

Mum was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1909 to Clement and Emily Arthur who lived at 140 Wortley Road, High Green. She was christened Florence Eleanor and she was one of eight children. The siblings were Ivy, Beattie, Violet, Victor, the only boy, Florrie (mum), Freda, Grace and Ruby who was the youngest. The family home was always at Wortley Road until their parents deaths, Emily in 1930 and Clement in 1935. They are buried together in Burncross cemetery.

1928 – 1937

Mum was very pretty and had a few suitors but eventually she met and fell for a lad from Heckmondwike. He was Ernest. Eric Scott. They married and lived for a while with mums parents and in March 1928 they had a daughter who was christened Audrey. They moved to live in a caravan that was sited at the rear of the Miners Welfare Club in Westwood Road, High Green. It is believed that dad worked as a pipe-fitter either at the local pit or at the Thorncliffe foundry in nearby Chapeltown.

It is not known how long the caravan was their home but they moved to a house in West Yard at Hoyland Common. It was here that Joan was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1936 and Ken followed the very next year, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1937. Audrey attended the local school at Allots corner, a Victorian building that was very close to home. On our 2014 visit we found the old school building had been demolished and a very modern one built on the site. We found no trace of West Yard or of anything recognisable in the area, we found new road layouts and all new houses and bungalows.

The next house move was made to Hawshaw Lane in Hoyland. We have no dates or duration but on our 2014 visit/search we could find no trace of the houses we lived in. We later found that Ken has a book called "Pits and Pit-men of Barnsley" in which there is a picture from an old photograph of Lanky Row, Hawshaw Lane. The very houses we had lived in. These were demolished in 1967.

1938 - 1941

The next move the family made was to Aston Lane, Perry Bar, Birmingham. Again we have no dates or of how long we lived there but Joan remembers that Ken learnt to walk there. Also remembered is the ammunitions factory that was at the bottom of our garden. It could have been 1938/39 as at some stage dad insisted that mum and the children move back to Yorkshire to live with relatives as he feared bombing or an explosion could endanger the family. He stayed in Birmingham to work although what his work was we do not know. Pat thinks it was a ruse on dads part so that he could live with his latest conquest. Birmingham was not bombed until August 1940 and the family were long gone by that time. Mum eventually took the children to Perry Bar to fetch dad back, when the door was opened it was by a heavily pregnant woman and this seemed to set the pattern for their future. It is believed that it was Joan that persuaded dad to come home, she was always dads favourite and we think that it was her tears that made him come back.

Perhaps this is the time to describe what our father was like. Dad was considered to be quite handsome, he certainly seems to have had something that drew women to him. He seems to have been quite charming and he was known to excel at all sports except swimming. He was in cricket teams, football teams, he played tennis and much else besides. He also had a very good tenor voice and had performed on the radio. Audrey remembered that once when dad was playing tennis at a club, mum took the children to watch him play but as he was trying to

impress his female partner he totally ignored his family and when he was able he sent them packing.

The next move - the fifth I believe, from staying with relatives we were given a house in Westwood Row. This was the end house of the top row, Westwood Row had two rows of houses and the relatives we had been staying with, Uncle John and Aunt Violet Platt lived in the bottom row. On our 2014 visit we were only able to get as far as the reservoir and to see the large water pipe that we used to walk on. The path to Westwood Row was sealed off as I believe the bridge was unsafe to cross. We took some photos of the reservoir. Ken says that the rows of houses are no longer there and the site can be accessed from the New road but we didn't go to search for them, perhaps another time. In later years Pat can remember holidaying with Aunt Violet and clearly recalls their German Shepherd dog that constantly wanted to be best friends with everyone's legs. She also remembers lying in bed and watching the coal buckets as they travelled to the pit head on the overhead cables. The bedroom we children used had a skylight and imagining the tons of coal falling on us was quite a frightening thought to go to sleep with.

1941- 1942

Dad must have changed his line of work about this time as the next move was made to a tied farm workers cottage, 17 Daniel Lane, Netherhaugh near Rotherham. The year was 1941. On our 2014 visit we were fortunate to speak to a Mr Grayson who was the great grandson of the Mr Nicholas Grayson the owner of the farm where dad worked. Whilst we were chatting Ken remembered that an incendiary bomb fell onto the cow barn causing a pretty fierce fire, it was said that dad went into the barn and got all the cows out, whether he did it single handedly or not, no one knew but Mr Grayson said that the charred beams were still there. He is the cousin of the current owner of the farm so it is still in the same family as dad worked for. The farm has recently reverted to cattle but for beef not as in dad's day, for milk. Mr Grayson then took us further down the lane to see the cottage we had lived in. It is now owned by a nice German lady who bought it sometime after the war. The lady who lives next door at number 19 has lived in the village all of her life, she remembered our family as her mother and ours were friends. She used to live at the top of the lane and she recalled that after we had moved on mum came back to visit her mum bringing three little girls and a new baby. The new baby was Pat, so that was in 1942. Ken was not amused to think that he was remembered as a being a girl although he did have beautiful curly hair and a cute face. Other memories of our time here were of dad visiting the local dinner lady at Greaseborough school, her name was Fanny Bright and dad used to cycle over to the next village to be with her. The lady from number 19 verified that the relationship was talked about for some considerable time after we had left. Joan remembers the long walk to school in Greaseborough and one day seeing an elephant in the road, the first time she had ever seen one except in a school book and a pretty terrifying experience for a six year old. Luckily she had big sister Audrey with her. The elephant was being exercised by his keeper as the circus was in town. She also recalled having her tonsils out and eating ice cream for the first time. There were barrage balloons in the school field and these would probably have been at most schools in that area as Greaseborough is very close to Rotherham and a heavy industrial area.

In 1941 the family moved yet again. This time to Rose Cottage, Stainton near Maltby. We lived in that house for a very short time, from there we moved just a few hundred yards down the lane to Railway cottages. It was while we were in Stainton that Pat was born on February 27<sup>th</sup> 1942. All records show that Wath on Dearne was her birthplace but it was probably

where the birth was registered. There are not too many things remembered from here except Ken and Joan tipped up the pram with Pat in it, luckily she must have been strapped in so no harm was done.

From Stainton we then moved – move number 9 if anyone is counting! We went to live at Well Lane, Wadworth. On our 2014 visit we could find no trace of Well Lane at all. It looked as though all that side of the main road had been cleared a long time ago and all rebuilt in the modern style. On the other side of the road we were able to find the school that Joan and Ken occasionally attended which is now a private house. Also what used to be the headmasters house, another private house, and the very splendid church. We took some photos of these.

1944 – 1945

We could not have been living long in Wadworth as there are only two years between Pat and Neville's births and the family were living at Wilsic when Nev arrived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1944. Dad was working at Lodge Farm and we were living in yet another tied cottage of the same name. We took a photograph of the cottage and of the very room where Nev was born (from the outside of course)!

We then moved – for the eleventh time, to 3 Tong Lane, Tong near Bradford. This would be in 1944. Audrey would be about 16 years old, Joan 8. Ken about 7, Pat 2 and Nev still a baby. On our visit we were looking at the house and the lady that owns it opened the sitting room window and spoke to us. She has the cottage up for sale and assumed we were interested in buying. We explained why we were showing interest in the cottage and she told us that she has lived there since buying it in 1967 – 47 years so it is possible that she bought it from the farmer who employed dad as it was roughly 23 years after we had left there. The cottage is right next door to the church so we walked around the church yard and found that what Joan remembered as being an orchard was in fact a sort of sunken area of graves and some of the headstones were pretty old so perhaps there had been an apple tree or two that had branches hanging over the high stone wall that enclosed that area. Joan does remember that the house was of a strange construction. It stands with the side wall onto the road with the front lawn on the wrong side of the garden wall. The inside of the house was built on many levels with little flights of steps here and there. The kitchen window looks out over the graveyard adjoining and it was remembered that many a breakfast was spent reading the headstones. The cellar must have been pretty damp as Joan says it seemed to have hundreds of baby frogs in it and she hated having to go down there. Also recalled by both Ken and Joan were of visiting aunts and cousins who used to stay over and the sleeping arrangements that were an adventure although probably not too comfortable. The sitting room had tall built in cupboards and all the children were bedded down in the shelves and deep drawers of these while the aunts had the beds. On one of these visits cousin Barry Utley dug a hole in the middle of the pristine lawn, it is not known whether he got into trouble about it but many years later Ken took a photo of Barry looking at the spot. Whilst we were living at Tong Ken had to go into hospital to have a T.B. gland removed from his neck. It left a scar but caused him no further trouble. On our 2014 visit we took photos of the cottage, church and of nearby Dridlington school that the children attended, sadly about to be demolished. The next move was made immediately after Ken came out of hospital and was a long way from our Yorkshire roots. This was our 12<sup>th</sup> move and it was made in an open backed lorry as Joan remembers it, the children were sitting on a sofa waving to everyone they could see all the way to Stone Cottage, Gedgrave near Orford in Suffolk. The move will have been made

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yet again because of dad's work as a herdsman. Orford seems to have been an exciting place to live although quite a dangerous one as it seems to have been on the German bombers flight-path. On arrival at our new home the farm-hand that dad was to replace had not moved out of the house so for everyone to get a night's sleep after a long journey, Audrey, Joan and Ken were given beds in another farm-hand's cottage. Mum, dad and the two little ones were bedded down in the cow barn. Mum made up beds in the cattle feeding troughs. On our 2015 visit we stopped first at the school that Joan and Ken went to. This was in 1944. The school had not changed at all and there is still the playing field next to it where they witnessed a vast number of planes and gliders darkening the sky, this we can date precisely as September 17<sup>th</sup> 1944 and what they saw that day was the mission named "Market Garden" or better known to many as the film made of it called "A Bridge Too Far". It was here also that one day as they were on their way home from school there was a sudden snow storm of silver paper or foil, they were witnessing an attempt to interfere with German radar. We went into Orford and looked at King Henry II's castle keep. We then looked in at the village church as Ken remembered there had been an incident where there had been a parade of soldiers in the village square in 1942, a German plane came over and strafed the parade killing many soldiers and civilians including women and children. They were buried in a mass grave and we were able to find it, read it and pay our respects. The massacre occurred on the 22.10.1942. We moved on from there to find Gedgrave which we found down a long, private country lane that went no further than Gedgrave Hall. The hall is owned by Sir Edward Greenwell and the land and farms around it used to belong to the Greenwell family. The house we had lived in is directly opposite the driveway to the hall. The current owner of the house came across to talk to us and when we made ourselves known he was happy to talk and show us around the outside of the farm. He let us take some photos too. The milking shed where mum, dad, Nev and I slept on the night that we first arrived was close by the house and is now in use as a wood shed. There is a tin sign behind the door that is a wartime warning sign, we took a photograph but it is not clear enough to read it. We took a few photos of the house and Joan remembers it as being two houses back to back and this is possible as it looks to be too big to be just one farm worker's cottage. Joan recalled that there was a piano in the barn that they used to play on although none of us has ever played the piano. We then asked the owner of the house (which is now just one house, not two) what happened to the house that used to be behind ours, the one that Audrey, Joan and Ken had slept in on the day of our arrival. He said that the Greenwells own a listed house in nearby Sudbourne and it was in danger of falling down so they had the cottage knocked down as they needed Suffolk bricks and flint to repair it. The current owner also told us that his parents' had come to work for the Greenwell family and the cottage became their home. He was born there in 1949 and has lived there all his life. Other memories of Gedgrave in wartime were of an officer being billeted in the dressing room that was next to the children's' bedroom, (in the photo of the front of the house, the small window over the front door was the dressing room). His batman was billeted up at the hall with the other soldiers and he came every morning to attend to his officer's needs. The children were a bit spoilt by the soldiers as they remember a swing being made for them in a troop carrying vehicle for them to play on. Both Ken and Joan remember the noise of the big gun called Big Bertha that was sited at Orford Ness when it was being fired at incoming German planes. It was there that they experienced the sight and sound of the rocket bombs known as doodlebugs. Also remembered were butterfly bombs which I think were parachute bombs. One thing that struck me was the distance the children had to walk to school but I think they were used to it as the school in Greaseborough was also a long distance from home. One last memory of Gedgrave was mum telling us about an incident when dad was coming home from the farm where he was working, a German plane was

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flying straight down the lane that dad was walking down. It was firing at dad but he was quick and agile enough to throw himself under a hedge and he escaped injury. Perhaps it was that experience that prompted dad to get us all on the move again but move we did.

The next move – number 13 I think, was made to Pine Tree cottage in Wissett, still in Suffolk. It was here that Audrey met her future husband, Des Fletcher. The Fletcher's were a fairly wealthy family (by our standards). They were from Cambridge but they also had a large house on the outskirts of the village called Wissett Lodge. On our trip in 2015 we came across Wissett Lodge first and took some photos although we didn't approach the house. It is listed for accommodation and looks very nice and very expensive. Audrey had told us that the house was haunted and in the 1950's we would spend many a Sunday evening listening to her stories. We found ourselves recalling some of them. Ken said the first tale he remembers is about one of the Fletcher's meeting an old lady in the road, she was carrying a bundle of sticks. She stopped him and told him the family would never have any good luck whilst living in the lodge. After a few steps he turned around and the old lady had disappeared, there was nowhere she could have gone to, there were no breaks in the hedge, no gateways and no sign of her. Many awful things went on to happen that were unexplainable. The house became flooded at one time, the whole of the ground floor was many inches deep in water, there had been no heavy rainfall and although there was a pond in the garden there was no flooding in the grounds at all. Another happening was the hay ricks spontaneously caught fire in perfectly calm weather with no sign of unusual weather patterns to cause it. There were often footsteps coming to the doors and on opening there was no one there. There were at least three cold spots in the house and I remember Audrey listing them as one on the stairs, in the sitting room and one by the pond in the garden where it is reputed that a servant girl drowned herself, although why she did it is not known and the reason now is lost in the mist of time. There was also a story of a black dog but we couldn't recall that one. We moved on into the village of Wissett that is just down the road and came across the school that looked much the same although like others we have found, this too is now a private house. From the road we could see the area behind the school where our house once stood. It is now a grassed area fenced off from the school much as it had been in our day except it used to be a wall over which mum passed me when I had pestered to be with the other children. I was hastily passed back when I was discovered to have wet pants. Ken and I walked up the drive alongside where the non-existent gate to our non-existent house was and he was showing me where the drive led on up to the farm and also the point where a capped off piece of metal post, which was all that remained of a gate that some Italian prisoners of war had erected, when two dogs bounded up to us. They were friendly and their owner was not far behind them. As usual he asked if he could help us and when we told him of our reason for being there he became very interested and Ken was able to tell him some of the history of the place. His name was Mr Prior and he now owns the farm that dad had worked at. He has been in the village for about fifteen years, he has about twenty acres and it is used mainly for horses. The farm was much bigger in dad's day and parcels of it have been sold over the years. Mr Prior also owns the bit of land that our house stood on and he was very interested to learn that there had been a dwelling on that spot. Ken showed him how the ground undulated up to where the house had been and it was clear to see how flat the area was, if one were to dig down there must surely be foundations of some sort. Mr Prior took my telephone number in the event that should he apply for planning permission to build a cottage on the site (for a lady that does livery for him) known facts of an earlier dwelling could aid a planning application. He then took us on up to the farm and Ken showed him which of the buildings had been the milking shed, (once again used as a woodshed). Also the cart shed, this now has large French doors and opposite these a big picture window and as Ken explained, the horses

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would not reverse so they had to have a door in and opposite a door out for trouble free movement. He knows a lot of stuff does our Ken. Mr Prior invited us into the house but we declined as we had no memories of ever being in the house. We thanked each other, shook hands and left. On leaving Wissett Ken told us of his ghost experience. He was asleep one night and a noise woke him, when he opened his eyes he saw over by the door a figure but could not see who it was. He felt very uneasy so he ducked under the bed covers, after a while he chanced another look and there right above him was the figure of an old man. Terrified he went back under the covers and stayed there, he finally went off to sleep and was not troubled again. He is adamant that it was not a dream. Wissett is definitely haunted. He also told us of finding our sweet ration in mums handbag, he took all the sweets and handed them round to the kids in the school playground. I don't suppose the rest of us went without so the hiding he got was not in vain. Joan remembers the party that was held in the school-yard to celebrate V.E. day and also the dance in the school hall. No more bombs and doodlebugs. Hooray! 1945.

1945 – 1946

The next move was made to Bluebell Common in North Walsham, Norfolk. Move number 14. Yet another move made because of dads work and to another tied cottage. On our 2015 visit we found the primary school first, we had a walk around the outside of the school, which is a very large red brick Victorian building, it has a large tablet on the front with the date 1874. We found the steps that Ken remembered at the side of the school and from there we followed his memory of his journey to and from school and found Bluebell Common where the house was with no trouble. The first building we found was the barn where the V.J. day celebrations were held and the field behind it where the bonfire was. It was good to find the barn still intact albeit with some repairs and a field that has not been built on. So with our backs to the bonfire field we found the site of our house. There is a modern house in its place so we took a photo of the gate that has a wooden cottage on it and I wondered if it was anything like the original cottage but no one could remember, perhaps an old photo will turn up from the family archives. The area where the barn and house are is known now as Marshgate. We didn't linger as there wasn't much else to see so we pressed on to our next port of call which was to be a long journey to Winteringham in Lincolnshire. On the way there Joan remembered one incident that happened at Bluebell Common. There was a visitor for dad one day when he was not around, it was Fanny Bright his old girlfriend from Netherhaugh. The only reception she got was a present from mum, a chamber pot poured over her head. Not a nice way to be told to shove off as she had travelled a long way to see him. Her journey home must have been embarrassing.

Move number - 15 – was to Glebe Farm, at least Audrey had remembered it as such but we found it to be called Westfield Farm and on our 2014 visit we were left pondering on this. On our revisit in 2015 we were able to find out a lot more about it. The farm had been bought by the Co-operative Society and it was the manager who lived in the farmhouse. We have a book that was produced by the W E A of Winteringham and a good picture of the farm and the American style silo is in it. We also have before and after photos of the farmhouse, as it was at the time we lived there in 1945/46 and as it is now with the roof lifted. The farm yard has been built on and is full of new houses, the farm is a private house and although the orchard has not yet been developed it looks as if it has been cleared so that in the very near future it will be. The farmhouse is on the corner of a T junction and on the opposite corner is a big Georgian house and at the time we lived there it was owned by a very old lady, she lived alone in this huge house and mum used to do a bit of cleaning for her. Audrey also used to

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help out too. In 2014 we found that Spring House (which we found from the book is what it is called), used to be an elderly peoples home but it had closed and was up for sale. Our next visit in 2015 we found it had been sold and has become a private house again. The new edition to the family whilst we were living at the farm was Christopher, he was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 1946. For years we celebrated his birthday on the 27<sup>th</sup> but in later years when he emigrated to Australia he found out that we had him a day older than he should have been. It was from here that Audrey left us to get married to Des Fletcher and went to live in Cambridge but before she left we managed to get a family holiday in a caravan at Skegness. We have a nice photo of Audrey with Chris in her arms, Joan and Pat in their silly "Kiss me quick" hats taken outside of the caravan. It was on this holiday that we locked ourselves out of the caravan and dad had to get Ken onto the roof so that he could get through the skylight, (he was the only one small enough), he had to drop down inside and unlatch the door. Ken remembers being pretty scared of the drop but he is alive to tell the tale so he must have been successful. We do wonder where everyone slept as the caravan was very small but we have always been good at mucking in! Another memory of that holiday was finding the beach with barbed wire barriers and areas that were prohibited possibly because of land-mines. Back at the farm there were some notable events such as when dad was chased by the bull that had escaped from the bull pen. It's a good job that dad was athletic as he managed to leap over a 5 barred gate to escape. There was one casualty, Pats little tin dolls pram, it got trampled to death. Another well remembered incident was the cut lip. We had a hay waggon in the orchard with bales of hay on it and plenty more on the ground and we were all jumping off the waggon and landing softly on these. Pat was doing the same but being little Joan was catching her, Joan said stop but Pat was having none of it, she jumped when Joan's' back was turned. She had a soft landing apart from her top lip that was badly cut on some rough baling twine. Screaming blue murder and fetching the neighbours out of their houses opposite in Marsh Lane, one neighbour gave Joan some tea-towels to staunch the blood flow and with Pat in a pushchair they set off to find dad who was watching a local football match. When found he told Joan to go and meet mum off the bus (she had been shopping in Scunthorpe). Mum then pushed Pat to the local doctor in the next village who put several stitches in her lip without the aid of a numbing agent. For some time the dressing on the lip looked like a moustache and was the cause of some serious teasing by Ken. Another memory of our time here was of a local man known to us all as "Harfewown" or Half-crown. He had a yard further down Marsh Lane just over the stream bridge. He could get anything or mend anything always at a cost of two shillings and sixpence. Joan also remembered that she tried smoking whilst here and she couldn't understand how dad knew and why she got a good hiding for it. I think she knows now. Ken remembers that we had no mains electricity in the house and through some crude method there were wires and sockets but these were supplied from a generator that was only used for the new milking machines and when the milking was completed the generator was turned off. We therefore had no lights at night except oil lamps and candles. Dad had a friend who lived in the village called Jack, his wife was Milly and they had two boys John and Walter. Walter was Kens friend and they spent a lot of time together. They would chop sticks for Jack who would bundle them up into neat bundles on a machine so he could wire them tightly. He then sold them locally. He also had a good line selling logs too. Ken remembers the shed where Jack did all kinds of woodwork, where he made us a pair of wooden lorries that were like peddle cars but were propelled by our feet, we had plenty of fun with those.

1946 – 1947

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We were soon on the move again, this time to Ardsley, near Wombwell, much closer to our family roots. This was to another farm called Lowlaiths Farm and here we lived in one of a pair of modern staff houses that had indoor plumbing, a thing that we were rarely used to. This was the 16<sup>th</sup> move and I'm sure we moved more often than some gypsies!

It was here that we experienced the very bad winter that seemed to last for a very long time. The farm was up a long drive and when you turned off the road you then went under a railway bridge, up the long drive with open fields to the left of the farm. During the bad winter the snow was blown on icy winds and drifted into great banks and as a result there was no access under the bridge. To get to school and to the shops we had to climb the bank, cross the line and down the other side. We also had to walk on top of the frozen hedgerows because the snow-drifts were so deep. Another memory from here was that of the bull pen being directly beside the hay barn where we used to play. We could look down onto the bull and he seemed to be very far beneath us. Ken used to tease me about my red coat angering the bull and if I was pushed or if I fell down into the pen the bull would kill me by trampling me to death. The fall would probably have killed me but at 5 years old the bull was more frightening. We went to look at Lowlaiths Farm in 2014 and it has changed vastly. It is now a centre for disturbed adults. We spoke to a very nice chap who told us about the place but he didn't want us to take any photographs as this could possibly upset the residents who were wandering about. He did say that they still have an area that is called the bull yard.

1947 – 1949

The next move – Number 17, was to Somerset. To 8 High Street, Portbury. Just south of Bristol. Yet another tied cottage attached to dads' job as a herdsman. It was a pretty cottage in a pretty village of thatched cottages, although ours was not thatched. The village had a forge across the road in Mill Lane and right next door to us was the cobblers shop. Our garden was well stocked with every fruit tree and bush imaginable and in the biggest apple tree we had a tree-house. Our toilet was at the bottom of the garden and had a big piece of wood with two holes in it, one for adults and a smaller one for children. The contents of the buckets under the big wooden seat were useful for the garden. Behind the toilet was a big stone wall the other side of which was the orchard of the farm that was just down the road from our house. The farm that dad worked at was on the Portishead road about a mile away. The village school was a former monastery and had only two classrooms. It is now a private house. The village Post office is still there but it is no longer a shop, another private house but the post-box is still in the wall. The public house is still there and looks exactly the same and seems to be doing a roaring trade, serves great food too! The school teachers cottage is still lovingly cared for and the big house opposite that I think is 17<sup>th</sup> century looks to be in great condition, Ken used to deliver milk to that house. Sadly the march of time has altered the rest of the village somewhat. There has been a lot of building of new houses not too many being in keeping or in sympathy and to be fair the Ministry of Transport were even less sympathetic when they put the M5 motorway in to cut the village in half.

In 1947 Des was born, on October 27<sup>th</sup>. He was born at home in the front room. Soon after this event we had a visit from dads friends Jack and Milly Kirkby from Winteringham. Milly gave birth to a baby girl in the very same room and it is said that mum took one look at the baby, named Margaret, and seeing that it was the image of our dad she sent the Kirkby family packing and apart from some letters that Ken or Neville has, they were never heard of again. Portbury was a great place to live for us kids, we had a stable that contained no horse but just a small pile of coal in one corner and perhaps a few logs but we did have a swing and also plenty of room to play on wet days. Ken managed to break his wrist in a bike accident and



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apart from his moaning all night it wasn't noticed until the next morning when mum noticed the huge swelling. That must have been a trip to the hospital in Bristol or to the local doctor. Christmas was quite a special one for Pat as on Christmas morning her favourite doll that had sustained a bad head injury, was back from the dolls hospital in Bristol with her head all mended! Audrey visited when she could and on one of her visits she brought her own daughter, Marilyn Julia, only ever known as Julie, to be christened at Portbury church on the same day as our Des. Julie had been born on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1947. Mum had a friend in the village who was known to us as Black Bess, I think she was called this because she was not very clean and neither was her house. We kids tended to avoid their family if we could and we could not see the attraction for mum, it could well have been for support as dad was up to his old tricks with the females and it was probable that Bess was the one person that dad would have no interest in. I mention Black Bess because a few years later when we had long left the west country, we came on holiday and happened to visit Bess when she had moved to Pill. We kids escaped her fly ridden house to play around the lanes and fields and for some reason that is lost in time, our Chris, who had found an old penknife, tried to rescue a sheep that appeared to be stuck in a ditch by trying to cut off its' ear!

Portbury was our home for a longish stay and on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1949 our Christine was born. Dad never saw Christine as he had left home before she was born. He ran off with a woman who was staying in the village just down the road from the farm he worked at. I remember that mum had gone to Cambridge to visit Audrey and us kids were left in dads charge with the help of Mrs Atkins, the newspaper lady who lived in the last cottage near the school. Dad went out every evening but not before being very nice to us leaving colouring books and such things that his lady friend, Eileen had bought for us. I don't know if mum ever knew that he had brought his girlfriend to the house. The farmer let us stay in the house until Christine was born but he needed the house for dads replacement so we were soon on the move again.

1949 – 1952

Move number 17 was to Redcliffe Bay. This was to a disused army camp, and we were squatters. We moved into a nissen hut and it soon became as homely as we could make it under the circumstances. It was great for us kids as we had a choice of baths and wash basins and we never had to queue for a toilet! Although we would avoid the baths when we could. There were many families already on the site when we arrived so it would seem that many others had been made homeless, whether they had been bombed out in the war or for reasons similar to ours we will never know but there was a closeness and camaraderie among us all. Families would watch out for each others kids which was useful for mum as she now had to go out to work to look after and feed her brood. Dad had disappeared without trace and mum could find out nothing from the farmer he had worked for although we were to find out nearly 40 years later that he had known where dad was all the time and still did! Mum got a job at a nail factory in Portishead, this left Joan to see to us kids with the help of a neighbour now and then. Redcliffe Bay was a paradise for us young ones, we had the moors and fields to roam on and we even had our own bay to bathe in. We had the whole area of the camp to play in and there were plenty of bomb shelters and flat bases where some of the nissen huts had been removed where we could perform our party pieces or song and dance acts. Kens favourite pass-time was damming up the stream that ran through a small wood on the moors, that and beach-combing in our bay. Whilst we were having a great time, out in the fresh air and watching the banana boats coming up the Severn to Bristol to unload, mum was having a really hard time of it. Bringing up seven children, one a very small baby, having to work full

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time and then taking a second job at a local beach road café, washing up and preparing vegetables must have been exhausting. I know that Audrey helped financially where she could she helped to keep us clothed and without her help we would have been in dire straights. Ken remembers that he used to go and help mum at the café with the vegetables and he used to get two shillings occasionally which he appreciated and also kept it quiet from the rest of us. Not daft our Ken.

We used to get a visit from the aunts and cousins occasionally and one memory of one of these visits was the time when we were all in bed so it was quite late. We kids were all in one bed, top to tail and the aunts were all together in another room. There was a knock at the door and mum got up to see who it was. The aunts were calling out to her not to open the door quite convinced we were all about to be murdered in our beds. It was a hiker who was looking for a bed for the night. We kids thought it a good idea to let him in but the aunts were nearly hysterical and begged mum to send him packing, mum got Ken to help the stranger to carry an arm chair to an empty hut nearby so that he could spend the night in some comfort. The arm chair came back in the morning unharmed.

Joan had become interested in boys here and although she was only about 13 she had a boyfriend called Archie, he must have been a good deal older than her because he used to turn up regularly on his motorbike bearing gifts. These were always bottles of California Poppy scent, at least we all used to smell nice. While mum was at work and with Christmas drawing near Joan fetched in a branch of a tree and set us to work making decorations out of milk bottle tops and any bits and bobs we could find. We also made paper chains to deck up the hut. Having stopped for dinner I must have upset Joan (something I found easy to do) as she turned and threw the bread knife at me, I had a pretty large cut on my elbow and Ken with a chuckle, said he could see my toenails from the inside! He always sees the funny side of things and he is a great kidder my big brother. For me it was just another childhood war wound.

Ken loves to tell the tale of how he used to regularly have to bring a bag of coal home on the cross-bar of his bike after school, he couldn't ride his bike so he had to push it. No mean feat as it was uphill whether he came by Nore Road or West Hill and the distance was at least 5 miles. We all went to school at Portishead, Joan and Ken were at the senior school in the centre of town and Pat, Nev and I think Chris were at the primary school on the Clevedon Road on the edge of town. Both schools have closed and I believe have new houses built on the sites. There have been many changes in Portishead since we were there, The main street is pretty much the same and the old picture house is still there but it is now a library. The brand spanking new railway station that was built while we were there went the way of many others when Mr Beeching waved his axe. The site is now all retail warehouses. The old docks are no more, that area is now a swanky new marina and appropriate housing to suit has been built around it. The park and boating lake are unchanged except that there are no row boats on the lake but it is a fine place to sail your pond yacht.

Another point that I feel is worth mentioning here is that whilst we lived at Redcliffe Bay we children had to spend a couple of weeks at a Bellows children's home, once at Weston in Gordano and at another time in a larger home at Cheddar. This house was a big detached house in large grounds and was owned at one time by Leonard Cheshire as a rest home for soldiers. These couple of spells in care were so that mum could have a rest herself and it probably saved her health and her sanity too.

Another historical thing happened whilst we lived in the nissen hut. King George VI died, he died on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952. I leave it to you to ask Joan what she was doing when she heard the news!

Mum must have found out where dad had gone to because I remember going to the court -

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house in Nailsea with her to try and get maintenance from him to help support us. I do not exaggerate when I say that all she was awarded was one shilling a week for each of us. Joan remembered that the court used to write to mum saying that dad was in arrears with what little he did pay, she was asked if she wanted them to prosecute him and mum would just write on the letter YES and send it back.

With so many hungry mouths to feed meals could often be a problem for mum and it was a good thing that we were able to have free school meals during term time. School holidays were another headache for her. After dad had left us mum had learned to improvise. Here are a couple of examples of food and treats she made. Because Christine was a baby mum used to get free National dried milk and orange juice concentrate and with the dried milk she would make it up for the baby and then a thinner lot would be made up for the rest of us with the addition of a spoonful or two of sugar, into this went a good helping of stale bread and hey-presto we had a good breakfast of "pobs". The treat we had occasionally was made from the same dried milk, mum would mix it to a stiff paste with water, she would add a few drops of peppermint flavouring and when it was like pastry to handle she would roll it into a long thin sausage, cut it into small pieces and put it in the pantry to dry. These were our home-made mintoes.

Our favourite meal (still a favourite today) was Taties 'n' Onions. It is made by frying sliced onions until soft and starting to brown, into the frying pan is added peeled and sliced potatoes. Add enough water to cover all, add a couple of oxo cubes and salt and pepper, (I add a pinch of dried herbs nowadays), simmer for about half an hour. Thicken with plain flour and water paste or cornflour and serve on a thick slice of bread. A filling and tasty meal.

For tea or supper we would eat bread and dripping and if there was brown jelly underneath the dripping and you were lucky enough to get some this was a prize indeed! The orange juice concentrate was lovely and I believe mum used it with gelatine to make jelly for us sometimes.

Another meal made for us was soup made from bones that the butcher let mum have. These were boiled slowly with some root vegetables and the ever useful oxo cubes and another healthy meal was on the table. With stale bread and buns the baker offered occasionally and sometimes some broken biscuits (especially good with custard as a pudding) we were not often hungry.

Across the road from us on the lower side of the camp, there lived a family with a relative who had been a cook in the Navy. We kids loved it when he made doughnuts and we were invited to have some. To this day I have never tasted a doughnut to touch those he made. What a great time in our lives Redcliffe Bay was.

1952 – 1954

It must have been shortly after the King died that a decision was made to put the younger children into children's homes so that mum could go to live with Audrey to enable her to work full time, this would be the only way to make sure the children were cared for and that she could earn and save enough to get a proper home for us. The home selected was a convent in Clevedon, this was for girls and small boys up to the age of seven. Nev was already just 8 years old so he was taken to Broadstairs in Kent. Chris was also taken there when he reached the age limit. Nev had to be introduced to Chris as he didn't recognise him on meeting. The convent in Clevedon was home for Pat, Des and Christine for about 2 years. I remember being at the primary school and taking the eleven plus examination, I then went to the brand new secondary school for a term before we were eventually returned to mum.

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We were in the home for 2 Easters and Audrey and Joan (who was living with her) came to visit us and brought us big chocolate Easter bunnies. A treat as we rarely had sweets in the home. The nuns were not unkind and they did their best for us but life was very spartan.

They were not of a catholic order but were high church and because of this I was confirmed by the bishop of Bath and Wells into the church. For two weeks in the summer the nuns would take us to Burnham on sea and we would camp in the school that faced the sea. We all loved this but the sunburn was no fun, fussing the beach donkeys was. We all had camp beds in the main hall and I seem to remember that we ate mostly white cabbage so we had coleslaw before it was invented.

Some of the older children were taken to the Bristol Hippodrome to see the pantomime after Christmas by the courtesy of the Bristol Evening Post newspaper. We were members of the Pillar box Club, run by uncle Bob for the children of Bristol. The year that I went, 1952, the show was Cinderella, it was beautiful and afterwards we were invited to draw a picture of a scene from the show. I did and was fortunate to win second prize. The first prize was a puppy which I dearly wanted to win but second prize proved to be more memorable. One of the nuns took me on the bus to the Hippodrome to collect my prize, on stage I was presented with a pretty large birthday cake and everyone in the theatre sang happy birthday to me. Needless to say that tea next day for all of us was much better than normal.

While we were in the home the Queen was crowned and the nuns were lent a television set by a local shop. We had all the neighbours in to watch the coronation and all day was spent standing up (the visiting grown ups had the chairs) us big girls at the back, standing and the little children sitting on the floor at the front. It proved to be a long day. The Queen was crowned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1953.

While we younger children were in the children's home Joan had gone to Cambridge with mum and Ken stayed in Portishead to finish his schooling, he lived with a friend of mums whose son was a school friend of Kens. The family were called Clark and Ken was not treated very well at all. Ken has recorded this in his own memoir. Mum worked at PYE's radio and television alongside Audrey and they all lived at Ditton Walk for a while until Ken came to join them all. I guess it was all a bit overpowering for Des so mum and Ken went to live with an elderly gentleman, mum looking after him as part of the rent. Eventually Ken and mum went back up to Yorkshire as Ken needed to start work and the pit seemed like the best thing for him although I'm not sure whether Ken thought this. Meanwhile Joan stayed with Audrey and Des Fletcher.

The next family home, for mum and Ken anyway, was a caravan that belonged to aunty Ruby and uncle Dennis who owned the Salutation public house in High Green. Eventually Joan came to join them and soon after this mum was able to get a council house, a brand new one with all mod. cons. This was a new start for us all to become a family once again. We little-uns (although we were not so little now) were back home in time for Christmas. The house was in School Road, number 32, in High Green. The school at the top of the road was Greengate Lane secondary modern and being now eleven years it was my new school. The first Christmas was quite memorable as not having had too many toys and games before we were pretty excited and we were all up in the middle of the night ripping off paper and squealing with delight at all the goodies. We made such a racket that we got mum and Joan up and they had only just got to bed so we were sent back to bed but very shame-faced. The morning found nothing at all for us, all the lovely things were gone. Later in the day we were given our presents but we had learned the lesson of patience.

Mum was working as a cleaner at a huge foundry owned by Newton Chambers. It covered a vast area and had several different subsidiary business's on the site. We believe that mum cleaned offices and also the canteen as I well remember that we children used to walk

through the shunting yards, through mud, muck, rails and waggons to meet her from work, not every day but certainly on days when we knew she was bringing cakes and buns from the canteen for tea. It was here at the Thorncliffe works (as named by Newton Chambers) that they made armoured tanks for the war. Churchill tanks especially and proof of this is in a book called "Chapelton and High Green" by Joan and Mel Jones. Ken says the secrecy was so great that when people asked what was being made they were told it was water tanks on wheels, which on reflection could have been plausible as with bombing and sometimes there being no water due to burst mains such things sound useful.

Joan worked at Thorncliffe but at a subsidiary called Redfires. They made ranges and all things fire related for domestic use. Joan's job was matching up the parts like oven doors and other bits attached to a kitchen range. They needed matching as they were fired in a sort of red/green, shot silk or petrol on water effect, or in a mottled cream colour. Later she moved to work at the Izal factory that was on the same site, (still part of Newton Chambers). It was here that she met her future husband Alan Hewitt. Ken was working at Wharnccliffe Silkstone pit and later at Howbrook, both quite near home or reachable on a bike.

1955 – 1957

We moved from School Road to an older style council house but still in High Green. Number 3 The Circle was a bigger house with more garden front and back and we were able to have chickens in the back. The rent was possibly lower too as money was always scarce. Joan's wage would have been lost to us too when she married Alan. I was living with Audrey at the time of the wedding and we travelled up for the nuptials. They were married at St Saviours church at Mortomley, High Green and after the reception at a nearby pub I can remember Joan and I running back to the Circle for Joan to change to go away. Her first married home was with Alan's mum and dad in Hoyland and I think it safe to say that she was not happy living there.

Audrey, Des, Julie and I were living at City Road in Cambridge. Des ran his dairy business from there. There was a shop at the front that was let out and the dairy was at the rear. The living accommodation was a very rambling affair above all the business areas. I was attending St. Georges secondary modern school. I had not liked the school in High Green but St. Georges I loved. I enjoyed all the lessons with perhaps the exception of maths which had never been my strong subject. But I didn't disgrace myself and was never bottom of the class even in maths. I must have been 12 or 13 years old and boys had started to seem not uninteresting although one in particular had become just irritating, he always sat behind me and pulled at my hair or scarf. He was called Terry Elliott. More of him later. Audrey and Des were having a few marital problems about this time, Des had a very young girl hanging around and she eventually began helping him to deliver milk on his rounds, her name was Mary but Audrey always referred to her as "It". Audrey was very depressed and one day she sent me to spend the day with my friend, I was very uneasy as it was normally quite hard to get much time away from home as there was always Julie to keep an eye on and chores to be done. Julie must have gone with her dad on his rounds on this day as she sometimes did. Feeling that something was not right I went home early and I was forever glad that I did. Audrey had shut herself up in the upstairs sitting room that we rarely used and had tried to gas herself. I don't think things improved much but I was not around to see as Julie and I were packed off to mum in Yorkshire. Joan was having her first baby and mum needed help with the younger kids. It was my turn now to be mothers little helper. I remember well going to visit Joan in the Hallamshire hospital where Linda Marie was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October

1955. Joan was living in a caravan in Elsecar. It was on a farm and seemed to be right in the country as to get to it you had to walk up a long lane and there was an awful lot of grass about it. When I asked Joan about it she said it was at Boyd's Farm. She is not sure how long they lived there but when she had a very bad asthma attack they had to leave there and come to live with us at The Circle in mums front room. We had an old lady living in the front room for a while whose rent helped out with the household expenses. I suppose she must have been moved on so that Joan, Alan and Linda could move in. Joan remembers how they brought their chickens from the farm to our house, they put them in the bottom of Linda's pram and pushed them all the way, it has to be at least 8 miles! It was at The Circle that Richard was born on the 22 of March 1957 and Joan and her growing family were on the move again to yet another caravan, this one was sited behind the Crossfield Tavern in High Green.

1956 – 1957

Meanwhile – I was back in Cambridge and living once more with Audrey, Julie and Martin who was born in February 1956. Audrey's marriage had broken down and Audrey had bought herself a house in Thoday Street. Knowing she had to make a life for herself and her children she went to Reading and trained to be a telephonist and began her climb upwards in the G.P.O. She had always worked either at PYE's or elsewhere but now she had a fail-safe career. I was back at St. Georges and life was pretty good. Audrey was very good to me, she had a dressmaker who made her a lot of clothes (Audrey always dressed in the latest fashion) and Julie and I had some dresses made by this lady too. I had lots of friends and we used to meet in the evenings at Coldhams Lane rec. Of course there were boys there and eventually Terry Elliott and I were going out together. On my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday Audrey gave me a party, as the house was so small I was able to have only a very few friends but the theme was green and I remember that the drink she got us was Green Goddess, a liqueur. I don't think Audrey knew how strong it was and that was my introduction to drink. I was also given a record of Tab Hunter, I was fond of him, the record was "Young Love". For my last school party Audrey altered one of her strapless evening gowns for me to wear, she added wide velvet shoulder straps and a matching bow with long streamers. She also made me wear stockings for the very first time, which I hated, (tights hadn't been invented then). I think I can safely say I proved to be the Belle of the Ball.

Audrey was doing very well at the G.P.O. telephone exchange and when I left school she wanted me to make a career along the same lines. I went off to Norwich to start an eight week course and was enjoying it although I didn't much care for my digs. I got a very bad dose of tonsillitis and was sent home, I spent two weeks in bed. The landlady in Norwich said I had been seen going into a public house and was seen drunk but none of it was true. I had gone into the off-licence of a pub to get a bottle of Cydrax, a non alcoholic drink as the tonsillitis had made my throat very dry and sore. The G.P.O. chose to believe her story and I was dismissed and disgraced in Audrey's eyes. I had to find another way to earn a living and to try and regain Audrey's trust. I also wanted to try and repay her kindness as on leaving school, she had taken me into town and bought me a complete wardrobe of adult clothes. In those days there were plenty of jobs to be had. When I recovered from my bout of tonsillitis I went in to Cambridge and applied at a "gown shop" (a quality ladies dress shop). I was lucky enough to get the position and started straight away. The horrid Norwich incident was soon behind me. I was also glad to be back with Terry again. Thinking I knew what was best for me and disregarding Audrey's wishes I went to live with Terry's mum when they moved from New Street to Dalton Square in Chesterton, quite the other side of town and I changed

jobs too. After a spell working at P.Y.E.s I went to work in a knitting factory, it was better pay and was close enough to walk to. Things started to go wrong with Terry, he was very possessive and was becoming dangerous and violent. He was having a nervous breakdown and his mum advised me to go back to Yorkshire for a spell out of harms way and to give Terry a chance to recover without emotional problems to hold back his recovery. So I did.

1958 - 1959

While I had been away from home the family had moved again. This time it was to a brand new council house in Pilley. It was so new that not all the roads were laid and houses were still being built around us. Ken was still working at the pit at Howbrook. Nev was at Ecclesfield grammar school, though I think he played hookey most of the time. Chris and Des would be at Kirk-balk and Christine at the small school at Tankersley.

Whilst I was finishing my schooling, starting work and getting on with life in Cambridge, Joan and Alan, with their growing family had moved from their caravan to a house in Thorncliffe Row. These houses were for the workers of the Izal factory and they were built at the lower end of Newton Chambers site in Chapeltown. They say "new house, new baby" and there could be some truth in it as Joan gave birth to a baby girl they named Susan, Sue as she has always been called was born 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1958. Joan used to walk up to High Green with her children every Monday to help mum with the washing and what a job it must have been because neither had a washing machine, they were a luxury in the late 50's and washing was done with a dolly-tub, posher, wash-board, (later to be used as an instrument in skiffle groups), and a mangle. When mum moved to Pilley the joint washday still went on but Joan used to get on the pit bus to travel up to Pilley. Early in 1959 Joan was having severe asthma attacks and the doctor advised that the family should take advantage of the "Ten Pound Poms" scheme and emigrate to Australia for her healths sake. Alan's parents were not keen to see their only son go so far away and I don't suppose mum was too keen either but when Sue was about 6 months old the move was made. Mum went to Tilbury to see them off on the boat neither knowing if they would see each other again.

1959 - 1960

Back in Pilley Nev had left school and went to work at the pit top of Rockingham colliery at Birdwell, he was there about six months and realised he was not cut out to be a miner. In 1960 he decided to join the army as a cadet in the Junior Leaders and he went off to Berkshire to train. I had changed jobs and was working at Timpsons shoe repairers on the shop counter in their Wicker Arches branch. I met a local Pilley boy called Stephen Ayers at the youth club in Tankersley and was convinced he was the love of my life but at seventeen what does one really know. Ken was knocking about with cousin Barry at this time. Barry's sister Doreen was living next door to us at number 8, we were at number 6. Barry spent a lot of time there and at our house and as Ken had bought himself a motor scooter the pair used to travel places to meet girls. They went as far as Goole so that Barry could see a girl he had met and Ken started seeing her friend Jean Woodhall. Barry soon tired of his girl but Ken was hooked and Jean came to live at The Avenue with us. They married in 1959 at Pilley and they went to live in Stone Row with uncle Alan. Stone Row was typical of the rows of miners cottages, there were two rows and they were adjacent to the pit yard. The pit in Pilley was Wharncliffe Silkstone and uncle Alan must have worked there at some time to be living in a pit house but he was not working when Ken and Jean went to live there. Aunty Freda had died and their children were all grown, married and gone. Des Uttley was the youngest and he was living

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with cousin Doreen (his sister) next door to us. When they built the new houses we were living in they also built a brand new miners welfare club and it was next door but one to our house. Mum was doing some cleaning, getting it ready for the grand opening. We had been at the final night at the old clubhouse down in the pit yard and a grim and grimy place that had been so we were all looking forward to the bright and modern new club opening. Mum was invited and although I was a few months short of my eighteenth birthday I was included on the invitation. It was a grand opening and in those days there were "turns" on a regular basis, it was well supported and pretty full on most nights. Mum continued to work there as a cleaner and pot-washer for some time.

I was seriously besotted with Steve and I got on very well with all his family. He was only sixteen, nearly a year younger than me and he used to get angry when I used to sing the hit song of the time to him "Only sixteen" but to be fair he seemed to be older than his years. Nev and I used to pool our resources to buy a 45 rpm record whenever we could and the number one hit that year was "Here comes summer". Steve got to realise there were plenty of other girls around who were interested in him and I guess I was jealous. Things got worse between us and I took some of mums sleep aid tablets. Apparently I slept for nearly two full days and when I awoke there was a policeman sitting on the bed. I was taken to be assessed by a psychotherapist in Sheffield but it all came to nothing. Terry must have recovered from his nervous breakdown as he took to travelling up to see me. The first time he cycled up but then he got a motorcycle and he visited a few times. He and his mum then moved down to Bridgwater in Somerset to live with Terry's half sister and her new man, Percy Baker. Terry asked me many times to go back with him and after the sleeping pills episode mum thought it might be a good idea, she thought that Terry would be a better bet than Steve and that he cared for me so on her advice I headed off to Somerset to have another new start.

Fay and Percy lived in a big three storyed house on Taunton Road. Opposite lived Terry's oldest brother and his family, Roger, his wife Eva and at that time 3 sons. We all lived a very social life as Percy and Terry had a lot of business friends and being in the motor car sales business they rubbed shoulders with rally drivers and garage owners and such like. We were out most nights and it was a lifestyle I was unused to. I worked in a factory that made car parts called Willmot and Breedons. I hated the work but the money I earned helped to fund our evenings out. Percy decided one evening that it would be a good idea for Terry and me to get married on his birthday and as usual all of us went along with his plans. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1960 we were wed. Mum and Nev came and Nevs ex girlfriend Linda Jowett, who had been my friend back in Pilley. She came to be my maid of honour. I remember being at the alter and hearing mums voice behind me singing above everyone else during the hymns. She had a beautiful singing voice and it brought back memories of singing along to the Sunday night songs of praise on the radio back home before we got T.V.

Terry and I moved in to a caravan on Lakeside, a site just a few yards down from the house on Taunton Road. Mum was staying with us for a week and it was great to have her to myself without all the other kids. We went shopping together and wandering around Blake gardens, we had a nice relaxing time but mum was suffering with indigestion and stomach aches. On Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of October mum collapsed in the shower/toilet block, we got her into bed and the doctor was called. He made her as comfortable as he could and left saying he would come back in the morning. I sat up all night with her and in the morning the doctor returned. He had mum taken straight away into the St Mary's hospital in Bridgwater. I don't recall if I was told what was wrong with mum but I was told that she was very poorly. Mum had been asking for someone to bring our Des for her, I had contacted Audrey who was on her way and Ken was supposed to be bringing Des but Jean had insisted that she should come instead and so Des was left at home. I left the hospital at about 3 o'clock as I was asleep on my feet and



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mum was not conscious at the time. By the time I got to the house, perhaps 5 or 10 minutes away the 'phone was ringing, mum had died. 8<sup>th</sup> October 1960. She was just 51 years old.

January 26<sup>th</sup> 1909 to October 8<sup>th</sup> 1960

1960 – 1963

The hospital would not let us see mum and I was glad when Audrey arrived and she took over the handling of everything. Most things are a bit of a blur for me at that time. I lost my voice for a whole month and was in no condition to work, I suppose losing your mother just one week after getting married would send one into shock. I think changing my job and working for an elderly couple in Wembdon might have helped me to get back on track. I was cleaning for them part-time and they were so kind to me, but eventually I was offered a chance to train as a hairdresser and for an eighteen year old, that held more appeal than being a char-lady. I liked it very much, I was pounced on one day by the staff and when I went home for lunch I had become a blonde! Free hairdos were great but having constantly wet hands gave me chronic exzma so once again a new job was needed. Terry and I had rented a house in Queen Street right in the centre of town. I started work at Crown Wallpapers and what a great job it was. I loved it there.

The good life started to go wrong for Fay and Percy. Terry was also getting into trouble with them and he had also started staying out late, sometimes he stayed out all night. I didn't like the crowd he was mixing with either as there was wife swapping going on and I don't think it mattered that Terry's wife was not there, there were always plenty of others to go round. Percy and Fay lost the house and Terry's mum and David her ward/grandson, came to live with us. One night Terry brought home a woman he said he had rescued from her abusive husband and we gave her a bed for the night. When I tried to be sociable at breakfast with her Terry shouted at me and told me to mind my own business. I was suspicious, and when Terry and Percy went off to Scotland to work on a hydro-electric scheme on Loch Awe leaving me to clear up everything and then to join them, I did some sleuthing and found out who the woman was and what the real story was. Fay had gone to Norfolk to live and I was going to Scotland to join Terry, (I nearly didn't go). Terry's mum and David went up to Derbyshire to live with her daughter Ciss. I went to Scotland and found my home was to be in a caravan on a hillside that was sloping so badly that nothing was straight. There was no electricity, the water supply was a mountain stream and the milk was from the crofters one cow and as they had no means to pasteurize it the milk would become cottage cheese by tea-time. We were only there a couple of months as the weather was turning cold and Percy had always been one for his home comforts. Working manually for a living was against his creed and he was used to living on his wits so another move was made. Back to Cambridge we went, followed closely by the very bad winter of 1962/63. Audrey put us up for a short while, for Percy it was even shorter as I think he might have tried to charm our Audrey and Audrey was not too fond of men at the best of times and he got very short shrift and was out. He went to find digs and very soon had another woman in tow. To be fair he stayed with Dorothy and I believe he eventually married her and they had children. Terry and I found a house to rent and I was working at the isolation hospital at the bottom of Mill road. Nev was in digs at St Thomas Square, he had given up the Junior Leaders and was working as a porter at Addenbrooks hospital. When mum died Audrey had taken the three youngest children to live with her in Cambridge. It must have been pretty crowded as her house was quite small as I think I have already said. Eventually things thinned out a bit as Des moved into a hostel in Bedford, he started work at a hat making firm in Luton and then went on to take an apprenticeship with Janes of Bedford, builders, a useful trade that has stood him in good

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stead for life. Our Chris had gone back to live with Ken and Jean and to finish his schooling at Kirk-balk. In his own words he took his bike to the train and went home. Christine stayed with Audrey until I moved back to Cambridge and then she came to live with me. Chris had always been keen on art, as was I and he spent much time doodling and drawing (when he should have been learning about English history). Although he won distinction for his artistic merits it was impossible to earn a living in Yorkshire at that time unless you went into the pits or the steel foundries. So as Nev had done previously, Chris joined the army. He signed up to be a drummer in the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and as he says "drummers in the KOYLI are really buglers/riflemen". That was not what he wanted at all so when a chance came along to become a drummer in the regimental band he jumped at it. He then had to learn to read music, another language to him. He enjoyed it all, especially the outdoor stuff but hurt his right knee and that was to effect his future somewhat. He did come to Cambridge for Christmas with Terry and me in our rented house. It was a good Christmas that year as although we didn't have much, we shared it all. Des, Nev, Chris, Christine and me and Terry when he chanced to be around. In January 1963 Chris was posted to Malaya and then to Borneo and Nev decided to go back into the army too. He joined the Pay-corps and was to work his way up over the years to W.O. 2. He had a spell in Aden and also in Gibraltar, so the boys were seeing a bit of the world.

Kens family 1961 - 1968

While all this was going on in the south, Ken and Jean had been getting on with their own lives. When mum died they were allowed to keep the house as it was the children's family home and although only Chris was the only one to finish his schooling in Yorkshire, Ken and Jean were starting a family of their own. Robert was born on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1961, followed by Gerald on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1963. Ken left the pit after witnessing a fatal accident in which a friend of his, working very close to him was killed. He started working for a de-scaling company and began his travelling all around the British Isles. He was doing all manner of interesting cleaning jobs with his famous "Jetting machine". He was away from home a lot but still managed to increase his family later on with two girls. Caroline born August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1965 and Janet who came along in January 1968. Ken is writing his own family story so his version would be more accurate and informative than mine so perhaps he could be persuaded to link his with this version.

Joan's family 1962 – 1963

Joan, Alan and their children set sail on Christmas eve 1962 to come home to Blighty. They were bringing with them a new baby boy, Paul, he was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1962 and he had to be 3 months old before he was allowed to travel. We now had a little Aussie in the family. It took 5 weeks to sail home and when they arrived Nev went to meet them off the boat. They came to Cambridge and a mini-bus was hired to take them back up to Yorkshire. It is worth mentioning that Joan didn't want to come back to the U.K. But Alan's dad had died while they were in Australia and Alan's sisters kept writing to him saying that as he was the only son he should be at home to be near his mother in her old age. Joan's ma-in-law had won again.

1963 – 1965

Meanwhile back in Cambridge in 1963, Terry, Christine and I had moved from the rented house where incidentally, I had celebrated my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday with a lovely birthday cake from

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Audrey and precious little else. We moved into a really grotty basement flat where we stayed for a very short time as I quickly answered an ad. for a housekeeper with a rent free flat and I got the job so we moved yet again. The properties we had been renting were always furnished so moving was pretty straight forward. We then lived in a very large four storey house in Brooklands Avenue, a posh area of Cambridge. I was to look after Mrs Harvey, who lived on the ground floor, the first floor flat was ours and the top floor and basement flats were let. Mrs Harvey was tiny and frail and I was able to look after her and all her meals as well as working full time which was great as I now had a job at Crown Wallpapers in the Cambridge branch. I took her breakfast in bed before going to work, I dashed home on the bus at lunchtime and took her sandwich or soup. I left her afternoon tea on a trolley for Christine to take in to her when she got in from school. Supper was something light but cooked which she took at seven pm. It was all very manageable. Working at the Cambridge wallpaper shop was as enjoyable as it had been in Bridgwater. In fact life was good until I got pregnant. I was rushed into the Mill Road Maternity hospital and was very poorly as it was unclear what was wrong until I was operated on. It was an ectopic pregnancy and there was considerable damage, I was unconscious for 3 days in intensive care and I was eventually told that children were never going to be part of my life. My marriage was not good as Terry was hardly ever at home and apart from my job and visits occasionally from our Des and Joan and her children, (Joan had left Alan for a short time and was staying with Audrey) there were few highlights in my life. There was one occasion I remember with a smile, it was when Joan's kids were with me for the day and all sitting around the table having lunch. Richard, who would have been about 6 years old, asked me if when I was little did they make little children go up chimneys to sweep them? Before I could answer, quick as a flash, our Christine said "don't be daft, off course they didn't but they did used to walk jerky and quick." How old did they think I was !

Joan and the children went back up to Jump and back to their life with Alan and Terry and I left Mrs Harvey to move into an old cottage with an outside toilet and no bathroom in Gold Street. Bathing was done at Audrey whenever we could. I must mention here the birth of Marcus, Audrey's youngest. When Audrey bought the house in Thoday Street, Des Fletcher used to bring her maintenance money for the first two children, every Friday night. He was sometimes allowed to stay over and the result of one of these stay-overs was Marcus. He was born in February 1963.

Whilst living in Gold Street Terry went up to Birmingham to work for Percy Baker again. Percy had run off with Dorothy, the woman he had lodged with in Cambridge. They had settled in Brierly Hill, Birmingham and Percy was dealing in second hand and repossessed cars and then into car and lorry spares. Terry came home occasionally but really I had become used to living on my own quite a lot and I had started to have a life of my own. Terry came back one week-end and told me he was going to live in Birmingham permanently and that I must give up the job I loved and go with him. That was when I realised we had reached the end. He went and I stayed where I was. I loved Gold Street on my own. Des used to come at week-ends, Chris used to come on leave occasionally and drove me crazy as his drumsticks came too and everything became useful as drums, sink, table, doors, nothing got left out.

After Terry had finally left I took an evening job in an off-licence next to the wallpaper shop. It was attached to a cinema and ballroom complex and it was here I met Dave "Chalky" White. He used to chat to me on most nights and eventually I went with him upstairs to the dance-hall. He was a competition jive dancer and as I had never jived before he taught me. A whole new world opened up. He was in the R.A.F. Stationed near Cambridge and he used to stay at week-ends, he had a wife and two children in Northampton but he had stopped

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going home sometime before he met me. When he was demobbed he went home but eventually left his family and moved in to Gold Street. Life became pretty hectic in Gold Street I had friends to stay sometimes and there were always people dropping in. We had a new girl start at Crown Wallpapers, her name was Afzan. She was not really shop-girl material but she did the job well and we became friends. Afzan's family lived in the country near Huntingdon in a lovely big house. Her step-father was an ex-wartime flyer and her real father was a Malayan prince. When her mother remarried the children were adopted and their name became Manning. Afzan's friends were undergraduates and we spent many lunch-times in college rooms playing backgammon and sampling "Horham specials" a cocktail that was invented by Marcus B who was a thoroughly nice chap. Zani had some friends whose families were of some note and although I was mixing with people who all came from a world a million miles away from my background they made me feel wanted and welcome. Indeed I had been fetched from my bed by Marcus to go to a party and they wouldn't take no for an answer. Afzan came to live in Gold Street too for a while, between flats, and we often had champagne and sausages for breakfast. Christmas 1964 was pretty memorable as we were invited to spend it with the Manning's at their lovely home. Chris, Des, Chalky and I were all there. It was evening dress for dinner and Zani gave me 2 dresses to wear and insisted I keep them but whenever would I get a chance to wear that sort of thing again. We had a lovely Christmas. The girl that was paired with Chris was allowed to wear day gear for dinner as Chris only had denim jeans and jacket with him. They were so kind and made us feel very comfortable. Poor Nev missed out on all this as he was overseas in Aden. We didn't forget him though as I had everyone I knew sign a big white handkerchief and write a message on it. He still has it to this day.

Afzan went to London to do a modelling course at Lucy Clayton's, we all knew selling wallpaper was just a stop gap. Indeed she only came to us because her boyfriend at that time had told her that unless she got a job there would be no dinner for her that night! She had stayed longer than she intended.

1965 - 1966

I had other good friends come to stay for a while. Babs and Derek I had met at the Dorothy, a suite of function rooms owned I believe by the Co-operative. I had changed my evening job to work the bars and to do waitressing when required, sometimes silver service at Lord Mayor functions and such like. The Dorothy was a great place to work as we got to see some pretty big stars of show business, groups that went on to become famous and one time we saw Dusty Springfield.

Des was doing well in Bedford. He had started his working life at a hat making factory in Luton but it was not what he saw himself doing in life. He left there and started an apprenticeship with Janes of Bedford. He came on one of his visits to Gold Street in a nice little green car, he had named it Veronica 2, the reason for this was the girl he brought with him was Veronica 1 and always would be! Ve, as she has always been known was barely sixteen and I liked her very much from the start. Over the years Ve and I have developed a theme, it being I always remember what people wore, she remembers what they ate.

Needless to say her camel-coloured dress and red chiffon scarf are indelible in my mind! This was 1966.

Chris's story from 1966

Chris had got on in the army, he had been to Malaya and Borneo in 1963 as I may have mentioned and then back to the U.K to Andover where he met and shortly after married Yvonne on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1966. Another posting took him to Berlin in 1967 and a year later Yvonne joined him there. Chris had formed a great little rock band and they named it

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“The Take”, he has some good photographs of them and they really look the part. It brought in a lot of spare cash and also took them to some great clubs. The next posting brought him back to the U.K and Colchester, this was now 1968 and soon after he was given a medical discharge due to a knee injury that had left him with arthritis. Later on in life he had to have knee replacement surgery on both knees! They both went to live with Joan when they found themselves in civvy street. Joan’s house was pretty crowded (she had moved from the Brickyard in Jump to a 3 bed council house in Hoyland). Chris went to work at the steel works in Wicker arches in Sheffield, a job not really suitable for a musician so at the first opportunity they applied to join the £10. poms and left for Australia on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1970. They arrived in Freemantle 3 weeks later with \$40 between them. Only 3 days later he got a job with a cabaret band and his first weeks wage was \$150. In his own words “I was on my way to stardom!” After about nine months the gilt must have worn off the Gingerbread so he joined the R.A.A.F. Central band as a percussionist. Not having managed to have a child of their own, they adopted a baby boy, through a church adoption agency. After yet another medical discharge because of his knees they decided to try again in the U.K. This was now 1975. Things were never going to be as good for them here as in Australia so with the little money they had left they flew back to Melbourne. He was playing with a band in a German restaurant (I’m not sure if he had to wear lederhausen or not). He also started a teaching course and was on his way to teaching music to kids in schools. He thinks it was all the time he had to spend working and studying that Yvonne needed someone with more time to spend with her and also a bit more security than Chris could supply. Divorce was the outcome in 1977. Chris moved to Queensland in 1978 where he met Kaye. After a whirlwind courtship they were married in 1979 on the 11<sup>th</sup> August. Kaye has two lovely daughters, Belinda and Leanna and he feels that coming into a ready made loving family was a real turning point for him. With Kaye's backing and support he landed a job with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and later went on to teaching in several schools around Brisbane, with some professional performances under his belt too.

Meanwhile,back in the early 1960's, I had learned to drive, a passion with me and when I got a full licence I wanted to get a driving job so I turned my back on Crown Wallpapers and went to a local cleaning firm, Penguin Cleaners. I was given a grey mini-van and I drove around all the villages around Cambridge collecting and delivering from local shops. It was there I met another friend called Bruce, he used to work a pressing machine but eventually he left and I believe he became a chef. I went on to work at Blundells, a tally firm and my round covered the Huntingdon, St Neots area. We were allowed to use the firms vans for our own use which was great. To have wheels was quite something in the sixty's. One time Des, Nev, Bruce and I went off to Brean Down for the week-end. We slept in the van and we had a great time until the van broke down on the way home. We were all broke except Nev who has always saved for a rainy day and the poor chap had to pay for us all to get home by train. I can't remember if we ever paid him back. That proved to be a costly week-end as I had to pay the cost of the repairs to the van, it took sometime to pay it off.

Getting a job in civvy street was not easy for Dave, he had been a mechanic in the forces and he had not really wanted a grease-monkey job so Percy Baker made a re-entry into our lives. Dave followed in Terry's footsteps and went to drive for Percy. He drove a lorry and picked up and delivered crank-shafts and other lorry parts to the London area from where they were shipped to Africa. I had not wanted to live in Birmingham with Terry and I wasn't all that keen to do it with Dave but I cared for the chap so we gave it a go. We rented an old house that had a shop front and as with a lot of older properties in the area you had to cross the back yard to get to the kitchen in all weathers, I can't say I liked it at all. I got a job in a small

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supermarket, I didn't mind the job but the area was depressing. On my day off one day I thought I would try and get to a park that I could see from an upstairs window, I wanted to take my shoes off and walk on some grass as there was none where we lived. I set off and walked for miles only to find when I got there that it wasn't a park it was playing fields surrounded by a big high wire fence. There was no way to get in. I went home and decided there and then to pack up and leave Birmingham straight away and head for Somerset. And that is what I did. Dave came too of course.

1967 - 1968

We got off the train at Highbridge and walked to Brean, some considerable distance to Pontins Holiday Village, a holiday camp that I had noticed the weekend we had all gone in my firm's van, when it broke down, remember? We asked if there were any jobs available and we were lucky, we were given a wooden chalet to live in and Dave was given a job behind the main bar. I was given a job by Lyons Maid ice cream. I was in a kiosk part of the time making "Knickerbocker Glories" a fantastic tall glass full of fruit, ice-cream, nuts, syrup and cream with the crowning cherry on top! The daytime part of the job was pushing a cart around the site selling ice-creams to the happy campers. The summer of 1967 was a glorious one weather-wise and the holiday camp was great fun too. Since getting together with Chalkie I had lost touch with Audrey so it was a great shock when pushing my cart about one day I looked up to serve the next customers and it was Simon, Julie's husband and Martin. They had all come to Pontins for their annual holiday. It was smashing to be able to spend my time with them when I was off duty. The staff were allowed to use the camp facilities, the bars included so we did have some social life. Having been taught to jive by Chalkie I had found it difficult to jive with anyone else until I found the staff chef who danced the same as Dave so I was able to have a good time even when Dave was working.

There was a bit of a mutiny by quite a crowd of the staff in about late July and as a result a good few of the staff left, Dave and I included. We went with a few others to London with no idea of what we were going to do or where we were going to stay. Things like that didn't seem to matter in those days, we seemed to sail on and something usually turned up, look how we found bed and board with income at Pontins! We found our way to Afzans flat in Shepherds Bush but she was away on honeymoon at that time. Her sister Angela met us and let us in, she said we could stay for a couple of nights but must find somewhere else to stay a.s.a.p. When Afzan went to London to do the modelling course she obviously started mixing with fashion photographers and film makers. She came to visit us from time to time while we were still in Cambridge but when we moved to Birmingham we lost touch. The next time I heard from her she sent me an invitation to her wedding, she was marrying a film director. The invite took some time to reach me as she had been unaware of the Birmingham move and also the Somerset move so I missed her wedding. There were about six of us from the holiday camp and together it was hard to find accommodation for all of us so the bedsit we found that would have been OK for two was pretty dreadful for six. I didn't like London at all so after ten days I said that I was heading back to Pontin's to see if they would take me back on, Dave came with me but what happened to the others I do not know. Luckily Dave was a good barman and they were happy to take us on again. I was to work in the bar as well which suited me as I would be working the same hours as him so there would be less chance of his being able to womanise, it didn't work of course after all this was 1967, "summer of love, free love" and all that! At the end of the season we were undecided as to where we would go and what we would do. Birmingham was the one place I did not want to go so Cambridge was the obvious choice. We fetched up at City Road where Julie and Simon were living. We had the attic bedroom but Dave was not happy so he did another of his disappearing tricks and once again I had only myself to think of. I went back to the Dorothy

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to work in the Beachcomber restaurant running the wine-bar. Another job I really enjoyed as there were always interesting people either at my bar or eating in the restaurant. The local businessmen spent their lunch-times at the bar and in the evenings many of the performers in the ballroom or function rooms would take their interval breaks at my bar.

Christine had been living with Joan and she had left the north and come back to Cambridge, although it was not with me she lived but with some chap who was very familiar with certain illegal substances, so after some frantic attempts we were able to get her away from him and she came to live with me again. I had moved into a rented cottage in Parkers Terrace, a nice little 3 bed with a bathroom! Dave was back with me and was running the PYE social club in Chesterton, he was very friendly with a lady in the personnel department who also handled the social club business. They had a big Valentine's day dance organised and asked me to bake a big cake for the centre-piece of the buffet table so I made a very elaborate cake with two big hearts stood in the centre, these were made of cardboard and iced (not for eating). When Dave's lady friend went to cut the cake it had disappeared. Stolen. Later in the evening I was talking to some young lads, apprentices, I found it was them who had taken it and the proof was there in a photo taken with a Polaroid Instamatic camera. One of the lads became a friend of ours, Phil Thomas and was often in our company and a frequent visitor to Parkers Terrace. Christine came to work at The Dorothy upstairs in the function rooms and would occasionally come and help me at the end of the nights work to clear up in the Beachcomber so that we could both go up to the entertainments in the main ballroom. We must have been in a hurry one night as a bottle fell out of the crate I was carrying, smashed and cut my foot very badly under the ankle bone, I wasn't aware of it until my shoe felt sticky and wet. I was rushed off to the hospital for stitches so we missed the show that night. I should have been off work with it but the management sent a taxi daily for me and provided help in the Beachcomber so all I had to do was sit on a stool and supervise.

It was at my bar one night that a customer, who had been a regular for his dinner every night for a week or so and on chatting at the bar afterwards I found that he was a holiday relief manager for a large shoe company. He showed some interest in me but I told him my young sister would be more his age and a much more suitable companion for a date. I introduced them and the rest, as they say, is history.

Christine's family 1969 - present day

Ray Mather (his name) was from Manchester and when Dave and I decided to move on again Christine went off with Ray to Manchester and from there they went to Bexhill on sea and married in 1970. The first of their three children, Sharon, was born 27<sup>th</sup> November 1971. They moved to Mold in north Wales where Nadine was born on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1974 and a son Aaron born 27<sup>th</sup> April 1976 completed their family. They sold up in Mold and moved down to Somerset where they have lived in the main since, first in Wellington, where they had a shop for a while. They had a brief spell running clubs and pubs in Hampshire and Wiltshire and Ray also drove taxis for a while but a breakdown in health put an end to a working life for him so they live in a nice little bungalow in between Minehead and Bridgwater. The two girls are married and have children but so far Aaron refuses to join the marriage brigade.

Meanwhile Nev was also making a life for himself. Nevs family from 1967.

Nev had met Christine Nelson (my niece by marriage to Terry) in 1967, it appears to have been love at first sight as Christine was in a hospital bed at the time. Terry and Nev had

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palled up and as Terry was to visit Christine, Nev went along too. This was in August and by the following March they were married. Nev was getting a posting and wanted to take his new bride with him. He was now in the pay corps and had postings to Scotland and was also in London for some time too. He was stationed in Gibraltar for a good spell and he has a really good story of his journey home from there as a crew member on an ocean going yacht. I hope he can be tempted to recall it for everyone to read as it would make very interesting reading I can assure you. Nev and Christine eventually bought a house in Fair Oak, near Eastleigh when his final posting found him at Worthy Down and their children came along whilst he was there. Antony was born on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1972. Kerry came along on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 1976. They moved to the Midlands to live and then to their current bungalow in Hornsea where I believe life suits them just fine. It was not all plain sailing for them though as along the way Nev had a heart attack when only 40 years old, he recovered but later he had to have 3 valves replaced with open heart surgery. Christine has worked at keeping him fit and although he has had hip replacement and is travelling a little slower than he used to life is still good for them.

Meanwhile back in my own life in 1969, when Christine left with Ray she had left her dog Sandy, a lovely big collie, with me. Cambridge had gone a little flat for Dave and me so we did a flit and in a car he was supposed to have bought from Simon and with very few belongings and of course Sandy the dog we headed for the west country again. We were not so lucky in finding accommodation straight away and the only work we could find was fruit picking to begin with so we lived in the car and used public conveniences for washing. Two weeks sleeping in a car with a big dog was not much fun but we were able to find a caravan to rent just outside Bridgwater. I got a job at the bus station café in Bridgwater, Dave did bar work in a local pub so life became a bit more normal. Phil our young friend from Cambridge suddenly turned up and announced his intention to stay with us and to get a job locally too. He got set on very quickly at an engineering works and Hey Presto we had ourselves a lodger. A 22ft. Caravan with 3 adults and a big hairy dog was a wee bit cramped so we looked for a house to rent, we dropped on a lovely old farmhouse in Weston Zoyland. We all lived there in comfort and I changed jobs to work at a petrol station locally. Dave was seeing a young barmaid at the pub he worked in and she was unaware that he lived with me. I had taken a job at the Bristol Hotel in Bridgwater, doing bar work and as a waitress in the daytime. When Dave disappeared for 3 weeks I thought he had finally gone. He turned up and told me he went to see her parents, (she wasn't a local girl) and when he asked their permission to marry her he was sent packing, so back he came to cry on my shoulder. Phil had had enough of our problems so he moved out and I believe he eventually went home to Wales, where he was from. I too had had enough so I moved into staff accommodation at the hotel. I enjoyed the work but sharing a room was not to my liking so when the offer of a flat came up I took it. It was over the shop of Terry's old friends and they must have let Terry know I was there. He turned up one day and asked me to go back with him. I turned him down for two reasons, I didn't want to ever go back to Birmingham and certainly not with him, especially as our Nev had paid for our divorce!

I must still have cared for Dave as he came for me and talked me into another try, he was now working as a milkman and he had a lovely country round. He had a cottage allocated to him in a village near Taunton and I used to do the round with him sometimes. It was a lovely part of the country at a lovely time of the year and for another brief spell life seemed to be a breeze. It was while we were here that the Americans landed on the moon. I recall that it was a full moon that night and I found it hard to believe looking up that there were men walking around up there. I needed to earn a living as Dave was so unpredictable that I dare



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not expect him to keep me with no wage of my own to rely on. I got a job at a local car sales and garage, serving fuel and delivering and collecting cars. I liked the driving part best though. I don't think we stayed too long in the Taunton area as the old itchy feet syndrome kicked in again. We jumped into the old van that Dave had bought with Sandy and a few belongings and hit the road again.

This time we turned up in Bedford. I can't remember if we just stuck a pin in a map or not but I am certain that there was never a plan! We made contact with our Des again and we all moved into a 1930's detached house and attempted to settle down again. I worked in a dress shop in the centre of town, Des was progressing with his building career and what Dave did for a living while we were there escapes my memory. We were not in Bedford for long, just long enough to lose Sandy who was used to going off on his own and coming home when he was hungry. There was a park nearby and someone took him to be a stray, they eventually let the police know but we were unable to get him back as they would not give us the name and address of the people who had him. We therefore left Bedford without him and once more took off in the van. This time there was a plan, we were headed for Norfolk where Dave's mum and dad lived. They were not his birth parents but they had adopted him as a baby and I had been unaware he even had parents until he suggested we go there. I would add that when we left Bedford I don't know where Des went to live, probably with Ve's family for a while. I was not particularly enamoured with Norfolk or with living with Dave's folks. My first job was at the Plaswood factory, in the finishing department. They made wooden lamps and other wooden household kitchenalia, my job was smoothing out any runs that occurred when the lamps had been dipped. I worked with a nice crowd of people but was happy to move on to a company that made clocks. Metamex made fancy wall clocks with sun-ray designs and are quite collectable nowadays. My job was to add all the spikes and beads to the basic shape of the clock. Some even had signs of the zodiac around the edges, these were very popular at that time. We were living in an old rented bungalow with old Crittal windows which let in the draft and the whole place was freezing cold all the time. Easy to see why another move was imminent. It was while we were here that we heard Alan had died. It was a shock as the poor chap was only 36 years old.