village the trail widened to a slope and I saw a whole crowd of people standing either side on the crest. Every so often they would cheer as a skier went over the crest. Not wanting to show my technique, which was pretty poor, I stopped and joined the crowd. Was I glad, on the other side of the crest it was wet sheet ice, steep and ending in a deep puddle of water. The cheers were for the many who lost control and finished sitting in the water. I went one evening to a fondu party with a sleigh ride included.

When I got to Cheam I found that my mother was in hospital with a stroke. Dad had not been able to contact me as he did not know the hotel I was staying in. Mother was out of danger, but had lost some facial control. I spent much of the next ten days with my father, visiting my mother each day, but I was able to get to the theatre in the evening four times. I took the night train to Paris, the only time I have used a sleeper in Europe, and caught my flight the next morning.

Generally speaking, I did not spend a lot on holidays, we only had two weeks a year and most years the intended plant shut down during the last two weeks of July did not occur because of work pressures. Reg and Stan often had a cheap holiday delivering cars from Detroit to the Pacific coast. Many of these cars that had been repossessed in the centre of the US (where they were manufactured) could be sold at a much greater profit on the west coast. Several companies were set up to deliver them. They would offer known good drivers the use of the car to get to the Pacific in seven days, all gas and repairs paid and an honorarium of $100 on the safe handing over. I joined them one year when I wanted to go to the Seattle World Fair. Of course you still had the return fare, but I was able to get a sale ticket on a late flight to Windsor, where I had left the VW at a friend's house.

After my mother's stroke, I made a point of finding the cheapest charter flight from Montreal to London and managed to visit each year until 1966. There were many more privately run charters at this time. The jets only held 125 passengers and it was much easier for an organizer to find the extra 124 to pay for his flight. Canadair ran one for several years and the total cost of aircraft with meals and booze, and all the extras like landing fee, was around 28000 dollars. The actual charge was about $250 per person, or about a week and a half of my salary. The flights tended to be quite an orgy as many seemed to want to start their holidays blind drunk. I kept a watch on what I drank as I knew that I had the rattle and shake of the Green Line bus, going from London Airport to Leatherhead. There I could get the local bus to Cheam.

My mother spent more and more time in hospitals deteriorating until her death in 1966. My father visited her every day for an hour or so, even after she could not recognise anyone. I accompanied him on my trips but spent the rest of the time chatting or going to the theatre.

I was keen on musical comedies and while in Montreal, would take many of the long week-ends in New York City going down by bus on the Friday night, staying at the Y for cheapness, and usually taking in two or three shows (matinees and evening) before returning over Monday night. I hate to think what the quality of my work was on the Tuesday as I could not get much sleep on the bus. I saw many of the famous musicals, from "My Fair Lady", "Lil' Abner", "Fiorello" and "Camalot" through to the lesser known like "Baker Street" & "Tenderloin". Today I have over thirty records of various shows that I saw and enjoyed (and can enjoy them again because of the records).

Montreal was getting much more of an international centre for entertainment. There were a couple of cinemas that had reverted to being theatres, there was a thriving rep theatre in the Mountain Playhouse and other theatre clubs. More cinemas and libraries had been opened, particularly in the suburbs. But the cloud on the horizon was TV, it was now in almost every home and the quality of the programs had dropped in proportion to their availability. News was brought into the home with all its goriness, as soon as it happened. This was brought home to me in 1963 with the assassination of President

Kennedy. It happened while we were at work, but with-in minutes of the shots, telephone calls from wives watching TV at home came in. I kept a small portable radio in my desk so the stress office got the bulletins as soon as they came out. In the evening the actual shooting was on TV, from the movie camera of a sight see-er. The next week the murder of Oswald by Ruby was shown as it happened. It's no wonder that violence generally increased.

I had shared an apartment with Reg for twelve years. He was a very easy person to live with as he was most cheerful and it was nearly impossible to have a row with him, as he would generally just laugh it off. We had also largely got into different circles of friends, as he had remained with the Canadair group and I had made many friends from outside Canadair. Anyway I decided that it was about time that I had a place of my own. The lease was up so we decided to rent separately, Reg in a one bedroom, myself in a bachelor apartment.

This consisted of an "L" shaped room with a bamboo curtain to pull across the bar of the L to hide the bed. A full kitchen was in the window side, while a walk-in closet leading to the bathroom was on the entrance side. It was very comfortable with only one drawback. The apartment immediately above was rented to a nurse who was on nights and I learnt the hard way about the expression "waiting for the other shoe to drop!"

At the yacht club, I had lashed out and brought a Sailfish. This was a sailing surf board with a lateen type sail. It was fairly difficult to sail because the mast interfered with the sail, and it had different properties on either tack. You did not sit in it, rather on it, and often out of it, - in the water! It was very tippy. The first time I went out on it I had much difficulty in going about, I went over each time I tried. When I finally reached the shore, Liz and Maureen, the nurses I had taken to the club, came and poured some beer over the boat saying "I name thee, the Unsinkable Molly Brown," which of course became the name. I discovered that the best way of coming about in strong waves was to turn into wind then reverse the rudder. As the boat started to drift backwards it turned, then you could straighten the tiller and bring in the sheet and away you went.

In the September of 1964, I was at the club one weekend. When one of the members I knew, said that he wasn't able to sail the next day and would I take out the girl he was sailing with. I knew that he was married and assumed that the girl was his wife. I agreed and the next day met her and took her out. She was a good sailor and could have taken the boat out alone, except that she had not yet passed out the skippers test at the club. I wasn't too unhappy as she had a good figure and was showing it to good effect in a green two-piece. We sailed together the next day and while we chatted, I mentioned that I was moving out into an apartment by myself. We had a good sail and afterwards I found that she was not the wife of my friend, but a new member recently from England. I asked her for a date but was given a cool reception. The next week I asked her again this time I was accepted, I found out later that in my talk of the moving out, she had thought I was separating from a spouse and decided to steer clear of me. After this misunderstanding was settled, we went sailing together a fair amount for the rest of the season and during the fall went out together. I had met Madeleine Chapple, who was later to become Madeleine Joseph.

MyContents

My Sail Mate

Chapter 9 Marriage 1964 to 1968

I saw a little of Madeleine during that winter, but was sailing with her much more in the next season. Our dating had restarted on St Georges day, when I had sent her a home made card and invited her to dine and dance at Altitude 727, a fashionable restaurant on top of Place Ville Marie. I was also taking her out to shows, parties and dinners. By the end of summer I had decided that I wanted her as my wife and proposed to her. Alas I was gently refused, however our association did not change. We both liked eating out, and occasionally dancing. I enjoyed a good drink and although Madeleine would come with me to bars, she never, at this time, had anything other than soft drinks.

Dating was quite a problem as our respective jobs were keeping us very busy. The structures department had started work on the design of the CL-44-J, which is an extended fuselage version of the swing tail cargo aircraft. Schedules were very tight so we were doing an extended week at Canadair, often working until 7pm. On the other hand, Madeleine who was a social worker in the foster department of the Childrens Service Centre had to make visits all over western Quebec and never knew when she would be at home. Her area took in Valleyfield in the west and Freiligsburg in the east. Driving over country roads often ice or snow covered is not conducive to a strict timetable. Most of the time all was well, but occasionally there was trouble like a ditched car, but as it was a farming area, there was always a tractor near by to get things on the road again.

It was around this time that I got my first introduction to computing. Canadair had a small computing department, which mainly used an analog computer. In digital computers it had just obtained one of the latest IBM-360, and the earlier Burroughs E-101 was released for engineers to use. It was contained in its own air-conditioned room and was programmed by putting pins in an array of holes. We used it for calculating section properties and for solving simultaneous equations. A ten by ten would take about 30 minutes to set up, 5 minutes to run, and about an hour to interpret the results, which were printed in eight columns of sixteen digits consecutively regardless of the problem. Fortunately electronic desk calculators were purchased soon after by Canadair and we were able to return to the old methods of logical calculations rather than programming to fit the machine language pin commands.

Madeleine had taken a charter flight to England over Christmas. Her return was through Toronto, so I arranged with her that I would pick her up at Toronto International Airport. To do this I had arranged with friends who lived near by to visit them and have Madeleine stay the two days of the week end. The flight was late by two hours, so I stayed drinking with my friends, Graham and Ann Gillespie. We phoned and found that the flight was landing in twenty minutes, so Graham drove me to the airport. At that time there was a window looking into the custom hall, so I was able see Madeleine getting through. I thought she looked very guilty as she was talking to the custom man and afterwards found that she hadn't declared everything. I am sure the custom man knew, but let her through anyway.

When we got back to Graham's house, I expected Madeleine to go straight to bed as her flight was on a Britannia that had taken 17½ hours. She had got a second wind enjoying the nattering and finally retired about 2am. We motored back to Montreal on the Sunday afternoon.

My Mother became progressively worse and had experience another stroke. She had aged far beyond her years and sometimes had fantasies. I had gone home each summer and in 1966, my Father called to say that she seldom recognised him. I booked my Atlantic flight early, going in July. I visited her nearly every day, but she did not recognise me. I spent most of the time with Dad, who although resigned to her death, was very much upset. There were many visitors and the doctor had said it could be any time.

I had arranged with Madeleine to deliver something to her mother who lived the other side of London at Watford. Madeleine's mother, Anne, invited me to stay for the night, so I took my slides projector and the large number of slides that I had brought to England. Madeleine was on many of them, and others were sights of Montreal and mutual friends. I showed the slides to Anne and then to her neighbours and had just gone to bed when the phone rang. Ten minutes later, Anne came in and told me that it had been Madeleine phoning from Montreal. When I left Watford the next morning, Anne said that she expected to see a lot more of me. She was right!

When I arrived back to Montreal, I tried a new tack. I prepared a card saying "Mrs Chapple requests the pleasure of your company for the marriage of her daughter . . .. on 26th October 1966" and gave the card to Madeleine. She said "NO!", "its much to soon", so I said "When?" and we were engaged without her agreeing to marry me.


The card

We decided for a wedding on new years eve that was a Saturday. We did not allow for the difficulty in finding a church to marry us as neither of us attended a church in the area.

We spent the next few sundays going to various churches in Lachine and Dorval. We also had to decide on somewhere to live as the bachelor was too small for two. We saw and signed a lease for a one bedroom apartment at the Royal Dixie. We had not announced our engagement and had the embarrassment of meeting two of our ski chalet friends as leaving the rental office. I forget the fib we told but I think that our secret was out any way. We decided to make an announcement after Madeleine had an engagement ring. We went to Birks and bought one just before setting off for a weekend in Toronto at Graham and Ann's home with a large group of our Montreal friends. The ring was soon noticed by Ann and Terry Law, so no announcement was necessary.

Finally, we arrange with the Rev. R. Turpin of St Marks, the Dorval Anglican Church to marry us, but not until the new year on the 7th January, as all other days had marriages booked. The period just before New Year was very popular for weddings as there was a complete years married allowance on the tax forms. The vicar's name was Reg (not Richard!).

The day after our engagement, my mother died, but our engagement was no surprise to neither my father nor Anne. The next few months were hectic arranging for wedding, reception and trying to arrange for visits for the ceremony of Father, Anne and David (Madeleine's brother). Father's health was such that he could not make the winter journey and David could not get time off at the start of term in the new year (he was a teacher), so Anne was the only family member at the wedding.

We decided that prior to the wedding we would take out to dinner, all our close friends, a couple at a time. When it came time to go out with Terry and John Law, we chose the Thornecliff, which had sentimental as well as culinary appeal. Half way through the meal, John, in his hesitant way, said that he knew that David was not coming so he would like to volunteer to give away the bride. We were taken back, but Madeleine immediately accepted. The offer by Terry to put on the reception was refused, as we had already made tentative arrangements. It was strange, because up to that time I had not realised that someone would have to do this. I thought that the bride gave herself away, "to honour and obey." I was wrong on both that and "obey". After the running about that I had to do, I can really sympathise with "the family of the bride". It was fortunate that Madeleine could drive, as possible for her to take the car and do some of the organising.

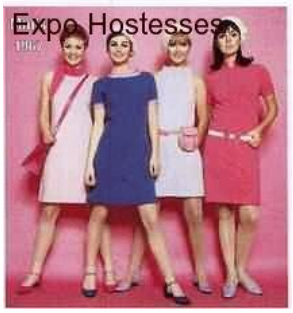
Just before Christmas, Anne arrived and we put her up in a small hotel on Dorchester Street. She spent much of the time at The Dixie, even experiencing a Montreal 16" snow fall on Christmas day that snowed her in with us until the afternoon of Boxing Day. Fortunately Molly (Madeleine's family nickname) had transferred most of her clothes and belongings from her room, so night clothes and the necessities were available. On the new years eve Madeleine and her mother moved to the apartment and I went to live with Reg who was to be my Best Man.

The great day arrived and I set off to church in Stan Foster's car, Anne was also being driven by Stan, who was acting as usher. As we drove away from the apartment, Anne said it was my last chance to cry off. Mind you she was sitting between me and the door. We arrived at the church without me getting away and Reg led me to wait in the church. We waited, we waited and we waited. The bride was over ten minutes late, I was getting more nervous by the minute, so much so I wondered if I would be able to make any responses. Then the Bride arrived. I learnt what had happened later, Madeleine and her bridesmaid were going to the toilet just before leaving for church and her bridesmaid dangled part of her dress in the bowl. There was a quick action, drying with a hair dryer and ironing with one of the wedding presents, but departure was delayed.


7th Jan 1967

I don't remember much of the ceremony, but we got through it without hitch. Just as we set off for the reception at the Edgewater Hotel, right on the shore of Lac St Louis, it started to snow. This was fortunate as it meant that we could drive quietly from the church, without the honking of car horns that accompanies most Canadian weddings. By the time the others had cleaned the snow off their windshields our car was far ahead. We had chosen a comparative simple meal at the Edgewater, but the chef added a couple of hot tortieres with his compliment, so the forty people at our reception had hot food in addition to the buffet ordered.

When we first discussed plans, we said that we would not have a honeymoon, but save for a big holiday. As the wedding approached we changed our minds and booked a week in a hotel in San Juan (PR). After the toasts and speeches at the reception,



we returned to the apartment to change and get our luggage. We drove to the airport just as our guest returned to the Dixie to continue the party at Reg's place as a good bye to Anne who was returning to Watford on the Monday. After we checked in for the flight to New York City, we were told there would be an hours delay for snow clearance. We phoned Reg and could hear party noise in the background. Finally we took off and in New York took a taxi to the Tudor Hotel where we spent our wedding night. The next day we flew to San Juan, lovely warm and sunny weather that was such a difference from the north. There was one difficulty, my luggage had been sent to Miami in error. I had no pyjamas so it was lucky we had chosen a warm place.

It was the first visit to a Caribbean country for both of us. I had always said that I could not understand people wasting money going south in winter. After this trip, I could! We took a side trip to fly to the US Virgin Islands. It was a free port with very cheap booze and gifts, but we did not take much cash with us, so returned with little. We saw the sun set over the harbour, and although I had been told that tropical sunsets were spectacular, it was much more beautiful than I had expected. I took a couple of colour slide ,which by luck, gave a record of the skies. The other notable photograph taken there, was a truck with the words "VIRGIN Is. - TESTING Dept.", always good for a laugh during the showing of our slides.

Our wedding year, 1967, was also centennial year in Canada. The whole twelve months had celebrations to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of confederation, but main event was "Expo-67" in Montreal. The exhibition was held on the island park in the middle of the St Lawrence River, St Helens Island. To make it sufficient in size another island was made by reclaiming the land between St Helens and the embankments of the seaway. As fill became short the plans were modified for the island to have a large lake in the middle where water sports could be played. There were also a collection of canals that water busses could tour.

The City of Montreal took on a changed appearance for Expo. A network of limited-access roads crossed the town and the first three lines of the underground system, "The Metro", opened just before the opening of the exhibition. Madeleine and I brought "passports" (season tickets) for expo, and went over thirty times during the six months it was opened. The national pavilions entered into the spirit by having country visa stamps, which were stamped into your passport on entry to the pavilion and everyone tried to get a full set.

My father's health was better in the summer so we asked him to visit us. Although they had written to each other, Madeleine and Harry had never met. The day for his arrival neared and Madeleine got more nervous, would she stack up as a home maker, a cook, daughter-in-law? The night before his arrival she was so het up that she could not sleep, so she got up at 3am and gave the apartment one last clean. After he had arrived, Dad admitted that he also was nervous about staying with his daughter-in-law. Would his habits and ways be too irritating? They got to know each other very well in the nest five weeks of his stay. Looking back, I was just as fearful when I first met Anne the previous year, and at that time was only a friend of Madeleine. We took my father to Expo several times and I was amazed at his endurance considering he was a diabetic and had a heart condition.

He returned at the start of August and we had just time to tidy up when Madeleine's mother arrived for her three week visit. She had thought it extravagant to come again so soon, but we convinced her that she should see Canada in the warm without snow on the ground. Air transport had become relatively cheap on charters so that we were able to have one of our parents over each year that we did not visit England.

I had done some work for Expo on a sub-contract. A major concrete company (Frankon) was making the units for Habitat 67, the apartments built up of a number of large concrete cubes. Each one was a complete apartment but weighed many tons and had to be lifted into position by large crane. To move the units from the casting area to the crane, the company had manufactured a straddle-lifter. The design engineers were experienced in reinforced concrete, but obviously had little experience in steel work because when they connected lifting cables to the first apartment, instead of lifting the apartment, inch by inch the top beam came down to the roof! I did an analysis and found not only was it not stiff enough, but it was only a fifth of the strength it should have been. One of Canadair's hydraulic engineers and myself were given the job of modifying the lifter. Instead we managed to get them to scrap it and we designed a completely new unit that was built as fast as the drawings could be made. There was a backlog of a dozen units, but with the new hydraulic drive on the lifter, they were able to get up to schedule.

Some of the architecture at Expo was unusual, and very advanced. But the architecture that had the most lasting effect was on the clothes worn by the various hostesses in the pavilions. In 1966, skirts

CLYC. Those sailors couldn't sail except to try to win, and most races were brutal. We would not have stood a chance but for the fact the regatta lake was surrounded by pavilions that funnelled the wind in a most peculiar fashion. We who knew the layout consequently had a distinct advantage over the better sailors who did not know the area. Our best result, was a third place while Molly was at the helm. I finished up the day in the first aid tent after being hit on the head by the boom on gybing to avoid being hit by a visitor who wouldn't "starboard". I didn't even have the satisfaction of getting him disqualified as there were no appeals in "fun" races.

Looking back at Expo there was so much that we saw and did, it is difficult to come up with the highlights. The immense USSR pavilion always had a long line-up to get in, but once in, the art and science displayed were worth the wait. The Mariachi band outside the Mexican pavilion played with such enthusiasm that it lifted your spirits. The artificial lightening in the French, the geodetic ball of the US and the music of the Beatles in the British pavilion, all bring back memories. However the thing that I remember the most was the people. Most had a friendly and helpful attitude and time and time again you heard of help given to visitors. It was although the city had been given a new hope for the future and its citizens were inspired to make the best of it. Too bad that promise was not fulfilled.

During the first year of our marriage, we had been living off my salary while saving all Madeleine's salary. We started planning for our big holiday early in 1968. We considered touring the Caribbean, then Europe, but we came to the conclusion that we could afford to go around the world, spending most of the time in Asia. Books were obtained from the libraries to list things we would like to see. Then, with the aid of air timetables, selection of places we could visit in the time available. Finally a route with the possible flights was made and given to Cooks, who made minor corrections and issued tickets. The airline industry at this time had a round-the-world ticket that cost $1260. But where you went away from the base route you had extra fare, so we ended up paying $1335 each for a ticket that had fifteen segments.

Also available at that time was a travelling bankers draft. This consisted of an identification certificate, a list of banks in every country of the world and a pass book in which the full amount of the draft was entered. Anytime cash was needed, one could go to the nearest bank on the list, ask for cash and the amount would be deducted from the total in the pass book. In this day of satellite communication between computers and international credit cards, such things are not needed. In 1968, you normally carried large amounts of traveller cheques or cash and hoped that you could change them into local currency at a reasonable rate.

The other big problem that we had to overcome was luggage. It had to be light and convenient enough for us to be able to carry, but sufficient for three months travel. In addition we would be in India in August, Northern Russia in September, and Britain in October, which meant different types of clothes were needed for the climates. Almost everything we took was drip-dry as we did not know what laundry facilities we would find on our travels. Our luggage also had to contain toiletry, some washing materials, make-up for Madeleine, a large first aid kit and drugs for myself, and spread around the cases were twenty rolls of colour film for the two cameras we were taking with us. We finally left with three large cases, a Bergen rucksack, with a sling haversack each. Just about manageable if the distance to be carried was not too far.

With all the arrangements made, we settled down to enjoy the summer in Montreal, sailing, swimming and awaiting the start of the holiday in August.

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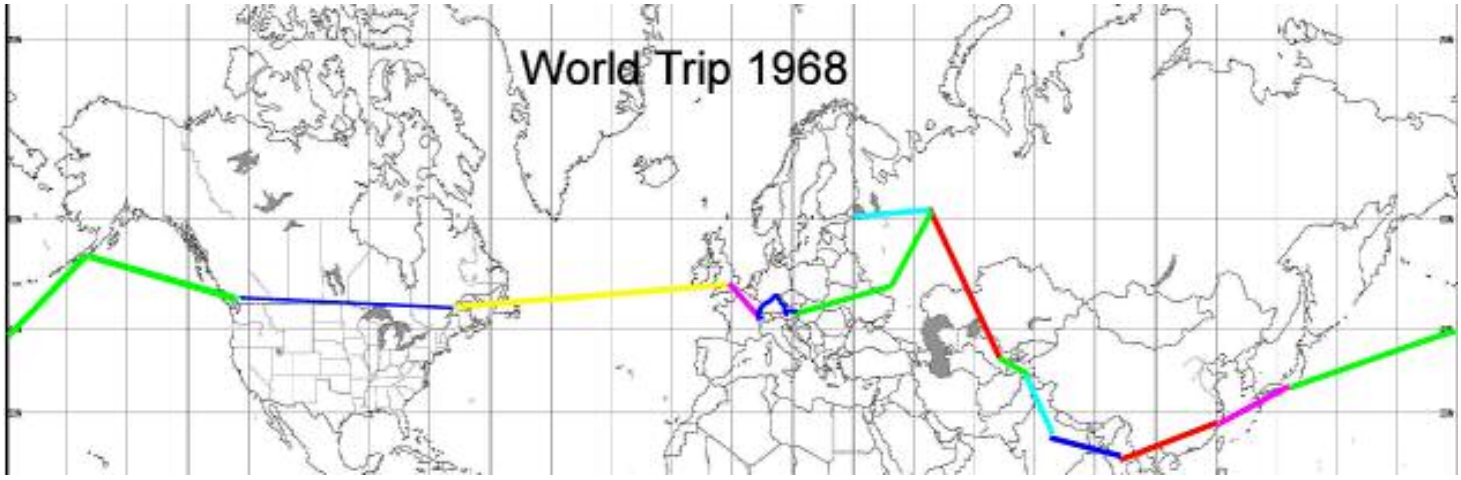
Chapter 10 Trip around the world 1968

After some preparation and very careful packing we were ready to go, then slowly the departure day of the third of August came along. Reg and Raye ran us to Dorval Airport, only five minutes drive from the Royal Dixie, where we checked in and met a number of friends who had come to see us off. We went up to the bar to have a drink (or two) and suddenly they were announcing the last call for our flight. When we reached the gate, we were told that all the seats were taken, but would we mind going in the first class cabin! We of course graciously accepted and all the way to Calgary we and the other four first class passengers were served by the first class stewardess two meals and plenty of drinks. The plane at Calgary was delayed, but by this time we were really floating and didn't care. We arrived at Vancouver about 9pm and checked in for a very sound sleep. We had to leave the next after noon to get the Trans-Pacific flight, so we fitted in a quick tour of Vancouver.



The aircraft that we flew in was a stretched DC-8 and was full. Soon after take off, they announced that "due to bad winds" we would land at Anchorage in Alaska to refuel. What they didn't say was that we would be landing at a military airfield and would be stuck in a very hot cabin for the two hours it took. The military don't hurry themselves. The flight over Alaska and the Aleutians was very spectacular, all mountains and fiords with no signs of humans anywhere. We landed in Tokyo late the afternoon of the next day, having crossed the international date line. The weather in Tokyo was a misty drizzle with very high temperature (37°C) so the effect was like being in a Turkish Bath. We found an accommodation deck in the airport where English was spoken and they booked us into a hotel. Fortunately it was just outside the main railway station where the airport train arrived, so there was no trouble in finding the hotel. We checked in and decided that what we most needed was a shower and sleep. The airline had been feeding us all the way across the Pacific, and we were certainly not hungry.

We had been told that we had to share a shower with three other rooms but there would be no difficulty at that time of day. When we got into the room and plonked down our bags, we found, lying on each side of the bed, a kimono and a pair of throngs with a note saying these were for our use for the duration of our stay. I must say that this type of garment is extremely comfortable to wear and I certainly made good use of mine. The next day after an "American breakfast" of orange juice, toast and coffee, we went out to explore and really start our world trip! After our return to Canada, a Japanese friend told us that tying the obi in the front was a sign of a prostitute!

Our first impressions were small people, small cars and bustle, but we were in the heart of Tokyo. It appeared prosperous and the people well dressed. Few were in traditional clothes, most were in western style suits and dresses. There was little informal or sports wear in evidence. When dealing with people there was an inherent politeness and formality, and a general helpfulness. One only had to stand on a corner looking at a map and someone would come and ask in English if they could be of assistance. This was often very welcome as Tokyo is very strange in that street numbers are not consecutive. Instead the first house built is No1, the second is No2, which may be at the other end or the next one. To make matters worse the street address is not usually given and the district name is the main address. Fortunately each district is centred around a major intersection where there is a police post. There was a painted local map of the district in each post. When we went by taxi to find the Afghan embassy, the taxi driver went from one police post to another, each time he dashed in and either spoke

to the policeman or looked at the map. We were finally dropped outside two large buildings and told it was one of them. Actually it was across the street, but at least we had been taken to the right area.

The Japanese considered "Face" as being most important. I inadvertently caused a schoolgirl to lose considerable face. I was walking along a street with two schoolgirls in their early teens walking towards me. I saw one drop what looked like a coin, as it was round and silver. Without thinking I pointed to it. The girl who had dropped it went red then white and dashed back to pick it up. She had littered the street with some foil from a chocolate bar and a foreigner "had taken her to task!". I would have liked to explain my error, but both girls ran to a waste bin and then away.

The weather was very hot for the whole of the time we were in Japan and we soon followed the example of the natives by buying the fruit-flavoured milk that was in coolers at every news-stand. The other drink that was exceptionally good was one that was made by placing various fruit and ice cubes in a blender and blending until it was a thick icy drink.

Madeleine and myself tried to get by using Japanese. I had learnt a number of the kana (characters) and would attempt to read signs. She, with the phrase book, would attempt to ask for things. She landed in trouble a couple of times. The first time was in a drug store where she had gone to buy a plaster to use on a blister on her ankle. She looked up the phrase for "adhesive bandage" and mimicked it. The shop girls just responded with puzzled looks. She then pointed to the blister and acted out putting one on. "Ah!" said the girls, "Band Aid!" and led her to a rack with boxes labelled in kana and English. Everyone had a good laugh. The second event was in a cafe. Madeleine had asked from the phrase book where was the wash room. The waitress understood but put her hand up in front of her face to hide a giggle. We realised that something was wrong even though she had guided Madeleine to the right place. Later we asked at the hotel if the phrase was correct. The answer was yes, but the word in the book "benji" meant Mens room, hence the giggle.

My job was a lot easier, for travelling I had got two subway plans, one in English, the other in kana. In order to buy tickets, I transferred the position on the English plan, to the kana one and then compared the shapes to the ones on the ticket machines. When they matched I put in the money and out came the tickets. We had to count the stops very carefully, but travelled all over Tokyo without trouble by subway. Eating at restaurants was easy as all had a show case either in the window or in the entrance with plastic models of the various dishes, each with a number. We knew our numbers and could either ask for what we wanted or if that wasn't understood we could write the number on a paper. We never had any difficulty with drink as it was saki or beiru usually. Madeleine had ordered milk at the hotel when we were first there and it came hot and with salt in it. We did not chance ordering milk again until we returned to Europe. Some of the food we were served was a bit strange, but we eat and enjoyed it. One seafood soup we got had lots of tiny shellfish in it. They were too small to eat the flesh individually and we did not fancy crunching them, so that was one item that was left.

One of the side trips we took was four days in Kyoto, the old capital. We were fortunate to be able to get into a Japanese inn, a Ryoken, as there were not many still operating and few westerners went to them. When we arrived in the taxi, we were met at the entry steps by the manageress, the maid and the porter who bowed us to where the intermediate slippers were put on. The porter took charge of the outside shoes and the intermediate slippers were used in the passageways to our room. At the threshold of the room these were removed and room slippers were used on the tatami mats that covered the complete floor area. The room was completely bare except for a "coffee" table. Everything including the bedding was stored behind sliding panels in the entrance area. The manageress explained that this room was used for westerners as it had both sorts of toilets in the washroom and they had placed a full height table and two wrought iron chairs in the tile area in front of the sliding doors that opened onto the "garden", a small enclosure of plants waterfalls, streams and fountains. Beautiful, but it was for looking at, not for going into.

When evening came we found that the bed rolls were laid directly on the tatami and we were given the hard straw pillows instead of the wooden one used traditionally. Breakfast was served at the western table, but the Japanese meal we had there was cooked and served at the small table with us trying to imitate the waitress/cook sitting on our heels. She had served westerners before as she brought us a cushion each, which at least held off the cramps. After cooking the meal, she took an egg cracked into a bowl and whipped it to a cream then showed that we were supposed to use this as a meat sauce. I did not like the idea of eating raw egg but tried it and to my surprise actually enjoyed it.

The journey to and from Kyoto was on the super train. The train averaged over a hundred miles an hour including two stops. During our stay we visited a number of temples and museums and I learnt a lot about Japanese history. Nothing was ever taught

in English schools on any histories for eastern countries except when the British invaded. From the train we could see the mountains of Japan, which are quite different from American or European mountains. In Canada they are magnificent but wild, in Europe they are tamed with villages at there base, but in Japan they seem to be completely in harmony with people and have hamlets and shrines on their slopes.

We did not go to Mount Fuji, although we could often see it, but we later visited Nikko area. We travelled Japanese style, buying breakfast boxes to eat on the train. These are small wooden boxes with compartments containing rice, sea food (shrimp & octopus), bean curd, and seaweed salad. It was unusual but we were hungry and all was eaten.

It was time to move on and we took the plane to Hong Kong. The last we saw of Japan was the cone of Fuji on the horizon. On the flight there was a girl who had spent four month with a Japanese family. She seemed quite surprised when we asked if she had learnt Japanese. "No they spoke English" was her reply as if that was the end of it. I only wished I had the opportunity of staying with a family, I am sure that I would have come away with a form of Japanese-cockney. We booked into the Chungking Mansions on Nathan Street in Kowloon, which is a high rise old office block, with a small shop arcade on the ground floor and every floor above the eighth was made over as a boarding house. We were on the eleventh floor, which contained about 30 bedrooms and half a dozen washrooms. There was a large community room where breakfast was served and one could watch TV, all be it, in Chinese. The clientele was Chinese, students and people like us (touring on the cheap).

Hong Kong was the shopping delight of the east, everything was available and was cheap providing you bargained. You had to be careful on believing what you were told. Madeleine wanted to replace her running shoe that had started to disintegrate. She was told that it was impossible to find them in her size and the broad western fitting, but they could be made for her in two days at a cost cheaper than she could get them in Canada. She went away to think about it, and while walking in the Chinese market area of Victoria, she saw shops full of them. She went in and by signs was able to try a pair. They fitted perfectly and were a fifth of the Canadian price.

In Hong Kong we took in the sights, including a trip to see the border of China in the New Territories, and the mandatory trip to the Peak on Hong Kong Island. We also spent a complete day relaxing on a beach at Repulse Bay, where we sunned, swam and eat at a community area just adjacent to the fabulous high rise hotels where the rich visitors got rid of the dollars. At the time we were there neither the tunnel nor the subway had been built, so to get to Victoria from Kowloon you had to take the ferry. It only cost one HK dollar (first class), which was 20¢ Canadian and took about ten minutes.

On our last planned night in Hong Kong, we had dinner at a restaurant on top of one of the better hotels on Nathan Street. We sat by a window that looked out over the harbour and across to the island. Half way through the meal we noticed men outside putting shutters over the windows. When we got down to the streets there were many shop owners boarding up the store windows. On asking at the rooms what was happening, we were told that we were now in signal 4 of a typhoon warning and suggested that we telephoned the airport about our flight. We did and BOAC told us it had been cancelled and suggested we stayed where we were for another day. The next morning we were at signal 7, and by noon the typhoon had struck (signal 10).

It was both frightening and breath-taking. By standing in the arcade we could watch the street. The only people out were the emergency and police, who were in waterproofs and wearing steel helmets. They needed the latter as there was a constant tinkling of broken glass falling from the high buildings as one after one of the windows was broken by the wind. Street signs were being torn off of their mounts and were flying down the street. The power in our building was off about 2pm, which meant a long climb through derelict unused floors, most of which had lost their windows, to get to our rooms. We were told that the glass used in many places was thin, but in the rooming houses, it had to be thicker and better quality. Certainly, none broke. The power went back on at 4:30 but there was no food available in the rooming house that day.

Fortunately the eye of the typhoon crossed Hong Kong at 5pm and we were told it would take two hours to pass across. It was amazing how quickly the wind died away, within five minutes it was completely calm. We dashed to a hotel a couple of doors down Nathan street, had a quick meal and got back to Chungking Mansions with about 20 minutes to spare. The wind came up as quickly as it had died, but from the opposite direction. We spent that evening laying in bed, reading when the power was on. There were intermittent outages through out the night.

The next morning we drove to the airport through downed trees, broken glass, and debris and were able to catch the first plane out. It was a rough take-off and sufficient turbulence to have the steward strapped in the seat next to mine for the first hour. The newspaper we bought at the airport said that the new warning system had been very successful as there had not been a single death from the typhoon in spite of it being one of the more powerful to hit the city. In Hong Kong, winds had been measured up to 131 mph, which is 210 kpm.

Our next stop was Bangkok in Thailand, another city of temples, but this time set on a system of canals called klongs. We stayed at a western type hotel, with an open air swimming pool that was well used. Much of the transport in and around Bangkok was by water. On the river you could see large motor barges so laden that only two or three inches of freeboard were visible. Many people lived on boats in the klongs, sold fruit and produce from punt-like craft, as well as using them as busses.

While I was in Bangkok I decided to go to the aeronautical museum at the airport. It was supposed to have a large collection of early aircraft. I took the city bus out to the airport past paddy fields with water buffalo in them. When I arrived there, I asked at the BOAC desk about the museum. After some consultation I was told it was operated by the Royal Thai Air Force and the entrance was half a kilometre down the highway. The guard at the gate did not understand any English but he called the sergeant who knew a few words, but the word "Museum" was outside his knowledge. I had looked up the thai word for it and the imitated English as given by the phrase book was "Peter Pan", which I repeated a number of times. Everyone in the guard house also said "peter pan" and other Thai. words and the sergeant came through with "Fermez!". I thought to make the most of a bad thing by saying the only Thai. phrase I knew "Mai pen raie" that is used constantly by the Thai. and means something between "it doesn't matter" and "no problem". A sort of equivalent of the "san fairy ann" of World War I. This coming from a foreigner made their day and they escorted me to the outside of a locked hanger, wiped the window and signed me to look in. I could just make out a number of biplanes in various states of repair. I thanked them all and was taken back to the road with much friendliness. The sergeant flagged down the next bus so I did not have to walk the distance to the civil part of the airfield. It amazing what a few words can do.

Bangkok is the flattest city that I have ever visited. There was only one hill visible and that was man made. The king wanted to build a new temple and decided to make it stand out by having a hill made to build it on. We did a little shopping in the city buying some silk that later Madeleine had made into an evening dress. I bought some gemstones. I wish that I had my father's knowledge of jewellery as I could have made some excellent purchases. I could not tell if I was buying gems or just coloured glass. Those I got were true, but I just could not chance it.

The next town we visited was New Delhi in India and after the proud and bustling cities in the previous countries, we found Delhi a disappointment. There were multitudes of beggars on the streets, and a general run down appearance. Later when we went on guided tours, it was always descriptions of past glories. It was cleverly done as most of the time you did not think about the collection of ruins that you were looking at. We stayed at a hotel in Connaught Circle that was quite pleasant and served some very good meals. It was not air conditioned but had the ceiling fan that did make it seem reasonable in comfort. One thing that the bed room had was its resident lizard, which was very useful in keeping the insects down. One night I was awakened by a scream from the bathroom to see Madeleine and lizard scurrying away from each other. She had gone into the bathroom and had seen the lizard out of the corner of her eye and screamed. The result was that the lizard hid for the next night and we had insects to contend with. Fortunately the lizard forgave Madeleine for scaring him and was back at work the next night.

We took a day trip to Accra to see the Fort and then went on to the Taj Mahal. I had read so much about it that I expected to be disappointed, but I must admit that passing though the archway in the entrance and looking down the gardens and pool to that magnificent building it was all that I had read. Its proportions are so correct, it was a pity that our trip had to return to Delhi so we could not see it by moonlight. The journey to and from Accra was quite an experience. The bus tore down the centre of the road with its horn blaring but it didn't stop camels and other vehicles from playing chicken with it. I don't know how accidents were avoided but we got back without incident.

The next stage of our journey was the most critical as there was only one plane a week into Kabul, Afghanistan. We had booked into the only hotel in Kabul, from Canada. We arrived and checked into the hotel Madeleine was a little under the weather so I wandered around by myself. After India, they seemed a proud race and I was surprised to see many of the men carrying rifles of

all vintages. The women were fully covered from head to foot in black except for a few young women in knee length skirts and black stockings. I am sure they thought themselves to be in the height of fashion but to me, they looked like Italian prostitutes. Madeleine had been warned that offence might be taken if she wore miniskirts, so she wore her longest dress when she went out.

I walked into the bazaar, which is not a marketplace as I had thought, but just the old part of town. The streets are narrow with a draining ditch in the middle. There are walls on both sides but no windows. When I passed a door from which someone was leaving, I could see a shaded garden through the archway. It was quite a maze as the streets wind and there are no distinguishing marks, each street looks like the last. I was getting quite worried when I finally came out on one of the wide boulevards that surround the bazaar. I had walked right across and I had a two mile walk in the sun to get back to the hotel, but at least the map marked the way.

For the short time we were in Afghanistan, I liked what I saw. I was very surprised at the quality of the fruit, especially the melon, because the ground and surrounding hills appear parched and sun-baked. One memory that remains vivid is waking up just at dawn and looking out of the window at the dawn glow on the mountains which are the outskirts of Kabul. In the city we could just see the outline of the big mosque. Then we heard the call to prayer, which is very musical. I sat there until the sun shone on the dome of the mosque. It was a magical moment.

It came time to leave and I decided to get to the airport early. It was just as well, because when we got to the counter we were told that we were not booked on the aircraft even though I had confirmed on the previous day. I used my aircraft knowledge and demanded to see the airport manager. I demanded seats as we had booked over four months before and had confirmed and said I would report them to IATA (whose headquarters is in Montreal). The manager said, thinking he was talking to an English gentleman, "If we put you on, we would have to take someone else off." I just said do that! The flight was delayed over four hours, but finally took off fully loaded with a single stewardess standing in the entry, and seemed to skim the tops of the mountains that are on three sides of Kabul.

We landed at Tashkent in the USSR late in the evening. An armed soldier came aboard and collected our passports. We were then allowed off and taken to the custom halls and told to collect our luggage. In the middle of the hall were about 25 pieces of baggage, and there were 80 people looking for their luggage. Apparently Ariana Afghan Airlines had put 128 people in a Boeing 727 that is designed for 105, but in order to cross the Himalayas safely they had off-loaded all the luggage. So there we were in the Soviet Union's eastern republic with just the clothes we were standing in, and one flight a week from Kabul.

We checked in the hotel and were asked for our passports, which were still at the immigration office at the airport. A phone call confirmed it and we were told they should have returned them to us, as though it was our fault. It became obvious in the light of day that the promised extra flight by the Ariana representative was just flannel and we would have to make do. Fortunately Madeleine was wearing a drip dry dress and my shirt was similar. The weather was hot, so we were able to rinse out each night. We both had cameras, pills, tooth gear, and all our documents in our haversacks together with some other things. The next day I went across to TsUM, the Sears of Tashkent, there I purchased a pair of socks, a couple of handkerchiefs, and a razor with blades. When I got back to the hotel and put on the socks it was like wearing nettles, the handkerchiefs were just squares of cotton with no hem, but the shave I got was OK. I looked on the blades and read the word GEM in Russian letters, with "made in Britain" underneath. There were some Americans also without luggage at the hotel, but they seemed to get the backs up of the Russians they dealt with. We found that the waiter was pleasant and helpful once we tried speaking some Russian. The meals were good with generous stews and plenty of fruit.

We were given a free guided tour in each town we went to in the USSR. In Tashkent there was a ZIL with a driver and red-haired tourist guide just for us. The guide was quite friendly and told us about her life and possessions and discussed living in the USSR with us. The driver remained silent, but I suspect understood what was being said in English. While I was in TsUM I noticed racks of women's dresses, all black with a white print pattern. When we looked around on the streets, nearly every woman and girl was wearing this dress. We went back to TsUM and looked at the fashions, There was another dress, a blue with black print. There were also two racks of winter coats, one brown and the other green. We saw the same hideous clothes in other towns in the Soviet Union.

There had been an earthquake that had almost destroyed Tashkent a couple of years earlier. The result was that the city had been rebuilt with streets upon streets of three story brick apartments, all exactly the same. In the tour except for the gardens and a couple

of well built ancient buildings that had survived the earthquake, the only word for Tashkent was DRAB.

We flew to Moscow, still without luggage on an IL-18, which was similar in appearance to the Britannia. I was quite amazed with Aeroflot's operation. The visitors and officials were loaded then people were counted off from a line up. From then on it was every man for himself. People carried large cases, string bags full of produce and all kinds of packages onto the plane and placed them anywhere. The stewardess tried to get some unsafe packages from the rack and the passengers just refused. This was not the Soviet I had read about where everyone bowed down to officials. Later I realised that the stewardess was not considered an official. The Britannia was considered one of the quietest aircraft of its time, but the IL-18 was the opposite. I had ringing in the ears for a long time after the flight. The noise and vibration in the toilet, which was in the plane of the propeller, was so bad you could see the partitions visibly panting in and out.

We found that Moscow was the city of "NYET". Each restaurant we went to, had a tri-lingual menu, but almost every item that we tried to order was not on. We could always get into the restaurant of the hotel, but with one exception every other restaurant barred the doors to us with a nyet. In fact even at Intourist, most questions were answered the same way. A week later, we were still without luggage (the next flight the next weekly flight from Kabul had arrived). We contacted the Aeroflot agent and were told it would be on a Russian flight and be delivered to Leningrad to await our arrival. I called at the Canadian Embassy to see if they could do anything. They were not particularly helpful, but gave us a TCA flight bag so we could carry the necessities we purchased in Russia. I must say that while we were in Russia we were not restricted in our travel, and could go anywhere by bus or tram. There were no signs of being spied upon, though in the hotels no bugging was needed, the walls were so thin you could hear a mosquito two rooms down the hall!

Bolshoi Ad

We were able to get tickets for the Bolshoi Ballet to see Giselle. We had our dinner at the hotel that was a half an hour's tram ride from the centre of Moscow. We decided to take a taxi as we were short of time. There were several people outside the hotel climbing into taxis, but when our turn came, the last taxi had gone. We waited until a taxi dropped someone and started to get in when a group of people dashed across the road and tried to take our taxi. The driver supported us and drove away to cries of "fascist" and "imperialist", nearly an international incident. The journey was hair raising, as another taxi drew along side at a traffic light. The driver asked ours for a light and was thrown a lighter. The traffic light changed and both taxis accelerated to about 70 kph side by side. The other driver threw the lighter through the open window of our taxi and our driver calmly put it away with one hand and took the other from the wheel to wave. We got to the theatre in good time, but a bit shaken. In the theatre a Canadian couple in evening dress, saw the Canadian badge I was wearing and asked in a patronising tone if we were camping. We of course were still in the wash n' wear that we had been in since leaving Kabul. The ballet was marvellous, a fairy tale come to life and improved our opinion of Moscow tremendously.

We left by air for Leningrad, again there was a long wait for the flight to start. No one knew why at the time, but later I found that fog had grounded all flights out and into Leningrad. We arrived at Leningrad and after seeing the Aeroflot agent were taken to a small room where our luggage finally awaited us. After some bureaucratic form filling we were able to get the bus in to town and checked in at the Astoria Hotel. It was famous before the October Revolution and had the original lifts that creaked their way up and down. When we got to our room and unpacked to finally get into clean clothes, we discovered that Madeleine's case had been broken into and a new suit she had bought in Hong Kong, some silk, and a silver cross had been stolen. Fortunately the things in the pack and the other soft sided case were untouched. I suspect that it was done at Kabul and only the locked hard sided case was thought to have valuables that warranted breaking in.

In spite of the loss, we enjoyed Leningrad. The food was better and the people more friendly than Moscow, while the parks, gardens and buildings had a civilized look. Many of the buildings had been painted in soft pastel shades in all colours. We spent a day going around the "Hermitage" that is part of the Winter Palace now a show case building and an art gallery. The collection was the best I have seen, they had 25 Rembrandts on display and large numbers of the impressionists. I judge that their 19th century collection was larger than the Louvre in Paris.

We took the trip by hydrofoil to Petrodforets, through the estuary lined with warships. This used to be the summer residence of the Tsars, but had been destroyed during the siege. The gardens and fountains were in good repair as was the exterior of the palace, but when we looked through the window it was only a shell as the interior had not then been renovated. However the gardens and water displays were in good shape. There

were several trick fountains there, the sort that start a fine spray when someone walks on a certain stone or sit on a bench. All good fun, as long as you are not the one under the spray.

We had been warned that supplies in Russia were in short supply and we had to check with each other as frequently there was only toilet paper in either the mens or the womens, but not both. I guess that most people did as we did, and stocked up while supplies were available. I had in my case a universal sink/bath plug. When we recovered the luggage, Madeleine decided to do a small wash in the sink. Every thing went well until she tried to empty it. There was a loud GLUG sound and instead of going down the waste pipe, the water was spreading over the floor. I dashed out to the concierge, a rather fat lady who sat in the hallway watching all the comings and goings. I yelled "Vader v'stalynyah," which I believed meant "water in bedroom." She looked at me as though I was mad, but decided to investigate. When she got to the room, she said "Ah Vader!" and called an official who could speak some English who said "worker come - fix." About 30 minute later, worker come - mopped up floor - and fix -- by wiring taps closed! We did not know whether to laugh or cry. To do them justice, the drain pipe was sealed with goo and the wire taken off before that night.

It was time to leave Russia and we were taken to the International Airport. It was a huge building with no-one there. By comparison Mirabel, was like Piccadilly Circus. We were alone, but in the distance there was a man by himself. Madeleine said to me "that's the Ariana agent, I said it couldn't be, but it was. We had been trying to reach him to report the stealing from our luggage, but he never answered his phone. Madeleine buttonholed him and made him acknowledge the loss and promise restorations. Of course we did not even get a reply from the airline, but the insurance paid up in Montreal. The flight out was in a Tu-134 jet, one of the most modern aircraft in Aeroflot's fleet, but it had very uncomfortable seats. We landed at Kiev, disembarked and were pushed through the exit procedure. We took off again and finally returned to freedom at Vienna.

The effect of being in a fashionable city like Vienna after Moscow was such a contrast that it was a feast for our eyes. We saw "Don Carlos" at the State Opera and to my discomfort took too much new wine in Grinzing. It was in Vienna that Madeleine came very close to being divorced. The first day there, I saw the lovely pastries in the cafes and wanted to have some. "No" said Madeleine "I will get fat." She agreed to go on our last day in Vienna. The great day arrived and I trotted along with her like Pavlov's dog at a bell ringers convention. We got to the cafe and it was closed! It was Sunday and all cafes were closed. Madeleine has not been allowed to forget this calamity (not even after 25 years).

Pastries in Vienna

The next ten days were spent in Germanic Europe; Salzburg, Munich, Nuremburg and finally Zurich. As I have talked about these cities before I will say no more than we enjoyed ourselves and mention some memories. A wine cellar where we drank, ate and danced, that was so crowded that to leave we had to join the dancers and slowly make our way round the floor to the exit; going to the theatre to see "The Merry Widow" sung in German but somehow understanding it. Finally, a quiet street in Zurich where we were sitting down when an elderly man drove up on a motor scooter, got off and took out a flute and started to play. The clear tone against the slight song of birds matched perfectly the sunny fall day. We were entranced until the piece ended. A window opened from one of the houses and a young girl leaned out and clapped. we joined in, and the man gave a little bow, got on his scooter and drove off. How I wished I could have recorded that moment on film.

We spent the last three weeks in Britain spending the time between my father and Madeleine's mother. We arrived back at the Royal Dixie late afternoon of a Monday, and the next day at 7:45 I reported for work. We had taken over two thousand slides and were to bore our friends showing them for many weeks after. Mary H. met us at the airport. She and Ron had looked after our car while we were away and kindly picked us up and returned the car at the same time. We had left Montreal at the start of August and it was now the end of October, we had been away eighty days. It was later suggested that we should write our experience and call it "Around the World in Eighty Days" or something similar, but someone beat us to it. The entire holiday including some buying in London had only cost us under $5000, with air tickets included, and of course the loss of salary while we were away. We have never regretted spending this as it was an experience of a lifetime. We now had to settle down to more mundane things like raising a family.

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Chapter 11 The family grows 1968 to 1975

We soon settled down to the humdrum life back at work, and were soon thinking about the Christmas season. While we were in Germany, David, Madeleine's only brother had immigrated to Ethiopia, to teach at the English School. He had actually landed in Frankfurt at the time we were in Munich, but there was no way that we could see one and other. I had never met him and it looked as if I never would. We tended to write slightly more frequently to him and our parents, who would phone each other occasionally or when there was important news to share.

The 1969 winter was the first one in over ten years that I had not been in a ski chalet. We had decided that we would go easy on spending after the blow-out on the holiday. This was only comparative, as we still had long week-ends in New York City and went to the theatre when something good was on. We had broadened each others tastes. Madeleine was seeing and enjoying films and musicals, while I was going to concerts. There was a series of concerts at the new sports arena, which served wine and cheese during the concert. We went there several times, and they started by turning the lights low and every member of the audience lit a sparkler. Madeleine commented how romantic it was, but I disagreed as it is impossible to be romantic with the smell of fresh onion on your partner's breath. Again I was in the dog-house.

Science and technology was advancing in leaps and bounds. Colour television was the rule rather than the exception, and every teen ager had a transistor radio glued to his or her ear. The pocket calculator costing twenty dollars could do as much as the early computers that filled a room and cost tens of thousands of dollars. The shadow on this was that inflation was being felt on the necessities of life. The cost of food, housing and transport were going up, even if the costs of luxuries were decreasing. The cold war got colder by the year and the big powers pushed each other and backed away, like a form of dance. The Cuban Missile crisis was balanced by the Bay of Pigs. The difficulties that the US was experiencing in Vietnam would soon be felt by Russia in Afghanistan. There were, however, some bright moments like the landing of men on the moon, and the flying of passengers in the supersonic Comet. Medical science was extending the span of our lives, providing you lived in a large town in an industrial power. My father wrote that when he was born, not even motor cars existed, flying was strictly for the birds, the thought of a picture being produced out of the air was stuff only the supernatural could do, and men on the moon were left to the fantasies of Jules Verne.

With the expectations of a larger family we moved again in May. We stayed in the Dixie, moving to a two bedroom apartment on Bourke Avenue. It had just been repainted but was on the third floor, which meant it was quite hot in summer. I was able to install my old air conditioner onto a stove circuit and we were able to use it without blowing the fuses every time it started up, which was the main reason it was not used in the previous rooms. With the extra room we could have guests, even after we had children, for the crib could be placed in our bedroom leaving the second for the guest.

For the summer vacation, we did the tour around the Great Lakes in our car. It was the same route as my first Canadian holiday, but having the car enabled us to take side routes, and to stay in more scenic areas than possible by bus. My father's health was no worse and we were able to persuade him to visit us again. He agreed to come for a month from the middle of August. As his age was 73, we did not take any long trips, but as the month went by and both he and we were enjoying his stay, it was decided to extend it, - several times.

We took him a couple of times to "Man and his World", which was the semi-permanent extension to Expo, a shade of the real thing but still quite good. My father was not much of a theatre or concert-goer, but he went to Place des Arts with Madeleine a couple of times, the second with me accompanying them to see Victor Borge's concert, which in spite of the clowning of classical music, Madeleine like very much.

We were a little worried that my father would find the days long away from his friends and home, and with both of us at work. However, in spite of his age and medical condition, he was a good walker. Nearly every day he would walk down to the lake shore, a little under a kilometre. He would return by the park, where if the weather were reasonable, he would sit and chat with the people there. A couple of times a week we would go to the Dorval library where he would take out the maximum number of books on his visitors ticket and on Madeleine's, so he was able to do even more reading than when he was at home.

Although there was TV available, he seldom used it except to watch sporting events of an international type, as he claimed he did not understand the North American football, baseball and hockey. A number of the people whom he had met with my mother eleven years previous either invited him to visit them, or visited him, so in all he was busier than normal. His stay extended finally

until the 9th January. The Christmas period that year was full of parties and was quite heavy with snow. He was amazed that we went out in such conditions. We went to a party on Boxing day at Terry and John's home, which was on the other side of Dorval. I did think that we might get stuck there, but at 1am the snow plough went by and I was able to run him to our apartment, then return to the party. Molly and I got home ourselves about 4:30, which was about par for Terry's Parties. He returned to England, having made the most of the company of a daughter, something he had always wanted.

Madeleine had been unsuccessful in getting pregnant, and after tests to find out why were inconclusive on both of us, we decided to adopt. Children were still readily available for adoption, as the Pill had just been introduced and was not easily obtainable. It was almost unheard of for a single mother to keep and bring up a child. Society was just too unforgiving for such a "crime". The time it took for the paperwork, interviews and selection was about four months. Just as we were almost there, Madeleine came down sick. It was chicken pox, she was one of the few people who managed to get it more than once, and this was probably her third time. She was declared free from contamination and we went and picked up our first child, David Vaughn, who was then nearly 3½ months old. Molly had finished work in the foster home department on the Friday and became a client in the adoption department the next Tuesday.

Like all new parents we felt very strange, particularly as Vaughn was old enough to have some feeling of change, but on the whole he was a happy child. There was a coincidence in that Madeleine had been having minor surgery in the hospital where he had been born on the very day. We had to learn parenting the hard way as neither of us had any relations near by to help out. This hit hard when one week we both went down with a particularly violent form of 'flu and at the same time Vaughn had diarrhoea. I remember getting up in the night to change him and just making it back to collapse on the bed. Fortunately, Madeleine had got over the worst of her attack for the next change. Since that time I have had an admiration for single parents and the way that most of them give so much of themselves to bring up their children.

It was in 1970 that the first rumbles of Quebec separatism were heard. It started with bombs in letter boxes, which although did not kill anyone, severely maimed a soldier doing bomb disposal. The Briton, James Cross was kidnapped and held and the actions came to a head with the kidnapping and subsequent killing of the cabinet minister Pierre Laporte. The War Measures Act was passed and we read that Montreal was a terror-stricken city shivering in fear under military occupation. The only shivering we saw were a few poor soldiers standing in the wind and blowing snow outside the consulates. As far as fear was concerned, it certainly was not evident in any of the people I knew or saw, including those of Canadien origin. I believe that the media blew the whole situation up to a degree that it formed the rifts between the English and the French. It is true that many Canadiens had been exploited, but the exploiters were equally English and french speaking, and the church was one of the worst.

Anne visited us in the fall, to meet and spoil her first grand child. But his main introduction to our families came in the summer of 1971, when the three of us flew to London. Nearly all east-bound transatlantic flights leave Montreal in the late evening, and this was no exception. We went to the airport with a number of friends and Vaughn was very lively in spite of it being long past his bed time. It was suggested that if he was allowed to suck a finger dipped in scotch, he would soon fall asleep. Like hell he did! All the way across, he was chirping and throwing things out of the carry-cot that had been placed on a fold down shelf on the partition in front of our seats. We got to Watford, we were bleary
eyed but that evening he was still awake. We paid for it later as he had baby jet lag for three days. In the five weeks he and Madeleine were in England they visited every member of both families that we were in touch with.

On Christmas eve, we had a very nasty shock . First thing in the morning as we were preparing breakfast, I had a call from Reg asking if I could go to his flat. When I got there, Reg looked terrible and said he was having chest pains. I immediately called the Police Ambulance and they came in a couple of minutes and took him to the nearest hospital. I was going to follow in my car, but as there had been snow over night, I had to dig out first. I got to the hospital about 20 minutes later and was told that he had experienced another attack on the way and was in the operating room. As they had admitted him without any paper work, I was asked to fill in the forms. Just as I finished a sister came in to inform me that Reg had died. The police needed information, so I had to spend the day in his apartment and at work trying to find next his family, next-of-kin and other details. Reg died interstate, with the result that his half brother only got a tenth of his wealth. The province took the rest! Early in the New Year, Madeleine and I made new wills, just in case.

Canadair had been through a couple of cycles of good and bad times. I had been involved largely in the design of the CL-215 Water Bomber (Landing Gear, Water System & other systems), which was another time, when much overtime was worked. At Canarch several contracts of a highly different nature were completed. We had been involved in the design of the new provincial

Police building, which was unusual in that the vertical mullions at the top were structural, for appearance, and served the purpose as bars for the cells. Another design made, was a grid sun-shield to prevent motorists being blinded by the setting sun when exiting from the Atwater tunnel, which faced west. Probably the most out of the ordinary, was a symbolic statue for Air Canada'a headquarters building in the form of stylised wings. We designed it for gravity, wind, and earthquake loads, but realised something was missing. We invented a new case, the university student loading. We strengthened the design to take the weight of 25 students climbing on one wing. It was just as well we did as within a few month of being erected, there was a student jape with a number of them on the top of the wing.

My father had been experiencing pain and cancer was diagnosed. He had radiation treatment, which gave him a little remission but in the winter he wrote to say that it was getting worse and that he did not think he would see me again. I was able to get a charter flight over Christmas and spend 18 days with him. It was the first time that Madeleine and myself had been separated for more than a day. We spent a lot of time talking about the past, visiting his friends and going out in the car. My father was still driving, but did not like driving far in case he got a bout of pain. He was very cheerful although not too optimistic for his future. An operation was planned in the new year. I had to return to Montreal and my last sight of him was waving as he drove away after dropping me at the bus stop for London Airport. He died on the operating table on St Patrick's Day.

We decided that Vaughn should not be an only child, so we put in an application to adopt a girl. In the twelve months since applying for Vaughn, the situation had completely changed. The sexual revolution had occurred. The Pill was being prescribed for anyone who asked and the number of babies for adoption had dropped to almost zero. We waited 19 months before we were called to pick up Xena Jill, a little red haired baby of three months. It was a long "pregnancy", and at time it looked like it would never end. The situation got even worse later, when parent's age and other restrictions were placed on prospective couples. We would not have been able to adopt if we had left applying until later as I would have been too old.

The inhabitants at the Royal Dixie changed each year and there were now many more families with children. This meant that more apartments with two and three bedrooms were needed. To cater for this, many of the one bedroom apartments were turned into bachelor apartments with the extra room added to the next apartment, making it into either a two or three bedroom unit. Our was one of these so we had the extra room when Xena arrived. There were many families with young children and nearly all were tight for money. Going out, even to the cinema was expensive as a baby-sitter was needed. To overcome this Madeleine and a couple of other wives organised a Baby-sitting club, where mothers would sit for others and build up a credit in hours, that could then be used for babysitting their own child. It worked very well and with up to twenty members, it was always possible to find someone to sit for you, even at short notice. Of course the night sittings require the husband to be at home with their child, but during the daytime, children could be dropped off at the sitting mother's home. The kids enjoyed this as they got to play with other children, and more importantly with other children's toys. I find it difficult to understand why co-operative baby sitting is not more available in Canada.

The Royal Dixie was a good place for children in the summer, but like all apartments, it was restrictive for the children in winter. After Dad's death, I arranged the selling of house in The Spinney. It had to be done through a lawyer, arranged by post and although the house was sold as I wished, most of the things I wanted to be kept or sent to me, disappeared. They were mainly little things like chinaware and photographs, but it hurt in losing them. With the sale of the house, I had sufficient cash for a down payment on a house in Canada. After some searching we found a bungalow in western Dorval, on Nightingale Avenue. It had a good garden with both trees and a vegetable patch and a full basement, so we signed on the dotted line and moved there. This was the last move I made without professional movers, and took about twenty trips in the Volkswagen and one in a local truck to move all of our belongings.


Our first house

Like most home owners I soon found that I had to learn new skills. We decided to make in the basement a playroom and an extra bedroom for Anne when she visited. Carpentry was required to put up the panelling and false ceiling. Then I turned into a plumber and installed a wash basin and toilet. In this I was fortunate as extra drains had been roughed in when the basement was poured. Duct work for the heating and electric work for lights and plugs added to the skills. It is fortunate that my apprenticeship gave me a good grounding for practical work. The work was finished the day before Anne's arrival for that years visit.

A company depression was in progress at Canadair, people were being laid off every week. Although I was still busy

developing specification for NATO for surveillance drones and then structurally designing the CL-289 drone, nobody knew, on any Friday, whether he would find a "pink slip" in his cheque telling him that his services were no longer required. The number of illnesses and heart attacks by employees drastically increased. I started looking around for other work. I had applied for a job at CEPE (Central Experimental Proving Establishment) had an interview and then waited. I did not hear for ten months. I was then given an offer slightly less than I was earning when I had applied and I had received an increase since that time. Apparently there had been a freeze on hiring in the government, anyway I turned it down. I also applied for several other jobs, mainly with the airlines. Although I had interviews and sometimes the second interview, I was not offered the job. I later found that my bearing during the interviews was hindering me. I had always had to fight an inferiority complex, and in interviews, I tended to derate myself, believing it the honest way. I became friends with someone that interviewed me for Air Canada, who told me of this fault and explained that most people inflated their experience in interviews, so the more modest were at a disadvantage. After that, although I did not exaggerate, I was careful to explain what I could do. It paid off with job offers and I would advise anyone to state what they can do and have done, regardless on whether or not they believe it relevant. Let the interviewer decide that.

It was not that I actively wanted to leave Canadair, as I had liked the work and the people, but the economic pressures caused me to make a move. Looking back, I find that Canadair was an exceptional company because it tackled many things and was sucessful in most. As early as 1948, it "stretched" an aircraft, by adding an additional piece of fuselage when converting the DC-6 to the North Star. It was the first company to design a cargo aircraft to load its cabin with full size pallets. This was done by designing the complete tail section to hinge (CL-44-D). I did the stressing of the joint hingesn actuator & locking devices. Other firsts include; the first purpose-designed water bomber (CL-215); first successful swing-wing VTOL aircraft (CL-84); and the first army surveillance drone (CL-89). In other fields, Canadair had entered curtain-wall and other aluminum structures (Canarch); had designed and built rough-terrain vehicles for the arctic as well as building city busses for the MTC. Smaller jobs were also tackled, such as a spectroscope for the nuclear industry; a system of oil slick control; several ground effect vehicles; research programs on escape pods, Hot Structure (Re-entry vehicles), , and industrial safety. I worked on with Ken Goodall on the Hot Structures, but alone on Oil slick control, fluid columns for ground effect machines and the safety programs. Probably the most unusual job was in association with two doctors. It was a device similar to a portable iron lung except that it fitted on the belly of pregnant women. An industrial vacuum cleaner was modified to give pressure and suction, which was supposed to aid the delivery of the child, by stomach massaging. It was designated "The Labour Saving Device".

I also have to thank Canadair for opening a new world to me, Computing. Canadair had always had a section to look after the large computers used for both business and engineering calculation. They had for some time been experiencing trouble in calculation because the computer experts, who could program, knew nothing about engineering. They did not talk the same language as engineers, which resulted in a number of routines not performing correctly. They could train a programmer in engineering, or could give courses in programming for the engineers. They chose the latter and a group of us were told that we would have classes. When the time came for the first class, they found that they had over booked. So five of us were taken off the list, but as we wanted to program, we were offered that if we learnt from books they would give us a generous allotment of computer time for hands on practice. It turned out that one of the five became the top programmer at Canadair, and I was not bad, even if I say so myself! I found in computing the entertainment of problem solving and got the same kind of enjoyment that many people get from doing crossword puzzles.

We had some good news; that David was coming on leave from Ethiopia and would be staying with us for ten days. I was finally going to meet my brother-in-law. We all enjoyed having him, but initially it was difficult to get him talking, and did not know what to make of the little girl who sat on the settee with him. But once he got used to us and realised that we were willing to discuss any subject, he opened up. We had a week-end trip to Quebec City together and then I found that he was a different person, very knowledgeable on many subjects and well read, but we were often chatting in a bar, which was the sort of gathering he was more used to. We got to know each other, altering the preconceived ideas that one gets from just letters. I am sure that my letters to David before his visit must have read very stiff and formal. Not only did I not know what to write about, but my knowledge of him was through other peoples eyes, in this case, his mothers and sister's, so not likely to be entirely without bias on his worse aspects. David treated both of the children like adults, which I am sure they loved. David at that time was unmarried and I suspect had little to do with young children.

Things had become exceptionally bad at work. The number of employees at Canadair had dropped from the 13000 in 1953, but had then risen to 7500 in 1967. It was now an all time low of 1500 and there were rumours that it could be zero by 1976!

This was the scene when I had a job offer from Keith Walker who was now working at the Transport Ministry in Ottawa. The salary was marginally less than that I was getting at Canadair, but the cost of moving and other incidentals would be paid. I accepted the offer and after Thanksgiving Day 1975, I moved to Ottawa to started work in the Airworthiness division of the Department of Transport. Could the day be an omen?
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Chapter 12 Ottawa - working for the government 1975 on

Ottawa is about 200 km to the west of Montreal, but is a completely different city. It is set in Ontario - just - as it is really a twin city with Hull which is across the river in Quebec. Montreal was the largest town in Canada with, in 1975, a population of two million and was wide open as far as entertainment was concerned. Ottawa-Hull had less than half a million and closed down when the government offices shut at 5pm. When you flew into Ottawa the air appeared clear, but on the approach to Montreal visibility decreased with an industrial haze as you got closer. I went up in September and found a room to move into for starting work.

We decided for me to take a room and commute to Dorval at the week end, while I looked for a home in Ottawa and Madeleine sold the house in Dorval. We would co-ordinate it so that we would move from Dorval just before the new house became available. The room I took was rough, in a rooming house off Elgin Street. It had a refrigerator in the room and a walk-in closet, a bed, table and two chairs. After much complaining curtains were placed on the windows. There were five rooms on each floor with a shared bathroom and kitchen. Elgin Street is one of the more lively thoroughfares in Ottawa, it has many restaurants and several late night operating grocery stores. I had thought that I would probably be trying out many of the restaurants, but in fact ate at home almost every night. I had made arrangements to work non-standard hours, coming in at 7am and leaving at 6pm four days a week. But on Friday leaving at 3pm to catch the train for Dorval and getting in around 10am on Monday when the first train from Montreal arrived. Madeleine met me and dropped me at Dorval station. But my weekends at home were from 5:30 Friday to 8:00 Monday. Madeleine was able to visit me a few times when Anne was visiting. It was almost sinful the way I escorted her to my room to share my single bed, the trouble was that no-one cared!

My work at the DoT was similar to what I was doing at Canadair, structural design, only now I was checking and evaluating the methods used. Soon after I arrived I was given a report to look at from Canadair, it was prepared by a Don Joseph, I returned it to Keith so that there was no conflict of interest. My glance at it determined that it was not very well done. My first major project was the approval of the DeHavilland Canada DHC-7, so there was no conflict there, and by the time that Canadair were submitting their CL-600 Challenger, I had been away four years. Other work that came in all the time, were defects and incidents which required regulatory action, sometimes grounding the fleet until inspections or repairs could be made.

Because of the longer hours that I worked during the week, I did not do very much exploring in Ottawa. Of the four nights I was there, on a Thursday I went to the Byward market and did my shopping for the next seven days, and on another day I walked to the Public Library and got out books for the week. The remainder I spent in my room after cooking and washing up, usually reading. I had the portable TV in my room, only used it four times in the six months.
At around Christmas I started looking for houses. I did this by going to one of the big realty companies (estate agents), where I was given a table and I went completely through their listings making note of those with the correct number of rooms and with in our price range. I also threw out several that did not look attractive in the photo on the record. Over the next month, I investigated each, using a map and visiting the area by bus. From this I was able to reduce to a short list, by removing those not close enough to schools, shopping and facilities. The agents then became involved and I was taken to the six properties that remained on it. The number was then reduced to three, as one had such small rooms that it did not conform to its description, the second was in a poor state of repair, and the third although would have been suitable had been adjacent to a land slide and I did not want to chance another taking the house out.

In Montreal, Madeleine had been arranging the sale of the home and we had got a buyer, who wanted to move in at the beginning of April. We did not get the asking price, but it was well above our minimum. Prior to this, it had been very hectic for Madeleine as she had repainted much of the house, cleaned up and on being phoned by the agent before a viewing, had gone like a whirlwind through the rooms tidying. This in addition to taking Vaughn to kindergarten and Xena to nursery school. To make the final choice in Ottawa, Madeleine came up for another over night stay. We looked over all three houses, then sat up to the wee hours trying to make our decision. For better or worse we decided to take the two story cottage near the Carlingwood shopping center. It was in an ideal location, only five minutes walk from the center, School, library, liquor & beer stores and the bus went from the bottom of the street to outside the Transport's office block. The house was standing in a fairly large garden (for Ottawa), had a finished play room in the basement, and the two upstairs bedrooms had built-in drawers and cupboards on two walls. The master bedroom also had its own wash basin and toilet.

I was left with the jobs of arranging for the movers, for a hotel for the family for the few days of the move, and most of all, a new mortgage as the cost of housing in Ottawa was 50% more than that in Montreal. By now spring was approaching and I spent more time exploring. Ottawa is a beautiful town, with long scenic drives along both rivers and the canal. There are several large parks, mainly near the outer boundaries, but little green space in the centre of town. Being the capitol, many of the national museums are located within its area and because of the diplomatic presence there are many good restaurants serving foods from other lands, now called ethnic restaurants. The main disadvantage is that it is basically a one industry town - Government! In recent years, however, the Hi-Tech industries dealing with computers, software, instruments and radioactives have grown up in the suburbs.

It was arranged that I would return to Dorval at the end of March, to sign off the house, pack some of the more delicate things. Then when the movers arrived, I would run Madeleine and the children to the station so they could ahead to Ottawa and stay in the Motel until the furniture arrived. I would stay with the movers until they left, tidy the house and clean and drive the car to Ottawa. The afternoon before this was to happen, I had an emergency call from Madeleine. The buyer of our Dorval home had lost his job and gone to Toronto. He had tried to reclaim his deposit, but of course the trust company held on to it. I dashed down to the bank and arranged an special loan to cover the cheque we were suppose to get from the sale. Madeleine immediately put the house back on the market, but it was a worrying time.

We were advised to reduce the asking price by a large amount in order to get a fast sale, fortunately we did not as after a few low offers we were able to get what we had originally agreed from another family. They wanted to move in quickly so our double mortgage was only held for six weeks, and the extra interest and expenses were covered by my share of the deposit which I eventually got. One other near mishap occurred in the move. after the van had been loaded, I asked the driver when he would be in Ottawa to unload. He said "I'm not going to Ottawa, this is for Collingwood" (some three hundred miles from Ottawa). We rang up his dispatcher and a mistake had been made. The instructions "near Carlingwood" (a district in Ottawa) had got changed. Fortunately we were able to get that cleared up before he left, but because of the schedule for the rest of the load, the delivery took three days instead of the one. But all that meant was that we stayed in the motel longer and Madeleine was able to clean the empty house.

We registered the kids for school in the fall. Ontario has a somewhat different school organization compared with Quebec. Xena was able to go to kindergarten as they have two years and Vaughn went into grade one. Both were in the French Immersion Program. In this program, the children are taught initially only in french. As the grades get higher more English is taken, until at High School it is almost all English. It is the best way for children of an English speaking family to become bi-lingual. I only wished that I had received a similar education, as I was never able to speak french well, even though I can read a little.

In the fall of that year we had what was to be Anne's last visit to Canada. She had been having treatment for Cancer and it was uncertain if she would be able to come. She was given the OK by her doctor and we arranged a flight. Before she had always flown from London to Dorval, which was only five minute drive from the old house. There were no direct flights to Ottawa, instead she would have to fly into Mirabel Airport which is over a hundred miles from Ottawa. A friend had written to say that Anne was quite frail, so we had to meet her. I made some inquiries at work and was put on to the person in charge of airport security and with a bit of a sob story was able to get a DoT badge which would allow me both in the custom hall and immigration. Because of the length of journey and the size of the car, the whole family could not go, so Madeleine stayed in Ottawa to look after the children. I went and was standing by the immigration desk when the ground vehicle came to unload the passengers from Anne's flight. I looked around for an elderly lady. A lady was wheeled off in a chair who looked vaguely like Anne, but very sick. I was glad to see it wasn't her, but there were no other wheel chairs. Then I saw a familiar figure striding off and carrying a large bottle of Duty free. It was Anne. I was able to help her through the customs and got the car and then we drove the two hours to Ottawa chatting the whole way where the rest of the family greeted her.

She was obviously a sick woman, but she was determined to see her family in their new setting. She stayed as usual, the full month. But admitted that she would probably not be able to come again as her endurance was getting less. In February of the next year she had to return to hospital, we tried to make arrangements for the children to be looked after while I was at work, so that Madeleine could visit her. Unfortunately such facilities were almost non existent then, but we finally found a day school that would take them and arranged a flight for Madeleine. Two days before the flight we had a call from England, Anne had died.

There is a feeling of unworthiness which affects a survivor when separated by long distances. A feeling that one did not do

enough for the deceased relation. I felt it with my Father and Madeleine felt it extremely badly on her Mother's death. It isn't helped by inferred criticism that you are not with them to the last, often by relations who do not appreciate your personal difficulties. It takes a long time to get over the feeling.

My job at Dept of Transport enabled me to visit other countries because when a foreign aircraft was in for approval, a team would be sent to the manufacturer as the familiarization part of the validation. I had four such trips while I was in the airworthiness division; one to Texas (USA), two to France, and one to Italy. I also was able to visit Holland and Belgium, going to these countries for NATO conferences on Damage Tolerance of structures. The aircraft industry had been compelled to develop a new concept of relating the frequency of inspections to the damage rate calculated at the time of design. Before this inspections were specified AFTER something had gone wrong only, which was often fatal for those who had the defect first. New theories of crack propagation and initiation were developed and with the aid of computers, fairly accurate predictions could be made. I was fortunate to have a good background in fatigue analysis which was a good starting point, so I was designated to become the DoT specialist in Damage Calculations. My experience before DoT had been with fixed wing aeroplanes, now I was evaluating not only these, but also gliders, helicopters, home-builds and even hot air balloons. The work was often hectic but never boring.

The validations were always enjoyed, you had to work very hard to cover everything during the limited time, but most evenings were free as were the week-ends. Sometimes the host company put on entertainment for the entire group, which you were expected to attend but there was some time available to look around and I was able to visit several unusual places. One of these was museum in Bordeaux set in a disused army barracks. It had the largest collection of military uniforms and their paintings, that I have ever seen in one place. Also while we were in Bordeaux we went on a Saturday to the beaches. Most of us went to the municipal beach and picnicked there. A couple of associates went to another beach that was all "au naturale". They arrived there and were admiring the scenery, but were soon told that clothes were not permitted. That evening, there were two very uncomfortable engineers. Both had very bad sunburn on their behinds through laying face down (were they embarrassed?). I would liked to have heard what they told their wives.

The various tests provided other breaks from the humdrum work of the office. We were required to witness all tests of a structural nature, and with modern aircraft these have become varied. There is the static test where a non-flying prototype is loaded, gauged, and finally broken. The latter can be very spectacular. Fatigue tests were performed on another prototype. In this test, the airframe is loaded in quick succession with loads of the various conditions that an aircraft experiences. Thereby the equivalent of one flight can be done in a couple of minutes, instead of hours. This will enable the designers to find out when and where damage or fatigue cracks will start, long before any aircraft has the service life for this to happen. Simulated lightening strikes determine the damage to aircraft skins, Models are catapulted in to water to show the behaviour if an emergency requires ditching. The one test I did not enjoy was the windshield test. In this a recently killed chicken would be fired from an oversized airgun to hit a mock-up of the front of the plane. It was fired at a speed of 250 knots to simulate an aeroplane flying into a large bird. Of course no penetration was permitted. the remains of the bird did not upset me, only the smell. Whenever there was one of these test to be witnessed, I would tell Madeleine NOT to prepare chicken that night for dinner!

It was difficult trying to deal with the Russians during the cold war period. I became involved when they were trying to get the YAK-40 aircraft approved in Canada. All other countries, including Iron Curtain countries like Poland or Rumania, designed their aircraft to a set of regulations similar to the USA. The American FAR25 was used in Canada, but the British ARB "D" and the French AIR were similar. The early Soviet aircraft were designed to a specification based on their military requirements, with very little in common. Many countries produced a set of design reports in the aviation international language, English, to help obtain approvals for export. The Russians produced summaries in English, but these did not relate to the FAR25 requirements. I had studied Russian and had got as far as lesson 12, - three time! So I could pronounce Cyrillic printed words. Many of the technical words in Russian have a similar spoken base to the English equivalent. This enabled me to roughly translate calcs in the original Russian. A good technical dictionary was very helpful. It became apparent that the work submitted was not sufficient to approve the aircraft, so several groups of engineers were sent to Ottawa from the USSR, in order to explain.
The Soviet parties consisted of a senior designer, several engineers, two translators and a couple of extra people. We suspected that the latter were security as the engineers often looked towards them before answering us. Although most of the engineers spoke English, all official talk was through the translators after a discussion in Russian that we could not understand.

Of course, the cold war was still on then, but quite by accident, I caused a change in their behaviour. There is a Russian word "Хорошо" pronounced "Horashaw," which means "good/well" and is used somewhat similar to "bien" in French. I listened to what was being said in their huddle and from the few words that I understood and the context of the conversation, I guessed the answer. I must have said "Horashaw" a couple of times before the translator had finished. Suddenly a huddle was called by the Soviets, and from then on, the discussion in Russian was conducted in whispers. I was told later by the Canadian translator, that I was suspected of understanding Russian and the security people had limited their discussions.
It was very difficult to get much information from Moscow. We were told that we would get anything we requested providing we specified the document number. We asked if there was a list of documents with both title and number. On being told there was such a document, we asked for a copy to be sent. We did not receive it and asked why. Moscow replied "You did not give the document number!" The YAK-40 was never approved for registration in Canada or any other western nation.

I have always had difficulty in language, and I am not even very articulate in English. I found that when I was speaking in front of an audience, particularly through a microphone, I often got tongue-tied and stuck for words. As I had to speak out at meetings I was compelled to overcome this. Today I can speak in front of a crowd, but still have to plan my statements ahead of time if I am not to get hesitant. Going on validations twice to France, did much for enabling me to attempt using French. There was usually an interpreter available, but on one full day at "Aerospatiale in Marseille, I had to work with the lady structural engineer without an interpreter. Her English was about the same level as my French, but we were able to cope. The next day we checked with the returned interpreter and found that we had got all of the important points across to each other correctly. It gave me quite a lift because up to this time, I had believed that I had a mental block as far as languages were concerned. I tried to get on an immersion French course but was never able to get a place. The younger people had the priority as that was more cost effective.

One area of work that I enjoyed while at DoT was when assistance on accident investigations was requested. The Aircraft Safety Department had inspectors that went to the crash sites to collect information, and a test department that could run tests on pieces found. They did not have, at that time, any engineers familiar with design. Sometimes it was necessary to work back to find the cause of an accident. This meant suggesting a scenario and determining the aerodynamic and structural effects. If the damage were similar to that of the crash, it could be assumed that such, could be a possible cause. Most of the time this was done in Ottawa working on theory, but once I went to near the crash site where the wreckage had been partially reassembled. There I was able to measure and find damage that did not support the reasons thought to be most likely for the crash. Further work at Ottawa together extra evidence searched for and found at the site enabled us to find a more probable cause and hopefully prevent other similar accidents.

The standard of life in Canada had, over the years, improved at least materially. Even people on welfare had colour TVs and ran cars. Nearly every form had a space for telephone as only the extremes of society were not on the telephone. More and more gadgets were available and became in common use. On my arrival in Canada, clothes were sent to a laundry to be cleaned, in the 60s you would take them to a laundamat or if you lived in an apartment to the laundry room, but now almost every one had their own washer and dryer. Similar progress was made in the kitchen with dish washers taking the place of husbands, and pre-set microwaves replacing wives! In the entertainment field, the portable radio was replaced by the transistor, which in turn was replaced by the "walkman". Televisions and record players also became smaller and completely portable. Electricity replaced the manual labours, and every little item for the home was electric, so that by 1970 I had over forty devices powered by electricity, ranging from tiny potable radios to complete entertainment centres; From 14 cubic foot freezers to hand-held coffee grinders and outside things like a lawnmower and a snow-blower.

If many labour saving devices were now available, many of the luxuries of yesteryear had disappeared. The servant in the home had long disappeared except in the extremely wealthy. Craftsmen were a dying breed, and repairs to anything had become very difficult. It was the throw-away era, short useful life plastic (which had a long environmental life) had replaced many of their wooden or metal predecessors. Man made fibres had completely dominated the field of cheap clothing, not always with superior comfort. In the field of entertainment, the goggle-box television had eroded the film and theatrical industry and on entering the ninth decade of the century, the general health and well being of north Americans was at an all time low. The picture of "Joe Blow" was of a smoking beer drinking overweight person who spent all of his time when not at work in front of the TV.

We had in the past kept in touch with David through the letters he wrote regularly to his mother. Anne always passed them on with her letters to us, however after she died David wrote regularly to us. He was very similar to myself as before I came to Canada I seldom wrote, but once here, the need to have an anchor and family was great so that I wrote a couple of times a week, and have made a point of keeping in touch with family and friends. David visited us in Ottawa in 1978, and in the course of his visit, mentioned a young Ethiopian girl he knew. We did not think anything more of it until six months after his return to Ethiopia, when he announced that he was getting married to Rahel. So now our families appeared to be permanently half a world apart. Both children enjoyed having an uncle even for such a short time. I think that the children of immigrant families suffer from not having uncles, aunts and cousins around, particularly in the pre-teen years. My own experience was that there was a sort of rivalry between myself and the two male cousins who were the same age, but liked one another to play with when on a visit.

Ottawa tends to be more moderate, exercise is used by many as there is much available within the city. The cycle paths spread 32 km through the region. These become ski trails in winter and the canal which is claimed to be the worlds longest ice rink during winter gives pleasure to the many people of all ages who uses it. The rivers provide the means of water sports and there is an active group of the more exciting sports available nearby; White water rafting, hang gliding, horse riding sky diving and ballooning, to name a few. Above all there are many pleasant walks on the park ways, along the rivers and canals and in the parks. On a sunday morning you will see whole families out for a cycle ride, skiing or skating or just walking for the fun of it. We tended to do all of these activities, except that I did not cross-country ski, instead I used snowshoes, but could generally keep up with the rest of the family who were on skis.

The cost of living had been increasing as we entered the eighties. The interest rate soared sky-high to the 20% level before dropping with the associated inflation. But to look in the towns of Canada you would think all was well. The centres of all the big towns; Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton and Ottawa altered with the demolishing of old buildings and the raising of sky-scrapers. Shopping centers were built in the suburbs and the city-planned city cores became areas of underground shopping. The design of shopping centers changed from the row of stores with their own parking, to those with covered walk ways, and finally to the fully enclosed malls surrounded by parking lots. The price of homes rose from the $12500 in 1952, to $50000 in 1973, and to $150000 in 1991. Although the homes are more elaborate now, they are not well built and on very much smaller lots. The desirability of homes over apartments seemed to cycle over the years.

One area of electronics which had become much cheaper was computers. They were now available at a cost that an individual could afford, all be it, quite expensive. I dithered around trying to convince myself that I really need one for my job. In the end I decided to buy one anyway, but as a plaything for Don. Any practical use would then be a spin off. There were only two brands cheap enough for me, a PET (made by Commodore) or a TRS-1 (made by Radio Shack). I decided on the TRS-1 as it had a larger memory, 16K! I had to learn a new language as FORTRAN was not available. BASIC was similar and I already knew a little so I had no difficulty. Over the next six years I purchased various extension and peripheries and when I got my second computer, it had two floppy drives, a printer, a speech card, and 64K of memory. The simultaneous equation that took 15 minute on Canadair's E101 could be done in 90 seconds, and most of that was keying in the data.

Both the children were at full time school and Madeleine found being at home very restrictive so she took a part-time job with the Ottawa Board of Education, teaching recorder playing and music in several grade schools. Financially, it was not very gratifying, as although the rate was high, the hours were few, and neither driving between the schools nor the large preparation and clerical time was paid. It was worth it, as without these distractions life at home would have made her stir crazy. All Madeleine's qualifications were obtained in England but when we moved to Ontario she joined the Association of Canadian Social Workers. On her qualifications and experience in Quebec, she was rated equivalent to a B.S.W. The adverts showed that this would be very restrictive in salary if she returned to the work force. I was able to talk her into returning to university to get a Masters Degree.

In 1977 she started at Carleton University, one of the two universities in Ottawa, to take a part-time Masters of Social Work degree. The next four years were quite hectic on the family and very nerve wracking for Madeleine herself. Carleton at that time was very leftist and anti establishment in its leanings. I believe to an unreasonable level. Instead of having a progressive student body, what resulted was a highly conformist, but verbally and theoretically rebel group. Many of their ideas could not be faulted, but either their application

was inappropriate or they went much further than was practical. Madeleine who is naturally a middle of the roader (not when driving fortunately) had to submerge her resistance or opposition to some of the way out theories as both staff and many students could not accept criticism. She wrote a number of papers and she did a couple of terms doing field placements in the social work department of a hospital. And finally she completed and handed her thesis in. After a few tense weeks, it was announced that she would be awarded a M.S.W. We all breathed a sigh of relief.

In 1979 we took the children on the first of what was to be three trips to England. We spent time visiting friends of Anne in Watford, and those of our families still living in England. We took day trips to Stratford, Chessington Zoo and several days on the Isle of Wight. The main holiday was in London seeing the sights and the South Coast in a rental car where we all enjoyed the sea side. It was fun showing the kids the famous places and even the un-famous places where we had lived. We managed to have a four week vacation every four years to Europe. The second trip we included time in Belgium, both in Brussels and more sea side at Ostende. The trip we made in 1987 included a few days in Paris as well as a return to Ostende. We tried to give the kids the culture of the Louvre, and the fun of the sea in a single trip. The high light of this trip was that we were at last able to co-ordinate our holidays with those of David, who was in England with Rahel, his wife and Cleo, his six year old daughter. We spent time as a greater family both on the Isle of Wight and in London.

The work in Airworthiness was interesting and I felt worthwhile, but the pay was poor. This was mainly because the administration and management of the government was performed by mainly clerical trained staff. There is also a required pyramid of salary paid so that no level of administration could get less salary then a lower level. This is fine when all employees have the same function, but where technical or scientific staff are controlled by clerical, there is a blockage on increases. The consequence of this was a consistent turn over of technical personnel, particularly amongst the more experienced. It got so bad and the service to the major Canadian companies suffered, that the presidents of the three largest, Pratt & Whitney, Canadair, and DeHavilland, wrote a combined letter asking the minister to do something about the situation and saying that people with similar responsibilities and experience in there organizations were getting at least 33% more in salary. All that happened was that another independent study was made which confirmed the need for salary or rating increases, but the recommendations went back to the same administrators, and they did nothing.

By 1980, the purchasing power of my salary had reduced appreciably, so I was forced to look around for other employment. In the course of six months I wrote for four jobs in the government and got interviews in two. I was offered a job in Defence (DND) as a computer programmer and mathematician. It was a complete break from what I had done before, but I felt I could handle it so I accepted. It was in the Marine Engineering & Maintenance group, but the work was not difficult. What I did not like about DND was the lack of co-operation between the military personnel and the civilians, almost to obstruction. I was not sorry that after I had been there three months I received a call from one of the other jobs for which I had written. A postal strike had postponed the closure date for the competition. I had an interview and was given an offer. It was $10000 more than I had earned at DoT and considerably more than what I was getting at DND. I did not hesitate to accept.

I started at the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB) at the start of November 1981. The work was similar to that of DoT, but instead of checking aircraft against aeronautical Regulations, I was checking Radioactive Packages against the equivalent regulation. My first thought on seeing the engineering presented for this, was that the level of higher technology was a lot lower than in aircraft. I did not get much of a chance to consolidate my opinion, because on the second Sunday after starting at the AECB, I awoke with a feeling of doom and a slight tightness across the chest. It did not improve and I was persuaded by Madeleine to go to the Emergency at the nearest hospital. It was just as well I did, for I was having a heart attack. I spent the next three weeks, first in intensive care, then in a semi-private ward. I was fortunate that I had almost no pain, but this had the disadvantage that I tried to kid myself that I hadn't really had a heart attack. However when I started to get mobile again in hospital, I knew different. The first day I was told just climb four stairs up then down. A whiz, I thought, but after the third step I had no doubt how much I had been weakened.

I was able to get home for Christmas, but did not venture out visiting until New Year's Eve when Madeleine and I went to a party for a couple of hours. Being winter I could not build up my walking endurance outside, instead I would be driven to a shopping mall, walk a period, sit on a bench, then walk again. By the beginning of February I was getting around outside and even using busses. The doctor gave me the go-ahead to start work, half days only and after a month back to full time. The AECB were very good and all my benefits accrued in the previous government service were carried over to the new job so I had no worries financially.

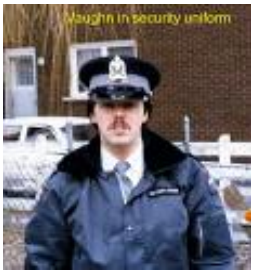
Madeleine decided that, in case I would not be able to keep working, she would apply for some jobs. Using the formula for

applications that I had found successful, she put in four applications. She had interviews and was given offers from two of them. Then came the terrible time of making a decision on which one to take. Each had things she wanted together with other things she disliked. After much deliberation, she chose the Regional Rehabilitation Center.

The setting of the center had a lot to do with her accepting. It is in a hospital complex in the south-east of Ottawa, cross town from where we live. The Rehab Center, together with the General and the Children's hospital and the medical section of the University of Ottawa share a gardened and wooded site. All are in modern buildings interconnected, because of the climate, by tunnels and overhead enclosed walkways. The complex has its own bank, shops and eating places and is served by the Ottawa busses. Because of the cross-town expressway, called Queensway, it only takes her 25 minutes to drive the twelve miles, about the time it would take to the much nearer other hospital, on roads more clogged with traffic.

Both our children, Vaughn and Xena, had a fairly normal childhood, with the usual amount of children's sicknesses. On the whole they were healthy and had little time from school. Neither were very scholarly nor over sporting. We tried to keep the family together by having a day out once a week, when we would picnic, swim, cycle or motor together. Except vacation in England, we had no family to visit, but a series of photograph albums recorded incidents and people connected with us. It surprised me how much both children would look at these photos, and today it still gives pleasure seeing them (and us) as they were.
Of the two children, Vaughn was the more adventuresome. On his first visit to London, we were staying in Belgrave Road and he went a couple of times to the Science Museum, in Kensington, by himself on the Underground. He was only nine at the time. Xena did not like to do things alone, but on a visit to Niagara Falls when she was ten, I was amazed to hear her act as an interpreter for a Quebec family staying at the same motel.

Both of them dropped out of school when they were sixteen and were living away from home by the time they were seventeen. Madeleine believes that this was partly caused by being adopted and that they had a need to "find themselves" more than natural offsprings. I think it was just a case of "greener on the other side of the fence." I think that both of them realize that they are restricted by their lack of qualifications, but the effort to go back to school and apply themselves is too much.



When they started work, it was not too long before both became disillusioned. The way of life in the poorer paid jobs would disgust even the most optimistic. The pay rates are often lower than the provincial minimum, with the attitude "there are plenty who will take the job if you don't want it." The working hours particularly in fast food outlets, are both at unreasonable times and do not add up to a 38 hour week, resulting in low take home pay. As if this isn't bad enough, the underpaid worker has to purchase the uniform (or livery) from the company. Officially this is only a deposit (of the full cost), but as a daily wash is needed for food outlets, the garments do not last and no refund is given on worn out clothes. Vaughn had similar problems at some of the companies that he worked for as a security guard. The deposit on the uniform, with winter outer garments was over $300, which takes a long time to pay when you are only doing 35 hours a week at $6 an hour.

Most of the government offices in Ottawa are in or near the centre, so the city has developed a system of express busses. They go in during the morning and out at evening, using fast roads and busways, so that the journey in for me, which is a distance of five and a half miles, takes just 20 minutes door to door. The AECB and DoT have offices within a block of each other very close to the Parliament Buildings, which may be considered the centre.

I regained my strength over 1982 and although was never as active as before the attack, returned to my activities, including the sports that did not over exert me; walking, cycling, swimming in summer and snowshoeing and skating in winter. The work at the AECB also broadened out. In addition to the approval of package designs, I was also involved in many other aspects of transporting radioactive material. My knowledge of aircraft and the aircraft industry was used when ever there something touching on aircraft or air transport. I had to become an inspector for both the AECB and also the Dangerous Goods Directorate at Transport Canada, in order to do compliance inspections of shipments and facilities.

Few people outside of the industry know how widespread is the use of radioactive material. Everyone knows of the bomb, and most people know of nuclear power, but all too many people associate the two together. But these two uses are only a fraction of the radioactive materials that are transported. There is the group of devices that are used inside buildings. There are the

smoke detectors that warn us of fire that can kill much quicker than cancer. The warning signs that tell us how to get out of the building in an emergency and do not fail when the electric cable is cut. Atmospheres which could be explosive, are made more safe by static eliminators using radioisotopes.

Many lives are saved by radio-pharmaceutical used both in diagnosing and treatment of disease and even cancer itself. Surgical instruments and dressings are made sterile in irradiators. Food can be prevented from spoiling also by irradiation. I known there is a controversy about this but I have yet to see an argument against that is supported by facts, although there are many that just say "you don't know what harm they will do in the future", which could be said about any aspect of human endeavour.

Gauges are used in industry and geological survey. X-ray analyzers allow scientist to discover the composition of minute samples, to isolate poisons or for medical and forensic analysis. Even the industries obtaining traditional fuels, like coal and oil use tagging and measuring by radioactives. In Canada there are more than 800000 radioactive shipments each year and more than half are medical.

Madeleine and myself are once again by ourselves. Both children dropped out of high school and are living in their own homes. Vaughn had been working on and off over the last three years in various security companies. He decided that he would claim the dual nationality of Canadian and UK British that his parentage allowed. When his new passport arrived, he was very please to see that it was an Economic Community one for the UK. After losing a job because the company went bankrupt, he decided that he would be the reverse of his mother and father by going to England to live and work. He is an awful letter writer, but the last we heard was that he was in a security job with a post at a film studio.

Xena, who is now known by her second name of Jill wanted a place of her own from about the age of 14. she worked a number of jobs in the service industry since she was 16. A couple of times she has attempted to return to school for adult education, but there has always been other limitations. The latest of these was in 1991 she became pregnant and had a baby boy. She is now keeping house for herself, her boyfriend Lenny and baby Leonard in a nice apartment adjacent to the Ottawa River. It is amazing how the proprietary of living together has changed over the years. From the pretense of the Mr. & Mrs Smith era, to the openness of today. Fortunately there is no stigma for a single parent today. Thirty years ago it was completely different. An acquaintance of mine took the extremely difficult course of getting a job in New York, when she discovered she was pregnant. By doing this, she was able to have the baby, have it adopted, and not have the facts known to her parents and most of her friends. In this way, she was able to lead a normal life and eventually get married, all of which would have been unlikely if it had been known about the baby.

I have found both at work and amongst the contempories of Xena, a steady increase of single parents. Of course, divorce is much more common. Madeleine and myself will have our silver anniversary early in 1992. Today this is getting to be uncommon, as so many marriages do not seem to survive five years of living together. There are even cases of professional women intentionally getting pregnant to bring up the child alone. To me, this does not appear to be very satisfactory as I believe that a child is better nurtured when both parents are available.

I do not envy the youngsters starting off in life. Their education does not give them much know-how that is useful in the work place. The emphasis on material things and the constant urging by the media to get ahead, puts considerable pressure on them. This coupled with the sop of TV, alcohol and street drugs tends to cause burn out or cop out for many. Comparatively few have the sports or hobbies that their parents had, to relieve these pressures. I put much of the blame for this situation on television.

The period starting 1982 was the first time in our married life where finances were not critical. There were two professional salaries coming in, the mortgage on the house had been fully paid and we did not owe anything. We were able to indulge in the luxuries a little more, but even then we did not spend unwisely, in fact often we were downright mean! Our collection of recorded music increased so much that I had to use a computer data base to keep track of what we had. My TRS-1 had become so out dated and limited that I purchased a PC, a Tandy 1000. Five and a half years later I again updated this time to a 386 machine on which this is being processed. In fact computing overtook reading on the call to my spare time, which unfortunately was still very limited.

Contents

Chapter 13 The variety of employment 1983 to 1991

Over the years I had slowly become a generalist, in fact this was my specialization. The joy of tackling many different types of jobs, is that the wider your experience becomes, the more unusual or interesting work is offered. I make it a point never to refuse any offered work providing I believe that I am competent to perform it. You still get a share of the routine or those that others don't want, but the rest are lovely. In this chapter I have described several that I particularly enjoyed doing.

One of the areas that I looked after was the development of the regulations for the safe transport of radioactive materials. This involved going to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna every other year to participate in a technical committee. I went in 1984, and again in 1985, this time as designated expert for Canada. I found it very interesting and satisfying as I believe that the rule changes generally made things safer. The meetings which lasted for a week, were fairly hard work often requiring working late or preparation in ones hotel room. But there were sufficient socializing with people from other countries to make some good friendships over the excellent Viennese meals. The meetings are held in the Vienna International Centre which is part of UNO and has extra-territorial rights. In fact we had to make a daily international trip by U-bahn (Underground/Subway). On the whole, very good work is done there, as you can imagine how difficult it is to get agreement from four international agencies and sixteen or more countries. The countries often themselves can be under strained relations, USA & USSR; Britain & Argentine; Egypt & Isreal; BRD & DDR, to name some, but agreement was always reached.

Another part of the job was doing inspections and witnessing tests. Several incidents that caused laughs later occurred. On one occasion I was at Chalk River for a drop test. The particular package had been dropped several time earlier so the designers were confident of success. They decided it would be a good time to get some positive publicity, so they invited the media, a number of civic leaders and chiefs from fire and police departments in areas where the shipments would pass. The day could not have been better, blue skies and sun with little wind. The theory of the test is that they represent the worst impact that the package could experience in any accident. To do this they hoist the package to the top of a 30 foot tower, then release it to drop onto the huge steel and concrete pad under the tower. This was explained to the visitors as the package was hoisted. When it was at the top, the count-down began "Five.... Four..... Three", at that moment, there was a loud bang and the package still on its cable started to descend slowly. I heard one of the police say "shouldn't it go faster?" The descent had almost reached the ground when there was a cloud of smoke from the top of the tower and the package juddered to a stop about three feet from the ground. The brake on the hoist had given out which caused the motor to overload, burn, and jam. The people at Chalk River hurried the guests to the dining room and gave them a slap-up lunch, but to no avail, there would be no test until a new hoist could be fitted, a 24 hour job. The designers learnt that it was better to have the press see films of past drops, at least the results were known. Actually the articles in the newspapers were not bad as it was recognised that the failed equipment belong to Chalk River and not the designing company.

I was on a visit to Calgary and late one afternoon I was called and told that an unannounced inspection was to be done at one of the oilwells in the north and they would like me to do a transport inspection at the same time. The well was over 400km north of Calgary and the logging was due to start at 8am the next morning. I got my gear, toothbrush and pyjamas and joined the two inspectors in the four-wheel drive truck of the AECB. There was a light snow falling as Jeff T. drove from Calgary, but the four lane highway to Edmondton was mainly clear of snow. About three quarters of the was to Red Deer we left the highway and went on country roads. Bonny Duff., the other inspector said that the roads were in good condition. I took her word as all I could see was a white expanse, with no indication where the edge was. We passed the odd house or two with the time between sightings getting longer.

About 11pm after 350 kilometres, we entered a small town called Drayton Valley which I was told had grown from a population of 100 to over 5000 due to the proximity of the oil fields. We pulled up at the main hotel and tried to check in. We were told that there was no room at the inn, not even for Joseph. After much phoning we found that the hotel booking had reserved a room at a hotel with the same name in Edmondton, some 200km away. The booking clerk phoned every hotel, motel and home in Drayton, but every bed in the town was taken! However there was three rooms at a Motel where the road from Drayton crossed the TransCanada about 50km to the north. We booked by phone got in the truck and drove there. I was in bed at 1am, but was called at 5:45, after it seemed only a couple of minutes sleep. After a quick breakfast we drove to Wolf Lake, first the 50 km to Drayton, then of trails (not roads) 70km. We got to the area on time and went to where the well was supposed

to be worked.

Up to this time I had assumed that Oil fields were like those in Texas or near Calgary. standing like a sore thumb in the middle of large open fields or even deserts like in the middle east. The northern fields are in the middle of forests, usually in small clearings not visible from the track. Tin arrow signs with inscriptions like "Exxon #K 213A" enable the workers to find individual well. We found the one with the correct inscription, but no one was there. AN attempt to contact base or the oil company on the modular phone was unsuccessful as the place we were in was not covered. After some touring around we came across a truck with Radioactive Placards. It was our licensee, the work at the well had been postponed at the last minute so the trip for Jeff and Bonnie was wasted. I was able to do my transport inspection in the middle of the forest with snow up to my knees. Bonnie took over the driving and we got back to Calgary in the late afternoon. They went up again two days later when the log was re-scheduled, by which time I was flying back to Ottawa

About 1986, the transportation group was given the job of doing an evaluation on all new devices coming into Canada before an approval would be given. The radioisotope group at that time had no engineer within the group, so we had to consider operational engineering as well as transport. It is amazing on the diversity of the gauges and other devices. Moisture and ash analyzers are similar in operation if not in size and detail, but are completely different from the thickness gauges used by the plastic and paper industries. The use of tritium light tubes as landing aids for helicopter and emergency landing field, solve the problem of failed lights due to power cuts or lack of maintenance, and could be installed in remote areas without electric power. Level gauges and analyzers gave automatic warning before water levels got to dangerous lows or before atmosphere had poisonous levels of trace gasses.

The area of devices that I found the most fascinating were those in the medical fields. These are both used in diagnostic and treatment, often for growths. There are tiny devices which are inserted through a flexible tube pushed through the nostril into the lung. Right up to huge devices which require a special room and large amounts of scanning and computing equipment, used in the treatment of brain tumours.

One of the most unusual jobs I had to do was to witness a test arranged by the RCMP. The Mounties have the unpleasant job of being prepared to deal with terrorists. This includes the identification and defusing of car bombs. To do this they need to X-ray the contents of suspect vehicles without moving them. A small but powerful Radiographic camera appeared to be ideal for this. The only problem was nobody knew if the unit would withstand an explosion if the bomb went off during X-ray. It would be bad enough having the blast, but if radioactive contamination was possible then its use could not be justified.

It was a bit of a "Catch 22" situation, with the only way out, to test a camera. A camera was given to them and an inert dummy source was installed. Explosives were obtained, and instrumentation borrowed from Energy, Mines & Resources, (the department regulating explosives. The army agreed to supply the range and men to detonate the explosives. The AECB agreed to monitor the results, so I was designated to do this.

I should explain that although there was no source in the camera, the shielding itself was depleted uranium, slightly radioactive. It is not dangerous from the radiation, but if due to contamination of the hands it is ingested, if the dust is inhaled then some danger in the long term is present.

I drove the 185km from Ottawa to the army's artillery range at Petawawa to be there at 8am on a hot and hazy day. A small convoy of vehicles assembled to take everyone to the range tower another 25km into the bush on gravel and dirt roads. Even these roads petered out as we approached the range tower. From there, only trucks with good ground clearance and four wheel drives were suitable to get to the test site as the track was literally just two wheel ruts except where large rocks filled the ruts. I looked around for transport to the test site, and the only vehicle with a seat vacant was a truck placarded EXPLOSIVES. I got in and we bounced our way approximately a mile. The journey reminded me of the film "Wages of Fear" as the ground we passed over was absolute desolation. Scrub and grass burnt and blasted, trees and the shells of vehicles all but destroyed, and the occasional sign indicating an unexploded shell or bomb. It was a copy of the photos of the Western Front in 1916. We got to the site where the demolition corporal, who was driving, unloaded 250kg of explosive into the back of a very old pickup truck with its side painted with day-glo. The camera was set on the ground 15 feet from the truck in a position where it could have taken X-rays. When every thing was set up we all returned to the tower.

The tower, itself was supported on two thick telephone posts, with a platform about 50 feet above the ground and a roofed

cabin above that. Everyone reported in by radio, that they were in a safe position and all was ready. At the zero of the count down the truck became a fireball and a mushroom cloud of smoke ascended. It was then time for my effort. I went with the demolition officer to the test area, he to check that there was no explosives left and unstable, and I had to check that there was no radioactive contamination.

Fortunately all was well. I said to the officer that I wasn't very happy with the idea that there might have been explosives still around. He replied that there was nothing to worry about explosives, but was nervous about the radioactivity. Each to his own. All that was left of the truck was the engine block sitting in a shallow crater with the back axle blown some 60 feet behind, everything else was in tiny pieces of metal. The camera passed the test without a mark on it, and the dummy source easily retracted into the safe and shielded position.

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Chapter 14 Approaching Retirement 1991

I have tried to analyze changes in attitudes that have occurred over the years, but one thing, I find difficult to explain. This is the habit of smoking. Personally I have never smoked. Of course as a schoolboy I tried a "fag," but did not like it. Both my parents smoked and never forbade me, in fact, often offered a cigarette to me. Unlike many of my peers, there was no dare in smoking for me. At the start of the war, most men in the work force smoked. There was often a tendency for the middle class, or those inspiring to be so, to use a pipe. Cigars, because of their cost, were only for the affluent, but cigarettes were used by all. Women were smoking, but not in large numbers, and seldom smoked in public or on the streets.

By 1950 the majority of both men and women who worked also smoked. One of the surprises I got on arriving in Canada was that there was so much restriction on smoking. It wasn't allowed on busses or streetcars, in cinemas, and the large downtown stores. Not that it seemed to slow down the smokers. It was not until about 1970 that the "evils of smoking" started to be published and the anti-smoker became militant. Today, prohibition against smoking is the fad of the city fathers. Not that it appears to have deterred the teenagers. Outside any high school or at the meeting places at shopping centers, you can see many of youngster puffing away. They are of both sexes, and often very young, so I wonder if there will not be an upswing again.

I had a friend in Montreal who used to pull my leg about the English and things British. He would say "'Central heating is unhealthy!' said the duke, with a voice full of emotion and bronchitis" in a plummy English accent. But then he would spoil it by giving his own smoker's cough. Like many smokers, he would not admit that the cough was a result of smoking.

Another area where attitudes have changed considerably over the years is in the field of gambling. I am not much of a gambler as I hate losing, but I always had a bet on the Grand National and the Derby and had a bobs worth (one shilling) on the treble chance. In Canada, I buy tickets in the high prize lottery each week. Both my parents liked a little bet each week on both horses and pools.


Bookmakers

The British have always been gamblers, and those living in the twentieth century are no exception. The laws applied to gambling, in the first part of the century were strange, to say the least. Betting and wagering were legal and open on the horse race tracks and bookmakers set up their stands at every meeting. The same bookmakers, however, would be liable for a heavy fine if they took a bet on the same race, but away from the track. To make matters more complicated, betting on credit (or wagering) was legal, so a bet could be telephoned to the bookmakers office, providing he knew you, and trusted you to pay up. Gambling debts could not be enforced by the courts. There was a difference in legality as well as the operation between bookmakers and the Totalizer (known in the US as the Paramutual). Bookmakers either gave odds to a bet, or it was what was called "starting price odds" (the odds quoted by the main bookmakers just before the start). Whereas the tote took the total amount wagered, remove a percentage for operating and profit, then split the remainder between those who had winning tickets. The tote could not lose, but bookmakers who couldn't correctly judge the odds, soon went broke.

Things started to change by the end of the war. The football pool became the flutter that everyone did. The prizes soon became fortunes, so that by 1960, a million pounds could be won on the treble chance. For this you had to select from a list of 72 football matches, six games that would end in a draw (tie). As there was seldom more than seven draws in the week, the chance of making the selection was very low. This meant that the pool was shared between two or even one winner. As the first prize got higher, the more people went in the pool, until it got multimillion. Winnings were not taxed in Britain, so getting the treble chance was the dream of everyone, like the 6-49 lottery in Canada today.

Today, the law in Britain is a lot more liberal. Off course-betting is permitted, with betting shops operating. Many cinemas had closed as television took away the customers, were reopened as Bingo halls, and one finds fruit machines (one armed bandits) in all kinds of establishments.

At the time of writing, we had been in Ottawa sixteen years. Ottawa has been a good city to live in. It does not have the night clubs of Montreal, nor the scenic splendours of Vancouver, but everything you need to be comfortable is here. Madeleine and I have interesting jobs. We have hobbies that keep us entertained for more time than we have available. For Madeleine it's playing the recorder, for me its collecting information on military uniforms, not to mention computing. Both of the children unfortunately did not finish high school, but have gone on their own ways. They live away from home but we see Xena regularly, often for Sunday dinner. Both seem reasonably happy, so I suppose we cannot ask for more.

A couple of years ago, we arrived home after a meal with friends on Christmas eve and were greeted by Xena, who was then living at home. She had been given a present by her boy friend, good, we said, lets see it. It was a tiny puppy, only the size of her hands. I had always ruled that we could have no pets as there was no-one in to look after them. It was, however, Christmas, and both Madeleine and Xena pleaded so I weakened. "It can stay on a trial as long as you look after it," I said. I don't know who I was kidding but "Freckles" stayed on and got bigger - and bigger. She was a bitzer, with some beagle or hound predominating. Of course Xena looked after her - for a couple of months.

At the end of the trial period Madeleine and I were doing everything. You guessed it, we had grown attached to the beast so there was really no question of her going. As she was large and not very continent, I built a dog house for her. It was insulated and I put in an electric air heater run through a thermostat. A curtain door enabled her to go into the warm house, where she could run the length of her chain (30'). This meant she could be kept outside even on the coldest days.

Freckles was a stupid dog, but very lovable. In summer it was her delight to go for a ride in the car, with her head poked through the window, ears flapping in the slip-stream. She was allowed in the house during the evening where if she saw me sitting reading on the sofa would run and jump into my lap, knocking the wind right out of me. She and everyone else thought this was great fun! Unfortunately at 18 months, Freckles died. We were all shattered. Madeleine who had never had a dog before, has now decided that one is required on our retirement.

Misty

In the mean time we have an adopted cat. Misty, the grey cat from next door has been visiting us over the years. Her mistress left home to live in her own apartment during 1990. She took Misty with her, but unfortunately it did not work out. The person sharing the apartment and Misty could not stand one another. Her mistress asked Madeleine if we would take her as our cat. I was outvoted by Madeleine so Misty is now one of the family, but being a cat and therefore independent, she does not need much looking after, only feeding.

I have always soaked up information. As a small schoolboy I bought a little book from Woolworths. It cost three pence and was called "The Schoolboy's Compendulum" and contained many lists. There were lists of countries, of rivers, of mountains, of Kings & Queens, and even such exotic things as the Greek alphabet. As an apprentice I would buy Whitticker's Almanac, which at five shillings, was a large investment. I have gone to the "Information Please" and "World Book of Facts" type of year-book. When the game of Trivial Pursuit became popular, I couldn't understand the fuss, I had always pursued Trivia. Over the years I have collected books on all subjects, and have in my library at least 2000 books on subjects from underclothes to rockets, or edible plants to saucy post cards. I have been blessed with a fairly good memory and I still take delight in being able to find answers to the most unusual queries often brought up during discussions. Mind you, I don't believe in cluttering up my mind, but rather try to remember where I can find answers.
At work I have half a dozen three ring binders full of cuttings from various technical magazines. I have indexed their subject on cards, and have always intended to make a computer catalogue. Looking through my files, I find lists labouriously copied from borrowed books. Things like the Korean alphabet or the Polytechnic Colleges of Britain await the day when someone asks about them. I should have obtained employment from Guinness as there I would have been in my glory.

January the 7th 1992 was approaching and this would be our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the silver. I had decided that I would buy a small gift for Madeleine. Of course, it had to be made of silver. I had seen some silver rings and decided that one of these would be ideal. I should explain that my pet name for Madeleine is "Puss" and I had been purchasing over the years, many pieces of costume jewellery. These were mainly broaches and ear-rings, in the form of cats. The ring I had chosen had the shape of a cat, from nose to tip of tail, in a spiral form so it could fit any size of finger. I bought the ring in early December, had it gift wrapped by the store and hid it away until the great day. Madeleine decided to open the gift while I was having breakfast. I watched her open the little package expecting to see her smile. Instead I saw first puzzlement and then a very curious expression. She said "Why are you giving me an empty box?" Sure enough under the wrapping the box was empty. At 10 am, as soon as the store opened, armed with my bill, the box and wrapping, I started to explain the trouble. I was interrupted with an apology from all three assistants in the store, who rushed to get the missing ring from a safe. Apparently at the time the ring was being wrapped, the girl doing the wrapping placed the ring on her finger while getting the box. As she did this the phone rang. She answered the call and then proceeded to wrap the box completely forgetting the ring, which she discovered to her horror, a couple of minutes after I had left. It had been a cash sale, so there was no address on the invoice. It will take another twenty-five years for Madeleine to allow me to forget " the gift of a gift wrapped box! "

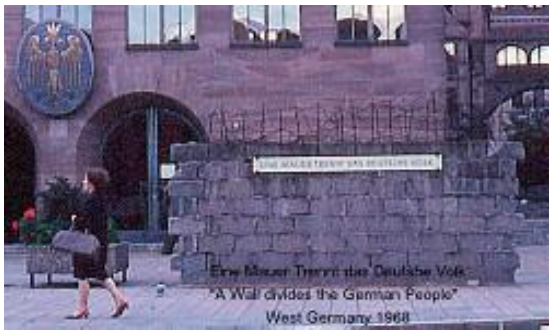
As I have written this work, I have become more conscious of how much my speech has been affected by the times. I have written this as I would tell the story today, with all the poor grammar and misused words. As a child, I would have used the language of the London streets with use of rhyming slang and cant, thus avoiding "putting the mockers on things" by "using me loaf." When a schoolboy, during the war, the "gen" would be modified by "Smashing" or "Wizard" unless I "pranged" because of a "gremlin." When I first started work in the factory, I could not put a sentence together without at least one swearword, so that would not be suitable for an autobiography. On my arrival in Canada, a whole new vocabulary opened up, a "biro" became a ballpoint pen and I went to work in a streetcar not a "tram." One advantage I found, was the choice of spelling of some words. This meant I could, in part, hide my poor spelling ability.

Over the years, some words have changed their meanings. For example, the expression "a bachelor gay" would have meant a single man who lived a full life, in the first half of this century, not a homosexual. I got into some difficulties with changed meanings when I first arrived. On hearing that my next door neighbour had difficulty waking, I offered to "knock her up every morning," to the delight of those within hearing.

Today, my speech is a mixture. I still "put on my whistle to go out for a nosh," but I also "put gas in the auto." I have tended to use British spellings except where things were first introduced to me in Canada (like shopping centers). Some corrections have been made to the grammar, at the suggestion of Madeleine, but mainly it has been left "as is" to be ME.

Even though there are still two years to the proposed date of my retirement, there is not much I can add to this writing. Any way, my philosophy is that retirement is not giving up work, but only changing it, so other projects to replace an autobiography, will suggest themselves. No one knows how long one will be allotted, but I am hopeful of plenty of new experiences, may be even another chapter or two of this work.

In writing this, I have tried to explain what I did in terms of the period as I saw it. A social historian would have been able to give more of the reasons or dynamics for the changes I have seen. I would have liked to give opinions about the events, World War 2, Korean War, Rise and fall of Communism, the break-up of the British Empire, the rise of the welfare state and its slow collapse in the western world. But I am not really competent to give more than my own opinion and that is biassed by my limited reading and research on these events.



I have lived more of my life in Canada than in England, but I have some of the ways of both countries. I am not afraid to consider new ideas or to try new things. On the other hand, I would never throw out something old, just because there was a newer item. Madeleine complains that the junk in the basement bears this out. I believe that one should have tradition, but at the same time accept progress. Too few people act this way.

This was the end of my original opus, but as the years have gone by, I find that I have more to say. I have therefore added extra chapters. They are more of my observations rather than a commentary of the times, which I have tried to do in the preceding chapters.

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Chapter 15 The next years - Japan after 24 years

After finishing my autobiography in early 1992, I decided that I would retire at the start of 1994 and not wait until my birthday in the following May. Now nearly seven years later I am adding other chapters. I have altered chapter 14, so my pontificating will now be at the end of the new chapters. I will try to keep my writing to more personal history, as the alteration of conditions in Canada seem to me to be mainly negative. Governments, both Liberal and Conservative have whittled away the medical and social protection that had been built up. Attitudes of the younger people tended towards the "I don't care" and "It doesn't matter" view. I believe that the break down of the Family, the Church and general discipline resulted in people wanting all the advantages of a good life, without the duties that go with it.

In international terms these seven years have been very eventful. They started with Operation Desert Storm, the international recovery of Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion. The break up of the old Soviet Union into the CIS and the smaller Russian republics was completed. While to the west, the European Economic Community was enlarged and gained power. America, in spite of a more liberal president in Clinton, appear to become more conservative. South Africa came back into the world community and voted in a Negro president! It seem the once again we could sing "And the world stood upside down".

The papers were full of horror stories from the wars in the former Yugoslavia and Africa. Even the sports heros were no longer given space in the newspapers, unless they were involved in drug taking or murder. Terrorism has become an every day occurance, In Northern Ireland and Isreal, it has come to be expected due to the intolerance of the extremists on both sides. But almost every country is now affected, with the butcher's bill becoming larger, cumulating in the events in New York on 11th September. Because of television, all these gruesome images were delivered every day right in to your living room. Technology had given the media the tools to collect the smallest of events. The camcorder had reduced in size and price so that every reporter, both professional and amateur could record events as they happened. Wrongs were brought to light, as in the Rodney King case where the police were filmed beating a Negro. But in doing so, opened a debate that nearly split the nation (USA). Cameras became the main tool for security. Banks, Shops, Malls, and even Car parks took continuous films, so that it was possible in Britain to follow the kidnapping of a toddler by to small boys, but unfortunately not in time to prevent his murder.

Another advance in technology was in phones. Exchanges became one large computer so that calls could be monitored and accounted. The cell phone (radio phone) had dropped in price so that all could afford them. It was common to see people in the streets, in busses, in restaurants and even in toilets with the small plastic phone to their ears speaking to nobody visible.

Late in 1991, I had been placed on the committee for selection of papers for PATRAM, the symposium held every three years on transporting radioactive material. Most of the work was done by post and phone, but the final selection and the making of the timetable was done at a meeting in Washington DC that I attended. Most of the people on the committee I knew from IAEA meetings, so it was very pleasant. I had not been in downtown Washington for thirty years and I was able to spend a morning in the Aviation Museum, which was not in the new building on my previous visits. I noticed that like most large US cities, the streets emptied at about 6 pm and we were advised not to walk anywhere at night, and if possible to travel in groups. It made me appreciate how comparatively safe is Ottawa, where Madeleine can go for a walk with the dog safely, every night before retiring. All was settled and the symposium was to be held in Japan the next September. The only trouble was that Japan was so far away and so expensive that our director at the AECB did not think that the travel budget would stand even one person going. After some consideration he said I could go providing the drain on the budget would not exceed $2500. It did not look too hopeful as the airfare was $2300. I did some investigations with the help of the travel agent and a couple of phone calls to the Japanese Embassy. I found a special on CP with an airfare just under $1000, and a couple hotels at less that $100 a day. This was great as the Hotel next to the conference centre was $270 a night plus $23 for breakfast. The trouble was that both hotels were some distance from the centre. I asked for bookings in the closest (about 25 minutes walk), but it was full. The second hotel was about 3 km away, but I took it. I was very fortunate as when I got the map I found it was one block away from the subway station which went directly to a station near the centre. It was even better when I got there, as they gave coupons that reduced breakfast to $10 and evening meals to $20, well within my budget.

I had not been in Japan since my visit on the world trip in 1968, so I was interested to see what changes had occurred. The first impression was at the airport, which was now 45 minutes away from Tokyo, and was a modern top rate terminal. A highspeed train departed from the basement for both Tokyo and Yokahama. It had reclining chairs and electronic indicators showing its

actual location on the map. At Yokahama station I went to the forecourt and took a taxi. I had carefully drawn out the name and address of my hotel in Kanji characters. On giving this to the driver I was asked in English, did I want the New Otani Hotel, so in that spirit I said "Yes! - Haii!" and off we went. My first impression was of being in any North American city. The tall buildings, the cars on the roads, the dress of the people were all similar. Nearly ever one was in western dress. On our previous visit many men and a large proportion of women were in Japanese dress. The Otani was a small hotel and there was only a couple of westerners staying there and only one of the reception clerks spoke English so I had to give my room number in Japanese.

Fortunately I had got street maps before leaving Canada, so after I arrived in the afternoon I explored. I found the nearest subway station and also bus stops which fortunately had the routes served marked on them. From the map I discovered that I could also get to the conference by bus. Around the corner from the hotel was the entrance to a street closed to traffic. It was about two kilometres long with stall along it and shops either side. These were a mix of small Japanese shops and internationally known ones, such as McDonalds, KFC, Virgin records, and Etams.

On the next day which was Sunday, I walked for miles taking both movies with the camcorder and photographs. I found the way to a park on top of the highest hill in the town. In it there was a look-out tower from which one could see the whole of the city of Yokohama, the harbour, and most of the bay, a wonderful view. Just below the tower was an entrance with many people going in. I joined them and found that it was the zoo. I only saw Japanese families there, but it was just like being in Canada, little boys chasing pigeons, a toddler losing her ice-cream and whole families just enjoying themselves. I finished the afternoon in the harbour area. This was a completely new development called Century 21. A tall skyscraper had just been topped and was now the tallest building in Asia. There was a new art gallery, the maritime museum, city and public buildings a funfair with a very large Ferris wheel (100m diameter, the Vienna one is only 70m). Right at the water's edge was the conference centre (where our meetings would be held), an exhibition hall, and the hotel where most delegates were housed. This hotel was about 20 stories high and shaped like a sail. It was very expensive, even beer was about $10 a bottle!

The conference itself was very good, the most difficult part was choosing which of the four concurrent papers to attend. There were eight slots a day, so it was possible to go to 40 papers plus poster and film sessions. At night, there was some layed-on entertainment. I went to the Gala Dinner put on by the Japanese Government, strangely enough at a Chinese restaurant. An American company (which I had dealings with) was celebrating its 50th anniversary of founding. They invited about 100 delegates, including myself and most of the IAEA people, to a night trip on the tour boat around the bay and harbour. There was a very good meal supplied, and the table I was at was right beside a window (or should I say a porthole). Most other evening meals I spent with other people that I knew from the Vienna meetings. For lunch, I discovered that I had enough time to take the bus from outside the centre, directly to a huge shopping complex, with over 1000 businesses in four adjacent centres. There I had the choise of about a dozen sushi and other Japanese restaurants. I did my usual trick of copying the characters from the dish display in the window. Only on the Friday was I able to persuade others to join me. They were not very adventuresome I had the weekend both before and after PATRAM to explore the city sing the excellent bus system, the busses of which displayed the next stop (dot matrix lights at the front of the bus). It was of course in kanji characters, but with the aid of two system maps, one in kanji and the other in Latin letters, I was able to find my way.

I had two weekends in Japan because of the flights, so I was able to visit a number of the local sights (museums, parks, Chinatown, a sailing ship, and a Japanese garden park). My only complaint was that it was impossible for me to chat with those I met, because I could not speak Japanese. The journey home over the Aleutian islands, Alaska, the Yukon and the rest of Canada was spectacular, as the whole flight was in daylight. I arrive home in the evening tired but feeling it was a good trip.

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Chapter 16 An added chapter - Animals in my life

As a child, I had always lived with animals. The three dogs, Terry, Snap (who I only saw about a dozen times during the war) and Bruce were always part of the scene at home. Even at Godalming, in my billet, there was a dog for about nine months. In addition, there was also at least one cat in the pub, but as there were many I can only remember the last "Buchie" (a black & white cat named after Buchanan the makers of Black & White Whisky). There were , at various time other animals, Goldfish, Canaries, and even a parrot for short periods. Most families in London had a pet, so I was quite surprised on my arrival in Canada to find how few homes in Montreal had animals. Of course, I and most of my acquaintances were living in apartments. Even those in duplexes and houses did not have fenced gardens so few of the immigrant families had large pets. The other factors which made the keeping of dogs less attractive in Montreal was the climate (Five month of sub-freezing temperatures), the lack of public open spaces, and the very narrow side walks. Although I would loved to have owned a cat and a dog I did not think it fair on the animals to be cooped up alone in a room all day. In earlier chapters I have written about Freckles and Misty, so I will only talk about the animals that we had after my initial retirement..

The summer of 1994, I had finally retired, although I was still working a couple of days a week. Madeleine and I decided that this was the time to have pets. We had placed our names, in 1993, on the list for rejected trainees for 'Dogs for the Blind'. The list was long and the rejects few, so nothing had been heard (it was over two years before we were contacted on whether or not we still were interested in a dog). We decided to go ahead from other sources. In most large cities there is an organization that accepts unwanted, lost or abandoned animals and gives them a home while new owners are found for them. In London, it was the Battersea Dog's Home. In Ottawa, It was the Humane Society. It has always disgusted me that people would get an animal, and just put it out on the street because they couldn't be bothered look after it. More that 50% of the animals at the Humane Society were abandoned!

On the Saturday of the civic holiday long weekend, we arrived at the Humane Society's building. It is a long two story building with offices on the upper floor. Most of the lower floor is rooms used as labs, services and cage rooms. There are a room with larger pens, but most have rows of small cages along the longer walls. We walked through the entire complex getting more despondent. We were met with enthusiastic greeting by some, howls and barking by other, some were huddled. All were pathetic! we would have liked to have given homes to all. There was one, however, who was just laying quietly with his head on his paws, waiting patiently. He looked like a Husky and was called Yukon. I immediately wanted him, but we had also found another dog as a possibility. Madeleine was able to walk both dogs and after some discussion and soul searching we decided not to wait but to get Yukon there and then. We then had a lot of paper work to do, while the staff prepared the dog for discharge. Just before we finished, a worried assistant came in the office and said that it appeared that Yukon might be starting kennel cough, a highly contagious disease. We were asked if we still wanted to go ahead. We agreed and a few minutes latter we were outside with Yukon on a lead. I opened the back door of the car and said "In!" Without further ado Yukon jumped in and we had our dog.

It was only latter when the cough did not develop we realised that we had probably save him from being destroyed as the policy was not to chance infection of other animals from contagious diseases.

Yukon turned out to be an excellent dog. He was house trained and kept himself spotlessly clean. He did not beg or make trouble and was a good eater of standard dog foods. Although he would bark at the sound of the door bell and growl until he was introduced to a visitor, he seldom barked at other times. His only fault was when out walking on the lead when another dog was nearby. Then he appeared to go crazy, jumping and growling. With some apprehension we registered him (and us) at the Humane Society's Training Course. Much to our surprise after the initial pull to get at other dogs, he sat at our feet in a room full of dogs of all shapes and sizes while we were being trained. At later sessions, the dogs were allowed to run free in a large outside fenced area. Again there was no trouble. It was obvious that when on the lead, Yukon was doing his duty in protecting us from other dogs, and in spite of all our efforts, we were not able to lessen his attempts to dominate other animals..

We were committed to also get a cat, and a few weeks after the arrival of Yukon, Xena's cat had kittens. We choose one of them and arrange for Xena to keep it until after our return from our usual week in the Caribbean in October. This would mean that the cat would be fully weaned and we hoped house trained. In September a visit to us was arranged, Xena brought Majesty to us in a travelling cage. Yukon appeared very violent and attacked the cage. We were quite worried, was he a dog that was not able to live with other animals? The day soon came when we had arranged to keep Majesty. Again there was violence at the cage. We decided that initially Majesty would live in the downstairs bedroom (which had become my computer room). We brought her out when we were around, and managed to give her the affection that she needed. But she was confined to her

room for large periods. We felt that she was not sufficiently part of the family, so I brought a 40" panel of Lexan (polycarbonate) which is a very strong transparent plastic. This was installed in the doorway. Now Majesty could see all that was happening without fear of an attack by Yukon. The next thing we knew, was the two animals nose-to-nose (with the lexan between them), Majesty trying to get out and Yukon licking his lips. A period of training occurred with cat on settee, Don with his knees in front of her and dog on the floor with his chin on Don's knees. Slowly the nose-to-nose distance reduced until finally they touched and there was no untoward result. Majesty soon had the full run of the house. Occasionally, Yukon would put either a paw or his chin on Majesty to hold her down, but she had no fear of him. Not long after I walked into the living room to find Yukon lying down on the floor with Majesty washing his ears and face. Peace had arrived!

Ottawa is not a good city for dogs. Although it requires them alone amongst animals to be licensed and tagged, it does not provide any facilities for them. Just the opposite there are many bylaws to restrict them. Officially no dog is allowed on public property unless on a lead, but this law is almost ignore by owners. Rightly there are 'poop and scope' laws, but why not for other animals? (not even horses). Many parks prohibit the entry of dogs. This leaves the owner of the outside type of dog at a quandary. Where can they have the run that is their nature and joy? Certain areas in and around the city do not seem to enforce the leash law and at these place the dogs and their owners who can afford the time collect. I discovered one such place nine kilometres to the west of us. It is a wilderness of almost 4 km² area bounded by the river to the north, the main exit highway to the south and two side roads on the other sides. It is fully fenced in, but time has made large gaps in the fence. No motor vehicle can get in the area, but their is a lockable gate to allow horses in. It contains forests, woods, marsh, ponds, streams, meadows and is crisscrossed with trail (for skiing in the winter or walking at other times). We refer to it as Connault because it is adjacent to the rifle range of the same name (Canada's Bisley).

I would take Yukon there for his afternoon walk about four times a week. We would take a different route every day until the snow got too deep. The first winter I walked for about 15 to 20 minutes before Angina made it uncomfortable. By the summer my walks had extended to the 60 to 75 minute range and even in the coldest days of the second winter I was walking 40 minute. Those who say that having pets improves ones health weren't so wrong! We also walk on other ski trails and of course the parkway which is close by, on the days I was in at the AECB. We also discovered a number of hidden paths in the Gatineau Park where Yukon could run off the lead. Unfortunately these were inaccessible after the snow had arrived.

The two animals got closer in their play. Majesty often starting things by jumping on or at Yukon then getting him to chase her. It was frightening to see him with his mouth closed on one of her legs (or even her head). But he was very careful not to bite and she in turn neither cried nor ran away. He also enjoyed being washed by her and would place his head on the seat where she was lying so that this could be done easily. They would often lay nose-to-nose and frequently slept side-by-side. Although Majesty acted as the mother in washing Yukon, he would be the father in disciplining her (chasing her away) when we shouted for her to stop doing something. In fact they were just like our children.

Majesty was normally an indoor cat, but in the height of summer we allowed her outside. She would often stay out until the late evening. Then one evening she did not return. she did not return for either of the next two days and we began to think she had been eaten by one of the many wild animals that still exist around Ottawa. On the third night I was sitting quietly by an open window when I thought I heard a soft Meeuow. I got a flashlight and went out calling her name. The Meeuows got more frantic and seem to be coming from up the street, so I walked up calling and shining the light in the neighbours gardens. The sound got softer so I returned swinging the light. I suddenly so two spots of yellow from the gable of the garage two houses up. I got our neighbour to open his garage and in there was a trap to the loft with a broken ladder. It was obvious that the ladder would not hold a human's weight so we place a drum on top of a bench and I was just able to put my head through the trap. Two eyes stared at me and a loud purr started. I was able to persuade Majesty to come to the place where the broken ladder was near and she jumped down. My neighbour said that he had used the car, put it in the garage and locked the door. He hadn't intended to use the car until the next weekend. A sadder but not wiser cat was brought home to much greeting by Yukon. He had been quite upset for the three days she was missing.

One of our local friends has a couple of young children, but they do not have a dog. One evening this lady, Janice, stopped at our house to deliver something. She was on the way to go tobogganing with her children and their friends. The kids loved to make a fuss over Yukon, and asked if they could take him as well. Madeleine and I were going out to dinner locally so we agreed, saying we would pick him up at their house (5 blocks away) after dinner. Yukon happily jumped into their van and off they went. About an hour and a half later we arrived at Janice's house to find a very worried looking women out in the street. Apparently both kids and dog had a whale of a time on the slopes. All was fine until the kids went to bed. Yukon then sat by the door, which Janice interpreted that he wanted to cock his leg. She let him in the garden, but after performing he ran out and disappeared. Janice was very worried as Yukon had never walked to her house she got her winter cloths on and was

just starting to search the streets, when we arrived. Madeleine stayed with Janice while I would drive the streets. I thought I would first go home for clothes more suitable for outside. As I drove in our drive, there patiently waiting on the top step, was Yukon. He had enjoyed himself but had decided it was time to go, and went! He jumped in the car and we returned to pick up Madeleine and reassure Janice. Surprisingly, Yukon was forgiven and invited at other time to visit Janice's family.
We lost Yukon after he had been with us twenty months. He was found some four metres from a road in a dying condition. I rushed him to the vet but he had died on the way with his head resting on his front paws, just as I first had seen him. I think he was some how struck by a car on the soft shoulder, but as there was no signs of visible damage on him, Madeleine thinks that it could have been his heart or a stroke. It hit us very hard, as Yukon had been the gentlest and most intelligent dog that I had owned. Even Majesty seem to miss him as she came to us for attention.

We decided not to wait, but to get another dog immediately. We visited the Humane Society, a puppy farm for Huskies, but finally took a rescued dog from a smaller organization. Cody (or Kodi) had been found chained outside a store and left for more than 24 hours in mid winter. He was rescued and put in a foster home. He was a large dog, 67 lb, with very long legs, an Alsatian's body, a Husky's ruff the long face of a collie, and floppy ears that flap up & down when he runs, like a bird's wings. He was a very excitable dog, eager to please, but well house trained. It only took a couple of days for Majesty and him to become companions. His age is somewhere between 18 and 24 months, and he does not try to dominate other animals so is much easier to take out.

Cody soon became an integral part of our life, his personality fitted in well. He was not so much of an outside dog as Yukon, and as Don was more at home because of retirement, spent even the summer time indoors. We were able to walk him without a lead as he was gentle with small dogs (even those that yapped at him). With the larger dogs he sniffed and let sniff without any violence on his part. We were able to use the walks at Bruces Pit, where there are many dogs walked, most without leads. The Pit has many trails through the woods, paths across the fields and trails around the pit (a water filled old gravel pit). Cody and Majesty have the same type of friendship, except that Cody does not respond when Majesty wants to be chased. He, like Yukon, puts his head down to be washed, but occasionally gives Majesty one big lick, much to her disgust.
I have always been surprised by the camaraderie of pet owners. At the Pit and along the Parkway there is quite a social gathering of animal owners. Also when one meets another owner during a walk, it is usual to swap information especially on breeds and names.
Majesty became a working cat in 1997. No we did not have a plague of mice! The Rehab Centre has a pet visitation program. This allows certain animals to be brought in so that patients (and staff) can have the pleasure of them. Majesty was accepted as the visiting cat after she was examined by a vet for health and sociability. Each Tuesday Madeleine loads her into the pet-taxi (a portable cage) and drives her to work. She stays in Madeleine's office until it is time for the visit, then is taken by the program staff to the room put aside for the visitation. There she joins the two dogs who are the other pets on the program. She has been quite successful because of her lack of fear of dogs and her general affection for people. She even has a Rehab staff badge, labelled "Majesty - volunteer". Unfortunately, with the Ontario health system cutbacks, the program was discontinued and Majesty joined the ranks of the unemployed!

Later Cody also took up social work. Madeleine registered him for the St Johns Ambulance Therapy Dog Program. He went to a training course, then was tested several times. He finally got approval and is now visiting, The only therapy he does is to visit a local retirement residence, so he is really just a Visiting Dog (as they call them in the UK, a Pat Dog). He seems to be welcomed each week by both residents & staff.
As you can see, I believe that pets enhance living. Every family that has the finance, time, and space would be better off to have one. When you are feeling down and a little furry creature jumps on your lap, or your dog comes and looks expectantly at you wagging his tail, it would be difficult not to be just a little happier.

A late arrival was the kitten "Dimmet" . Our grandchildren found him in their garden, about two weeks old. Xena already had three cats so we were asked if we could adopt him. We did, and he soon became the Boss! Fortunately Majesty and Dimmet get on together, while Cody barely acknowledges the existence of any cat.

Contents

Chapter 17 - Retirement?

After my heart attack in 1981, I slowly regained strength and general health. Of course, I altered my way of life to be more careful, but still carried on with the less energetic sports (walking, cycling, swimming, skating and even a little snowshoeing). My blood pressure was strictly under control and lower than it had been for years. I did not diet, but kept a watch on the quantities and what I was eating. The number of pills I took actually decreased, and my visits to the doctor extended to about six month intervals. Towards the end of 1991, I started to get angina pains, something had not experienced even during the heart attack. I went to the heart clinic at the Civic Hospital for tests.


Heart Institute

I was booked for an angiogram in February 1992. At 6 am on a Wednesday morning, Madeleine dropped me at the clinic. I was supposed to have a 9 am angiogram. I undressed and was put in a bed. I waited, and waited, and waited. About 10 am the doctor came into the ward, still in his green gown, apologized saying there had been an emergency, but I would go to the theatre at 2 pm. I was allowed to get up, dress, and walk around the ward. By 5 pm I had walked grooves in the floor and the nurse phoned and found that my doctor had got three emergencies one after another. He had arranged for me to spend the night in the ward and most important, dinner was served for me (I hadn't eaten since 6 pm the previous night). I had the angiogram at 8 the next morning (before the normal start of operating), and was back in bed feeling very woozy by 9. Just before leaving the clinic that evening, we were given the good news that no bypass operation was needed. Madeleine said that she was glad that I had the angiogram in the morning because the surgeon looked absolutely exhausted after two days of 10 hours in the operating room. I was put on a new set of drugs that help relieve the condition, and I was able to continue much the same as before.

I decided to retire in the January of 1994, instead of waiting until my birthday. I was more than 66½ years old, and had been the oldest person in the division for a couple of years. I gave three months notice so that arrangement could be made for the hand over of my work. But there was a hold on all hiring in force, so that there was no one available to hand over. Because of this, and to be able to complete several projects that I had been covering, I agreed to be re-employed after my "retirement" for another ten months, doing three days a week only. I was paid for the hours I worked at the same rate as before. This was not really "double-dipping" in spite of being paid my pension. My pension was only a fraction of my pay, and together with what I earned, was still less than a full pension. This was because my service at Canadair was not recognized, even though Canadair has become government owned. The work was the same as I had been doing and the arrangement was very favourable in that I could work when I pleased, and without interference. November of 1994 I retired for the second time.

I then settled down to a life of retirement, finding out about new interests. I investigated the local seniors' club, but was disappointed to find that the main activities were dancing and card playing, in which I had no interest. I investigated a senior's computer course, but found that it was only for the introductory level. Because of the lack of my interests available, I settled down to a routine of shopping and household chores, reading, computing and of course dog walking.

In June of 1995, we took a long holiday, divided between time in England and Holland. While in London we 'bashed' the theatres and managed to see or speak with our relations and friends. To get to Amsterdam, we took the "Chunnel" train, which was an experience in itself. At one stretch in France the speed exceeded 300 kph, although it did not feel fast. While in Holland we were invited to spend a couple of days with Dutch friends, who showed us around the windmill country, Something we would not have seen on any commercial tour.

A couple of month after our return, I had a call from the AECB. They had been without an officer to approve Radiography Cameras for months and there were two new cameras overdue for approval. I had worked on the transport side of approving cameras, and was familiar with the requirements and basic design parameters. So I agreed, and worked two or three days most weeks on a six-month contract. Then came my third retirement.

There followed three more contracts, each about 6 months long and starting a few weeks after the completion of the previous one. The work I did on these was quite varied, device approvals, package approvals, review of Environmental Impact Studies, and other transportation subjects. During the last contract I was given the job of the technical training of the two engineers that had finally been employed. It had taken the Human Resource department more than two years to fill the position that I had left and the one left open by the engineer who replaced the retired section head. One area that I was interested in, was put to use in my last contract. I had taught myself to program in HTML (HyperText Markup Language), which is used as the main interface on Internet. The AECB had started an internal Intranet, which was later called "BORIS", and I took on the job of designing and writing all the pages for the Transportation Section.

At the end of March 1997, my sixth retirement occurred. Although some questions were raised on a possible further contract, I said no. I would turn 70 in May and felt that the AECB should employ sufficient new people to do the basic work. I did not sever my association with the AECB however, I joined a couple of engineers in writing a paper (I tackled the historic side). I also helped in writing the divisional pages for "BORIS".

I have not taken on many new activities as I expect that when Madeleine retires, there would have to be changes to my routine. I have found that most of my friends, being younger than myself, are still working. Others, who retired before me, have moved to warmer climates or to be near their families. Of course, the biggest loss of friends at this time of life is through death. One by one my family and contemporaries in England have died, only one cousin is still living. I remember an aunt saying that it was terrible to outlive all her siblings and even her son, but she was in her nineties at that time.

On a more cheerful note, after the children were away from home it was possible to have more holidays. In the last year before retiring, I found that I had accumulated twenty weeks of holiday credit, and I was earning 5 weeks a year on top of this. I decided to reduce this, as the surtax on retirement would be terrible if this was paid out as a lump sum. I decided to take a couple of extra holidays in England, one in the fall, the other in spring. Madeleine unfortunately did not have holiday time available, but she very generously persuaded me to go alone. I went to a number of shows, and all the museums that I had never had time to go to on previous visits. I learnt a lot more about London in those few weeks than of any of the other trips.

As we have got older, the winters, especially the Canadian winters, have become more difficult to take. To alleviate this we have, since 1988, been taking a week in the Carribean during each fall. We went the first time with Xena to Jamaica, and the next year to Barbados. After that we tried Cuba and enjoyed it, so have been going back each year since. It was very cheap when we first went and is still quite a bargain. We initially went to various hotels in Varadero, then spent two years in Guardalavaca, and more recently gone to Cayo Coco, Santa Lucia & Esmeralda Playa.

Most hotels have an all-inclusive package, so that all food and drink is without further cost. There is entertainment for those who want it, but we spend most of our time on the beach (or sometimes at the pool). We have found that there is no soliciting in Cuba, which was a thing we did not like in the other two islands. The staff are friendly and helpful without the chip on the shoulder we have found in other areas.

On the 1993 trip Madeleine took the resort Scuba course and found diving enjoyable. When we got home after much heart searching, she took her open water certificate at an Ottawa Dive School. The next year she took the so-called "Advance" certificate to obtain additional skills. It has become a real love-hate sport. She worries before going down, than comes up feeling on top of the world. Bit by bit, she has got her own equipment, which has made a great difference to both her skills and enjoyment. On a trip to Austria, we got talking to a man at the local dive hut, and before long Madeleine had talked herself into renting equipment and taking a dive in the lake. She like diving in Cuba best, as the water is warm, the visibility is excellent, and the sea life and bottom flora and artifices are spectacular.

For myself, the holidays are for the most part, sitting in the shade on the beach with a book, and inter-dispersing reading with dips in the ocean and visits to the beach-bar for cold non-alcoholic drinks. I measure holidays as being a 5 book or 6 book week. I also find that I meet quite a lot of people on these holidays, some of whom, we have kept in touch with. With age, I have lost a lot of my earlier shyness, and now will chat with even people met while walking the dog, or at the shopping center.

We hope to take more holidays like the one in 1997, where we rented a car in Frankfurt (Germany) and toured through Germany, the Czech Republic, and Austria. We found Praha fascinating, still on the recovery from the years of communism, and the week we spent at Krumpendorf in the south of Austria was filled with new things, in spite of three previous visits. Some places that we might have gone to were rejected due to my difficulty in walking in hilly country. Cities are usually fine for me, as there are restaurants to sit in, or busses to travel on, when the going gets hard. Also there are many other things to do if the weather turns bad, whereas in a country area one can only stay at the hotel and read. We enjoy eating the local foods, and I have been fortunate that I can still eat most foods without worry, although I do have to watch that I do not over eat.

Madeleine is 2nd in seated row

Madeleine joined me in the ranks of the retired in October 1998. Instead of having an easy time, she proceeded to spend more time away from home. She joined in more recorder playing groups. She also started classes in Spanish to help on our Cuban adventures. At the same time she was writing , with a colleague, a paper (and poster session) for the AASCIP&SW conference. It so happened that I had also been asked to do

the historic part of a poster session at PATRAM. This was with two of my associates at the AECB. One of them had to drop out due to pressure of work, so I had to do about 50% of the work. Anyway I found it very enjoyable, except for the schedule limitations. Between all these activities, we saw less of each other than when she was working!

After finishing the above, I got a call from an officer in the Defence Department (DND). He had seen one of the programs I had written while at the AECB. He asked me if I would be interested in bidding on a contract to supply the DND with an similar but enlarged program. I said that I was interested, expecting to hear nothing more. However, some weeks later, received forms from a contract officer asking me to fill them out and make a bid. I did this, having some trouble in deciding how much to charge. It would be based in a program that I had already written, and in fact given away to all that requested it. I decided only to charge for the additional work. This made it quite cheap and it was accepted. I decided that as this was not a planned income, I would use the proceeds to but a new computer. When I completed the work and supplied the program to the DND, I was asked if I would give a lecture of "Transport of Radioactive Material and the use of my program". This I did in the September of 1999. I found it amusing, that at 72, I had been asked to start a new career. That was to start a software and training company. I had programmed for many years, but I was apprehensive on lecturing as my speaking abilities ae not great. Luckily, everything went off fine, and I was not asked any awkward questions.


London Eye

The end of the century and the start of the 21st Century saw us once again in Britain. We took advantage of the last year I can get standard cost car insurance in the UK by renting a car and touring S W England & Wales. The rest of the time we spent in London. I found it quite amazing how many new things are in London now. I don't just mean things built specially for 2000 celebrations, like the London Eye (ferris wheel) or the Dome, but the many tiny museums that have appeared on almost every aspect of life one could think of. Also buildings with quite strange designs (eg Lloyds, Charing Cross etc). It seems that every visit I take, I am able to visit new attractions.

As I have got older, I have had more medical difficulties. It seems that as soon as one thing is under control, another condition starts. I suppose that it is the natural sequence of aging, but cannot say I like it. Anyway, in spite of the down-grading of the medical services in Ontario, I have been fortunate that drugs & services have been available to correct such things as angina, mild diabetes, & arthritis. In fact in the April of 2002, I suddenly had an increase in angina, both in intensity and at times when it was not expected. Madeleine took me to the emergency at our local hospital. They transferred me to the Heart Institute, where a couple of days later I had another angiogram. It showed severe blockages, so I scheduled to have by-pass surgery. Three weeks later a double by-pass was done and I was back at home, 6 days later, weak but with better blood flow. In the USA the procedure would have cost me $75,000, but in Ontario there was nothing to pay. In addition my insurance (as a retiree) has not caused any financial hardship and has paid for the major cost of drugs & dental work. Again in 2004 I was hospitalized. This time for a repair of an aneurism. The operation went well & I was recovering, I had an ulcer that started to bleed. A second repair job was done on my stomach, this time without anaesthetics! I think it was the worst hour of my life. However I was still discharged from hospital in 12 days. It says much on the advances of post-surgery procedures. I was surprised how long it took my to regain my strength, about three month longer than the bypass surgery

I am now in my eighties, and I have tried to live an honest life. I have worked hard and played hard, but above all, tried not to treat life too seriously. You must be able to laugh at yourself and see the ridiculousness in the pompous and the self-centred. There are so many wonderful things and people on this world, it is a shame if you don't do your best to find out as much as possible. This I have done and enjoyed it greatly.

I will end this work here. Keep smiling, especially when things are down. They probably will get better, and even if they don't, then you should not have complained as things could have been worse. I will end my short sermon and hope that you have enjoyed reading this as much as I have in writing it. It's a great life and the only one I have.

God Bless. May 2008

Appendix

Written May 2008

Another three years have passed and I have got older and slower (but no wiser, unfortunately). More surgery on my eyes have given back to me large amount of the vision that I had lost. I was even able to take my 80 year old driving test without the use of glasses, something I could not have done if it had been require for me to take a test when I was 75. As I have said earlier, I cannot complain at the service that OHIP (the Ontario Health Insurance Plan) has given me. When I read of the difficulties that retired people have in the USA, I am very thankful that I am a Canadian.

I am still able to walk Cody for up to an hour, but as he is 14 years old, the question at the end of our walk is who is going slower! I still do most of the shopping for the household, but my other activities are now just reading and computing. For part of the latter, I am producing a database of illustration of military uniforms and badges, which I hope will accompany my collection of military book to the Canadian War Museum after my death. I would also like to copy in digital form all my slides & photos which I took on film cameras, but this is a slow & boring job, so I am unlikely to get far with it.

The state of the world has got no better. There does not appear to be any country without terrorism, war, political strife, disasters or famine. The average man has little to look forward to, and even the weather is troubled.

On this happy note I will sign off repeating my advise in the last paragraph of chapter 17