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Impressions

Printing, 1965-1980

Setting the Scene

The British Government of Harold Wilson continued to employ an incomes policy - to hold back wage claims - stabilize prices and slow down inflation. The unions tried annually, to improve working conditions and wages... when not forthcoming, threatened to work to rule. There was no one strong enough to stand up to the unions and hold-to a wages policy. The Government was prepared to allow some unemployment, to weed out the inefficient, time wasters and industrial agitators. The Labour Party elected the previous year - with a majority of 98. The government knew that the unions would jeopardize all their plans - to reduce government borrowing, but would not resort to legislation to assist them - for fear of popular unrest...!

Although Harold Wilson was a skilful leader of the Labour Party, he was weak at tackling the Trade Unions. Unemployment was rising and that was certainly visible in the printing industry. The government was unable to prevent the unions from demanding wage increases. The sterling crisis eventually caused the pound to fall in value.

It was not difficult to see the effects the unions were having - stifling expansion - holding back modernisation. All managers keep up with developments at home and abroad to make their businesses productive and cost effective... it is in the interests of the relevant trade union to be knowledgeable about those new developments - so that they can direct their member's interests. There were those amongst the workforce who could also appreciate this fact, but were too weak to influence the strident few. The Union's Secretaries were obliged to

pander to the militant shop floor workers, 'to resist unemployment and increase the hourly rate'. The activists peppered their calls - to their shop floor members, with: 'stand by your rights', 'help your fellow man', 'one man one job', 'don't give way'... never explaining the result of poor worker relations would be long-term - industrial stagnation. This last statement assumes that the activists, usually Communist or left wing Labourites, could actually picture the future they were influencing - of Britain losing work and jobs to overseas businesses - time proved they could not...! Often the activist wanted disruption to further their own ends - usually increase power over their fellow man, punctuate a monotonous job or bring about discord. Those social reformers who had humanitarian goals were not able to accept the downside to their thinking. The unions would never discuss with any government the rules on picketing, automatic strikes and their legal position regarding incitement.

In the General Election six years later, in March 66, Labour again elected into power with a reduced majority of 31. Four years later, in June 70, Labour failed to have an overall majority... allowing the new government of Edward Heath's Conservatives to push through an Industrial Relations Act the following year... a further year saw the country into the European Economic Community. Heath tried to carry the torch of an incomes policy... falling back on force... the result, a national three-day working week in 1973. Back came Labour and Wilson in March 74, with a majority of three... They abandoned Heath's incomes policy relying instead on a 'social contract'... which led to inflation and the unions agreeing to 'wage restraint'... not for long though...! Mrs Thatcher's election victory of May 1979 gave a majority of 144 ensured substantial power bases to last eleven years... The spiralling national unemployment rate continued into the second year of Margaret Thatcher's Government and the years of recession were only to slowly pass as the decade came to a close.

This period covered our family's induction to primary education. We had no idea, that comprehensive education would be introduced by neither Harrow Council in 1973 nor the effect it would have. The goal, to achieve Grammar School education for our children, was removed

by this policy, and we were not prepared to move house - to find an authority that did. Immediately, standards and classroom discipline started to deteriorate. A national comprehensive system sought but not reached - some Tory local authorities refused to instigate one... Throughout the country, sufficient finance was not forthcoming. Classroom discipline dropped further and teachers started to take early retirement. In 1971, the system only covered 35% of the age group. It has taken many years, where local authorities did introduce a comprehensive system, for their standards to return to the previous Grammar School's and then mainly in middle-class areas.

I left industry to become a teacher to escape the ravages of strident unionism, believing that advancement - in the profession, by good practice and dedication... My hopes were later dashed; there were greater forces afoot - politics, favouritism, and pandering to fads...

Christmas 1980, the family was in holiday mood. I was home from teaching - completing my first term second year degree course. Simon was in his second year science degree - at UMIST, David, in his final 'A' level year... the family's rigours, pursuing intellectual development needed a break, now was the time to take stock... but unbeknown, greater forces were at work...!

CHAPTER I.

Industrial disputes - Annual wage rises - Cost of living index - London Weighting - Harold Wilson - Public unrest - Activists - Life at home - Growing family - Making Room - Secondary Schools - Comprehensives - Mother in Law - Mother's death.

Although Harold Wilson was a skilful leader of the Labour Party, he was weak at tackling the Trade Unions. Unemployment was rising and that was certainly visible in the printing industry. The government was unable to prevent the unions from demanding wage increases. The sterling crisis eventually caused the pound to fall in value...

The blossoming youth culture at the country's helm gave an indication where the country was heading... as the Beatles dominated the sound waves. Within four years, the voting age dropped to eighteen. A survey by the lobby group Child Poverty Action Group showed that large families continued to be the major cause of poverty. An increase in child allowance had no effect on my income; any increase I received was immediately removed by income tax.

My working life remained greatly affected, as everyone else's, by the antics of the militant trade unionists. The threat of 'walkouts' – instigated almost without warning, became almost a weekly event... from miners to dockers, car and dockyards workers. It was depressing. A special police group formed to deal with public unrest – usually outside factory gates. It almost became a comedy – jokes were made on the radio – Peter Sellers acting as the Trade Union official in 'I'm alright Jack' with Ian Carmichael as the new employee and commentators taking off Red Robbo, the union activist at British Leyland. Away from the influence - viewed from afar, it might well have been a good Whitehall farce..., but, if involved, it was uncomfortable, worrying and lamentable.

Although the working environment in many firms, particularly the larger, strained - by poor industrial arrangements, this did not extend to all. Even within those firms who distanced themselves from the unions, there were always a few militant members who tried to stir up unrest... Those firm - that had a strong management - who laid down strict guidelines that they stuck to, refused to take on known troublemakers... told the union Head Office, 'they would not take on any more labour if forced to employ such people'. In these instances, and I worked at a number, they were not forced to, the unions not wanting a fight. It was known that if firms had on their books union

officials – on National or Executive Councils, the union Head Office, not wanting to make their representatives positions difficult, backed off!

This strong management ethos would not work so well in Nationalised Industries; workers would call out allied trades and firms supplying parts or materials. Some of these activists were local part-time union officials who sat on committees... were well known at union headquarters. Being told that if they wanted employment they would have to curb their union activities never went down well! In those instances, firms shut down their UK factories - and went abroad.

Life at home, compensated for the stresses of work - was fulfilling. The children well used to the routine of school, kindergarten, library and family outings. Sally... gave birth to Ruth, on 2 September – our second girl. This was another landmark for our family - were mostly graced by boys! Simon prepared to start at Longfield Primary School... at the same time as Janice – the next-door neighbour's daughter. I remembered my first days at Longfield – it did not seem so long ago, remaining unchanged over the years...

Excited by the thought, Simon, even though giving up his friends at the kindergarten, took to school easily. David was about to begin at the play school, taking Simon's place, keen to get cracking – doing all the things Simon had been talking about.

When David was born in 1961, only five percent of eighteen-year-olds entered university. We had the goal, to prepare all our children to go onto higher education. Rachel was two - sleeping in her cot in the small front bedroom. It was a lovely period, the family all doing so well... happily, having many outside influences and all taking part in the various outings and holidays. Rita, Sally's mother, was a frequent visitor being picked

up from her home by car to be taken back home in the evening. She played an enormous part in raising the children always taking an interest, reading stories, babysitting, creating a link with the past. She was very much involved in all that the family was doing or planning to do... not in some interfering way but listening to everybody, making sensible comments thereby being a stabilizing element, totally accepted. It was, exactly what I wanted to happen. It was sad my parents were not so interested... I do not remember one visit made as a planned or off the cuff visit and cannot offer any reason why they were so disinterested.

On Wednesday 7th October 1964 father stood down for the last time as the Masonic Lodge Organist. By this time, his hearing was such that he could not hear the commands from the pulpit needing someone to sit next to him to tell him the 'Order of Service'. He had done over fifty-years - long and valuable service.

There had to be some adjustment to the sleeping arrangements so we had plans drawn up to develop the loft and have an attic bedroom. These passed by the local planning control without any restrictions. The dormer windows, one for the false landing and the other for the bedroom - looked out upon the rear garden - faced east. The sides were tile hung. The new room measured six feet, where the stairs came up from the bedroom below, by sixteen... widening to eight foot, for the rear half. A large fitted wardrobe completed the structure. This proved to be a boon and provided a bedroom for Simon and David – later Benjamin.

We enlarged the kitchen taking the sidewall out another four feet, totally revamping the interior - having the hot water system updated too. We felt we were making a fine start to creating a good home for an expanding family in a pleasant suburban town close to all schools.

In 1965, there were still grammar schools in the Borough - skimming off the top stream of junior school achievers. As each school only admitted about thirty new students per year this restricted the social mobility of the vast majority... even though children could sit for entrance the second year - finely sieve those in secondary schools. Secondary Modern Schools lacked the dedication of the top two streams whose work ethic helped maintain a higher discipline. Parents of high achievers keep an eye on what is going on - how their children affected by less disciplined bottom streams.

Over eighty percent of the working population was a trade union member. This ensured, that there should be, a great bond between the Labour party and the trade union movement. Social inclusion was part of their manifesto and the betterment of workers lives included education for their children - free, and a higher standard - achieved within a comprehensive system. That was the idea of Shirley Williams, Secretary of Education. Through weakness - not insisting on all children attending a comprehensive school including those who were fee paying - privately educated. Not pumping in sufficient funds to insure the scheme 'took off...', the scheme faltered, never to achieve its planner's goals.

Sally and I were not fully alive to the changes experienced by our children in a 'comprehensive' education system... we were no different from many other parents. Who could have predicted the almost immediate lowering of standards and lack of discipline? It is obvious that if there are no enforced standards, and you cannot remove troublemakers and the lazy, standards will drop! The freedom allowed to children, more women working, and the abounding youth culture... changed society forever. Coupled with, a sexual behavioural thing gleaned from

the media writing about the new cultural elite and women's new place in society.

We had busy lives to lead and formal education was just about to start for our eldest. We thought that society, and the educational system within it, would be the same as the one we had grown up with... so we planned ahead basing everything on our past experiences. It is not that we took our eye off the ball – allowing the government and local education authorities to ride roughshod, we were in uncharted territory.

If we could rely upon our children receiving a good formal education we should concentrate on providing a happy learning environment at home... backed up by visiting galleries and museums incorporating music and drama lessons... all, as a total learning experience...

Mainly with the children's learning in mind, and to make them socially integrated - able to deal with their peers, we sought the help of a pre-school in Pinner. Eventually all our children attended this school either adding drama or dancing to their normal studies. I had also set my mind on all the children learning to play the piano, as a matter of course, when they reached seven.

Sally and I had expectations... that children should be well mannered, speak correctly, and be obedient - my own upbringing defined this as a prerequisite. I could see by observation that Sally's home life had been built upon similar standards. I could never understand why other parents allowed their children to wander around whilst eating and drinking or to roam whilst the adults finished their meal. Similarly, not sitting still at the table or banging their cutlery, shouting, screaming or generally playing about. Bad behaviour is not just of the present age... there has always been a belief by some parents that, 'we must not stifle children's behaviour, self expression or creativity' for fear of

restraining natural growth. I believe it is better to lead by example, giving explanation – why, doing what you want, when you want it, leads to disruption – false expectations and hopes.

Allowing children to dictate how those around them have to change their behaviour to accommodate theirs is antisocial. Children taught that there is a time and place for everything - curb their natural desires for immediate action.

The family's first few holidays, after my father-in-law's death, were with Rita. After a couple of years, she elected to stay behind especially as the family grew! Thereafter we always had our holidays one week at a time - at half term and perhaps an extra week in the summer. One of these, usually the spring half term, would be always to Eastbourne, at the YMCA, where we spent many happy years exploring the local countryside and beaches. These three one-week holidays did increase as the unions negotiated extra holiday weeks... always spent away from home - to create a break from the routine, socialise the children and give Sally a break!

The car was packed to the gunwales with children and clothes, buckets and spades, boots and pushchair ready to disgorge at the sea front opposite the hotel. There we would over the years meet the same staff, who made us welcomed, giving us a special tea especially just for the children. Evening entertainments were formed around organised games like beetle drives, pin ball and table tennis.

Our trips into the country – plotted on an ordnance survey map - taking a circular route that included as many interesting, historical sites as possible. It was difficult each year to do a route, not experienced before.

Although the ordnance survey map describes accurately what is within a given area it does not say how the route changes according to season, weather conditions or to alteration since the

map surveyed. It leaves out that there is a bull, the stile is missing the path overgrown... or that the farmer has ploughed right up to the field's boundary, over the path! Many are the times, we have found ourselves in a difficult position faced with viscous barbed wire, giant stinging nettles, lethal brambles, and storm filled ditches and streams, menacing cattle, private roads and overgrown tracks.

These more negative features, to an otherwise jolly occasion, needed a high degree of positive thinking on my part. I had to impart sufficient *joie de vivre* to fortify, not just the bedraggled, wet, tired, hungry masses, but Sally, who was still in the rear echelons, about to retire from the struggle. I am pleased to report that there were neither mutinies nor mass pickets the following morning. We all set off in high expectation after an injection of exciting tales of daring-do in the tribal lands. It was probably the thought of cheese rolls made in the back of the car, which gave them, hope and succour - to be reached at an appropriate stage in the walk.

These difficult times, experienced by all on walking holidays in Britain, have to be 'got over'. I did it by entertaining - keeping the children busy during the day - a task needing considerable effort. As soon as negativity and 'giving up' - not wanting to walk or not joining in, happened, that tolled the bell of passing day. I could not continue against dismal moods. It became too much effort to overcome their lack of 'spirit'. Fortunately, this did not happen until they were much older...

It was not just those times at Eastbourne which had the comfort of warm hotel at the end of the afternoon but happened too when we went to Ludlow or to some distant ram-shackled farmhouse selected from the farm holiday handbook borrowed from the library. It was always taking potluck that sometimes leads to some remarkable places to stay...

By this time, my brother Stan had three children, Michael being born the same year as Ruth. That same year Jean became pregnant again, which bought about a yearning in Sally to have another baby. However much I described the effects this addition might have to the family exchequer Sally was adamant that that is what she wanted - that another baby would not cost any more because we already had all the clothes and furniture.

David, who had a most easy going nature, never gave us cause to have any fear that new experiences would upset him - went to school in September, attending the same school as Simon. His work progressed very much on the same lines as Simon. The difference being the Simon's class had a preponderance of girls whereas David's a more even spread. As all parents, we became used to the school routine - requirements for homework, the school uniform and the times for starting and finishing. Rachel, who was three, now helped looked after Ruth, walking to the shops and library, and over the hill, to grandmas.

At that stage in 1966, I was becoming aware that no matter how much I worked - to cushion unplanned expenditure, I would never be able to put money aside. I explained to Sally that I was concerned that we would never be able to afford all the extra curricular activities, and certainly not private junior education. Sally said that we seemed to be able to cope... could not see how our situation easily changed - by unforeseen circumstances... because we had all the things necessities for family life, announcing joyously, 'I'm pregnant again...'

Sally paid the bills, usually through the bank, at the same time as the shopping... budgeting for the following week. I do not ever remember money put aside for emergencies let alone holidays. What money came in went out. I had just enough to pay my fare or petrol to work and about fifteen pounds a week for food, tobacco and a daily paper... the routine, started when first

married... and continued whilst working in industry. Having a child at two year intervals soaked up the increase in salary, not giving a chance to put some by. The perpetual overtime cushioned any unplanned for event sufficient to allow maintaining the house and car and keeping up the kindergarten and music lessons.

Saving is a habit... a good habit perfected when young. When, explained, 'you cannot have something when you want it' and, 'putting something aside for a rainy day', are two well known sayings... things cannot be planned perfectly – even the far seeing... it gives comfort and security to have 'a float'... Unfortunately our float was more overtime working.

This was the year the Wilson Government setup Britain's first Race Relations Act - whose powers aimed to reconcile cases of discrimination based on grounds of colour or race. This extended, a couple of years later, to include employment and housing. It was this action by the government, which prompted right wing groups to band together to form the National Front. Two years later Enoch Powell gave a speech, which included the River Tiber remark... ultimately to lead to his dismissal.

Still the unions pushed for higher wages and shorter hours. The wage freeze, which was initially voluntary, proved ineffective. Even though the policy given backing, the Labour government did not consider what was to happen after the year was up? Britain stepped back further from its onetime Imperial role in Africa.

It was difficult for me to keep pace financially with the number of outgoings even though I was still doing the same amount of overtime. I was never ill nor had an accident. Being employed in a high earning occupation as well as being able most weeks to do overtime - to pay for extras, we could maintain this standard of living. Industrial strikes, changes in work pattern,

redundancy and firm's closing avoided if possible and I was always scanning the job vacancy lists or thinking of new ways to secure a steady income. It was all quite stressful having to do things, which I did not really want to do. Taking on a new technology was not something I really wanted to do. Scanners and electronics - in any form, I had a natural antipathy. I was steeped... in the past - being used to craft methods of reproduction... My training locked me into a time warp of hand skills gained over a long period.

So my life... bringing up a family - providing for them, continued. I was most disturbed that I could not make Sally see that there was more to life than just having more children - providing those that we did have, with a better start... giving them time, showing greater interest... all would benefit.

Benjamin was born July 16, three days before my birthday, in 1967. Simon started cub scouting and piano lessons about the same time. My preconceived ideas about making sure my children were able to swim continued... they all started at the age of four... Every Saturday morning, we would go to the Northolt swimming baths and watch them go through their lessons. Having piano tuition now began and we were very lucky finding a young woman who was about to start teaching the piano. Miss Day was perfect for the job - within walking distance of home and with a natural affinity to young children. I explained that I wanted all the children to have lessons when the time came and she agreed that seven was the right age to start leaving out the theory until later in the process. The tuition books bought in Harrow at the music shop in accordance with her wishes and Sally's mother provided a music case. Rita was in total agreement with what we were proposing and told us of a piano which was up for sale. We bought this, had it re-felted, re-tuned and polished. It was not brought up to total pitch - thought the newly

refurbished action would not take full tightening of the strings... we continued until its next re-tune. I was very pleased that all my previous thoughts about the positive nature of music lessons were paying off. Each child, when introduced to lessons, took them uncomplainingly – as a matter of course – exactly as I thought they would! To further help their understanding I thought about getting the children to hear music performed professionally.

At work, our monthly union meetings had changed from Doughty Street to Red Lion Square in Holborn. At the Conway Hall recitals given every Sunday at a very low cost - being subsidised adult education. Most of the recitals were string quartets and as a family, we occupied the gallery. Rita gave us a further venue to try – at the Chiswick Music Society. This we fitted in with those at Red Lion Square. Those at Chiswick were for accompanied solo artists, singers and music lectures. By this time, Simon began recorder lessons at school and often accompanied his grandmother at the piano and recorder.

Sally's mother took on another part-time job - playing piano, at a local school for dance. This she combined, with her permanent position at Sudbury Junior School - teaching piano and recorder - taking the children through their exams, playing at choir practice and morning assembly... These teaching posts filled by taking a bus to Sudbury - from the bottom of her road.

The Operatic Society of Greenford used Rita to accompany them, playing Gilbert and Sullivan operas. On other evenings, she played recorder with a group, which gave occasional concerts and playing cello, with the Wembley Orchestra.

Simon was afforded more attention and detailed scrutiny, than any of the other subsequent children. This was not intentional but a matter of course. Every parent lavishes special care on the first born because they are new parents... it is only

natural. This does have rather negative aspects especially with the second child who has to take second fiddle.

We questioned every sound, movement and mannerism, seeking answers to,” is this behaviour normal, do they always breathe like that, shouldn’t we do something about it?” Through this concern and attention they can develop faster, walk and talk sooner, become potty trained at an earlier stage than later arrivals. This evens out and does not become a lifetime advance over their siblings even though relatives, friends and health workers clutch at these forms of behaviour as a means of comparison. However, it can cause resentment if not reasoned as being accepted as normal. I have written previously about the feelings I held towards my elder brother, feelings that I had not only as a child but as a teenager too. I was aware that he appeared brighter more alert, cleverer and more successful. These deficiencies within me, that I so keenly felt, were not things which I compared to others failings but feelings I held within myself. I knew Stan to be more disciplined towards study and more serious minded towards his training. His natural in-born skills and attributes compensated, to some extent, by my more artistic feelings.

My younger brother Derek got married that year to Carole Howard at the same Methodist Church that Stan had. Shortly after - that same year, Roger, Sally’s brother, and Thelma - living at Buckhurst Hill, had their first son Crispin.

Sally and I visited in turn both my brothers in their new homes, Stan in Chesham and Derek in Abingdon as well as Roger and Thelma in Buckhurst Hill. These visits reciprocated throughout every year keeping us all up-to-date what each of us was doing. Sally’s mother who was very kind to afford us the time and consideration baby-sat for us.

Sally and I bought our first washing machine in 1960. It was a twin tub and had to be pumped out into the sink after

every wash. It was invaluable especially for us having a family. There was a certain amount of satisfaction having two washing lines filled with nappies and liners with all the other baby clothes and accessories. This was purchased about the same time as our first refrigerator - allowing us to join the other thirty percent of the population in owning one.

Ruth was slow at beginning to talk. This was not of great concern but something needed to be done to ensure that this state of affairs did not carry on. Every time I came home, when not doing overtime, I went up to her bedroom, where she had her high sided cot,- the small front box room, and began to do what was to become a continuing exercise of speech therapy using a balloon to articulate sounds by vibration, reciting common words and reading nursery rhymes. Within a relatively short period of time Ruth 'got it' .There was no looking back after first grasping the idea and reading became no problem. Sally told me that she was pregnant again just after her thirty-seventh birthday in 1969. This was not only a shock but also much unexpected and I must say I was very annoyed. I made up my mind that this could not happen again... I did something about it...!

Sally was not at all pleased but I explained that we could not afford any more children if we wanted to give every child a chance to have extra curricular tuition in whatever sphere that they showed an interest in. I was now thirty-four with six children trying to keep many plates spinning! As for full-time private education, that was already not a possibility for any of them. We were already paying each one to have piano and swimming lessons as well as drama for Simon and David, dancing for Rachel and later pony riding for Ruth. Sally said that if she could not have any more children I would regret it...!

I could see that trying to explain my feelings to Sally – that having more children was going to reduce the amount we could do for those we already had, was impossible... that what was possible when they were young was not the same for what could be done when they were older... that it was not fair that one could have a better start than another. I was getting older and I could visualize I would not be able to give all the children the same attention – that our holidays would never be the same with the whole family participating.

Our family was enlarged to six that coming December by the birth of Rebecca, who was active, alert and ever questioning... all good signs for the future. As with all the other births, it was successful and accomplished. Sally delighted in having another child which she breast fed for as long as possible gaining much from the experience; with all of the children this went on for over a year and I am sure the children benefited. The old pushchair would have to do even more noble service and so too all the other pieces of equipment. What a massive release and relief it was to know that there would not be any more children. The house was beginning to burst at the seams and there were not any more spaces to take up. Quite what was going to happen when Rebecca finally had to move out of our room I could not imagine - there would have to be three girls in one room, not a sensible or happy turn of events.

The pattern for the family continued. Nothing was changed. We still went to the library on a Saturday where all the children had their own books. We still had a bag of sweets to help us on the way home. The concerts, trips to museums, galleries and Commonwealth Institute continued. Blackberries picked during the end of the summers, walks arranged along the canal and holidays still prompted a farm holiday book out of the library. Scouts, cubs, brownies: choir practice for Simon and

David and all the other routines continued unabated. We were complemented wherever we went on the good behaviour of the children. As a family we all did the same thing together - there was never any friction nor decent. We still did not have a television to watch, card games played quite a lot, monopoly, chess, draughts and leggo took up any spare time. Once started, piano lessons were accompanied by the annual exam. All the children took and passed each exam as it came along and getting them to do their practice was, by now, such a normal everyday occurrence that they did it without question. This is what I thought would happen all those years ago when I first thought of my children having lessons. This acceptance of what was normal practice applied to all the other activities taken up and if other challenges presented themselves, they took up a place alongside the others as a matter of course.

My mother had been a diabetic for about ten years and treated herself with injections prescribed by her doctor. Now that my parents were living at Pinner Green, [Derek having moved out when he married Carole in 1967], with Nan, who had by this time retired, occupying Derek's room. Dad was eighty, still active and quite capable of walking to North Harrow to visit us. He never understood when my mother was due for an injection, nor did he keep a check on what she was doing. I was called by Nan in an emergency and asked to "come round" for mum was ill - suspected that it had to do with her diabetic condition. When I arrived, Dad and Nan were pacing round not knowing what to do and mum was by this time in a delirious state. The doctor had been called, arriving shortly after me. He asked a number of questions about what had gone on and what medication administered. No one knew. This lack of knowledge totally threw the doctor who then dithered saying that perhaps it would be better to get mum to hospital as she had by this time passed into

a coma. With that, I returned home to await news, which was not long coming. My mother was declared dead within a few hours never regaining consciousness. She was sixty-one.

What a terrible waste for I discovered later her death was totally unnecessary. Had the doctor given her a large dose of insulin she would not have gone into a coma. Even if the cause had been by some other reason other than not having had her injection, a further dose would not have had a disastrously detrimental effect. My father was now at a loss. He did not want Nan to be in the flat although he probably realised that life would be difficult for him if she was not there. He appreciated that it would be impossible to live with either Stan's family or mine - there was no room.

There was obviously a problem... my father could not come to terms with. It was patently clear that he would be far better off staying where he was - sharing the flat with Nan, but he could not feel happy, for whatever reason, her being so close. They had known each other for my father's married life. He never spoke of it nor did she they both went their own way... In the end, they both split up having to go into separate council homes... neither home awful but they did not provide privacy, which they both wanted. Gradually they deteriorated. Nan died within a year and Dad a year later.

CHAPTER II

Recognized union firm – Four main Printing Processes – Militancy – Local newspapers – Colour Masking - Klishographs – Dr Hell – Letterpress – Jobbing

Printers - Web-offset – Wage rates – Robert Maxwell – Rupert Murdoch – Rotary Scanners – Page-planning – Newspapers.

This was a union firm and within their staff were some of the key national and branch trade union officials - those who attended all the meetings, became the officials and dominated how the union dealt with the industrial changes taking place.

These changes were not just about trying to entice work back to the United Kingdom. It was more about trying to halt the decline in the printing industry as a whole. Nor was it about faster production methods - introduced by film companies and makers of various printing machines. The chief changes affected a whole process, letterpress printing... the reproduction of pictures and type could be done faster and cheaper by Lithography using a more versatile printing surface and page make-up system. Letterpress continued using stereotype processes.

Type matter, since Gutenberg's invention in the middle of the fifteenth century, needed a raised metal image. Each previously formed letter being set in a stick to make up a line of type. Along came hot metal typesetting which is the process used prior to photographic processes to form a line of type. Newspapers need to change their printing surfaces rapidly to cater for the latest story. When letterpress was the chief production method, it used hot metal to set the type and blocks to make the pictures. These were set and clamped into a forme, which made up the printing surface. In comparison with photographic typesetting, it is a slow, laborious and expensive.

About this time, newspapers began to change over from letterpress to lithography - longer printing runs made possible by new printing plate surfaces. It was cheaper to use a thin, previously light sensitive coated, lithographic printing plate -

could be quickly altered if necessary, rather than making up a new letterpress forme, with all that that entailed.

Letterpress firms were closing down men paid off – many going bankrupt. All those skilled men in the newspaper industry had earned high wages, now unemployed. The Photogravure industry could not take them all nor could Litho. The unions whose job it was to find places of work, for their members, filled vacancies in Litho, organizing retraining at printing colleges. Many had to retire or find other work. Those who made their way into lithographic industry had to become used to working with film rather than metal. Some had been operating typesetting machines or making up black and white pictures into blocks. Now they had to learn about colour printing and understand the reasons why colour correction necessary. Apprenticeships were stopped - to add another place of work to fill and a rota for how many men to those under training reviewed. Overtime banned to create more work. All these stop gap methods to retrain, distribute labour and cushion changes in the industry were all short term. What it did do is make the whole business uneconomic forcing advertisers to seek work abroad.

These changes in working arrangements continued for years - the unions continued to put a block on accepting new apprentices until all the unemployed were given jobs to the extent that soon there were few young people in the trade. Overtime was heavily restricted and new working arrangements negotiated with the owners. Militancy reared its ugly head and those workers who spoiled for a fight had a field day. The unions still negotiated an annual wage review, which always resulted in higher wages, shorter hours and longer holidays. Strikes were threatened and an overtime ban implemented. Gradually, the work taken abroad stayed there and managements sought to find a way out of the impasse – the trade was becoming uncompetitive. Those firms

who supplied the trade with parts of the final process started to feel the pinch and many went out of business.

The major film manufacturers competed to bring out a method of colour correction prior to halftone screening. The first photographic correction systems used a series of continuous tone, film overlays, to correct the ink deficiencies. This was followed by a double overlay masking system. Later, another system used a single multi-layered masking film strapped to the original colour transparency - flat copy originals - watercolours and oil paintings, converted to transparencies allowed this to happen. All these systems were introduced to reduce the amount of hand work necessary. Eventually a film system devised that completely obviated the need for more correction... but it was too late... electronic scanning saw to the demise of film correction.

It was during the 1970s that local newspaper unbound by the restrictions their brother printers locked into for national newspapers began to be printed using a web-offset printing machine – using a reel of paper rather than sheets. Later, these papers were printed in colour well before the nationals began colour supplements.

Klischographs, invented by Dr.Hell - mechanically produce, an engrave halftone image that could be printed - to take the place of a halftone block. This machine was highly successful. Later on, the machine was adapted for colour separation work and given the name of Vario to differentiate it from its brother. The Vario was a flatbed scanner using the latest electronic scanning techniques of lasers and filters. The computer was programmed to separate the transparency into the four printing colours - including black, correcting the three primary ink colours magenta, cyan and yellow for their spectral deficiencies, whilst at the same time producing a halftone set of images ready for

printing down to machine plate. Enlargement or reduction made - to suit the customer's requirements, on a set of plastic foils - contacted for platemaking. The object was to make the film companies, the camera operators and colour retouchers redundant thereby reducing costs and speeding up the flow of production.

At the monthly union meetings scare stories prevailed - promulgated the demise of handwork. It was obvious that computer generated colour corrected halftone screen work plus typematter, would rapidly reduce the number of workers in pre-printing departments. Newspaper owners talked about producing colour inserts. The workers knew this would become eventually, by stealth, full-bloodied colour magazines.

Provincial newspapers based in the Midlands were using the lithographic process. The factories had been purpose built to take the new web offset presses. The simpler page make-up system for the lithographic process was far quicker and cheaper - to keep the publications current with the latest news - the aluminium plate convenient, lighter and quicker to change. It was obvious that eventually national newspapers would join the exodus away from letterpress once they had negotiated with the unions. To make this change come about the massive old letterpress machines had to be moved out - the process and handling of film being totally different from metal. The photogravure process, already operating reel fed printing machines contemplated that they too might be capable of producing newspaper - particularly the supplements which could be produced days before the final machine run - for daily newspapers. However, the industry knew the costs would be prohibitive. The unions pressurised the newspaper owners telling them that new employment deals would have to be negotiated

stimulated the newspaper magnets to devise a radical scheme to bring this change about without informing the printer's union...!

None of the changes in technology affected lithography to the extent that warranted such scares - promote mass unemployment. It all came about very slowly. What did undermine the *status quo for me* was the demise in M & J's profitability. Too many jobs were going wrong, standards of reproduction were deteriorating and production times not met. I could see that it was only going to be time before the final collapse of the firm. The enlarged staffs, now made up of newly trained men, were not capable of doing the job properly, to the times estimated. With that thought, I had to consider what to do and where to go... I scanned the vacancy lists...

It was not long before I saw a vacancy for a firm, which was only just down the road at Wharf Road, Islington - a firm of general printers who wanted a retoucher. As usual, there was only a 'one man one job' - 'white card', sent out... that meant, you had the job if it suited... It did not matter what the firm thought of you - if you had a bad name in the trade, they had to accept you. Quite often strong union supporters - activists, had a bad name and employers refused them jobs. This was the method used by the unions to make employers take on unwanted workers.

I landed the job at the printing house of W. R. Royles & Sons, Wharf Road, Islington. They are a family run business producing greetings cards and stationary. I went there after a period of years working at two of London's leading firms of Trade Platemakers [Trade Platemakers usually convert the original artworks and typematter for printing - those conversions make-up the pages of books, periodicals, newspapers, magazines and greeting cards. These patched and planned films, attached to foils... exposed to light sensitive machine plates... ready for printing and finishing]

Here was a family business making most of its profits producing greetings cards. The fact that their reproduction department might be unprofitable did not matter. They were profitable by holding the original artworks 'rights' - they bought them from the artist. By owning the 'rights' the firm could produce that artwork in as many ways as they could think of - from card to print, wrapping paper to place setting, from private speciality stationary to box making. One artwork incorporated into another, reversed, reduced or turned upside-down. The versatility was endless... they held a library of colour corrected, separated, sets of films... with the costs of the original separation and correction covered... thereafter the job was free of further reproduction expenses - capable of being re-planned, to fit a new layout.

When I went to work there, the owner's sons were just beginning to be trained to take over the business. Each of the sons took up a different side of the industry from sales to reproduction onto printing and naturally, they meant to make their mark.

My second job was the company's first print. At that time most of their work was in six colours. The three primary pigment colours, yellow, magenta and cyan, plus black, was overprinted with pink and light blue to back up any colour deficiencies and give weight. It expected that their prints follow the same procedure, with perhaps a seventh special colour.

I do not think that the management were prepared to see such a close reproduction by the use of a then conventional masking method - it was a revelation to them. When the final job was completed, they were very pleased. The management could see that here was another profitable line of work to exploit making 1970 the start to their production of large prints...

From that day to the present, W. R. Royles have continued to produce prints in a variety of sizes - reproducing oil paintings, watercolours and acrylics. All the reproductions photographed using a studio camera - photographing straight from the original painting through the colour correcting masking film to produce the separation negatives, which in turn screened to produce a printable image in positive. It was a pity that this firm never really appreciated how close a perfect reproduction could be made of original artworks, especially watercolours, by using conventional masking methods. The pigments and papers used by the artist were so close to the spectral measurements of good quality printing inks and paper.

Print unions have always used the term 'chapel' to describe their in-firm or print-house members. This term derived from the original meeting place - a religious house, where printing carried out. Each member of the SLADE & PW Union was attached to a particular firm belonged to that chapel and had to work to the union rules as well as certain in-house working practices.

A very strict routine was observed whereby each member in turn was expected to attend monthly head office union meetings and then to report to the chapel. The chapel secretary kept detailed minutes, which were agreed in the proper manner adopted by a well run meeting. It was normal that all the offices of the union taken in turn - that no one could absolve himself from the decisions made.

Every meeting whether held at head office or local chapel was officered and run according to the wishes of a certain clique of activists - they may have been socialists, left wing labourites, Marxists or unionists... a few were genuine seekers after better conditions for workers, some only concerned with power which allowed them to incite others which in turn gave them even greater authority, others were fearful of losing their jobs -

through the power of the group they felt less threatened, and others were born dramatists - wanted centre stage, with an audience. Whatever, they were not interested in producing the best job in the fastest manner for maximum profit. They did not see that it was in their interest to maximise the production process. Neither the workers nor their representatives knew the state the firm's books - how the economy of the business running, whether the firm was competitive with overseas markets, how the industry standing up to new production methods or country faring economically. Their thinking was purely day-to-day and perhaps week-to-week. Planning for the future to cover new technology or to consider making the firm more profitable was out of the question. Any sort of fraternisation with the management frowned on and any suggestion from the shop floor to assist management to seek a way round problems frowned on.

Wages, hours, holidays and conditions of work fought for in the annual round of negotiations, which at times were protracted and bitter. They could end up with an overtime ban and possibly a strike. When it came to a strike, every method used to force the issue to the extent that artworks were lost and equipment damaged. As the weeks went by trouble makers demanded that the firm should go bust rather than we the workers should give way. There was no sympathy shown for a firm who was finding it difficult to make ends meet. For a start, the workers never believed it and secondly half wished it were true so that the management could experience what it was like to be a worker without a job.

At a chapel meeting I attended, the union representative - father of the chapel, threw his wage packet onto the table asking to see everyone else's. Eventually he got them all and on opening them up displayed what was in them. The meeting discovered that there was no difference between any of them - they were all

paid the same. This went down badly... some of the workers believed they had been paid more than others because they were harder workers or were given the most difficult work. The management were playing one worker off against another giving the impression they were being selective when in fact they were being devious. The result was a greater solidarity against the management and the activists given a stronger voice.

In 1971 the Technical Director, Jeremy Royle, introduced the Vario Klishograph. The original Klishograph design had been devised for letterpress – to scribe black and white screened foils for block making. The Vario, as its name suggests, was capable of colour and monotone separations. The reciprocating machine, one side scanning the copy the other scribing the foil, was the invention of Dr Hell of Germany. It was a marvellous machine capable of producing excellent separations which unfortunately had to be contacted to film for platemaking, its only drawback. Jeremy was a keen advocate of perfect balance when adjusting the monitoring for black and white and colour television. He devised test cards and slides to register whether the TV cameras had been set up correctly. This concern for perfect continuous tone balance reflected in his interest when working the scanners.

The Vario's true value was hidden from the management. Workers conspired to slow-up every part of the production line deciding between them what time they should take for each job – usually decided by the size of the job. This could only take place in a firm, which made a profit by selling the completed job. In businesses where the firm produced part of the finished product a much stricter check could be made of what each man was doing. In such firms, there was also a willingness to undercut others in the same business to bring in more work. When a new machine or process was being introduced into a firm by the manufacturers very great care was taken to work not only in

accordance with the manufacturers guide lines but to take extra special care and time over each part of the operation – to slow it down. It was clear to the workers that the new process would reduce the amount of time taken on the job – making workers redundant. They decided to make sure a problem experienced working the new method would demonstrate to the management that the new process demanded almost as much time as the old. The contacted separation sets were heavily retouched to demonstrate the need for hand work. This happened when rotary scanners introduced – it was never admitted how revolutionary the Vario was - or how efficient. The time taken on each job using the machine estimated by the chapel - to guarantee worker's jobs. The purchasers of print and the advertisers within them would not know the difference between one process and the other. That a revolution was about to happen was held back – the workers allowed outdated methods to prevail, even though, in time, the industry almost collapsed...

The run-down of the industry was caused by workers who were greedy - manipulated the easy pickings, when they should have been looking to the future... knowing that new technology about to be introduced would draw more work to itself. 'The Media' bosses whether film, television or print, make vast profits... workers saw what was happening and demanded more... the public and advertisers inadvertently provided the rich pickings for the newspaper owners. The workers did have a point. There would be a reduction in labour and separation sets would be finished quicker. These new techniques could be adapted for the introduction of coloured newspapers.

It was very unfortunate that the management, and I suppose the film companies, were not aware that conventional multilayered masking systems – both Agfa Gævert and Kodak, were equally efficient – fast and cheap. Both these systems could

be used to correct multi planned transparencies and the result from original watercolours equally as good as a scanner.

That year father died in Shenley, 7th August 1971, the day before mother's birthday, after leaving Whiteways, Brooks Hill, old peoples home. The whole of his and my mother's, latter life was difficult mainly because of my father's principle of not owning his own home.

Robert Maxwell 1923 - 1991, operated a price cutting business aimed at the colour reproduction side of the printing industry - to introduce colour to his magazine publications. Eventually he bought the Mirror Group, from Reed International, which later became the massive International Press Corporation. Ruthlessly cutting costs, he introduced run-of-print colour printing - using a four-colour printing press to print his newspapers. This broke the hold imposed by the unions who were trying to force the newspaper managements to renegotiate wage rates and conditions. The move away from Fleet Street to Wapping by the newspaper industry, the engaging of electrical workers who were to run the machines, the introduction of the colour supplement and the total change to lithography by the old letterpress industry, all these new technical advances bought about a revolution in the production of print. The battered, entrenched and belligerent unions tried to turn the tide imposed by new technologies. The unions were never long-term players in developing their strategies, always forced to consider day-to-day relations with the printing house owners.

Within all these machinations, I was trying to reduce the financial pressure of a large family. Having the future in mind, I applied for the position of Reproduction Manager at Rupert Murdoch's The Times newspaper then based at Wapping, to run the new colour reproduction department. It was going to be equipped with the latest scanners and page planning systems... to

set up a department to print The Times colour supplement magazine. After a lot of meetings and discussions I got the job only to be told shortly afterwards that it was all off, cancelled, the unions were not going to negotiate. Times Newspapers were completely blocked in their quest to bring in colour as managers and men disagreed over the introduction of computerised techniques. The Times supplement was taken to Holland to be reproduced and printed. Much of the colour printing for the UK was being done abroad to produce a cheaper, more economical product.

It was apparent that Britain was being left behind in the use of robotics and microelectronics. Most of the large printing machines at that time were made in Germany. Scanner manufacturers did penetrate further afield - to Japan, Israel and America, having started in Germany... in Britain we had the Chromograph.

Ultimately national newspapers and to a lesser extent other large printing concerns gave way under threats of unofficial action by in-house chapels. Industrial relations had been bad for generations there was discontent and confrontation at every annual wage review. Strikes abounded and the government of the day incapable of holding down wages or stemming the high unemployment rate.

At the time one strike, which lasted for weeks, I found I had to sell some family heirlooms given to me by an Aunt, to make ends meet. I was desperately short of money for the mortgage. Sally contemplated asking her mother for a loan, which I was not at all keen on her doing. Fortunately, the strike was called-off - abandoned, without any benefit to the unions other than false promises from the management, which they knew they could not keep.

The Wilson government gave way to Heath's election and the eventual three-day working week after the power workers industrial action. Wilson was again re-elected. Callaghan took over after two years and Thatcher's conservatives emerged after only three years to try to stem the international trade recession. Unemployment doubled, de-industrialisation continued and inflation soared.

I was invited, shortly after the collapse of the job at Times Newspapers, to be the new reproduction manager at Royles. This I was pleased to accept. I had to inform the staff what was to happen. When I told the union representative, who was a well-known union activist, what was to take place he said that he would bring out all the workers if I went ahead – knowing that I knew all about the way jobs were being held up and made to be more difficult than necessary. With that, I went down to the works manager and told him saying that unless he backed me I would not take on the job. He could see that it was a hopeless situation and that they were stuck with the existing working relationship. He took on the job himself asking me to help whenever he had a problem, which I was pleased to do, for as it was, I had been doing all the new more intricate work enjoying the challenge. During this stage in my career, it was beneficial to be working for W. R. Royles... their policy was to promote the latest technology. By working there I was kept abreast of the latest innovations.

The Vario Klishograph at Royles was the second to be bought into the country. It was our good fortune, that we had an employer electronically minded, technically skilled, artistically sympathetic and open to the challenges of a modern reproduction department. In turn, each member of the staff was taught until another scanner purchased - and linked in - to the production line.

Royles must have been far in advance of most other printers... this technical know-how was used as a marketing ploy – used to bring in work from outside. The gambit was that here was a system that did without man made variables... the object had always been to find a machine which would eliminated workers altogether. Firms would ultimately stand the cost if they could do without union discord.

It was not long before a number of firms were producing rotary scanners - producing quality colour separations - to the same high standard the reciprocating Vario set... The rotary scanners could produce either negative or positive colour corrected sets. The original, either flat copy or transparency, wrapped round the copy drum. A modulated laser light beam, using filters or prism, reflected or transmitted a beam of light - to expose a film – later halftone screened. A separate pass of the light produces one of the printing tri-colours – yellow, magenta or cyan.

CHARTER III

Wage review – National Youth Clubs – DIY – Social Security Act – European competition – Grammar Schools – Harrow Public School – Comprehensives - Royal Academy Exams – School's Councils– Scouts – Driving lessons – Part-time working.

Some local education authorities started a comprehensive form of education in the sixties... by 1964, there were 200. Ten-years later there were 2,000, taking 60% of the pupils... by 1980 90% reached. Unfortunately, not enough money was put into the scheme to guarantee the scheme had a sound footing... Vociferous parents maintained their right to object to the system

stimulating some authorities to retain their grammar schools. This caused some parents, through the intervening years, to move into these school catchments areas. Private education, cathedral schools and home based educators siphoned off another group of students. Both the local grammar and these private schools creamed off the most able students placating their more forceful parents.

Gradually teenage clubs and associations faltered. Television undermined the good work such bodies had encouraged. More, younger married women with children went out to work. Socially liberal forms of behaviour promoted by parents, mistakenly believing – to allow, ‘the full development of the child’. It was the time of the swinging sixties. There was a growing prosperity for all ages and classes. The Beatles became the top group exploiting the Mersey sound.

It was also the age of DIY prospering on the back of television advertising. Panelled doors were boxed in, dado and picture rails removed and staircases made dust free by hardboard facing. Neat roadside verges ripped up to provide the entry to lean-to garages; privet hedges gave way to fancy walls and learner drivers blossomed. Mini skirts abounded and ‘jeans’ were the ‘in’ thing. Young couples getting married planned to gain the maximum tax advantage. Women were demanding equal rights creating a stressful atmosphere. In statistics taken at the time there were one and a half million more women than men in the population. There were disturbances between ‘rockers’ – who wore black riding gear, and ‘mods’, those who wore Italian designed clothes.

The most far-reaching legislation was the Ministry of Social Security Act, which sought, to replace National Assistance by Supplementary benefits, which depended on a means test there, began to be a conscientious effort to increase conservation and

control the numbers of high-rise flat developments. Trades Union unrest - trying to maintain the cost of living for their members, lost more workdays than their European competitors.

Edward Heath won the election for the conservative party in 1970. The following June Simon was faced with the eleven plus exam. There had been profound changes in educational ever since the 1944 Education Act. Sociologists, psychologists and educationalists were against this divisive split needed for grammar education believing that the comprehensive ideals should be encouraged and promoted by local authorities. At that time, Harrow Council continued with their existing secondary education, which included grammar schools – this state of affairs only lasted another three years.

Simon had been lucky with all his schooling. His classes had been populated mainly by girls and by children of parents who wanted their children to go to a grammar school. In this atmosphere together with our interest, we channelled his thinking which bought rewards. Simon passed and went to Harrow Grammar School. At the same time, we entered him for a scholarship to enable him to go to Harrow School... he was accepted, obtaining a Churchill Scholarship and a bursary for the full cost of tuition and boarding. Sally was beside herself thinking that taking him away from the family would be a disaster. She was content with his passing for Harrow Grammar, which is where he started that same year. I was delighted with all his accomplishments thinking that this would help the other children raise their expectations although I was sorry that he was not to go to the public school.

I had attended Harrow School with Simon to meet his House Master and whilst there be shown round the school; the classrooms and dormitories and to be shown where his box would be kept - discuss with the masters how he would fit in,

where he would lodge and who would be his tutor. Whilst being conducted around I was trying to imagine what changes Simon would have to go through and what this would mean to the family.

To complement Simon's piano lessons the following year, [he had now passed Stage 5 Royal Academy Exam] I took him to the local church organist and choir master to see if he could give him lesson on the pipe organ. This he agreed to do for a limited period until Simon found that schoolwork forced him to stop.

David did not have to sit the eleven plus, by that time Harrow Borough invested in the comprehensive scheme of schooling. Therefore, he started at Whitmore Comprehensive School in 1972. The philosophy behind comprehensive schooling left us thinking that things would not be so bad; believing that suitable funds put into the scheme and higher qualified staff employed to make it successful.

We were very wrong in our beliefs. This was in line with what many other disappointed parents thought. It was a disaster. Not only was Whitmore turning out to be a poor school but Harrow Grammar was included into the comprehensive system too - failed to maintain standards.

Both schools declined in discipline and for the same reasons. The parents of the children going to both schools were not insistent that their children should do homework. It was an impossible situation for the teachers. The head teachers could not demand correct behaviour because there was nothing they could use to make the children conform. There was no "if you do not do this you will fail," because there were no failures and even if there were where were they to go? Standards of behaviour began to fall and with that, results went by the board too. This was the decline in educational standards, which resulted in a lowering of pass marks, and then towards a simpler marking system with

continuous assessment and project work - to try to concentrate the students minds. The Schools Council brought in many new ideas to make curriculum more adaptable. Their detractors thought there was too much latitude and a greater effort made to inculcate skills that are more basic.

Stan, my elder brother, now had five children. Derek's first, Paul, was four, the same age as Rebecca... followed by Emma in 1973. We still met up on a regular basis to keep in touch and those visits interlaced with luncheon dates with our oldest friends the Selways and Sauls. Both Paicie and Bren, Sally's aunts, were corresponded although we saw far more of Paicie. Paicie was a schoolteacher and a dedicated Congregationalist who lived in a bungalow close to the main Waterloo station rail link. Our visits were generally on an every three-month basis and as such were much appreciated and savoured. She made a great effort to make our stay's enjoyable providing all the little treats the children liked. Paicie said she would buy a bicycle as each child attained the age of eleven when they would have perhaps passed the grammar school entrance exam. This promise unfortunately collapsed as our family grew. She was very critical of the size of our family believing that we would not be able to afford sufficient time nor money to each child and their education. She was someone whom I not only liked but also thought interesting - she held strong opinions and would not hold back from telling you what she thought. Her guiding principles firmly grounded on strict Christian teachings - the rule of self-help, abstinence and moderation in all things. She was scornful of her father who had left home to live with another woman and worshipped her mother for her fortitude. Rita thought her sister self centred, unadventurous - a thorough goody, goody questioning why her sister always had the school and class prizes whilst she had been overlooked. Rita also secretly

admired her father. Paicie loved her cat, which held pride of place, dictating her every move. This prevented any extended visits away from home on the ground that Sammy would not like it.

Both the boys and the girls were in the scouts or guides and worked their way through the normal badges. In my youth, I had found great company and friendship with The Boys Brigade and so enrolled my children in a similar organization thinking they too would benefit.

Sally by this time wanted to drive. Her mother was taking lessons from an ex-police driver who ran his own school so he became Sally's tutor. This was after I had tried my hand at the basics finding that trying to teach driving with the young children in the back was no way to cement harmonious relationships. There was also the matter of the inconvenient road bollard, which got in the way and honed up my panel beating skills. Eventually Sally passed her test and took over the car - needing it to ferry the children about, which meant that I had to get transport for myself.

One day when I was out taking the young children for a walk I passed a house with a Ford Anglia, in the drive, with a for sale sign stuck in its rear window. The sign offered the car for a mere forty-five pounds. When I got back home, I went out to the bank and drew out the money. Round I went to the house in all haste and paid the money asked. When driving home concluded that, it was a good buy and suited me well. Previously I had relied upon motor bikes, which had transported me up and down from London. But these I finally gave up through the suffering I experienced during winter months negotiating the A40 in freezing conditions initially on a BSA 500 sports which dripped oil whatever I did to correct the leak, and, who's electric's continually let me down leaving me with no lights. Then on my

little Honda 125 SL, flat out, head down, doing sixty with a fair wind behind me.

Sally started part-time work with a couple of firms, which did not prove to be happy one's for her. Eventually a vacancy came up at Northwick Park Hospital where she shared a position in the audio typing pool mainly covering arthritis, rheumatism and similar conditions affecting mobility and pain. This was a job similar to the work experienced when she first went to Wembley Hospital before we were married, fifteen years before.

At about the same time Sally found a vacancy for Rebecca to attend a pre-school class. The school was located on Harrow-on-the-Hill on the way to the hospital and was in the main attended by children of the Harrow School staff. There were only ten or so to each class and it was a happy, intimate and forward-looking establishment very much in the Montessori tradition. Rebecca took to it immediately and shone. Every skill awarded and praise given for even the slightest accomplishment making the children press for more.

When Rachel was aged, eleven we decided to try to get her into a better school environment - to that offered by the state educational system. A Catholic school, Saint Dominic's, which was also close by Rebecca's play-school, was the only choice. By much persuasion, we managed to convince them that we were true conforming Catholics dedicated to the school founding conditions. We thankfully succeeded and so had to go out and buy the brown uniform plus hat and satchel necessary to start that September. Because Sally could not always pick up the children from school, Sally's mother took over that job which was only about five minutes by car but still a blessing.

Both Sally and I were very pleased with ourselves that the children's schooling was going as well. Simon although initially bullied in his first year at Harrow Grammar had found his feet

and was doing well preparing for his 'O' levels in a years time. He was practising hard for his seventh grade piano practice and five in theory. The scouts were taking up any extra free time he had. David was at Whitmore holding up well considering the poor state of education there. Rachel, as previously described, schooled at St. Dominic's to a high standard than normal state schools. Ruth at Longfield in her final year of junior school as was Benjamin - was a couple of years behind her. Rebecca continued to enjoy being at play-school.

The bulk of the shopping done on Saturdays, buying potatoes and vegetables by the sack, at the warehouse next to North Harrow station. Bread bought five loaves at a time and put in the freezer. Fortunately the milk delivered to the door. Sally juggled the cooking and housework fitting in the part-time office work. We still went on holiday although it was getting difficult to entertain the older children. Rachel no longer wanted to walk on our countryside rambles preferring to stay in the car - it became clear that things had to change. Going on holiday with the children was never the same again... drawing to a close the innocent rambles... singing nursery rhymes whilst gathering wild flowers; only possible when there was no questioning of the order only an acceptance of the plan devised.

Gradually the children's personalities and attitudes showed through... not only did they want to follow what their peers were doing but wished to be independent - free of parental constraint. This of course is natural but upsetting, and certainly not so pleasant for me - the organizer... It was noticeable and felt - as the ages of the children increased, unquestioned obedience and compliance dropped off..., less discipline caused friction... visits to friends and relatives, less frequent, fewer gambols taken on visits - at a moments notice. All this was unfortunate for the younger children - they would never undertake the thrills and

spills experienced by their elder siblings... the on-the-spur-of-the-moment visits to historic buildings, rambles over hill and dale, just to see what was there... the fun and excitement visiting farms and lodging houses off the beaten track... greater numbers individual attention reduced, an obvious conundrum!

At home the displays of anti-social behaviour were expected, as were requests by the children to do what they wanted. These things, I was prepared for. It was the degree that took me by surprise. Having so many children in a small house without the space for each to develop in presented an ongoing problem. It was equally frustrating for me for it was clear the difficulties they were facing. All the time the younger children were losing out ... it was far easier for me , and their mother, to sit by the side of the eldest and discuss more adult things – what questions they were being asked for their exams, than to read a Janet and John books to the youngest...

Meanwhile, back at work, the Heath government tried to implement changes in trade-union law to limit flying pickets. He ended up with a 'three day working week' having failed miserably in his confrontation with the miners in 1973-4. I continued to work for five days - during the blackouts - limitations imposed by the electrical generating stations switching off supplies. At work, we held plate-glass up against the windows to use daylight to view the developed films!

The printing industry was greatly affected by the paper industry - suffered its greatest decline through the penetration of Scandinavian paper manufacturers. The profitability of the printing industry fell substantially and it estimated that by the turn of the millennium only half the workforce would remain. It was firmly believed by economists that a complete restructuring of the workforce was needed altering the balance between very skilled workers and those not so well trained. Economists also

believed that there should be a relaxing of employment rules - so that workers could be laid-off.

I moved to Mabbutt & Johnson, Islington, from Sun Litho, Ruislip. As with all job moves I made it was for no other reason than to increase my wages. M & J were Trade Platemakers to the lithographic printing industry - begun by two employees of Sun Litho. An outsider who provided the venture capital joined these two entrepreneurial men, the Works Manager and the only Salesman. When they left Sun Litho, they took with them half a dozen key workers. At the end of their first year of trading clocked up a quarter of a million pounds net profit. This quick profit stimulated them to expand the business. This they did to be London's, if not the UK's, largest Trade Platemakers.

Their main customers were Littlewoods catalogue, National Geographic, Playboy and various travel companies. They also took on general trade work, which they thought would produce further clients.

I go into detail about this firm because it shows that they were not only versatile - taking on a varied selection of work, but had to be viable in a most competitive market. Much of their work came from companies who would have sent it abroad to be reproduced, made-up and then printed. Whether the work done here or abroad the same photographic materials used. Agfa-Gaevent, Dupont and Fuji had their own specialist fields in graphic reproduction but at this time did not challenge Kodak for their Tri-Masking system, which reined supreme.

The expansion of M & J had been to promote an 'round-the-clock services', which up to that time was totally unknown in the UK. They hoped to corner a market. Engaging a large staff, they operated a twenty-four hour service operating in three shifts. Thankfully the retouchers, there were fifteen at the firms peak, kept to normal working hours and covered by working extra

overtime when necessary. One retoucher was engaged to pass work from the cameras working on the night shift so that it was ready for the colour retouchers in the morning.

I travelled to Islington by car doing the journey in about forty minutes all along the A40 - from Harrow-on-the-Hill, Greenhill through to Kings Cross and the Angel. Leaving home at just gone seven, having a half hour lunch at twelve thirty and if not working overtime getting home just before five. However, more often than not I would work overtime at least twice a week getting home at nearly eleven and often on Saturdays too from six thirty to twelve thirty.

It was a happy firm to work for simply because the staff had to get the work out - had to co-operate with each other - any problems would affect everyone else and each part of the production process relied upon the next. If snags were experienced you could see that you would not get home until much later so it was essential to get the job done.

It was a simple process to see which worker could do his job well and who would co-operate when there was an emergency. On a large sheet of mail order work where there was perhaps twenty pages of fashion plates, [swatches of the actual material and colour the article was made from would be provided], it is easily see who could turn out a good job. For some strange reason workers would make the same old mistake repeatedly even when they were told to alter their method of working.

As with all my jobs, including the one apprenticed to, I enjoyed the work - preferring to be in an organised situation - to work within an established system. Eventually I became one of the senior members of staff with the grand title of Retouching Manager. My task was to pass all the separation negatives and positives prior to retouching sign-off all the printed sheets after

machine proving, regulate all the overtime necessary to get the jobs out in time and see to the flow of work through the department. I also took on all the most difficult jobs simply because I liked doing them.

CHAPTER IV.

Times newspapers – Colour Scanning Studio – Newspaper Supplements – Union problems - Recession – Job Application – Teaching – Interview – Further education, LCP– Lecturer, Pre-printing – NATFHE – Garnet College – Teacher Training.

It was unfortunate that I didn't get the job with Times Newspapers... setting up a brand new colour reproduction department would have been quite a challenge. Nationally, the printing trade suffered a 'loss of standing' - by the closure of outdated printing works - the public thinking the industry faltering - not understanding that to re-equip a modern printing works the old machinery has to be removed first, which was no simple undertaking...!

The industrial recession in the middle of the decade went on, to the extent that even those firms known to be productive and progressive were losing work. The union's short-sighted view about the affects the new technology was going to cause to future industrial relations limited the speed industry was to take to climb out of the mess. This is not a criticism but a description of the way unions work. They operate on a day-to-day basis especially when unemployment and unrest threatened... they have no option but to pander to the cry for work...

School fees and extra curricular activities were stretching my finances - a drain, to continue for many years. I had to devise

a plan - to cushion this insecurity - lessen the affected of industrial disputes.

Sally was now working part-time and some of her money was finding its way back into the kitty, it was not enough in times of hardship to hold the fort. She objected to her earnings being for household bills - wanted to spend it on what she chose.

In 1975 there was an advertisement in the Daily Mail [*Throughout its life The Daily Mail has set aside a special advertisement section for printing vacancies*] of a vacancy for a Lecturer Grade II in the Graphic Reproduction Department of The London College of Printing. This I thought would be an answer to the fluctuating industry... I sent away for the application form, and letter setting out a list of duties

Filling in the form I signed, dated and posted it - 1st. February 1976, to receive back a letter giving time and date for interview... that April. This coincided with the family's Easter holiday at the YMCA. I caught a train from Eastbourne to London... with suit packed...!

As an apprentice I had attended The London School of Printing, Bolt Court, not far from Doctor Johnson's House and The City Literary Institute - just off Fleet Street. The School moved to The Elephant and Castle, later becoming a College... the college's first year and design courses installed in Waterlow's old building, in Back Hill, Clerkenwall. Now I was attending the college again... only this time, to teach...

When I emerged from the tube station, the college tower block presented its towering floors directly opposite... Its partly shrouded exterior, blurred by polluted light, resembled a Victorian engraving - a forbidding picture...; its ground floors windows shaded by roller blinds giving a backcloth to numerous student posters... the effect being to simulate a post revolutionary military headquarters. This structure forever circled

by a dizzy gyration of never ending traffic - hooting, screeching and thundering out an intimidating, pulsating roar... Never was there a more depressing sight. Gone the Dickensian charm of Bolt Court - the closeness and intimacy of well-known newspaper printing houses, cafes and coffee shops, that over the centuries contributed to the nation's, and printing's heritage. Here was a building of the sixties with all its non-architectural skills blatantly obvious... that bleak period in architectural design.

Still, I was there to try to protect my future so I had to give it my best shot. The pay just allowed me to survive with help from Sally's salary - the holidays would give me a chance to be at home with the children which was an enormous plus...

I knew already a handful of lecturers - two had actually taught me from the section I was about to teach in - one retiring - whose position I was filling, and six I knew from industry. As the manager in a progressive company which had the latest equipment I felt capable of holding my own. The company had employed ex-letterpress men to train, so I was versed in the art of passing on skills and theory.

The interview faltered because the selection board chair told me that whatever happened they could not offer me a Grade II position. They felt it only right that they should grant that position to someone who was already there - been promised that post for a long time. They were kind enough to say that the advertisement held the wrong wording. It transpired that they had offered the LII position in-house - to a grade I lecturer... it was for that now vacant position I was being interviewed for...

I do not think there were more than three applicants. Certainly, there was none with my qualifications. I was told, by the Chairman of the selection Board that in the event of being offered the job I would have to undergo teacher training - a new

government measure to protect teaching standards. Eventually all lecturers in Further Education would need a teaching certificate.

After the interview, I caught the train back to Eastbourne to complete my holiday and tell Sally and the children what had happened. After a period of weeks, I received a letter, which informed me that 'I had been accepted'. I was still most unsure whether I should take on a job, which paid a lot less. The fact that Sally was now working did have a bearing on my decision to accept; that, and the hoped for stability that teaching would provide, plus the long holidays, swayed my decision.

I served my months notice starting to teach that Easter, in 1975, when I was forty. A new career seemed a radical step... I was excited by the challenge. During that Summer Term, I was in classes with the senior lecturer and department head to give me an idea of how to conduct myself and what teaching procedure I should adopt. He told me to attend his lectures and to take notes. In that way I soon became used to the routine and soon picked up the method of work. Much of it was easy and I felt I could cope with all that was asked of me. The London College of Printing had an annex in Back Hill, Clerkenwell that catered for first year students, design and foundation classes. It was explained to me that everyone had to take in turn being tutor to various courses ensuring that registers, attendance's, general behaviour and end of year exams were formally carried out in line with the course syllabuses and possible strictures laid down by external examination boards, training bodies and employer federations.

My hours were twenty-two hours a week – nineteen of those hours as student contact time. The day started at nine and could end at nine for evening classes. You were expected to prepare your own classes, provide your own handouts, devise models, slides, order visual aid projectors and liaise with the

department's technical assistant to ensure all was arranged for the students. The technical courses covered City and Guilds examinations, printing trade courses designed for training purposes, the departments own two year full-time course, the technical content for other college courses, service design courses and a range of foundation, school introduction courses and employers start up courses.

Lithography was the growing printing process - taking over much from both letterpress and gravure. However, you can never be complacent in technical education... Those departments seeing that in time they will lose teaching hours - will plan to extend their teaching practice by stealth and have their outdated skills included in your syllabus. 'What is wrong with that', they will say, 'it will take up time in the syllabus and promote better understanding of practice and history - give a basic skill to first year students - apply old technical methods to give a grounding for future technology...'

Later, constructing a course that requires your participation, give their course greater credibility. Once the redundant staff fully converted, they will begin to increase their teaching time... eventually taking over the whole course. It was castle building... first, the disguised expertise that later turned into an authoritative voice.

Department Heads applaud staff, who design courses - that draw students to them, particularly high level courses. This increases the status of the college, school and department. College authorities eagerly seek all courses that cater for overseas students... their up front fees pay for themselves and others too. The college authorities are not concerned that those students may be better off under another establishment's course... it is about cash, student numbers and status. It is a dog eat dog situation and the college enrolling week is like a battlefield with clapped out

teachers exhausted by having to act as salespeople and promotions experts; the winners strutting around flapping enrolment forms giving a full class list of first year students. How much better a continuation course of three years ensuring at least three years of teaching practice. Once you have a list of over sixteen students, you can start the course even if they have not paid. The teachers will hope to get the cheque from the student on the first day or night attended. Even then, the student may say that the employer did not pay up but he would by next week, or some other excuse. It sometimes took weeks to get the money and even if you did not it was difficult to stop the class because some students had already paid their fee. There was a cut-off of eleven places taken and paid for which would allow the class to continue. Even so, by the end of the course there maybe just five students left out of perhaps four times that number at the start.

These were all parts of the system that I had to become accustomed to. When my first term completed I was co-opted by the Head of Department to help mark the exam papers, total up the end of year results and make out the reports. Here was another insight into the new world I was destined for. The philosophy was, 'try not to fail anybody', because that was detrimental to a child's well-being and self worth. Which made excellent psychology, if some sort of effort had been made by the student - in many cases there hadn't been...; some students, over my years of teaching, just entered their name at the top of the paper and little else...

My knowledge of statistics, averages, and bell shaped curves, spreads, graphs, mean and norms suddenly escalated. How to describe a student's efforts without being abusive or using the same hackneyed 'could have done better' was achieved by having a marking script suitable for all scores and yearly comments.

Common room gossip abounded, a hierarchy place setting of desks and lockers, deference given to old established members not necessarily length of neither service nor status, but a hidden unspoken position commanding respect...

The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education [NATFHE] represented the staff just as rigorously as SLADE & PW, NGA or NATSOPA had done in the trade. I was not escaping the influence of the unions at all. Here they all were the same members, just a name change. The alteration in working practices and changes in the labour market brought about by new technologies just as apparent.

Teachers knew that the public could not understand why the school holidays were so long. Years before children helped gather in the harvest – that is why summer holidays so long. What an outdated reason for establishing a course length!

Educational establishments are huge structures on massive land-sites requiring enormous sums of money to keep open. Having them empty, even for a limited period, is a waste of taxpayer's money. Staggered holidays, flexible working, shorter courses, instruction in the workplace, teaching by internet, all worth trying.

The biggest shock for me was not having to relearn chemical processes or writing on the board but qualifying for a teaching certificate. The last time I had written anything of length was at school twenty-five years before - I have already explained how bad that was. Completing a three thousand word essay-using quotes and indexation was an almost impossible task. For a start, I did not know where to start. I almost literally had to go back to school and relearn what I had missed, what I had skipped, things I had never been told about and to work my way round the skills of higher learning and the intricacies of the library service.

I began by building a desk and shelving in our bedroom under the stairs, which lead up to the attic room. A chair found and I raided the library to provide some course books. A second hand dictionary and paper provided by the National Health Service made up the equipment necessary to start. With that, I started that September - a day release course at Garnet College for Teacher Training, learning about the secrets of educational history, sociology, psychology and philosophy. The class was of many people much like me - not long out of catering establishments, building works, printers and secretarial offices. Actually it was quite good fun and I could have made much more out of it if I had had more time and space at home. My first scrip completed I asked Sally to type it up for me. This gave her a headache for she had not a clue what I was writing about and no doubt, I was not making a very good job of it either. With that rather negative start, I looked around for a typewriter and found one through the Harrow Lyons Club, offered to me for ten pounds. Now I had the means to type my own essays. From that, day life changed. Every evening that little machine clattered away initially turning out terrible rubbish and finally something more reasonable; it also coped for setting out my lectures and notes. My first essay drew from my tutor Ray Harmon, the criticism 'convoluted' and my last was 'a good effort.' Each I believed to be generous and kind. What was more to the point I was learning and enjoying it and could recognise the difference it was making to me. However, it was a painfully slow learning curve. All this furious banging away at the typewriter was eroding what little time I had with the children. Still there were the holidays. The thought kept me going in moments of stress on many occasions. There were times when I actually enjoyed the discipline and the feeling that I was improving myself.

At the same time, I was attending Garnet College I enrolled for a technical certificate in printing techniques thinking this would be another means of procuring a further step towards the next grade of lectureship - something else to fill my curriculum vitae and show keenness. This quest for more qualifications caused endless worry and a great deal of time. It was not necessary to go over the top but felt keenly my inadequate education that I must compensate...

The things I had to teach were in the main out of date skills. The more relevant pieces of training were to do with judging the colour content of an artwork, relative to that produced with the tri-colour printing inks.

Apprentices and trainees have to be shown empirically, if possible, that the course they are following is relevant and that the skills they are achieving are those that are still current. College equipment should be the same or similar to that worked on by the trainee back at their place of work.

Training could easily be accomplished back at the workplace if it did not interfere with production. Colleges rarely had the latest equipment especially large machinery, robotics or other electronic gadgetry. Lecturers are rarely *au fait* with the latest production line techniques.

College staff vacancies rarely receive many applications, simply because the pay is usually considerably lower than industry. It follows that many lecturers are not the most skilled or come from firms holding the best equipment; they sometimes have little or no experience of progressive industrial work patterns or skills. As their teaching life progresses they become more distanced from reality. The only way they can keep up to the latest working conditions they are encouraged to visit firms and work places or retain a consultancy.

The heads of college departments are usually those who have served longest in education - they have normally, but not all, worked their way up the ladder of lectureship grades. Thus higher rates of pay correlate to time served and age. This also in most cases equates to time spent away from industry. Naturally, the graph would show these members of staff to be those close to retirement and their pension. Unfortunately, it does not correlate to first class industrial achievement, vigour, first hand technical knowledge and hands on experience.

When I first went into education, I had no teaching experience, held no industrial diplomas, nor wrote technical papers. Although my industrial experience gained in the most advanced studios my power to change college working practices was nil.

Various departments in a college are always vying for power. This power normally based upon the latest invention or discovery, backed by published paper - this gave the department recognition and standing. Even without industrial backing, forceful individuals, who often spoke loudly - at one time might have been instrumental in advancing the departments position - exert a pressure out of all proportion to their knowledge. Now there was this revolution, brought about by electronics, these old college heads became left behind – felt threatened.

My introduction to teaching came at an unfortunate time, the onetime power was draining out of my particular section – retouching, taken over by the camera department, had always controlled the school's film processors and the rather ancient continuous tone scanner. The lithographic artists and retouchers, including various heads of section, over many years, had not pressed for these facilities being set in their ways not keeping abreast of working practices. In the trade many retouchers planned their own page positions leaving sheet positions to the

platemakers. In college this working practice was not followed allowing other departments to take over that service... the result, as electronic technology advanced onetime hand skills dropped away...

I tried very hard to convince my section head to adopt this method of work [claim page planning as an integral part of the retouchers work]. The whole section could see that this would be a way of ensuring that power and relevance held. However, we did not have the proper light benches, could not easily turn one of the technician's rooms into a darkroom, in a near perfect world did not, and never would have our own film processor. Part of this came true but it was all too late. Other sections could see the necessity to broaden their base and naturally, they tried to retain their power – even at the expense of another's job.

It was sad to see what was happening, skills were being taught by individuals who had never done the job themselves... information given, that was out of date - and in some instances, incorrect. This situation had come about because the industry undergoing such enormous changes. The college did not have time to regroup, and reorganise before another innovation came on stream.

Into the maelstrom I found myself, sitting a teacher-training certificate and coping with a growing family. Simon had taken his 'O' levels and had gone on to Sixth Form College to sit 'A' level Physics, Biology and Chemistry plus an A/S in Maths. David was sitting his 'O' levels at the comprehensive school, Rachel attending Harrow Weald; Ruth, with David at Whitmore, Benjamin, in his last year at Longfield Junior and Rebecca, attending North London Collegiate...

The 1977 session completed my first full year of teaching. It turned out to be more successful than I had imagined. The skills I brought with me from industry had stood me in good

stead - which experience far more up-to-date than the rest of the department – my age allowed me to be far more confident than my time teaching might indicate. If there were occasions when student rowdiness became a problem I could rely upon a story about my past to hold them interested. My late position in industry, as a manager of London's leading colour printers, gave me credence – as an authority, gave an abundance of relevant work solutions to correct production problems. Having completed National Service, tales about life in the Royal Marines always held their interest... having ridden and owned many different motor bikes this allowed me to enter their world. I am sure that having six children working their way up the school ladder gave me a fund of comical stories they could identify with... these were not talking points - of lecturers...!

CHAPTER V.

Certified Teacher – College of Preceptors - Special colour courses – Physics of Light – Artwork construction - College Inspectors – Wapping – Electricians union – Degree Course – Thatcher – Departmental organization – Planning – Film contacts.

Fortunately, I passed my Teaching Certificate. I had already submitted myself to taking the College of Preceptors exam, so it came as a relief! Having to write the essays for the Tutors was a chore but it did improve my English grammar and spelling.

There was this joint pressure on my lack of English Grammar - writing the essays and writing on the chalkboard and providing handouts. Nothing advances ignorance to a working knowledge faster than having to give a lecture and then writing

on the board - I found my brain having to go into overdrive especially talking about something I had little knowledge about. I had to also engage with students, who did not want to be there in the first place - to try and keep them receptive!

All lecturers have to take turns at being a course tutor. This post sometimes requires them to chastise or report bad behaviour. At last resort, the Head of Department or School informed - to discuss the removal of the student from the course. If this is being contemplated a meeting is called, attended by all the teaching staff on that student's course, plus the Head of School. It is extremely rare for this to happen. The lecturers did everything possible to make sure all students finished the course - it was extremely rare for a student to fail an exam or ejected off a course. Both these events showed the course tutor had not acted fast enough to check student progress - perhaps indicate that the student should not be on the course.

I had recourse to call such a meeting. All the teaching staff had agreed prior to the meeting that this particular student had been a disruptive member of class. I had personally discussed the matter with each member of staff and attended their classes to see for myself. When seated in the Principal's conference room, I explained the situation presenting my case and proffering my written report. The Principal spoke to each member of staff in turn asking each if they had a problem with this student. Some said they had known worse, others said he was good some days and not others, and one teacher said that he had no trouble at all - a teacher who had less control than any other!

Fortunately, his employer took this student away from the course never to return. However, this does show how difficult it is to get teachers to admit they cannot cope with a disruptive student and how, by this omission, other students suffer, to be put off further education for good.

A good deal of my teaching programme was taken up with colour theory. As I learnt in depth the subject's theory the more I could relate, 'industrial practice to the science'. In practice: a lithographic artist, matched a swatch with a colour on the artwork - to assess how close it was, or what portion it represented... each colour on the artwork, followed the same procedure - with each of the printing colours. Teaching the subject interested the students because the theory proved – the students wanted to understand the practical relevance of what taught...

The colour retoucher had to match colours in much the same way as the lithographic artist. The only difference being, he worked with only three primary secondary light colours instead of a range of eight or more... The three process colours: yellow, magenta and cyan are secondary light colours... their complementary colours are the primary light colours - blue, green and red, being equal thirds of visible light – the spectrum. In theory: an overprinting of the secondary colours produces black. A projection of the primary light filters – to overlap each other, reconstitutes white light. Where two colour overlap another colour produced - a process colour – one of the printing inks, and complementary to the third missing.

These facts are not disputable – the science well known. What is not so well known: whereas, the primary light filters are spectrally near perfect the printing secondary colours less so... imperfections that are corrected by compensation – reducing reflections of the other colours. It is not possible to print a perfect facsimile because the inks do not absorb two thirds of the spectrum and reflect the other third. Yellow, almost reflects all it should do, Magenta, lacks certain blue radiations and Cyan, lacks considerable blue and a lesser degree green reflections – is a weak colour.

The present rotary or tabletop, colour scanner, uses its circuitry to make these corrections. Enlarging or reducing the picture - with the type and tints, etc., in page and sheet position.

Producing a colour magazine no longer requires a fully trained staff. The reproduction scanners and printers linked to word processors do the job of half a dozen trained workers with a result previously unobtainable. Folding, cutting and creasing, and binding, produced by, equally efficient machines. The revolution complete within twenty years.

The Media Colleges now teach computer science... no longer troubled by union demarcation or petty labour controls. Manufacturing deficiencies - out of date machine tools and patched production lines, were laid-bare... by overseas competition. The working class mentality still operated, declaring that any falling off - lack of orders, 'not their problem'. The promulgation by union leaders that, 'they could foresee the changes coming about in the emerging industrial society', was sheer nonsense. Every aspect of life was in flux for no one could predict the effects of global warming or computer advances.

Whenever, faced by a group of students that made it obvious they were not interested in either the lecture or in the theory, I resorted to a discussion about their work - their jobs - how they fitted in. Trying to compare their working conditions to past factory life and future workstations... making comparisons - as relevant as possible - to life...

Once or twice, I had to work very hard to maintain a reasonable learning environment. I was lucky that I had a string of experiences with which to relate to keep the students amused - to take them away from the present, distract them, and lead them back by another route. Motorcycling, camping, being a Marine, and other distractions served their purpose. Nevertheless, most of all they wanted to know about industrial matters and if you

knew about the latest techniques and could talk about particular firms or had known individuals in the trade, then won over. They want you to understand and be sympathetic to their position and to the problems they are facing and above all 'to be interesting'.

Once, in all my years of teaching, the college inspected. We were given a month with which to prepare for the event. Not being long out of teacher training I had all the notes to tell me what was necessary. I need not have bothered... streams of instructions passed down the chain of command... All lesson had to have a laid down teaching plan - to conform to the latest psychological learning pattern - so many minutes for introduction, three to five main learning goals, lecture subject and summing up... returning to the key points. Every teacher programmes checked, all classes had to be of a certain size; all rooms had to be fully utilised. All the equipment on the department's stock list identified - proof of necessity shown. In other words, there had to be proof that the college was efficient - operating within budget. Frankly, it was not. It did not come up to any of those conditions never had nor would. Classes over a certain size had to have additional staff. Principle Lecturers programmed to be present - had to show a minimum number of teaching hours - but rarely turned up; running the department, they believed, demanded all their efforts. Rooms were not used to their full advantage. When the Inspectors attended classes, a specific number of students had to be there - to make the staffing, equipment and space viable... If the class lacked students - some dropped out, more co-opted in to make up the numbers. Similarly, the classroom: furniture, equipment, tools and machinery had to be necessary component of the lesson - shown to be so by inclusion in the teaching programme. No teacher I knew ever used a ridged lesson plan: lecture 8 on the syllabus was not the same as that taught last year, nor the same as other

lecturers taught, nor link into an overall plan. Assistants rarely had all the equipment. Class sizes were rigged and maximum generosity applied when marking internally invigilated exams.

It stated sarcastically, 'State run educational establishments are designed for the staff and not the students', in many cases, this was true. We could never work out whether the college provided education or training... if for education the staff not scientifically equipped, if for training, not the material, equipment or production line set-up.

Lecturers in the past, about to reach retirement age, found higher-grade work - to increase their salary - improve retirement payout and pension. It is perfectly obvious that lecturers who had been in Further Education for a lifetime towards the end of their teaching life are neither in full possession of the latest industrial techniques nor as fit to teach as they had been when young. A teacher's pension is calculated, by taking an average of the last three years salary. This falsified the standards taught to upper-level courses by acknowledged practitioners in specified fields of learning.

I have explained about the newspaper industry, which tended to control how the completely printing industry operated. The newspaper owners were very rich men who sometimes ran a business not necessarily reliant upon always making a working profit. There was, and still is, a certain status to be enjoyed by newspaper owners - as key political informers - as movers and shakers of government policy. In many instances, the owners knighted and feted by society. Their family also enjoyed the inflated position. They had an 'in' to Westminster and to power. This power, wielded by newspaper owners, manipulated and controlled the printing industry. Their greed retained the status quo over the life of the industry - stifled innovation, pandered to union demands. Their actions and social attitudes affected all

trades in the printing industry - even to those that had nothing to do with the letterpress industry. In many instances, they were family run businesses and handed down to continue the attachments and political preferences. They were insidious, spiteful and in some cases above the law.

The workers knew all of the above. Therefore, they worked on those traits of greed and avarice. They became the highest paid, had the shortest of hours and enjoyed the longest holidays. In total, they had the best industrial conditions of any worker. They went to the annual wage reviews energetically ever ready to extract the maximum for the minimum.

Both sides knew each other and played upon each other's weaknesses. The union leaders wanted to keep their positions of power and influence and the bosses wanted to keep the industrial wheels turning. Gradually, conditions improved but not fast enough to hold off overseas challenges. Old machines kept going. Working conditions endured. Outdated systems maintained. Eventually the whole lot tumbled down simply because, as always, technology eventually controlled the outcome - ruled and new materials, presses and systems came on stream. You can only maintain old equipment and work out of date techniques for a limited period before spare parts obtained and new techniques learnt.

The first to profit from the change was the provincial newspapers, outside the Fleet Street's nationals. The new information technology implemented using a more flexible, less ridged union ruled staff. New materials and presses using the lithographic principle operated quicker and cheaper than existing letterpress methods.

The owners of the national newspapers were not slow in recognising the benefits to be gained by moving to another print base where it was then possible to throw out old arrangements

and agreements employing workers [In this case it was the Electricians Union] who were not members of the old print unions.

In Britain in the late 70s, there were ten major print companies, four controlled outside the country. There were a number of mergers, which still did not improve print relations between management and the unions. Still, printing was about easy profits, weak management, high worker earnings, and as ever, many unofficial industrial actions, which delayed and held back any advancement towards modernisation.

Just as a point of interest: I have not mentioned women in any way either in the teaching profession, in the pre-printing industry or trades union. There literally were no women apprentices or trainees until the 1980's and then only very few in film make-up and planning. That situation would obviously transfer to the teaching colleges so there were no women teachers and likewise be applied to the unions.

There were no Catholics at all, neither men nor women, employed in Northern Ireland and no Protestant women. Regarding the Trades Union as a whole, I would imagine that up to 1980's there would be very few women in skilled positions requiring long periods of training - apprenticeships. It not thought worthwhile, by print house owners, to employ women who might leave the industry after expensive training.

After passing my teaching certificate, I went on immediately to read Education at Garnett, Teacher Training College. At the same time, I took the entrance exam for the Associate of Preceptors. I do not know whether these certifications helped but I applied for a vacant Lecturer 2 position. Thankfully, I was offered the place, which took me into the next incremental salary scale.

Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party elected into office after the Winter of Discontent - when James Callaghan, Labour Government had been in power. There had been a desperate monetary crisis in 1976 and very high unemployment. Wage controls and spending cuts were the line taken by the Labour party to affect control. It was obvious that trade-union power had to be reduced. The new government spoke of 'planning for the future' and 'controlling the unions'. De-industrialisation was a fact and news of further closures a daily event.

The strength of the printing unions was very noticeable at the London College of Printing. There was every reason why it should be. It argued, rightly, that Technical Institutes tended to be backward, in a technological sense, what was current in industry. Their main task was to train and teach fundamentals. It was rare for such institutions to develop industrial advances. It certainly was so in the printing industry. Newspaper workers, by tradition, were the militant unionists. They were in positions of power in the College, which dictated where the resources lay. The Letterpress Department and to some extent Gravure saw what was happening in the industry and to secure their position planned. That meant they would plan their department to take onboard the new methods of working which necessitated the use of film, the assembly/planning of film onto foil and film processing - the need for darkrooms. This they did successfully, instigating new planning courses for apprentices and trainees whilst altering their teaching programmes.

All Higher and Further Education Colleges have within their structure a hierarchy. Each of the specialisms catered for in these establishments also have a validity of their own. Schools, departments and sections are the complex structure of educational establishments - they operate in a hierarchical

structure. Their position is not permanent but fluctuates as industry and commerce changes. Unfortunately, they are always slightly behind the time taking longer to alter their internal arrangements. The Governing Body, Principal and Heads of Study should monitor world trends to make the establishment relevant and forward thinking. The government, industry and current educational preferences influence these factors. Publications that back up that research and other matters also have an importance. These published papers increase their validity if printed in overseas journals.

These three factors: research, publications and government led educational preferences decide on the direction those funds are distributed. The sums influenced by an ever-changing landscape of wars, elections, personalities etc. Fads, biased thinking and personal preferences play their part too.

CHAPTER VI.

Central Council of Physical Recreation - Forcing a reaction – Badminton Coaching – Golf – Sailing – Lacrosse – Netball – Northwick Park Hospital – Dances - Divorce Reform Act – Property Rights – Arthritic Club – Late nights – Tension and Stress.

It was thought, by my mother-in-law Rita, that I should take up an outside-the-home interest. This was a typical statement by Rita because she was very keen to see that individuals did not become hidebound and inward looking and tended to stimulate others to be outgoing.

I have never had to consider before why she should do this. It was if she had been bottled up, penned in, and corralled

and did not want others to be in the same position. Rita was a frustrated dancer - liked the stage and was in her younger days a bit of a show off. She was also a frustrated musician - although played the piano charmingly and sufficiently accomplished to be in the string section of the Wembley Philharmonic, would have liked to achieve - knew she was capable of, Associate of The Royal Academy. She liked to dream of being close to the Arts and Crafts movement and its followers - read about design, colour and furnishings, collected poetry books, meditated and could discourse on literature.

However, I do not believe any of that explained why she pressed so hard to make others react. It is as if she wanted to get some sort of response... stand back and see a change in the relationship. All most odd but she were interesting to talk to and had a wide knowledge of the classics and poetry. She once told me that she would say something to her friend Beryl just to see what her reaction would be. The object was to stimulate argument - by goading - to cause a reaction.

Sally had the same urge as her mother – to make a statement to observe the effect...this invites, on the uninitiated, consideration – to make a reasoned response to continue a conversation or offer explanation. This may not be what is required the statement may have been just a remark to fill in space...

I took up badminton at an evening class having never played before. The class was about twenty strong with mostly women, which is quite normal for all evening classes being more socially minded - preferring to do things in company. Some of the class had played before but the majority had not. It did not take long to get in the swing of the game and in no time at all found, I enjoyed the experience. The small group of men, including myself, stayed together for many years gradually getting

better whilst taking an interest in the professional game. We went to the all England competition at Wembley and took on extra tuition. Four of us stayed together for eight years, eventually I attended a British association course – became a qualified coach.

Golf was another interest, which caught my imagination. A near neighbour, Ian Cuthbertson, who had gone to the same school, played at the local course and invited me to ‘have a go’. Thereafter, a regular Sunday morning game meant getting up very early - before six, to drive to the course and put a ball in the shoot - ready for an eight o’clock playoff. This continued for some time and only ended because he left the area.

I have explained that Rita was very keen that I should take up an outside family interest to make a change from routine, every day work - saying that spending a week away would also be a good rest. The local library had a book, which listed courses and venues for sporting activities, and amongst those was the Central Council for Physical Recreation at Bisham Abbey.

I went on one of their sailing courses, remembering my experiences during National Service. Another year, I went golfing, then pony trekking, both with my brother Derek, finally, Badminton.

These events were good experiences - well worth attending. However, I had a family that I missed... It was unsettling and could be disruptive. There were one or two occasions when relationships with the opposite sex could have been progressed... I shied away... knowing that it could be highly dangerous and only end in unhappiness.

Sally had her interests too. During and after school she played lacrosse, which continued right up to when we were married, until being pregnant with Simon prevented taking part. Later, but only for a short period, took it up again. She was an aggressive player wanting to be where the play was and ‘to always

win'. When her friends, at a keep-fit class, asked her to join a netball club this took over and became a weekly event - the family, me pushing the pushchair, watched from the sidelines, attending the finals at the end of the season.

Sally took up the Red Cross attending their weekly sessions. This she found interesting closely allied to her medical experience whilst making one or two friends. Being a medical secretary by training she went back to work part-time... until Rebecca was found a position at kindergarten at the age of four. She then took up a full-time vacancy in the audio pool at Northwick Park Hospital dealing with arthritic and rheumatic conditions.

We attended the Hospital dances and social events to back up their fund raising for various charities and societies. Sally made many friends with patients and members of staff and these friendships, within the department, involved many lunch time get-togethers which spilled out affecting afternoons, and then on into the evenings. These social lunch hours began to spill over - into work, exciting the department heads...

Office staff in hospitals, and other large institutions, are mainly women, many of whom are job sharing or on part-time contracts. A high percent of these are unmarried, single mothers, separated or divorced - the completely social mix. These groups can have a great effect upon each other - affect each other's happiness, stability and social relationships. Those dissatisfied, disaffected and unhappy... seek excitement to spice up their lives. This can have a knock on effect causing instability in others, particularly over a long-term, particularly if the person susceptible to persuasion...

Men working together, talk about work, cars, DIY, sport, gardening and television. They do not belittle their wives however bad their relationship. Women talk about family and the home, social/community life, holidays, television and children. These

are generalisations but show that it is more likely that women in certain groups discuss between themselves their personal relationships sometimes in a disparaging way.

To the rising call for easier and speedier divorce The Divorce Reform Act of 1969 replaced the idea of matrimonial offence – usually adultery, with the breakdown of a marriage as due cause – it was also customary for the ex-wife to have custody of young children, which normally meant those children under sixteen – out of schooling.

The emancipation of women was clearly being achieved but at what cost? It believed in 1970 that sexual love, in all its parts, very important. Intercourse rate was believed to be twice a week as an average. Three times considered high and once thought low. The divorce rate was 10.4 per thousand of the married population - remarriage rate falling. There was a feeling by women generally that ‘it’s my time now’, believing men had had it good, in their eyes, for too long – wanting to capture ‘lost youth’.

Sally could not wait to find herself a full-time job now that Rebecca was going to school... being mindful there were to be no more children she was adamant that she had to have another interest to fill the gap. Having six children to provide care and continuity for at home – even though Simon was soon to enter university education, was not enough stimulation. The draw of, ‘being wanted and rewarded too’ plus the excitement, was enough to spur her on. Something had to suffer at home, and that something was, having a happy, calm, contented and fulfilled mother working for everyone’s best interest at home - planning a long-term secure future for all.

Simon finished his ‘O’ levels in 1976 going onto Sixth Form College for his ‘A’ levels. Halfway through these he had his mocks followed by the normal routine, filling in his UCCA form.

It was thought he would be a doctor, subjects that covered: Biology, Physics and Chemistry. When Christmas 77 came round, I telephoned his tutor - to find out when I would get back his page three comments - a university application made. I discovered that the UCCA form had not been filled in. The tutor gave as a reason, 'Simon's lack of interest, in having a university degree'.

This set in motion a panic in me. It was too late now to make a normal application. Fortunately, at College, a Higher Education publication highlighted the need for applications, for a bursary of £100 per month to read an honours degree in Paper Science at UMIST – sponsored by The Institute of Paper Making. One year worked in a factory of their choice for industrial training purposes. I sent off post haste for the form, which when it arrived, was duly filled in and posted. With a great deal of good luck back came the acceptance and pages of information. Gone was all thinking about being a doctor for now papermaking was the 'in thing'.

As expected, Simon got good grades whilst keeping the schools tuck shop properly stocked. Off he went to seek his fortune in Manchester relishing an excellent social life whilst taking an active interest in rugby and hockey. His mini suffered loss of wheels, much overloading with barrels of beer and achieving a record for the number of passengers able to get in it.

Simon's out of school 'washing up' experiences, in *The Hand in Hand*, Pinner [which backed up his paper rounds and other means of making money], not only gave him financial independence but provided money to buy and run his own car. David also went to work at *The Hand in Hand* a little later.

Simon took his car with him to university, and it lasted out the full four-year course - giving noble service - putting up with intermittent servicing, dodgy petrol and serious overloading. I

believe he came to know quite well one or two girls who complemented his dance routines delayed getting back to Hall. Being social secretary stretched his imagination and emptied his pockets. His third penultimate year at UMIST was spent at a Paper Making Mill in Snodland, Kent. The idea was to learn about the industry from the shop floor – to work his way round the whole factory gaining an insight into paper making practices.

Completing his two-year 'A' level course in English and History David was undecided about which university to go to... It was decision time. In the end he decided to take a year out in the hope that something would happen to point the way ahead. Meanwhile, a job at the Social Welfare Office for Employment, in Harrow, seemed a good starting off place. David joined a boxing club - enjoyed letting off steam on the punch bag... whilst keeping up his piano playing. These are difficult times for all teenagers trying to discover for themselves where their interests lie, coming to terms with the necessity of earning a wage. He was very conscience that whatever happened he did not want to lose face - take a menial job just for the sake of it!

During my summer vacation that year, I went up to Eaton Bray to see my brother Stan and his wife Jean. When I arrived, Jean showed me into the garden and bade me to sit down have a glass of cordial and wait, as Stan would be along soon. When he appeared they went off together - that I thought rather strange. When he came back he looked very annoyed. Anyway, we had a talk, the afternoon progressed, and after a cup of tea, I took myself off back home. It transpired later that Jean had been going out with her boss - she worked at a local car accessory plant in the office, for sometime, and this later turned into a permanent relationship. This was a totally unexpected event...

Stan and Jean had five boys ranging from sixteen to nine settled into schools and the locality for all their years together. Stan was going places with his company and not long made up to Director and General Manager. The house they lived in was in a crescent of new homes and had five bedrooms. Considered one of the better houses in Eaton Bray, had a relatively large garden neatly laid out and Stan's pride and joy.

Jean's behaviour was a total shock to Stan not knowing that her relationship had been going on for so long or that it had reached such a state. He gave her an ultimatum [my visit coincided with this event and therefore explains the rather tense atmosphere] which she accepted - to desert her family, which finally led to a Divorce. Stan had to re-mortgage his property to pay for the settlement, which made his finances very difficult - this coming on top of the added pressure caused by the fluctuating market in the motor industry as well as having to look after five boys.

Sally and I were not conversant with child psychology nor did we understand current thought on the socialisation of children within a family unit. Even though we had read Dr. Spock's book on having a family such esoteric notions were not to the forefront of our mind. There were more children to follow and more money needed to provide a home. Every day brought new challenges and young children are very demanding on both time and energy, feeding and comforting. Self-imposed as well as society imposed pressure can have an enormous influence on young people making them feel unwanted and uncared for.

Rachel was sixteen coming on seventeen, just like the song. She considered attending a secretarial college making office work her career. There were no pretensions about doing 'A' levels wanting to get out of education with all possible speed to start work and earn money. Boy friends were far more important

without being too critical about their present and future occupations.

Being fastidious and having to live cramped together with little or no privacy has its own effect - causes strain on others as well as oneself. The three girls slept in the large front bedroom, which made it almost impossible to be private and to have personal belongings properly stored. Rachel being the eldest demanded conformity from the other two and attention by them at all times to her space. No matter how tidy each person had their belongings surrounding them, it was never close enough and there were frequent dissensions.

As I was home more often now - able to control what was happening, calm descended. Rachel was going out most of the time with her friend Zoë from Canterbury Road and her boy friend from the Army.

Ruth was in her last year at Whitmore Comprehensive leading up to her 'O' levels and CSE's. It was difficult to study at home or to do her homework. She relied upon her good friend Mandy for company when she was not attending the stables at Grimsdyke. Being a member of The Pony Club, having the club tie, with the boots, riding hat and crop she was a dedicated follower. Every Sunday I would take her to the stables to do her bit for the club and to have lessons, which she enjoyed, meeting friends and taking part in the jumps and dressage. Whilst she was having her lessons I would take pencil and paper draw a picture of some detail of architecture of barn and outbuilding and fill in the colouring when I got home.

Piano practice for all of them started to collapse soon after Simon stopped doing his through pressure of work. His next exam was his final, which required theory as well as practical. Miss Day, the family's piano teacher, having got marriage now started to plan for a family, which forced her to stop teaching. To

find a new teacher was bad enough but to maintain interest and insist upon practice was getting to be impossible.

Benjamin was thirteen and not long at Whitmore. He was absolutely captivated by the cinema and all the technicalities associated with the industry, including film projection. It was difficult to keep him away from the Odeon, Rayners Lane, where he was to be found most evenings. He was also a keen player of early video games and pinball machines - found at the local amusement parlour. He collected films and often went to London second hand shops to see if he could pick up more. He could keep you amused for hours talking about special effects and the uniqueness of particular scenes from art films. His gang of friends roamed the streets listening; I am sure, to him talking about his absorbing hobby.

Benjamin had been most upset by not being allowed to go to Buckingham College, Harrow. He believed that everyone else in the family given a choice and that, 'if he were to be given a choice that is where he would like to go'. Unfortunately, Sally believed that there was not enough money available - the payments for Rebecca's School Fee Insurance Policy, and all the other out of school activities, was difficult enough - to pay for. This was just another pointer towards unfair distribution of resources and consideration - the whole family was being affected by lack of care - allowing outside forces to dictate an even spread of time.

Benjamin had his bed up in the attic extension with Simon, surrounded by books, films, a cine-projector and posters. They played cards and got up to all manner of pranks. From this time Simon was never again a permanent member of the home except those few holidays left to him in his final year before starting work.

Rebecca, now eleven, was an established North London Collegiate girl in her brown outfit and hat [skirt for summer and trousers for winter]. She was prepared to have a go at anything always bright and cheerful having no difficulty in picking up any of her school subjects. What a joy it was to have a child happy and accomplished interested in all things.

Stan eventually became divorced from Jean after a most stressful year of litigation. Later he employed, and fell in love with, Pauline to act as his personal assistant. They married in March 1980, which meant that Pauline had a ready-made family of boys to look after. Like the printing industry, motor manufacturing and ancillary trades were on the decline. It was a tough time and had not Stan met and married Pauline life would have become almost impossible.

During the summer holidays, I took the three youngest children camping. Loading up the Ford Anglia to the gills, with every space accounted for: boots, beachwear, ground sheets, lamps, cooking pots and all the other paraphernalia necessary for camping. After the annual trip along the A3, past Chichester, we reached Littlehampton where there were an organised campsite boasting toilets and showers.

The tent was a pneumatic arrangement, which relied upon air-inflated ribs - pumped up to form a dome, instead of a frame made of poles. It just about catered for us four, snug, although we had to be careful not to touch the tent sides when raining. In front, behind a beach windbreak, we had our gas stove and table. There were fun times on the beach jumping off the breakwaters, building the inevitable sand castles whilst trying to hold back the sea from smashing it. Littlehampton explored and the surrounding historic buildings were marched-to in turn. Our evening meals were usually fish and chips, which set us up for the return walk back to the campsite and to an early bedtime. It

would have been lovely to have Sally come down to visit us just to see how we were getting on and to see how we organised the sleeping arrangements. I thought then how strange her not coming down - joining in, even if it had only been for the day, it would have shown interest and broken up the week for the children... she never did, which was a disappointment to us all: now she will never appreciate how a visit by her would have made the week more enjoyable for us all.

These camping holidays curtailed by a thoughtless fellow camper who purposely punctured the inflatable ribs. It was impossible to mend so that ended our own efforts at sampling the outdoor life.

However, we treated ourselves - to the French form of regimented campsite, which was an improvement on all our other camping holidays. It was an experience, which was exciting, entertaining and educational. We even came away with the knowledge of how to cook mussels in wine and cream.

To augment my existing qualifications I enrolled myself on two Harrow Borough training courses. One was instruction for Victim Support and the other for a Youth Leadership – mainly how to run a Youth Club and organising sports and social events. During both these courses, under our team leader David Pickles, we visited many clubs and social events... being shown what was provided, how the clubs were organized, and who attended. These visits gave us a good insight into what the community was doing for young people: to give them a worthwhile meeting place, help them become socialised and social integration.

I came away seeing for myself how many generous individuals there were giving valuable time, effort and expertise to worthwhile causes. Some clubs were there to help underprivileged and physically and mentally impaired individuals who in normal circumstances were not allowed out into the

community. These events allowed their carers to have a few moments rest away for the responsibility of their charges.

By this time, I was an established lecturer with two teaching qualifications. Backing this up I had technical qualifications, which augmented my practical skills. Now at last I felt more able to look around and consider the future... it had been a difficult and frustrating time getting used to a very different world.

British society had gone through a technological revolution and still there were enormous change to come. I have already described how the printing industry changed. The rest of the UK's industrial sector had gone through a similar explosion dictated by computers and robotics. It would be fair to say that the average person lived with far greater horizons in all aspects... from holidays abroad, when to purchase a house, what means of transport suited the family, what type of diet they required and what form of partnership - conformed to their sexual needs.

Sally was working full-time at Northwick Park Hospital as an audio secretary in a large office with many other women some part-time working others working job-share schemes. The work force split up into groups concentrating on particular complaints and illnesses. Sally's area was arthritis and rheumatism and over a period had become very knowledgeable and sympathetic to those who suffered from those debilitating symptoms. Having been a member of The British Red Cross knew about first aid and minor accidents.

Hospitals, and Northwick Park was no exception, have clubs and societies associated with individual complaints. It is quite reasonable that they should have because they hold not only the expert doctors and consultants but also the files, literature and archives.

Sally was asked by the Arthritic and Rheumatism Club [ARC] chairman if she would like to be the club's secretary.

Whilst acknowledging her expertise he admitted that the club was desperate because they could not find anyone with the necessary experience. She was persuaded and accepted devoting much time and energy to the cause - even to the extent of frequent fund raising and social events. These took up a lot of her time and became more and more important to her... taking her out in the evenings meant coming back later and later - at this stage Sally was going out most nights, including weekends. I was happy that she was finding an outlet to her frustrations – not having any more children especially that ARC was such a reputable institution...

Fortunately, I now had a shorter contact teaching time and could alter my time for class preparation to coincide with home affairs. Taking some evening classes also gave me some additional flexibility.

I was taking on more and more of the house work, as much because I was there as to cover for Sally being at work. Cooking was becoming a greater part of my life and I enjoyed it. I bought the ingredients whilst on the way home and then got down to it before the younger children got home. The garden I had always maintained, including house repairs and car servicing. At first, Sally found this helpful – different, after a while tiresome... I was taking away one of her tasks. Now that she was no longer going to have any more children she saw this as removing one her remaining functions.

I saw to the evening baths and read the bedtime story to Ben and Rebecca. Rebecca stayed in our bed until we went to bed when I then lifted her out and put her into her own. This allowed Ruth to have a bedroom of her own – before Rachel came home... normally Rachel was out with her boyfriend Neil or at the Barker's in Canterbury Road.

That Christmas Eve in 1980, Sally came home late from an ARC social gathering. I had been pacing up and down - after seeing all the children to bed... as it got later and later... I began to get increasingly worried. When at last she came in, I questioned her about why she was so late, especially being Christmas Eve. She declared that, "she had been with someone who loved her and what's more she loved them"...!

In retrospect: I wonder what caused Sally to blurt out her news in that manner.... I knew then as I know now, she was quite capable of making outlandish and rash statements without considering the consequences. But this was so earth shattering - so likely to offend, that even she might stop before framing the words...! But no, here they were - the words - matching upto past events. She had said how she preferred certain physical forms and attributes... how past boy friends had provided more excitement. Still, to make such an entry, obviously had to be a planned event... needed confidence, assuredly and considerable nerve. Now I knew what she had meant by, 'you'll be sorry', when I had said no more children...! What about the children? There was such an age gap... the eldest at university and the youngest at junior school. There is no better time to announce this sort of news, especially at Christmas. I wonder what Sally expected me to do.

If someone had asked me prior to this happening, 'what did I think would never occur', this was it. If asked, 'do you have complete confidence in your marriage I would have remarked, 'yes'... but, there were all those: drinking sessions, nights out, parties and coach trips. Didn't they point a finger and give a clue... was I blind?