

CHAPTER IV

Secondary Education - The Headmaster - Headstone Secondary School - Homework - The Boy's Brigade - The Methodists Church - Annual Camp - Isle of Wight - London School of Printing - Boulton Court - Fleet Street - Employment - Selection - Apprenticeship - Lithographic Artist - City & Guilds - Dancing - Girl friends - Relationships - Life at home.

The Headmaster, Mr H. E. Manson, was a short, stout, red-faced man with swept back, slicked down hair, in a pin striped, pin neat suit with a projecting white handkerchief from his top pocket. He stood at the school gates in the morning rocking on his toes, alert to every living thing fluffing out his feathers.

The light, reflected off his spectacles - like the yellow orbital ring of a peregrine's eye, scrutinising its territory. He patrolled the corridors during the day catching his prey on the wing, alive to every trick played by his charges; stopping here, then there - to look in through the windows of the closed classroom doors to see if there was any 'larking about'. Not only did we the pupils fear him but the teachers too...

Morning assembly saw the whole school gathered, including the teachers..., a respectful mass of upturned faces ready to take part in the daily service before the start of lessons. Achieving this army of serried ranks was a thing of organisational beauty. At the command of a whistle, the playing children would stand still. Another ear shattering blast would direct all to form up by class - in twos. A third whistle started the leading class to file into school, along the corridor to the hall.

On my first day, Mr Manson explained to the assembled gathering that it was important to refer to the school as Headstone Secondary Modern School and not Headstone, as that was a private school down the road. He went on to say that, we should be proud of our school and should not feel ashamed of

not passing the eleven and... we attended a good school with an excellent record. I fear all his strictures were ignored. We were very aware we had failed and besmirched by the fact. Needless to say, thereafter, we referred to our school as Headstone.

We were allotted our classes; thankfully, all my friends were with me - in the same class - Upper 4B. I refer to the boys only, for most, if not all the girls, were from other schools in the neighbourhood. That day in September 1946, we began our four years of secondary education.

There were about thirty-five pupils to each class and four classes to each year - in order of merit. Annual exams were set and tested in school and my results were consistent throughout all my school life - being within the first half dozen in the second class. For some reason, which I cannot now imagine, I was quite satisfied with being in that group. Eventually the top class streamed - to take 'O' levels, which gives you an idea what the other three classes were like - in ability.

Education was affected just as much as industry by the war, the lack of male teachers and a lessening in standards - caused by lack of discipline. Today we see children carrying enormous quantities of books and school equipment. I do not remember anyone carrying books to school. What was necessary was provided - was read on the day of the lesson not taken home. We sat in-school set exams marked by the teachers who took the subject. There was no external assessment and I do not believe we ever had the School's Inspector pay a visit. Simple grammar taught with no reference to Latin. Mathematics including decimals and simple algebra the peak of achievement. French taught for a couple of terms. Music consisted of singing national tunes and listening to records. History taught more as a reading test without committing much to memory. Geography as

countries of the world than rock strata and population growth than birth of a town. Boys had metal work and girls home economics. Gardening consisted of a lot of digging with no planting. Woodwork for boys making boot scrapers and Sewing for girls making shoe bags.

Although some homework was required throughout the four years, I rarely did any at home. Mostly what was needed completed before I left school - that same day – during school hours. If homework was given at the end of the day, I did it next morning - in the playground. My friends and I considered homework unnecessary – an interruption to play. My parents did not question what was going on – they never attended a parents meeting or visited the school - at sport's days or special events. As my end-of-term results were sufficiently high, they never enquired too deeply, how I was getting on. Very few pupils went on to full-time further education no-one stayed on at school beyond fifteen. The shortages, previously described, plus lack of equipment and limited accommodation did not offer the chance of greater advances. Grammar schools concentrated on producing literate students not technocrats. Secondary education, apprenticeships, day-release courses and night classes not only produced tradesmen but skilled manpower which the country desperately needed to keep up with the rush of new innovations brought to the market just after the war.; for very many this was to provide a better means to make social advances...

One of the many crazes during my time at Headstone was miniature cricket. This played using stumps three or four inches high, a bat carved out of a small piece of wood and a marble. The whole assembly of players knelt down and gathered round the batsman, bowler and wicket keeper. This game, played on the field, soon turned trouser knees green.

Mr Mason declared at assembly that anyone caught playing this game would be caned. He thought the game ruined good clothing – that the parents would support him. Our team ordered onto the stage - made an example. We trooped out and lined-up, with hand extended, to receive our just deserts.

After school, we walked home past the shops towards the Embassy cinema. There were the usual skylarks of chasing each other and playing ball. One of the boys jumped on my back and I fell forward smashing my face onto the pavement. I leapt to my feet pretending that there was no harm done. Suddenly, felt a cool draught in my mouth. Putting my hand up to my face, I found that two of my front teeth knocked out. For months and years afterwards I was to be plagued by having to go to the dentist to have caps put on – temporary ones initially that had to stay there for two years. They were silver and obvious and I hated them.

It was during my first year at Headstone that my friends and I agreed to join The Boys Brigade. I was never happy at the scouts particularly digging grease pits, making chairs, tables, cooking stoves and latrines and sitting round the campfire – it was all so cold and very uncomfortable and quite prehistoric coupled with the fact that the uniform slouch, wide brimmed, hat and pole looked ridiculous.

Joining The Boys Brigade [first Pinner Company based at Pinner Methodist Church, Love Lane], at the age of eleven in 1946, was probably the highlight of my young life and lasted up until the age of seventeen. I went to gym classes, drill lessons, band and drill nights, and Church parades every Sunday, attended every camp and sat numerous badges. It was more important to me than school and anything else. It gave me security, interest, hobbies and social skills. We took part in drill and band competitions and for our summer, camp went to the Isle of

White. For some years, we camped in the same field as the sixth London Company the same company my father had belonged to so many years before.

Our Company was lead by Captain Leslie White who started the company just after the war. The company attached to the Methodist Church in Love Lane, Pinner. Four years later, the church insisted on having a Scout Group – partly prompted by an inherent class preference Our Company had to find other premises, which it did in Northwood. George Munday and Leslie Tanner were the other officers and together they formed a strong base for the company taking it to over thirty boys strong. Looking back it would be difficult now to find a more loyal of dedicated group of people who were only interested in doing their best for their charges. I owe them a great deal for their long-suffering patience and fortitude. Hardly a day goes by without some reference to those times and how they have ‘stood me in good stead’. Church every week and church parades once a month, every national holiday celebrated, the flag raised – if not in fact metaphorically, and the old Empire given prominence. They were days, never to return, days of strong community bonds and ridged rules of etiquette and behaviour. These extended to local use - when the family went out or on holiday, and to Brigade events and camps.

During one of these camps, my father had written to me one of his comical letters and addressed the envelope, ‘To Master Terence Kearey. Forever after my nickname was ‘Master’. As usual, my great friend David was with me throughout all my school days – from the age of five until eighteen - our lives were together. We went to Lords cricket ground. Every Sunday afternoon in summer went into the park at Headstone Recreation Ground to watch the cricket and take the scores. Camped out on Chorley Wood Common in forever-leaky tents and walked back

from Church from Northwood to North Harrow every week. Forever discussed the war, the history of England, castles and their upkeep, defences and sieges.

Every year we spent a week's camp at St Helens in the Isle of White. When we were there the island ran a railway service all round the island. The train, built smaller than normal size, started off from Ryde pier where the paddle steamers tied up, after their run from Portsmouth harbour. We arrived there from Waterloo Station having had to wear our uniforms throughout the whole journey, which made us very self-conscience. Still, we made a brave sight marching up from St Helens station with the bugle band in front in turn lead by Captain White to arrive at the field. This venue was the same every year I attended. The cookhouse was staffed by professional cooks whilst we boys had to peel the potatoes and do the washing up – not so very pleasant after having porridge or stew.

Every day there was kit inspection and the bell tent flap and brailing railed-up - made ready for rounds! The Union Jack rose to the bugle call, blankets folded in true 'pusser' fashion and kit neatly laid out on ground sheets. Palliasses stuffed with straw and tents carefully swept out, for woe betide any dropped points for that meant not winning the trophy for best squad. It is difficult now to describe what all this meant to us boys and how seriously we took it. An inordinate time spent cleaning the equipment, the tent and the site. The tent lines had to be exact and so too the kit for inspection. The bugle call perfectly played and the Union flag rose with ceremony and pride. Prayers said every day and church parades an essential part of the week's proceedings. Every squad had to perform a special task and to provide part of the week's concert party.

On one of my early camps, Mr White the captain ordered that no one should take a boat out on to St Helens bay. The St

Helens bay constructed to act as a holding lake for a water mill and had a low causeway built to retain the seawater. Every time the tide came in it filled the lake so that at all times there would be sufficient water to drive the paddles of the mill. The public could hire out rowing boats, the area considered safe for boating. Just why Mike Langley, David Villers and I voted to take a boat out I do not know. However, it was not a surprising thing for us to do for we did form a dastardly trio. It was only natural, and just our luck, that one of the officers would be passing the lake as we were playing Nelson. Therefore, up before Mr White we were marched. To be told “pack-up your bags” - for us to return home. Whether this was, just a trick to worry us I am not sure, but if it were it worked. The riot act read and bags packed; dressed in our uniforms we attended the assembled Company to hear of our misdoing. It was a most worrying moment. He finally let us off with dire warnings...!

A trip to Sandown was always high on our list of places to go. We piled out of the train to see what fun we could have. There was clock golf, crazy golf, who could make the best sand castle and who could skim the water with a stone to see who has bounced the most. None of these came up to starting the day off with a hot jam doughnut. These doughnuts were then and to my mind even now the very best that were ever cooked. Perhaps it was the dough, the amount of jam or the mass of sugar that the enticing doughnuts were rolled in, I do not know all I do know is many were eaten. Mike Langley ate twenty-seven at one sitting. Now that is what I call a record.

The round the island coach trip was another exciting event. Alum Bay, Blackgang Chine, Shanklin and Ventnor all are wonderful memories. Granny Smith apples have never been the same since. At this time my annual Boys Brigade camp was the only holiday I had and most of my spare paper round money

spent on it. I can even remember buying a glass of brown ale in St. Helens for sixpence.

The lessons we received had the same core component as most other schools – then, as today. A great emphasis was laid on English - language and grammar, and arithmetic... metalwork and carpentry for boy's domestic science and housecraft for the girls, these thought mandatory. A teacher dressed-up like someone from The Woman's Land Army gave gardening, thought fitting for secondary school children, especially during and just after the war.

We did have French lessons as well as Latin, soon replaced – thought unnecessary for future 'blue collared workers'. I finished school just before my fifteenth birthday definitely deficient in Basic English – not being able to explain the construction of a sentence, why one method of expression was preferable to another. I can still recite G.K.Chesterton's 'The Donkey' and John Masefield's 'Cargoes'. I managed to take the school's prize for technical drawing – with the painting of the school, both being the summit of my educational achievement... skills I found interesting... thankfully, stood me in good stead for my intended career.

My last year at school was a joy because I was asked, in company with another keen artist Michael Gilbert who's father was an architect, to paint a picture of the school's annex in Pinner. It must have been big because there were two of us painting it at the same time. That summer given spice and much nervous tension by games of 'truth, dare, promise or opinion' held on the school field – where I was hoping to be asked if I dared 'kiss a girl'. Unfortunately, I was never asked, but that did not stop me from being enormously excited by the thought. Those long hours I would spend round at Joan's home in Hatch End just cycling or walking up and down looking for a face at the

window... It made me dizzy so goodness knows what it did for anyone watching. Joan was so popular that I did not have a chance - I was also totally unsophisticated, unsure and inexperienced. Then there was Joy who used to ice skate at Wembley. She would walk down the high street with her white sided skate boots tied over her shoulder, long flowing hair and short skirt - even for those times. During class, I would have love notes passed to me which completely left me in a state of mild panic. I never knew what to do with them. It needed something far more direct and forceful for me to do anything about it. I was quite hopeless - totally shy and self-conscious but longing to be asked. As I think about it now if one of the girls, say Ann or Judith, had asked me out, and I had gone, it would have changed my whole life... so I would like to think... Being so lacking in self-esteem I would have grown in confidence overnight. In the final week of school life, the class told they could have an 'end of school party'. There would be music provided by the school gramophone, records we could provide, and each pupil asked to bring something for the table- to eat and drink. In the event, because I could not dance I sat out and consumed a box of dates kindly provided by someone else.

The teachers had been reasonable considering that many were onetime injured servicemen, or demobbed - just returning from the war, others filling in - whilst seeking employment. There were too many children to each class. Doubling up went on in classrooms using any extra space available - including the hall and corridors. Class sizes were always over thirty-five. Discipline was difficult to maintain due to not only the class sizes being large but also children disinterested after the excitement and expectations - of the war ending. It was always obvious which child came from the lower forms by their speech, dress and behaviour... made it a challenge for the sternest teacher. The teachers attempted to

amuse the lower classes to keep them quiet for they, in the main, were not interested in taking any exam! The top class [A], taught to sit 'O' levels - the other extreme, also recognisable and in every way as capable as grammar children. They were to go on to take 'A' levels for a university place. The rest of the final year's children faced an internal, school-based exam - not invigilated by an outside body... They were to go on to Colleges of Education, Polytechnics - to take City and Guilds exams, apprenticeships, nursing or secretarial courses.

The result of secondary education for most children in 1950 was a modest improvement compared to the 1930s. It was if anything a limited implementation of the 1944 Act. Even five years later only twice as many stayed on at school to seventeen than in 1940. What was lacking was a long look to the future by both the Labour and Conservative Parties. Overseas countries were adapting faster to new technologies. Still, in my last year all this was miles away. I drifted into the finishing school eddy... the wind driven current of work without me realising it was forcing me back into choppy waters!

My adopted aunt, who was working as a cook for Frank Oppenheimer, Managing Director, Chromoworks Limited, overheard a conversation whilst she was serving dinner. It was about the problem the firm was having finding suitable apprentices - in this case, it was for an apprentice in the Artists Studio. This was during my last year at school when I was fourteen. She approached Frank Oppenheimer the next morning - which she knew of a relative who was interested in drawing and painting, could they apply for the position. He said they could and asked her to get this young lad to submit some drawings.

There was feverish haste to comply with the request to produce sufficient work for a portfolio. My father was keen for me to leave school, impressing on me the need to pay my way by

contributing towards the housekeeping. A letter sent to the firm and a date arranged to attend an interview, with a portfolio of work. My father and I went by train to Neasden and then walked to the firm. The Board of Directors interviewed me and looked at my work. I was told what to expect... if accepted, and that, 'I would hear from them in due course'.

A fortnight later I received a letter telling me that I had been accepted and that I was to report to Doughty Street, Headquarters of The Institute of Printing, in London, to sit an exam and take a medical, both of which I passed. This was done in May of that year and I found myself accepted for apprenticeship to the Lithographic Artists Studio at Chromoworks Limited; but only if I completed satisfactorily a three-month probationary period and subsequently was accepted by the Union. I started work immediately I left school.

The end of school party and wanting to 'take a girl out' convinced me that dancing was going to have to be faced so I enrolled at The Guy Haywood School of Dancing which met above Burton's store in Harrow. There the intricacies of the waltz, quickstep, fox trot and Latin American dances – girls to line up one side of the room and boys on the other, 'take your partners please'. So began my introduction to girls and it did not take me long to realise that once again I had been missing out. No wonder those dark haired gigolos with their flashy suits had ruled the roost for they could show off their girls and, quite naturally too, they were more easily accepted socially and learned the art of small talk which improved their confidence.

To illustrate how bizarre life was at home I never had a front door key. From the age of fourteen, my brother and I were out most nights. My father locked up the house at about half past ten when both my mother and he went to bed. When my brother and I came home, which would be between eleven and twelve, we

had to get in through the landing fanlight window first by climbing the fence then balancing on the concrete cill and finally by squirming through the ten-inch window. Once inside we had to reach down placing one hand on the inside, window cill and then grab hold of the banister rail with the other. All this had to be done without waking my parents. In the morning nothing ever mentioned about how we got in, where we had been or what we had been doing. Even when I started work, I was never presented with a key.

At that time, I attended the old time dancing evening classes held in the British Restaurant on Headstone Lane, at the bottom of Cumberland Road, next to the Home Guard Hut, where David Villers father was the manager. You may well imagine what it was like for me to go there and have to dance with middle-aged partners doing the valleta, dashing white sergeant, palais glide, waltzes and the one-step. I was in much demand and really, it was great fun.

Gradually as those men and women, who were demobilised raised their own families they had aspirations honed from countless discussions with each other throughout their years of war service. These were, in the main, socialistic ideas about social betterment for the individual in an equal society.

The history of the Trades Union movement was always towards an increase in wages, and a shortening of the working week, whatever the shade of government. The unions also preached 'fair deals for all and that everyone deserved a job with a minimum wage based upon the cost of living'.

My childhood was happy and innocent. As a callow youth I was very unaffected by the opposite sex surrounding myself with a group of like-minded fellows who felt and viewed things much as I did. Most children joined a youth group of some complexion even if they did not keep up their attendance. Stress was not a

word ever mentioned throughout the war years and thereafter. You just got on with life and never questioned what was going on around you.

In my early years, I suffered, like many others, by shyness, generated by a lack of confidence, something I found impossible to control. My lack of confidence would be overcome, when I had thoroughly learnt a skill, and by this, achieved independence. In the last days at school, Barbara Sutherland invited me to a party. It was not only my first invitation to such an event but the first by a girl. It was a joyous, frustrating and clumsy occasion – probably for us both. I never went out with her which was a great loss of opportunity and very much regretted.

Drawing, both freehand and technical, was my favourite subject all my school life and thereafter through to old age. I enjoyed the precision of constructing a worthwhile design and a pleasing effect and had the patience to produce complicated and detailed work. I realised early on in my life that it was up to me to make a go of it - to make up for my lack of formal educational and paper qualifications.

Getting a job on leaving school expected, any thought of taking time off, either school or work, just not considered sensible or economically desirable. Fortunately, there was full employment and there was any amount of vacancies to choose from. There was plenty of choice but only up to a certain educational level - a standard governed by the selection board or interviewing manager associated with whatever trade or commerce chosen. As a generality grammar school children were educated for white-collar office jobs, perhaps management, whereas the child trained in a secondary school was more fitting for the shop floor and manual labour.

The Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, decided to hold a general election for 1950, which he won with an overall majority

of ten. The 'Welfare State' and the policy of 'Nationalisation' for the chief industries, including the railways, were established. Both these pieces of social legislation were not just the result of one party but achieved by a social awareness of nationhood. The Conservative Education Act of 1944 and Labour's National Health Act 1948, marked another change in the national conscience – made an effort to provide a comprehensive scheme of insurance to provide health care for the general population and long-term care for the old. For children and teenagers there were primary, secondary and further education – each abiding to a national curriculum? This was supposed to bring about greater equality between the classes and provide full employment - but it never achieved these goals. Class was still a great divider.

My father was a Conservative, imperialist and anti-trades unionist in a world conditioned to middle-of-the-road - left of centre politics. He was coming up to his retirement and was frankly scornful about allowing any work force to have any say in how businesses should be run... he believed that 'the management' knows best how to produce profits and govern their work force. How he believed this having the experiences he had had managing men in a cartage company closely associated with the railways I do not know. Britain has benefited from the slow growth of trade unionism. Most agree that without the trades unions acting as bargaining agents the country would have to be content with state intervention.

It was not universally considered, and certainly not at home, that a person's job might not last a lifetime. That workers might have to retrain a number of times to adjust to industrial demands was never thought of. Flexibility and an open mind to changing circumstances were not universal traits. This was not just the closed minds of my parents but national habits... people did not readily accept new methods of doing things in the

home or workplace..., which made flexibility of thought and the acceptance of unexpected events impossible to come to terms with.

It seemed that my mother was quite happy that my father should have his own way all the time. She never questioned him, argued or discussed matters... it was how things were and had been.

My mother's main love was her home and garden, her children and pets. She hailed after all from the country and never lost her love of flowers, animals, the seasons and village life. She was neither sophisticated nor a seeker after the latest fashion. Her naturalness made her very comfortable to be with - a trait appreciated by her few friends. Above all she never lost her love for country living.

It has been, and is a continuing to be, a theme in these writings, that the British population after the war had to cope with a changing world... a world that could not, would not, and will not, ever be the same again, even though hankered for.

Do not read into this that my parent's relationship with their children was that much different from other parents. In the main, I am sure it was not. The main difference was that my father was that much older and was therefore, in this instance, a true Victorian in upbringing, thought, word, manner and deed. My relationship with my parents was in the main 'of the times'.

I do not remember my parents ever saying to me, my brothers or to each other, I love you. I never saw them kiss, hold hands, touch, and cuddle or show any sign of affection; they never gave way to sentiment or feelings of inadequacy nor admit they had been affected by sadness or sorrow. On the other hand, I do not remember any great displays of attachment - feelings of warmth, towards my friends by their parents... these were things thought to be sentimental, weak, emotional and 'not British'. It

wasn't a way of teaching children to toughen up - to be unfeeling, just that individuals had to get on with life and 'see it through' – have a stiff upper lip in adversity and not give way...

CHAPTER V

Chromoworks Limited – Neasden - Oppenheimers – Printing House - Factory Work – The Artists Studio – Lithography - Drawing Techniques – Studio set-up – Work relationships – Trial Period – SLADE & PW Union - Father-of-the-Chapel – Getting to grips with work- Management – Apprenticeship – Work place - Printing processes – Posters – Festival of Britain.

My father had generously paid for a weekly train ticket – an action meant to demonstrate to me the confidence he had in my ability to hold down my first job. He was very much of 'the old school'. Whilst I was looking forward to a bohemian lifestyle, he, understanding the ways of the world, looked towards *my* dedication and perseverance... to '*set me up*', for a lifetime of work!

Ever since leaving home, my thoughts consumed by doubt and fear. Every part of me charged with foreboding. My walk, dodging in and out of the streams of workers down Station

Road, Neasden, took me away from the railway station... past the bombed out sidings and goods-yard that stretched as far as Wembley. The soot blackened factory walls - hiding behind spearheaded railings... the endless rows of terraced Victorian villas - bravely advanced upon the pavement; their geranium filled window boxes trying to lend colourful distraction from the all too obvious bomb damage. A poster-hung hoarding exclaimed, by stark design, the virtues of Persil's whitening power and Tetley's superior leaf - promoted by a colourful plantation scene, which gave colour and softened the aspect... I reached the factory gate...

Peering out from behind the grill of a small enquiry hatch a portly gatekeeper acknowledged my knock. He was attired in a brown, patched, warehouse coat, gripping a rolled-up cigarette between a few stained teeth, croaked a gruff, 'What-ja-want?' My fear returned; I thrust out my letter - Mr Oppenheimer's elaborate hand graced the paper... I made my first utterance since leaving home, 'Here sir!' The door opened... I reluctantly squeezed in. My working life began...

The Gate Keeper showed me the clocking-in procedure, having found my card, then marched me down the long corridor which followed the whole length of the factory to the Artist's Department. There, a grey painted sliding door opened onto a room furnished with eight six feet by four feet wooden tables, several racks of metal plates, and a small anti-room which contained the Foreman's toilet and a storeroom.

He introduced me to the foreman, Mr Brian Porter, whom I had met before at my interview. He, in turn, introduced me to Charlie Cockburn, the eldest in the room. Although past retirement age had elected to stay on - at onetime had been the foreman. Reg Passey held the position of unpaid deputy, Bruce Ormarod, the second eldest and the most irascible. Frank

Clements the lettering artist and finally to Eric Campbell the ex-apprentice - had just serve an extra year's apprenticeship to improve his skills.

I was then shown to an empty bench - to be mine, and to the storeroom cupboard... my responsibility. It had been explained to me at the interview that I was to serve a trial period and that if then I was accepted my indentures - a signed and sealed binding document made by the Master and Apprentice stating the terms and conditions, witnessed.

For my duties, I had Eric to show me round - as he was a most sensitive and industrious fellow, his explanation of my tasks most detailed and seemed to last for ages! The first thing in my day was to mix up the ink using an enamel plate as the mixing container I had to rub onto it a greasy wax black stick and then by rubbing the tip of my middle finger over the applied wax using water as the base. By this method, a black drawing ink produced - the consistency of thin cream.

My second task was to take the orders for dinners and snacks. Chromoworks had an efficient and popular canteen, which remained open for the next five years and that, was where my love for cheese rolls began. Their rolls freshly baked to a nicety and the butter and cheese unsparingly applied. The Works Drama Group laid on frequent dances and the annual Christmas Pantomime. As a whole, the firm was a family run affair and The Directors looked upon their factory with a parental responsibility; the workers viewed the firm as a means of employment and social companionship. Chromoworks was self contained not only having a canteen but a carpenters shop, it's own engineers and electricians, a resident nurse and social worker and the works painter and decorator. It was efficiently run, clean, freshly painted, windows regularly replaced and cleaned and the

industrial site up-to-date regarding methods of production and delivery of goods.

Eric took me on a tour of the factory- to every department and shop, introducing me to all the workers. The works employed sixty percent men. The forty percent women mostly occupied positions in the warehouse and print finishing. Great care was taken by any man walking through these areas, for the women would call out and barrack them. However, it was all in good fun and never got out of hand. If any of the machine minders became too fresh they were soon slapped - the women sheet feeders who fed the paper into the grippers of the large machines worked on platforms above ground and the men passing would make to grab for a leg only to have their hand stood on. Mostly the machine minders were very protective of their women helpers so there were hardly any problems.

Chromoworks was a Lithographic Printers - a printing house that was able to reproduce in colour all forms of commercial printing work. Their work covered production of the smallest labels right through to the largest posters. The reproduction of drawings, paintings, photographic prints and transparencies reproduced both photographically and by hand.

A Lithographic Artist in 1950 was still using the same tools, materials and processes adopted in 1796. He was drawing on the printing surface with a wax crayon and ink... either copying a previously painted artwork or making his own drawing. The standing, and future development of the industry, were not explained to me - that the industry was about to be revolutionised by new technology; even if they had I would not have understood the significance.

I was born at the time Kodachrome transparency film was invented – a process giving excellent quality. In 1942, Kodacolor negative film was introduced which bought about the eventual

tricolour separation for colour reproductions. It was during my apprenticeship that this discovery, and the inventions that followed, was introduced from America. By 1950, all small colour artworks were reproduced using photographic halftone principles, adopting primary colour filters to separate the tricolour printing images. Lithographic colour retouchers corrected those separations for their spectral deficiencies.

I do not know how much the men understood about the changes that would come about when the film companies introduced their new discoveries and inventions. Even by looking at the American industry you could not fortell the future. It has always been surprising to me how backward the Americans are in implementing new advances. Their printing processes were lagging behind European print houses. What was sure because I was there and experiencing it was that in 1956 the hand drawn poster industry was finished. Photographic film was now produced in large format size with a stable backing... previously, photographic plate glass size was 30x20 inches. From that moment a very quick change took place. It was a retrograde step but customers insisted upon having their work produced using the latest technology. It is obvious that multiple printing improves commercial posters which were now printed in four colours instead of eight. Over printing increases depth of colour allowing self colours to perfectly match the original and customers house style. Those lovely seaside posters on railway platforms would never be seen again.

By the 1960s electronic scanning began to be introduced for black and white newspaper block making using a Hell Klishograph. This spelt doom to photographic screened halftone images. Still, that was to come later, although workers began to appreciate what was in the air... These changes were to make the

onetime power of the camera operator, colour retoucher, lithographic artist and film planner, redundant...

After my trial period had been successfully completed - three months after starting work, I was invited to the following month's union meeting to hear whether I was going to be allowed to become an apprentice. I stood outside, whilst my worth discussed; later allowed back in to hear the verdict by Frank Clements, the Father of the Chapel - elected sometime before I arrived at the firm. He continued in this position until the Printer Strike in 1956. He was my mentor and had taken me under his wing ever since my first day in the works. Frank was an avowed Socialist, proclaimed the worth of social care and the brotherhood of man and was not afraid to say so - he frequently stood up at Head Office Union Meetings and declared his position - he was a most caring individual but unfortunately he expected others to be equally strong both in opinion, resolve and care for others. This was all very well but his thinking did not seem to include a consideration for the management and owner's need to make a profit; the effects of overseas and home-grown competition nor union strength used undemocratically. Without the use of a sealed ballot - to evade undue pressure applied to an opposing union or works committee.

The vote taken without dissention, I was pleased to stay and start my apprenticeship. However, I had to join the Union and attend Head Office and works meetings.

I started my five years as a Lithographic Artist continuing very much the methods and techniques used all those years ago in Prague. One of my first tasks, after mixing up the ink required for all the artists, was to draw a letter 'c' by hand [without the use of a compass] large enough to fill a 60" x 40" poster plate. The Foreman, Mr Porter, got down on his hands and knees, gazed along the curves by turning the plate round and if there was the

slightest bump or undulation, I had to do it again. I had to do that letter 'c' over a dozen times which took over a week and even then he only allowed me to stop and do something else when there was grumbling from the other men that I was being unfairly treated. This sort of attention to detail followed me in all that I did. No work accepted unless it was of a very high standard. Eventually such tasks were commonplace; I had to draw the whole side of a Heinz bean label - that is all the written ingredients, letters that were half an inch high. However, for this I used a ruling pen and compass. These were the first tools bought, and I have them here before me now, a half set of compasses and a ruling pen, so frequently sharpened down that it's blades are half their original length.

My days at work quickly passed. There was so much that was new to me - so much which was a challenge. I had found by luck, something that interested me - and eventually after a lot of hard work became proficient. I was never a lettering artist although I could produce a reasonable effort. It was lucky that we had Frank Clements who did all the lettering... and he was good at it too. Sometimes to do small letters he would cut down a brush handle to make a wedge shaped tip and use that instead of a brush. It was at colour evaluation, that I found I had a natural bent. It never seemed to me to be difficult to assess how much of each colour needed. What I did not have was the strong fingers of Reg Passey who could lay on a three quarter tint of chalkwork over a large poster plate first time, without having to build it up by continuous application of the crayon. His tint-work would be so smooth - without any patches.

It was in 1950 that Chromoworks won the contract to produce the official poster for the Festival of Britain. This was excellent for the firm and a whole range of posters needed, from small Underground Station posters to the largest forty-eight sheet

posters measuring 200 x 120 inches. Much of the other work printed was a succession of well-known advertisers from Tetley's Beer, Persil, Heinz and British Rail. Annually Lyons Corner Shop commissioned pictures for their restaurants. What was interesting was that a number of these were the self-drawn works of well-known artists - known as autolithographs.

Throughout my time as an artist, the basic drawing techniques never changed. To speed up the production of vignettes and increasing the weight of chalkwork an airbrush was sometimes used... for smaller areas the use of Ben Day Mediums – a mechanical tinting device with a raised dot structure stretched over a wooden frame charged with black ink, was appropriate. A pen and ink artwork or architectural drawing could be reproduced photographically that saved drawing by hand. All these methods were adopted to augment the use of chalk and ink. Towards the end of the process - of hand drawn work, great efforts were made to stem the tide of the camera taking over. However, in the end customers wanted the latest techniques to help sell their produce – thinking that to be modern and up-to-date would give them an advantage - nothing would entice the client to stay with hand-produced posters. Those changes to the industry were to come about, when I came out of my time as an apprentice and had served my National service, six years later...

In October 1950, I started my indentured period of apprenticeship for one day a week, including the evening; I had to go to The London School of Printing at Bolt Court - just off Fleet Street, to study the City and Guilds Course for Lithographic Artists. Many of my fellow apprentices had been to the school for their full-time education, having passed an entrance examination. Their knowledge of the industry was far greater they had had the advantage of training in a department that had a long-term future – the majority were photographic colour retouchers.

The course was for five years and taught by lecturers who were still there in 1980. They were keen on me continuing with hand drawing and showed great interest in the work that I was doing. I produced a reproduction of a horse and cart in nine colours, using hand stipple, by pen and ink. This method last produced commercially, before the war - in the 1920's. It was, even to me, outdated, but I did as I was told... much later I regretted the waste of time and effort!

There was an air of obsolescence about the whole process. It was not just all the other industrial trades affected by modernization and union disruption. Printing, particularly for London's national newspapers, beset by labour problems. National newspapers are unique. Their production is geared to 'the latest story' and 'the fastest deadline'. They make their profit on the advertisers who use their vast circulation for maximum coverage of their product. Any disruption in production is critical. Newspaper owners are caught by the threat of a strike. They always gave in. This gave the letterpress union's massive power and an enormous pay packet to boot.

I had to belong to a Trade Union. Chromeworks was a union house - a fact accepted by the management. The Legal status for such gatherings of workers did not come about until the mid 1860s - include all trades. The monthly union meetings were held at Doughty Street in London, and all members took it in turn to attend and report to their colleagues what took place - raise any questions the chapel required an answer to, and to vote in a manner agreed upon.

The union was organised within printing houses and platemakers in trade groups called Chapels with officials elected annually. The representative for each chapel was called the Father-of-the-Chapel, who was voted into office, with the rest of the committee, annually. It was hoped, by keen trade unionists

that each member would fill these positions in turn, in reality, all the officials continued until they gave up the position. Most of the business covered was routine and to a man, the chief participants were left wing Socialists... In 1950, the majority of workers were ex-service men in favour of Marxist ideology – means of production.

The Head Office staff also retained their position until retirement - deputies into the shoes of departing leaders. The main union policy or philosophy was one-man one job – using a ‘white card system’. Every journeyman was equal to another and the rulebook was the law.

The union was there to look after your interests from apprenticeship to retirement. The minimum wage was set annually for a trained member based on ‘the cost of living index’. All other wages balanced to this sum, including apprentices paid an incremental proportion.

The rulebook covered every known instance of dispute. On any ‘in house’ dispute, between a member and the employees, it was insisted that the Chapel would sort it out - by self-regulation. Any self-regulating system is flawed by self-interest and a lack of farsightedness.

In my experience, there was little regulation. Workers and management flouted agreements when it suited their interests. Managements were tied to making a profit, meeting deadlines and competing against other firms, markets and new techniques. Workers kept new production techniques and true production times secret whilst protecting the number of jobs and working habits. Employers either extracted unfair profits in good times or did not have the will to take a moral stand in bad... They were at the mercy of the unions, especially the newspapers, who had a deadline to keep. Minor union officials were often dissatisfied men threatened by their own lack of skill - their need to control

others gave them a feeling of power - to make up for their own shortcomings.

From 1950 onwards, momentous changes occurred in the printing industry. There was a transfer of work from one printing process to another as advancing technology dictated. Letterpress up to 1960 was the process for general printing work, Lithography the process most suitable for large posters, and Photogravure produced all the most popular magazine work. This order of work lasted from the late thirties until the seventies, when lithographic web-offset printing took over - the large print runs for magazines and newspaper production. Both letterpress and gravure declined leaving lithography in advance until jet and laser printing made inroads into that, in the nineties. While all this was going on, the labour force shuttled from one process to another, retraining as it went, trying to keep up with each innovation as it fitted into the production line. Technical colleges could not keep pace and Training Boards floundered. Finally, the unions lost power and the adage of one-man one job went out of the window – colour scanners and word processors linked to laser printers won out. However, all this was to come. No one could predict in 1950 what was to happen in fifty years – a revolution for the printed word.

So ended my first fifteen - wartime interrupted, years. No great scholastic achievements – few personal attributes unearthed. These moments were for me, and for my circle of friends, times of childhood innocence... of freedom, security and simple pleasures... In retrospect, they were halcyon days, taken for granted, and as described, doomed not to last.

I now realise my generation was very lucky – discipline, responsible behaviour and public order dissolved as the old social

order changed. In America, the lowest common denominator was ‘anything for a fast buck’, here, ‘I deserve a living’, to become later ‘because I’m worth it!’ Society now is far more selfish and demanding.

The anniversary of Prince Albert’s 1851 Exhibition was celebrated a hundred years later. In 1951, The Festival of Great Britain was incorporated to show the world Britain had survived – emerged from the conflict of war with all the skills and trades ready to resume where it had left off – to claim its previously held premier position. The site chosen for the festival was the south bank of the Thames, which had been badly bombed. Several aerial attacks had left a derelict site close to the centre of London - an ideal place to show what the future would bring and to demonstrate what Britain could do. A joyous expression for a war weary nation. This exhibition brought about much needed work especially to those businesses around London. In the event, it had about the same effect as the millennium dome.