

CHAPTER III

Final year of Apprenticeship – Journeyman – Motor Cycling – AJS – Dancing at Wembley Town Hall - Courting – Lacrosse - Engagement – Bottom drawer – Vicar - Marriage – Honeymoon, Isle of White - Harrow Road Flat –In-laws – Pinner – Pregnancy – Ford Van - Harbury – Home Improvements – The end of hand drawn lithography - Colour retouching.

It was quite a shock to go back to my old job in 1956, after two years National Service. There had been many changes to the printing industry since my departure mainly to do with technical innovations within the film industry. Three main factors transformed the printing of colour and type for all printing requirements. First: the manufacture of large size studio camera, Second: the ability of film manufacturers to produce larger areas of film with a stable backing, Third: colour correction, by overlay masking, to compensate for the spectral deficiencies in the tri-process inks. From this time photography ousted hand drawn reproductions. This was the end to fine art posters and autolithographs for coffee houses.

Customer preferences, in a now film obsessed advertising world - where hand drawn methods were 'old hat', wanted the latest high tech. methods. Advertising Agencies, sold space to clients on the use of 'the latest technology' that sold hording space using, 'keep-up, with all that's new'. It was *di rigour* - as a sales gimmick, but not always 'best practice or advice'. The object was... as always, to reduce the number of printings needed. Hand drawn methods could not compete with the range of tone produced by the photographic halftone screen. Immediate post war publishers relied upon letterpress to produce the bulk of general print work. This includes newspaper and book production. Print runs for popular magazines became the prerogative of gravure printing simply because the gravure cylinder retained the image longer without changing. Lithography produced greetings cards, wrapping papers, labels and posters. Whilst Screen Process [Silk Screen] concentrated on signs and shop counter goods and packaging.

It did not take long for all this to change, as new technologies came into being and working practices adapted to suite. The first process to feel the pinch was letterpress whose hand set type, superseded by hot metal production, gave way to photographic typesetting practices. Patched up and planned film, incorporating halftone pictures and lettering, exposed onto light sensitive coated, flexible metal plates, enabled the lithographic processes to take over much of the work previously printed letterpress.

I had to finish my apprenticeship by completing one more year. I was not to return to College or evening classes. Within a short time I found all the old skills retuning... able to copy everything a fully trained journeyman asked to do. I was now paid nineteen pounds for a forty-five hour week with two weeks holiday.

Before my NS, there had been very few union disputes. Men were returning home from the war and life returning to how they had been pre-war. Houses had to be repaired, furniture brought up-to-date and children catered for. Now, five years later, in 1955, the unions were conscience that wages had to keep pace with the cost of living and workers had greater expectations – an improving life style.

The dockers were complaining about age old methods of unloading ships; the Transport and general's 'closed shop' arrangement was being challenged by the Dock Labour Board. The Electrical Trades Union refused to maintain the newspaper printing presses; the Locomotive Engineers demanded a wage increase from the Transport Commission. It was constant friction throughout the 50s... spelt the eventual demise of Britain's industrial sector over this twenty year period... from which it never returned...!

The spirit of England had changed since the Suez Crisis in 1956. I was about to be called up to serve in landing craft. In one week the tone of the country altered when it was called 'the

aggressor' by the Americans. The whole campaign was viewed as gunboat politics. I thanked god... that it all died down and the troops returned home...

Back to reality and normal life: after work, my journey home was from Neasden Station... a seven-minute walk from Chromoworks. On many occasions, Ken, who had attended the same school, gave me a lift in his new Ford Popular – a car bought for him by his father, for the price of just under £500. Ken worked in the drawing office at British Thompson Houston - an electrical engineering firm dealing in switchgear. We gave up many of our Friday evening's to the Wembley Town Hall dances which were always well attended and engaged first class bands - Ted Heath, Ken Macintosh, Eric Delany, Johnny Dankworth and Lou Stone. Most Saturdays we went to the pictures... for he was good company, we chattered away covering most subjects, enjoying similar things. Film goers reached a peak in 1946 when one third of the population was going at least once a week. The Korean War, Malaya and National Service reduced audiences steadily until the effects of television - consistently lowered the graph...

Trevor, another artist working in the same studio, had a motor bike. Not only did he understand its mechanics but followed motor cycle racing. His girl friend Gladys was engaged to him for five years, spending most of their time together planning their new home. He refused to marry her until he could buy a house, which he eventually did, furnishing it... finally building his own garage, with his father.

Through his interest, and lots of prompting, I bought myself a black, ridged framed, single cylinder, 350cc AJS, from Pinks of Harrow. This faithful steed took me to work in all weathers. I kept this for a couple of years, stripping it down and polishing it... believing I was increasing its speed with every change of oil. Unfortunately, this never happened for it only ever went at sixty miles per hour with my head down, throttle fully opened and a following wind...

I began to take on more and more difficult tasks at work. Eventually after that first year after coming out of national service, I was able to take my place with the rest of the studio. For some reason, that I am grateful for, I was never 'banged out'. This is an age-old method of celebrating the completion of an apprenticeship. The departing apprentice carried around the firm on the backs of his onetime fellows whilst ink, soot and feathers, thrown at him...

All the artists were worried about their future employment. During my two years absence the industry had undergone enormous change. Advertisers believed that adopting the latest means of picture reproduction would help sell their wares. Colour reproduction was now going to be a photographic operation... hand drawn work phased out.

Printing was not the only industry to suffer from being out-of-date – lagging behind emerging Far East companies. Car and motorbike production boomed, as did the manufacture of components and accessories... but not for long... Hire purchase business doubled and house building soared. Television competed with radio and the cinema... and won. Independent television began in 1954 extended ten years later - increased its membership. There was large-scale immigration from the West Indies quickly absorbed by the railways. Overtime, by the nation's workforce, was an accepted way of raising ones living standard...

Wembley Town Hall was the unlikely venue... where I met Sally... my future wife. Ken and I went to a dance there just before Christmas 1955 having arranged the meeting the previous week. He picked me up at home as usual, in his car. As we mounted the wide steps to the Town Hall, we decided to have a drink first, take in the competition, survey the land - plan our evening.

The dance floor was certainly the largest in the vicinity - as a venue it lacked an intimate atmosphere. The floor was so large that before the next dance there was this enormous void in the centre of the floor, which, to find a partner, had to be negotiated. When one did pluck up enough courage to strike across the floor... towards a likely girl, always concerned that one's fly buttons undone or some other personal defect visible... what does one do with one's arms. Swing them or

should I put my hands in my pocket and saunter over feigning confidence. Did I always walk with a limp, I wondered, or is it these damn shoes slipping on the floor? It was equally daunting when being refused a dance by the girl using one of the stock phrases: "Sorry, I'm waiting for my partner, I'm sitting this one out", or, "I promised this one to someone else." The poor rejected soul had to either creep away, ask somebody else nearby, which never produced a good result, or carry on walking to the bar as if that had been his original idea in the first place. There was a distinct advantage to leaping to one's feet as soon as the next dance, introduced by the Master of Ceremonies - so that the choice of partner secured - at its highest point. The girls who were the prettiest and could dance well were always the most sought after. Without prior intelligence work, you might be fooled - make the wrong choice, then you had to stagger around the room with someone who had two left legs, had little or no conversation, or worse still just did not want to dance with you. The whole object of the exercise... to find a girl... who would be a good companion!

At the end of all dances, the 'last waltz' announced. To be left without a girl to take home was the worst thing possible. I looked around and spotted someone in the crowd who I thought might be suitable. However, my request granted... missing the fact that she was with a friend... we took the floor... It seemed to go quite well she danced easily... we chatted about the band, the choice of music and her preferences for dances. It was the best dance of the evening and I asked if I could see her home. At this she replied that her friend with her and that they had come together and it would not be right to leave her alone. I immediately asked if she would go with me to a Christmas Eve dance above the Regal Cinema in Sudbury. At this, she said she would - the date fixed, for meeting her there...

The evening was a success. It was my greatest worry that we might not get on - conversation stilted and time drag... However, it was not any of those things, it was enjoyable and for the first time I felt at ease and more sure of myself. I walked her home, which was over a mile away; time quickly passed. The parting kisses were a delight and I said goodnight arranging to meet her in a few days time - after Christmas she had her days planned long before. I walked back home over Harrow Hill along the Ridgeway, whistling a happy tune... at peace with the world...

It did not take me long to appreciate that this friendship was different. Our interests and feelings of togetherness were appreciably less stressful than my previous relationships. I do not think that it was because I was becoming more adept, although getting older in itself would naturally do that, it was obviously... the more experienced girl... She was interesting and interested and made the relationship natural and exciting.

From that time, we saw each other at least twice a week and gradually I grew to know her parents and her brother Roger. It was comfortable - so easy for me to be included into the family circle - to take part in their home life. They lived next to the Wilson's - Colonel Wilson had been my father's Corps Commander - in the Home Guard.

Sally was born on the 14th March 1932 to Harry and Rita Morgan at a nursing home in Chicester. Sally's father, born in 1899, served, during the First World War, in Mesopotamia in the signal corp. Harry appears in my memory as being slightly taller than I. Therefore, he was all of six foot - weighing twelve and a half stone. He was a Welshman, born and bred in Neath, South Wales. A head of thick, grey, wiry hair combed in a neat, central parting. A grey moustache set off a cheerful, lined, weather-beaten face... more often than not, wreathed in a smile. He was an inveterate smoker of Balkan Sobranie cigarettes, which he inhaled with relish letting the smoke, pass out through his teeth. This habit perfectly conjures up how he viewed life, particularly away from his work - for him, a chore - he tried to be enthusiastic about all that he did - had distinct views, of most aspects of life, which he propounded... looking over the rim of his glasses and The Times newspaper. It was this paper's crossword which gave his main form of relaxation.

Harry was a rugby fanatic, especially Welsh rugby... at Cardiff Arms Park. Having been born in Neath, South Wales, he never ceased to extol the virtues of either the country or its citizens. To him Dylan Thomas was its chief bard - he often recited Under Milk Wood many times the Welsh Anthem and Men of Harlech his first choice of tunes. The harp was the only instrument worth listening to and the Welsh flag the only flag worth flying. He was a Welshman through and through.

When I first knew him, he was the manager of Lloyds Bank, Greenford and considered his staff to be his main concern over all others. Throughout all his years, working his way up from cashier to manager, he had been a dedicated member of staff. Harry was disenchanted with modern banking methods - head office required goals to be set for taking on new clients - continually increased the targets of how much money the bank processed... he wanted to retire. This took away contact with main clients... he considered his friends. He was a member of the local Rotary Club and participated in their charity work but could not wait to retire from the bank so that he could watch cricket at Lords, westerns on the television and go cycling...

He was not a practical man; but proud, when he had wired up an electric plug or mended a puncture. He was literate and enjoyed going to the theatre. Financially prudent, he appreciated and planned for, a simple life the delights of the English countryside and good company... He mostly wore light grey suits and striped shirts and to my memory never wore a hat, nor ever wanted to. He was not somebody who would knowingly harm you, swear at you, raise his voice... but be gentle in all things...

His wife Rita, nee Hutchence, hailed from Woking where the family ran a Coal Merchants. They had met whilst Harry Chief Cashier at the Chichester Branch of Lloyds Bank. Rita worked at the County Library as Librarian; they both had an interest in Gilbert and Sullivan Operas and the theatre in general. Her father, moving out of the family home when she was young, forced the mother to raise the girls! This event had a great influence on her sister Grace [Paicie] who thought little of her father for deserting her mother and children, for another woman. Brenda [Bren] still lived in Woking. It was not until much later that her son Raymond, who worked for the local authority, married Valerie and continued to reside near the family home.

Rita had been a star pupil at school winning numerous prizes, which also upset her sister who tried much harder in her work but did not receive due reward or recognition. She was only about five feet four inches tall and slight of frame but very strong willed, determined and resolute - totally believed in woman's liberation. She was perceptive, relished testing other people's opinions and reactions, and once set on a task she persevered until finished. Rita was a homebuilder and delighted in keeping up with the latest fashions. Not popular mass market fashions but accepted appearances of good taste. The home at Sudbury Hill was always immaculate. The furniture was mostly of polished wood and the chairs had loose plain covers. Her favourite colour was green which showed in the colour of the carpets and drapery. Most of the curtains she made- up herself, taking great pains to ensure that the hanging lengths were perfect.

Tea laid in the dining room, arranged to a uniform setting. Small iced cakes, tarts and flapjacks home made and a bought almond cake was the usual fare. Rita at one end of the table with Harry served cups of tea facing her at the other. He relished fruit loaf, which is a particular favourite of mine too, so that was always on offer. In the evenings, I would stand by Rita as she played the piano, turning and sorting out the next piece of music. Being raised on Sullivan's music, and other turn of the century pieces, we got on famously. I knew that my father played the piano well but Rita more accomplished - gave greater feeling in her translation. Sally played the piano too - passing five exams, but disliked playing in front of anybody, not receiving the same pleasure from playing - as her mother ...

Rita played the piano to a high standard, accompanying the local light opera company and attending their concerts. She often remarked that she had been set to follow a music career... had

she not met Harry. I got the impression that she would have preferred the life of a musician rather than being a librarian, which she later became. Although there was a certain amount of romantic longing, rather than practical reality about her feelings, she imagined in her daydreams a bohemian lifestyle – not one of a staid bank manager's wife. She often spoke about past loves and losses with regret. In later life, she took up the cello, achieving a sufficiently high enough standard to be a member of the Wembley Orchestra. Her involvement with a local string quartet and recorder group gave her a busy out of home life, which complimented her later schoolwork.

The atmosphere of gentile orderliness and the attention paid to form, quality and style captivated me. These were all things foreign. Everything was decided by the relationship of one object or colour balancing with another - which picture should balance with a piece of furniture - sympathetic to the overall general decor and mood; this consideration was a revelation... made total sense! Rita thought all things through, giving an educated appraisal of the impression required. She was undoubtedly artistic, literate and thoughtful. I think she believed she had wasted her talents and for most part, she probably had - although for a woman it would have been difficult to have penetrated a-mans-world at that time.

Priory Gardens is a road of semi-detached houses, which runs up from Harrow Road... close to Harrow on the Hill. They were houses built about the same time as those in Cumberland Road but to a higher standard, being on a larger plot of land. The windows were latticed set in bay windows to the front. The garden neat but unremarkable, with a small number of fruit trees at the bottom of the garden... The french doors looked out onto the back lawn... The grass, mowed by Harry - a task he never looked forward to, became one of mine...!

Sally's brother Roger, went to boarding school - St. Paul's, for the first year... when I came to know the family. He had been a chorister at Kings College, Cambridge - winning a scholarship. Rita had decided to have him educated away from home. Roger remained in a boarding environment throughout his whole education. Rita believed this would make him more independent from the family. He was, and remained a convivial [hail-fellow well met] individual. His smile was inviting and genuine. He always had time to talk and had a generous personality. Roger could always be relied on... his keenness to please sometimes got in the way of positive action. He proved to be a good friend.

Sally had attended Haberdashers Aske Girls School and because of her inclination - to make each subject a challenge, kept in top class positions for most subjects. Her best subjects were Literature, English, Latin and Modern Languages. Sports of all type were perfect for her longing to succeed and she belonged to all the School's First Team. Sally had strong views, which she declared forcefully, and was out to win especially at games. She was also very upset when her mother compared her with a near neighbour Jennifer pointing out how helpful and considerate she was to her mother... believing her mother never gave her full credit for anything...!

Many Saturdays saw me taking Sally to a lacrosse match in Gunnersbury Park - she sitting on the back of my trusty AJS, the evenings spent occupying the back seats of the local picture house. During the week, we usually just went for walks. Come the summer we arranged to spend a week at a Warners holiday camp on the Isle of White. Before we set off Sally's father made me promise that I would look after her, which I said I would. I found this loving gesture most kind and thoughtful and just typical of the man.

It was planned to sleep in separate chalets - next to each other. In the event we slept together in one bed without engaging in intercourse, being quite content to save the experience for marriage which by then we expected to take place. It was during this holiday we became unofficially engaged, buying a marquise ring at a jeweller's in Shanklin, which Sally immediately put on. I felt full of the joys of spring and most sophisticated in my light tweed hacking jacket and dark grey trousers.

At last, I felt confident - I could concentrate on my job, the future look after itself... The holiday proved a great success, having any stress removed by compatible companionship; we were going to share the future together - no hurry to prove our love for each other - time would do that...

It was a glorious summer holiday with not a spot of rain in sight. Our walks together along the beach and exploring the countryside about the camp - taking the bus further into the heart of the Island, were unforgettable. I became badly sunburned, which took quite a while to heal.

It was on our return home that I asked Sally's father, when we were together alone in the sitting room, if he would agree to us getting married. He said that we had his blessing...! We announced a date for the following year... not sure of the timing.

I was twenty-two and Sally twenty-five. We were both excited, by the thought of being together, started to plan for the coming year. First I had to attend a Royal Marine camp in Malta - to last a fortnight, as a Z class reservist.

I flew out with the rest of the party in a Short Sunderland flying boat from Southampton to Gibraltar. For a fortnight we trained hard beaching and drawing off, circling the island many times...

Sally sent me an airmail letter every day, many written with 'I love you' covering the pages, which was eagerly looked forward to. The rest of the squad looked at me with envious eyes as they started to be delivered. Sally had started to knit a brown background fair-isle jumper with an extremely complicated pattern. This took all of Sally's patience and spare time - night after night knitting away trying to keep an even tension on the different coloured wool so that the pattern did not have one strand that pulled.

The Morgans did not have a television set - by choice, nor did they own a car. Rita practised the piano and cello most evenings in the dining room or bedroom to prepare her-self for the forthcoming concert. Harry continued reading... filling in his crosswords whilst attending monthly Round Table and Rotary evenings. They both decided that they would not buy a television, until Harry retired...

They took Sally and I to the theatre on a number of occasions to see Sandy Wilson's musicals, Salad Days, The Boy Friend and The Buccaneer performed at the Lyric, Hammersmith.

At this time, Sally was working part time at a local greengrocer's, earning sufficient money to pay for her way through a Secretarial Course for typing and shorthand at the Pitman College. Previously she had worked at The Bank of England a position her father had obtained for her which was not at all suitable for her - enclosed in a large institution was not something Sally would ever have liked. Having to use the underground railway was also something she disliked doing - was a fear, which has never gone away. She dislikes banks, banking and officialdom. All these fears and dislikes ended any hopes her father might have had in that direction. This decision did not go down well with either of her parents.

We met when Sally was undergoing a Pitman's Secretarial Course. She finished her training and passed the examination to give her all the skills she needed. A vacancy for a medical secretary becoming vacant at Wembley Hospital... Sally applied and passed the interview. It did not take her very long to understand and apply medical terminology to the letters transposed from audio recordings; typing-up letters from shorthand notes - which she was not so keen on doing. As the hospital was, only two miles from her home in Sudbury Hill Sally cycled there every day.

National Service had upset the normal course of an age old custom, linked to my apprenticeship... This I considered fortunate, I missed the 'banging out' ceremony - heralds the completion of an apprenticeship - reaching journeyman status. However, I did not get away without having to stand the firm a drink - over at the local pub - for both my engagement to Sally, and my new position...!

In 1956, industrial production in Japan achieved pre-war levels and West Germany, helped by three million refugees from the East, surpassed Britain's car production figures. The printing industry, controlled by the newspaper industry - whose workers always the most militant... annually demanded better working conditions. The men composing type - the compositors, held the newspaper proprietors to ransom... usually getting their way! This had a knock-on effect... onto the other printing processes, forcing up their wages... improving their conditions.

Most other industrial workers looked to the militant to hitch their coattails. The printing industry was not the only powerful group. The dockers - controlled the import of food, and the miners - controlled the power. The whole country rode on this era of increased affluence. Employment figures were up and there were not enough skilled workers trained to develop many new production techniques originally designed pre-war but now being introduced.

From this time onwards home produced cars and motor bikes lost out to the more reliable Japanese models. Eventually Britain's car, truck and motorbike industry failed to foreign competitors whose products were less rust prone, had higher component specifications and mounted later engine designs.

On the 31st October that year, Britain, France and Israel attacked Egypt. The loss of the war, by retiring from Egypt before a satisfactory completion - caused by American pressure, lost the country valuable industrial production and exports but it also interrupted vital oil supplies. All these taken together created a run on sterling and caused a loss of credibility and prestige. Macmillan had the job of putting a break on rising prices and maintaining the value of the pound. That year there was a destructive printing strike, which went on for weeks and caused much bitterness and strife. Its net result made a number of firms move out from London and caused others to close down altogether.

Prefabricated houses were built during the war, to house bombed out survivors. They were ready-made, easily erected, single floor bungalows, very much like a large caravan. Tower blocks were, now replacing these iconic, utilitarian homes. City and town 'bombed out areas' were completely changed from their original Victorian buildings by new slab sided easily constructed offices. Concrete framed picture windows, stairs and landings steel tubing that replaced brick; individual windows panes, stained glass, wrought iron railings and moulded brickwork anathema. It was the turn of minimalism, easy fix and pre-construction. It was thought, by the then consultant architects, that what people wanted was high rise blocks to house the maximum number of families so that more space around would compensate for the lack of gardens. Every part of the country had there own soulless creations the repeated a sameness of not only the social outcome of disaffected youths with nothing to do but a soulless conformity - lacking in individualism.

The massive increase in industrial competition from the beaten axis countries, helped by the Marshal Plan to ward off communism, started to prove too much for Britain's outdated, worn-out factories and machinery. It was very much easier to start-up a modern system of production when starting from scratch rather than cobbling on the latest innovation onto the old previous model.

Foreign Governments subsidised the building of modern factories, which could undercut British prices; our trade unions demanded one man for one job, which was inflexible and anachronistic. Work gradually went abroad especially when, it seemed to be more often than not, there was industrial action here to increase wages and reduce the working week. In the printing industry, particularly in the pre-printing side of the industry, typesetting and picture reproduction was now computer generated... the writing was on the wall... labour was going to be replaced by machines. Fixed-size presses superseded rotary book presses - standardization became an important factor in pricing. The rapid development of photographic typesetting to assemble a complete page continued apace. It was clear that letterpress typesetting and block making was in decline. It was a question of how fast would the print house owners change their equipment and come to terms with

what was clearly going to happen. Fortunately, for the workers, this did not come about as fast as predicted...

Society expected you to get a job immediately on leaving school, a percentage paid over to your mother - to help with the housekeeping. It was expected that you would get married after a reasonable period of engagement, of say two years, then, when in your early to middle twenties, you got married in a church; you rented a flat either furnished or unfurnished to allow you to save hard - for a deposit to take out a mortgage - to buy your first home. Children were to be the result of that marriage after a reasonable period taken to gather basic furniture together.

It was late in 1956 when there was a lengthy printing strike, which created great bitterness between the management and workers. The Works Director of Chromoworks could not deal with Frank Clements, SLADE&PW union representative. He was a confirmed Socialist very interested in social reform. He would not accept that the management could not increase the workers wages. There was talk of a walk out leading to strike action. Eventually, asked to step down as Father of the Chapel.

As usual, the workers demand was for a reduction in working hours, longer holidays and more money. Eventually the bosses concluded a deal and we all went back to work. However, the eventual outcome was the closing down of the artist studio over a period of a year. One man retired, two men went as trainee retouchers to Sun Gravure Works, two men retrained at Chromoworks as retouchers and two of us went to Wood Rozalar and Wilks, Willesden. Shortly afterwards Chromoworks closed down their Neasden factory and went to Nottingham becoming part of The British Printing Corporation [BPC]. This firm was also a general printer similar in size to Chromoworks, what was more welcoming, intended to retain their artist studio in the hope that they would pick up work from firms closing their studio.

My fiancé and I had not discussed having children before we were married. It was not a subject shunned because it was embarrassing just denied importance. We had not even discussed where we would eventually buy a house or how we would furnish it and certainly, not what style nor period of decoration we preferred. It was almost as if life would just follow on what had taken place before only now we would do it together.

Our marriage, planned for the third week in March 1957, timed to take full advantage of the end of tax year rebate. This rather clinical regard for a tax rebate was worth planning for and used by most couples thinking of getting married. We took ourselves off to see the vicar of St. Andrews, Sudbury, to inquire about what the marriage procedure was - about when the banns read. We had very little money and had to save like mad not only for the wedding and honeymoon but also for the flat on Harrow Road and essentials.

The wedding breakfast held at Priory Gardens. Harry and Rita Morgan had explained to Sally and me that we had a choice, a wedding with all the trimmings or a simple event plus a cheque for five hundred pounds. As I have explained - we were very hard up, took the kind offer with gratitude.

For the occasion, I had had a new suit and Sally had a fitted costume with an 'A' line light blue topcoat and hat, which she soon discarded - never liking such accessories. Round her throat hung a single string of pearls and pinned to her coat a posy. Sally hated dressing up and never ever got used to doing so. Such formalities and rites were anathema to her. She was all for sporting gear and casual wear.

I rolled up to the church by bus - from Harrow - dropping me off at the bottom of the road. I walked, in plenty of time, to the church... up the aisle, before the altar. There I mused, 'was I doing the right thing?' My doubts vanquished by finality and completeness... no more disruptions; I must 'get on with life'.

It was a fine spring day, warm and sunny, heralding a new life about to begin. Eventually the main guests arrived including Vera my godmother, up from Somerset, and Roger, Sally's brother, my 'best man'.

Sally drove to the church in a hire car and walked up the aisle with her father. It was a simple affair - no choir or bells rung, although there was an organist. The hymns we had both chosen, enthusiastically endorsed by Sally's parents, sung with enthusiasm. It was a lovely happy occasion with the minimum of ceremony and fuss.

After the ceremony Sally and I waited in the wedding car for all the guests to make their own way back to Priory Gardens, which was only five minutes walk away, and then we drove up in the car. Harry and Rita had laid on a fine selection of ready-made sandwiches, cakes and biscuits. A fine toast by Sally's father preceded champagne and cutting the wedding cake. From now on I was to call them Dad and Mum. They never asked me to do so, and I was never embarrassed using the familiar terms - it just seemed natural to do so. I became part of their extended family, from that day on... never needing better.

When we eventually arrived at Waterloo station, via the dreaded underground railway, Sally hated going underground, we boarded the main line train to Portsmouth, which would take us to the pier where we were to catch the ferry to the island. A taxi took us to the hotel where all of the guests, we discovered, were on their honeymoon too.

The honeymoon was booked at Cliff Top Hotel, Shanklin, and Isle of White. Our marriage state obvious, for who else would go on holiday in March... cold, wet and windy... The hotel was full of such couples - all on their honeymoon.

Our week was soon over. I have read that these events are not always easy affairs and ours was certainly not the most relaxed - we were in fact embarrassed which was silly because we had spent the previous summer together on holiday sharing the same bed. Perhaps we should have talked the matter through, but we did not, both being unsure and inexperienced. We were not the world's greatest lovers and the run up to the wedding and aftermath caused its own stress. There is something to be said for trial marriages - understanding all that is involved about making love with all the expectations that should follow. By itself, the hotel was fine and the Isle of Wight provided the necessary backdrop to the start of married life.

However, we survived to find ourselves outside the Harrow Road furnished flat - we rented... my motor bike, propped up in the road. Arriving back home, with forty pounds in the bank and a lot of hard saving look forward to...!

The owners were a funny lot because what ever they did they made a lot of noise about it. There was an amazing amount of banging and crashing with shouts and screams, which reverberated from one side of the house to the other. This was our nightly entertainment, which did not make our love making any more accomplished, in fact put Sally right off. At one time, I am sure the man threw a chair that bounced from one wall in their kitchen to the other.

Our rooms were sparsely furnished and the kitchen positively barren. The bed creaked and the floors echoed. Sally was homesick to the extent that she spent all her time back at Priory Gardens. It was all quite hopeless and no way to carry on. This lasted about a month before Father-in-Law decided that we had to have a better situation that might prove to be more encouraging.

An unfurnished flat - number eight Meadow Road became available in Pinner. A Lloyds Bank employee had occupied it. We had a chance to fill it, which we did with much rejoicing after paying a deposit. Now we could use all the things we had both collected to stock our bottom drawer... moving in May 1957, after its total redecoration.

We furnished the flat with a kitchen table with two chairs, double divan bed, light green carpet square, two Cintique arm chairs, a 'G' Plan wardrobe and chest of drawers and all the other bits and pieces needed to make up an on going home. With those and an orange box covered over

with a tablecloth that supported the black and white TV... we were all set to start our married life together in our own unfurnished flat.

My in-laws kindly bought us a magnificent Mason's tea service made in the Strathmore design, which became our pride and joy. It was always a pleasure to use but as with all most precious things, with a large family, accidents took their toll...!

My motor cycle, I kept down the side passage, to wheel out every day, to take me to work come rain or shine. It was not long before I wanted a larger machine. I discussed this with Trevor - a work colleague. He advised buying a bike such as his - being familiar with its construction and servicing his own machine knew that it was reliable... recommend his BSA, 500cc twin. With that advice, I looked around the various local showrooms and eventually found one at Slocums in Neasden. What a difference it made compared to my AJS... the BSA was a pleasure to ride...

Sally continued to work at Wembley Hospital and cycled there every day cum wet or shine. Her pushbike with the wicker basket on the front often with the day's shopping inside had to negotiate Harrow Hill that Sally used as a challenge to get up without stopping to push.

The house we shared with the Turners, who lived on the ground floor. Mrs Turner and her daughter 'did' housework for local people and her son worked for the council. Living with a family below was a strain particularly when Sally repeatedly cleared her throat at night. The result would be a tremendous banging on the ceiling below with a broom handle and frosty glances during the day. Mrs Turners was always a few centimetres away from the drawn net curtains that twitched every time we went out.

It was not long after being married that Chromoworks shut down their artist's studio. The management gave three months warning saying that they could retrain half the staff to be lithographic colour retouchers - those who had been with the firm the longest.

The three of us - who had to leave, asked by the management what we intended to do? George Clements said he would retire. Fred and I to fill positions within a local printing house called Wood Rozlaar & Wilks, Willesden. Everyone was satisfied... that the best had been done to see their future catered for...

The firm kept my wages at the same level, which, considering my new married state was very welcomed. It did not take me long to fit in with what the other men were doing. My previous skills stood me in good stead and Cambell Gilbert, detailed off as my instructor, was an adept tutor interested in the job and open-minded about new technical methods. There was an enormous amount of handwork still to do on both the continuous tone negatives and screened positives. Because so much time was devoted to masking out the negatives, I had a chance to take in what was going on around me and to adapt quickly to the new working environment and skills I had to acquire.

When first married, ten years after the war, the nation's conventions - behaviour and habits, based on pre-war patterns, that had evolved over generations. My marriage was the culmination of my longing to settle down and plan for a better life - to share goals, interests and outcomes. We had not discussed whether we were going to have children or how we would bring them up if we had. Getting together - courting... our engagement, marriage, and early life together, all followed conventional behavioural patterns... This conformity spilled over into shared tasks within the home and, from overheard conversations, sexual behaviour too... Having children was included in our forward thinking, although not spoken about... Although individual childhoods are not all the same - within a social class, life-styles patterns are. The changing culture of Britain promoted 'the welfare interests of children'. This was to play an important part in the future consideration of married partners. Sally and I continued to live in Pinner, throughout my year of re-training, and subsequently... when I moved on... to a job with Sun Litho at Ruislip. I applied for the position as

a fully trained retoucher, although the work considerably more advanced. At least five of us at Wood Rozalar, from different departments, went to Sun Litho – a relatively new plate makers and provers who were taking advantage of the boom in litho - taking over from letterpress.

The latest Kodak Tri-colour masking methods were used which ensured less handwork and retouchers had to do their own page planning. The Roland flat bed proving machines, three in all, were the latest design - all new. Planners took the separate pages to plan into sheet position ready for plate making...

Sun Litho was a plate-making firm for the lithographic printing industry and as such had to make a profit from only that source. This competition, from independent colour separation studios, plate makers, film planners and provers, became an inherent part of the printing industry, and over time created faster and cheaper techniques... Competition became fierce.

For all book production, whatever the printing process, films, showing typematter and [screened] halftone pictures, cut, patched and planned to form pages. These pages in sheet position are now ready for printing. The position of a page on the plate is relative: to the size of printing machine, number of pages in the book and method of cutting, folding and gathering.

Planning separate films – both screened pictures and typematter in page position, onto a clear plastic foil - both stable to heat and cold conditions, was a considerable improvement on letterpress having to set type and picture blocks into a forme.

The surface of the aluminium printing plate was coated with a light sensitive emulsion which hardened, when exposed to light. The opaque black 'image areas' held back the light leaving those areas capable of being removed – replaced - made ink receptive.

Within a very short period, many letterpress workers were made redundant. To absorb these workers – keep them in the printing industry and in the same union, apprenticeships were curtailed and a retraining programme instigated. It was not many years before the photogravure industry followed the letterpress industry's downturn. All this was the start to a massive restructuring of the printing industry, which is still going on today, driven by electronic image generation.

Throughout this period the trades union held legal strength. As previously explained it was not just in the printing industry that it resulted in poor growth. The obvious restrictive practices stifled the growth of productivity - put off firms seeking greater profits - investing in new machines. Unions were always trying to improve the conditions of their members because this was their main task. Therefore, the pressure on the economy increased. Management's did not stand a chance to resist having all that political power against them. In the coming, years when Labour in office there was a marked increase in the growth of public sector employment. This spiral of wage claims, strikes, inflation relying on restraint to curb an ever-increasing enactment of the position was destined to fail.

To maintain, perhaps increase, my living standard employers had to be progressive - be efficient - use the latest technology. This meant that I had to move firms every two to three years – move to progressive firms, keeping abreast of new techniques. It was no good staying at the same place out of sentimentality because wages would not keep pace with the cost of living. Most platemaking firms paid precisely the same rate to all employees believing that there would be no industrial friction between skills if all paid the same rate... not so...!

This was neither economical nor in the best interest of production however much it pandered to social engineering and the rights of workers. That meant that you could not seek a raise for greater productivity because that would mean that others would feel threatened – it would show that greater productivity could be made by admitting that this one man was better at his job than another. Who was going to be the judge, if a wage-rise given then that man should have all the most difficult work to do?

In some instances workers agreed amongst them - to accept the same rate – and ensure total transparency. Working in such an environment one quickly became aware that some men were better than others. Some slowed the work-rate down – so that others could keep up others sat back... The common denominator: for the slowest speed to be the norm - working at the same rate - for the same pay. This is patent nonsense... even if the standard of final work was the same, which never happened... quality and quantity gradually declined... However, new methods and machines came into production faster than human's change behaviour - adapt.

There was general belief by Labour Government's - of Clement Attlee's 1945 – 51 and Harold Wilson's, 1964 – 70, that the Trades Unions and various social welfare groups, should plan events in favour of so called underprivileged groups - workers who were less skilled. It is as well that in the early 60's there was a great post war boom - driven by cheap energy. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan attributed saying, "you have never had it so good". From 1951 to 1963, sandwiched between two Labour governments, there had been a Conservative administration, practically covering the whole period of which I write.

In 1961, life expectancy for males was 70 and females 74. The rate for employment growth in Britain was 3.2 the lowest for the seven largest Western economies in the world. The place of women was particularly difficult. The war years had seen a tremendous influx of women into not only the armed services but into industry – there would be no turning back, women sought parity with men in all fields. Women jobs in printing factories were for warehouse duties. Apprenticeships and trainee positions for girls only started in the early eighties. Girls just out of school no longer thought about getting married and having children. It was now about getting a job, fulfilling ambitions and becoming independent.

The economy was thrusting ahead which continued for over a year. Working conditions negotiated on an annual basis, in retrospect, always the same: longer holidays, shorter working and an annual increase to keep abreast of inflation. Overtime worked by the majority - at least two nights for four and a half hours per week and Saturday mornings from 6-12. New firms were opening up every week offering better wages and conditions and there was a steady turn round of staff.

In the sixties, the industrial unrest centred on the shipbuilding industry, dockside workers, mines and motor works. This had the effect of turning young people off those jobs - for fear of being involved and losing wages. The long-term result was a lack of suitably trained workers within all industries. The emergence of web-offset printing - from continuous reels of paper, for the production of local newspapers and periodicals - cut costs, introduced better quality pictures and started the use of colour. This was the beginning of steps taken to restructure the printing workforce.

The three main printing processes, letterpress, gravure, and lithography, competed with each other for the middle print-run jobs – a print run of half a million copies. Letterpress held on to newspaper production... mainly because the production set-up long established and would be expensive to change, and the strength of the letterpress chapels had always held the management to ransom. Letterpress also controlled book production for a similar reason although from a union point of view their power diminished – their profits were not from advertisers and deadlines. Photogravure existed for long runs - magazine production in the millions. Lithography printed labels, holiday brochures, lesser magazine runs, greeting cards, prints and jobbing work. By the 1960s, it was very clear that the two former surpassed the latter... All the most modern innovations: Flatbed scanners, studio cameras, film & foils, printing machines and rotary machine plates pointed the way - the printing industry was heading towards a radical change... In fact, it was a revolution.

Countries abroad influenced change too. Their workforce flexible - easily controlled - dominated by strong management. New techniques, working arrangements and modern machines

were quickly introduced – without renegotiating new agreements. This undercut Britain's industrial effectiveness.

In Britain, the newspaper industry continued to run on pre-war working methods. Abroad – mainly in Holland and Singapore, faster and cheaper lithographic processes undercut prices.... Their use of film for the production of typematter, multiple images and scanners, for four colour reproductions, gave them an edge – on price and time. Foreign governments financially assisted their country's printing industry. Britain could no longer compete.

1963 – 4 saw the twelve-month premiership of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the surprise choice of the conservative party. He predictably came across as a reliable, trustworthy prime minister who unfortunately had no persona for television and the media. He was a bad choice not because his policies were bad but because he did not reflect this age of youth and scientific progress – there was to be great changes in industrial development, which did not bode well for Sally and me – planning our way ahead...

It was considered by government 'think-tanks' that motorways was the answer to traffic hold-ups. 1963 heralded... the introduction to: town planners and developers proclaiming a new architectural design - to progress a brighter future... the promotion of concrete – roads, embankments, slab-sided buildings, bridges – institutional buildings and council offices. Cities and towns forty years later decried this misplaced zeal began to haul down these edifices of blighted opinion...

When we had been living at Pinner for just over a year Sally decided that it was time for us to think about having a family. We were still saving hard for our own house and the thought of having to do without one salary in our saving strategy was worrying. The question of having to start planning for a baby was a shock... and what about the long-term effects?

We had never discussed having children or if children came along what size family we would like. In fact, Sally had never shown any desire for children - enjoyed their company - shown any regard for babies or been envious of mothers to be. It was almost an out of character act, for someone so sporting.

However, Sally was not to be put off by financial considerations. Here was a challenge that required dedication - if others could have children then so could we, any thought about waiting until we had our own house was out of the question. So the decision made, that a pregnancy tried for - after two years of marriage life.

For me, to be making love most nights was an enjoyable experience and there being no need for contraceptives a liberating and satisfying time - but for Sally it was a mission - not something to be fulfilled by or enjoyed.

After a couple of months of trying for a baby with no results Sally began to question what was wrong. She consulted friends and colleagues at work. As she was still working at Wembley, hospital she was in the right place to gain some of the answers. Eventually the family doctor consulted. The usual advice given to achieve pregnancy was, give it time, be patient, achieve the right temperature and posture, and be relaxed... All of those I had in plenty. For Sally it was frustrating.

At last, the day came when Sally had the pregnancy test... which proved she was. It was a time of satisfaction and expectation. Sally still cycled to work and the months ticked by up to the time she gave up work just a few weeks before the birth.

That year we spent our holiday at a farm in Timberscombe, Devon, close to Dunster and its castle. I can still see the large bowl of cream placed on our table for every meal and the porridge too made with cream and full cream milk provided for breakfast. In the afternoons, a cream-tea served and once again, there was the cream placed before us in a large bowl.

On one of our motorcycle trips out around the lanes near Rickmansworth, we sped round a corner to meet a car coming in the opposite direction. The leaves on the wet road presented no grip

and we drove straight into it. I gripped onto the handlebars like glue Sally meanwhile flew over both my head and the oncoming car – I sustained a broken wrist and she nothing at all. I made my way to Mount Vernon Hospital where my wrist put in plaster. The damaged motorbike transported to a garage in Wealdstone where it was repaired. Never to be quite the same bike again - being out of balance - the frame slightly twisted. That made us very aware that from now on our family's safety was paramount.

That Summer I started to take driving lessons in a Standard Pennant car setting off with a hill climb up the hill to the cinema along Pinner high street or trying to pull out from the parked cars going down towards Love Lane. Riding a motor cycle had made me road conscience so it did not take me long to get the hang of driving. I managed to pass in eleven lessons, which was a relief because we badly needed the money.

I sold the Triumph 650 cc, which I bought in place of the BSA nine months before, and bought from a friend - Colin Reuter who ran a garage along the Pinner Road, a pale yellow Ford Anglia 15cwt. van for £150.00. It had only three forward gears and a side valve engine... but much needed for a growing family and gave noble service.

Stan, by this time, had gone into the motor industry from being an agricultural engineer, was in the servicing department at Dagenham Motors, Alperton. They took over servicing my car.

Often I wondered, after sampling dry, warm motoring, why I had continued with the motor bike. Those freezing cold fingers, wet chilled knees, waterlogged shoes and bulky weatherproof clothes. Not to mention those awful raised white lines on a wet day coming round a corner - that if you got one wheel one side of the line and the other wheel the other it meant a possible fall. This was the same feeling experienced when going over a polished manhole cover or a pile of rotting leaves. Alternatively, the heart stopping moment when a motorist suddenly opens his door, adjust wipers blades, cleans the windscreen, or to turns sharply in front of you... now we had a family to care for...

Our first child, a boy, was born on 5 February 1960, at Wembley Hospital Maternity Unit. We named him Simon Roger [after Sally's brother]. I was twenty-five and Sally twenty-eight delighted that the birth had been a success - without any complications.

After ten days Sally, released from hospital carrying Simon, we drove back to her parent's home – thinking that there she could rely upon her mother to make the passage to parenthood easier... could develop a routine to transfer back to Pinner. It was a relief that her parents were so near and that Rita was happy to put up with the invasion... It was an ideal situation, which lasted for a couple of weeks, but like all good things had to end...

We got all the new infants bits and pieces together and with Sally's case, journeyed back to Pinner. When we got there, we unloaded the pram and wheeled it up the front path. There, we suddenly realised the awful truth - the pram was too big - would not, with any twisting, turning, tipping and tugging, be enticed around the front door and up the stairs to the flat. It was at this stage, Sally, getting more and more upset, refused to proceed - declared that we were to return to Priory Gardens immediately...!

Our fateful return convinced the In-laws that here was a crisis that they had to be corrected, being too well aware, they would have to put up with an invasion... yet again, unless desperate measures taken. A powwow produced a solution... we had to have our own home and fast... Harry scanned the local papers for Houses for Sale...

Both he and I went in the van to see some of the houses on offer whilst Sally stayed behind with Simon. We had talked through the financial situation knowing that I had this Provident Life Policy - could be used to provide a loan for house purchase.

When I was seventeen my Aunt had taken me to one side to explain that I should devote some of my wages to take out a Provident Life Policy – to save, and later, convert to house

purchase. This seemed like an excellent idea and I completed the paperwork at once. This cost me in the region of £17.00 a month – which was a lot of money to me being almost, one week's wage. How pleased I was when it became clear that this policy would be our salvation for it allowed us to put down as a deposit £2,300.00. However, we needed another £500. My Father-in-Law stumped up the amount needed, put the transaction through the banks Lawyer and checked the paperwork. How lucky we were that he was a bank manager fully conversant with such matters.

Sally turned down a number of houses we looked at - being unsuitable – either too small or in a position which to her was unacceptable. At last we came upon 68 Norwood Drive which at first glance would provide all that Sally desired. She gave it the thumbs up and we speedily made our way to the Estate Agent.

The purchase arrangements was speedily completed and we became the proud owners... knowing that there was much work that needed to be done - to put it into a state suitable to receive our new family. All my spare time was spent scrubbing floors, stripping old wallpaper, painting and planning the new kitchen. Sally and I agreed to name the house Harbury - adopting 'Har', my home town [Harrow], and 'bury', from Sudbury - her home. The sign graced the front porch - hanging from the door canopy. It was very exciting to own our own home... I could not stop myself from walking round and round the house thinking how lucky we were...!

It was about this time that Harry took early retirement from the bank at the age of sixty. He had looked forward to this moment with relish – he was going to do all the things he had been dreaming of: being a grandfather, watching cricket, cycling, reading and perhaps most of all buying their first television and watching Westerns. His face would wrinkle up in a tremendous smile, he would draw an even greater mouthful of smoke in and exhale through his teeth as the wonderful thoughts, expectations, and delights regaled him. Now he could devote all his energies and time... to fulfil his dreams!