

Once in a lifetime- a life cycle by Bill Jinks

They are not long, the days of wine and roses
Out of a misty dream, our path emerges for a while and closes within a scheme



PROVIDENCE LUCK FAITH OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE FETE ACCOMPLI

"IN THE BEGINNING" 1925

I was trouble at birth, my Mother suffering with "Quinsy's" (Tonsillitis) In addition to my being "Breached" which might explain why I have strong legs? Being born in Miller Street off Newtown Row, in Aston I can therefore lay claim to being a "Brummie".

Mother and two Sisters- me on my First Bike

(mother was standing on the back axle, a three wheeler)



The "Tram" Depot was situated at the lower end of Miller Street, and of course trams ran

frequently to and fro. The type that remain in memory most were the smaller windowless darker coloured trams which I think were used by engineers and for recovery. An Uncle – Brother to my Mother, and born deaf and dumb worked for the then "Tramways" from which

we benefited with party and function tickets for all three of us, my two elder sisters –Alma and Betty and me. A "back to back" house with a communal Wash Place was an introduction to humble beginnings whose parents eloped to escape my Mothers persecution from a Family of demanding Father and Brothers. My Mother was a Methodist Sunday School Teacher before Marriage to my Father, following his discharge from the Warwickshire Regiment in the First World War, after being wounded at the Somme. He had a younger Step Brother "Joe", who was killed in the war aged twenty. The maiden name of my Grandmother on my Mothers side was Cope-Holte, which we could assume that in the past was associated with the Holte's of Aston. My Grandfather on my Fathers side – a Yorkshireman - had a well known Pork Butchers shop in Newtown Row. My Grandmother also on my Fathers side was Irish –Maiden Name Anne Millett who kept a shoe shop in the Bull Ring until her death in childbirth, aged thirty four Years. My Mothers maiden name was Jones and whose origins appear to be deep rooted in Birmingham. Her one Brother emigrated to America and returned for a visit immediately after the last war.

MY FATHER –AT REAR- WITH ARMY PALS



My upbringing, was in a close family atmosphere, unlike today with so many external distractions to impede the efforts of parents to exert domestic and characteristic influences on their offspring. Television unfortunately, being the major distraction particularly, with it's present day deviations of that which should be the 'norm'. My sympathy initially is bestowed upon Teachers who bear the brunt of this deviousness.

Anne Millett



My Early recollections were of Salvation Army visits and , 'A Wood Yard' and 'Funeral Parlour'. I still have a vision of those lovely Black Horses with Black Plumes adorning their heads. Also a vision of kittens being drowned with a broom in a bucket of water, which must have been my introduction to cruelty.

How far back can one remember? Surprisingly, I have a most distinct memory from when I was about eighteen months old. The reason is easily understood when I explain. One Sunday morning , I had been bathed in the then familiar galvanised Metal Bath, which when not in use was hung on the wall in the 'Yard' It was the same type used by 'Dustmen', now refuse collectors, and would carry them, loaded, on their heads to the dustcart.

I had been stood on the Table being dried out when there was a knock on the door and I was left momentarily to grasp a sticky 'Fly band suspended from the ceiling. I believe these are still available: a cardboard tube about one and a half inches in diameter by two inches long which, when you take the top off enables you to pin it to the ceiling and suspend about two feet of sticky paper which attracts flies?

On this occasion it attracted itself to my naked form resulting in screams which quickly brought both my Mother and the Salvation Army Lady visitor to come to my aid along with others who had heard my screams. They gave me another bath, after getting the sticky mess complete with dead flies from my delicate form I hate flies, but I do seem to have developed a liking for women in Salvation Army Bonnets.!

An early incident was of a Motor Bike being pushed onto me fracturing my shoulder Blade and from which I still suffer. The culprit came to work for me thirty years later.

I'm told, that at twenty months I was apparently responsible for the recovery of one of my two Sisters from Double Pneumonia when the Doctor took me (recovering from measles in another bed) and putting me on my Sisters bed with the words "here, see if you can do something with her" the recovery apparently was miraculous for, as I picked up her orange, she screamed blue murder, the first words from her for over a week.

Gas lamps were the only domestic and street lighting at this time and remember the "Gas Lighter" going his rounds with his rod both lighting and putting out the street lamps, that which created the illumination was called a "Gas Mantle" and periodically had to be replaced.

Another of my earliest recollections was of the drivers of the old single Decker buses who had only a tarpaulin to pull across to shield them from adverse weather. Another was seeing a 'tractor' type commercial lorry Steam driven with a rattling chain and coal embers dropping into a plate underneath the Boiler.

When I was two and a half years old we were fortunate to move into a new Council development in the Perry Common area of Erdington. This then was a new beginning and located at what was then regarded as the countryside and that is where I grew up until I was called up for my Army service. At that time there were open streams originating from Sutton Park, now the two brooks crossing College road, Mothers, used to stroll along them and collect the Water Cress growing in abundance along its bank. Such was the purity and cleanliness of the countryside at that time. I well remember when we first moved there, the house was so new that two of us in a pushchair were lifted bodily over the kerbstones being laid to the new house by the workmen.

An innovation to us was a bathroom with a bath; I had my own bedroom but was often found in my Sister's bed after my parents had returned from an evening out. This obviously was a throwback from the back to back when all three of us were in the one bedroom.. Harmless at that age, my parents concern though was putting me back into a cold bed. A front and back garden

was of course a luxury and at the back we made a sunken lawn with surrounding shrubs and plants of every description, jonquils, my mother's favourite, lilac, crysanths, margaritas, my Fathers favourite, roses of course also golden rod . I used to walk round the garden sometimes with my Mother and she would say "I had that off Mrs so and so" and "Mr Smith gave me that" such was the neighbourliness in those days. she would name every plant and shrub. It was important to us that the front garden gave credit to the Grove in which we lived.

I must mention an early memory. I would have been about three years of age I was playing in the new back garden when I screamed with terror at the sight of a big Airship accompanied by two aircraft flying overhead. It was the ill fated R101, which, two years later in 1930, crashed into a hillside at Beauvais North of Paris.

Pets! we initially had a ginger cat, yes!, a Tom his name was Jim and one morning he horrified my father by presenting someone's pet rabbit on the Lawn. My first pet was a "Java Sparrow" "Mick" tragedy occurred when, while my father was cleaning the bird cage outside, the bird escaped and in order to prevent it entering the garden next door, where there was a dog, he thrust himself over to stop it, only for his knee to come down onto it. I was heartbroken and ran screaming into the house. I know that my Father was more affected than me, I can still hear his words "I tried to stop the dog getting it". I had a tortoise called Jim afterwards and had him for years. I think he is still hibernating. I also had a Budgie. Later in life I had another one and bought him a mate for company. I built a breeding cage and they had three chicks. It was Fascinating to watch the instinctive behaviour, she wouldn't allow him into the breeding box unless to feed her or the chicks and I used to watch how, when feeding the chicks, he would thrust them onto their backs and regurgitate food into their beaks. They new it all and I learned a lot from them.

GROWING UP

(1930's 4 – 9 years)

A working class but, close family background was my upbringing, with a war Disabled Father, also Mother suffering from a Valvular diseased heart, the sacrifices of both to ensure we were adequately fed and clothed were praiseworthy, unlike many other unfortunate families who relied on the "Mail Fund" for the provision of the familiar "Black Boots and Stockings" in order to go to school.

HMS ROYAL SOVEREIGN OFF THE MERSEY



My father worked shift work at a "Tube Manufacturing Factory" at this time and which in view of his handicap (shrapnel wounds in his thigh back and head) rendered him to a sorry state, coming off shift with bleeding hands and feet. At seven years of age my school days were marred by an

unexpected attack of rheumatic fever and by which I missed about Six weeks schooling. This to my mind was a setback which I never recovered in my education,

this was followed by a nervous affliction of "ST. Vitus's Dance which created involuntary movements of Twitching and noises. Fortunately I grew out of this.

Meanwhile both my parents were suffering health wise, my Father through his war wounds and at one stage suffering from depression caused probably by the constant stream of doctor's bills for the treatment of my Mothers condition. He also entered hospital more than once for investigation and treatment. 1923 and 1938. My Mother at one stage suffered with "Gall Stones" and had them removed. I still hear her screams of pain before she was operated on.

What price the NHS ?

There were happy memories however, particularly of Christmas times and hot summers and of outings to the parks. At one stage we went on the tram to the Lickey Hills at Easter time. It snowed.

I like many was bullied, seems like an age old sequence in the growing up stage of life. However, I was one who fought back resorting to fist fighting and was quite a problem in this respect. "fighting again" that much so that on one occasion the Secondary Modern Senior School which I attended was, one day assembled on my behalf as an illustration of the result of fighting. I was a "bloody" mess. It would appear that no one delved into the underlying cause, or did they and was never pursued!.

One such incident however was, when I witnessed a bully who broke the arm of another pupil. The school was assembled and marched past myself (who had witnessed the incident) and Teachers, whereupon I pointed out the bully, rightly or wrongly?

Later in Adult life I associated with him, in his capacity of a Union Official, a completely different and responsible character than his school days. I don't think he ever realised the school day incident. How people change!.

I went on my one and only School trip at one stage, on the Train for the first time and to see the sea at Llandudno. Buses, from School to the Station. Liverpool first stop- onto buses through the Mersey Tunnel and on the Ferry to Llandudno to my first ride on a donkey. My parents must have dug deep to enable this. I understand the cost then, to have been ten shillings.

It was at the time of the accidental sinking of the submarine "The Thetis" off the Mersey. The Battleship the Royal Sovereign was also anchored in the area .My Father gave me a Box Camera to take pictures. The one picture I took was of my classmates sitting in a group on the beach . The one lad had bought himself a little sailing boat from Woolworth's and was sitting

in front with it on his lap. Some years later I worked with another Foreman and getting into conversation with him one day learned that his son went to the same school as me and that he

also went on the same school trip. He was killed in the war. I took his Father the photograph of his son sitting on the beach with his sailing boat.

I was an avid reader of comics and used to embark on "Swapping", going round to other mates and going through each others comic possessions to swap.

One day a School girl in the Grove fell ill with "Diphtheria" and later died.

Obviously it's effect was felt by everyone. But this was one of many diseases being suffered at that time. Measles, Impetigo, Chicken Pox, Head Lice, Etc. Her Mother however blamed the cause on comic swapping which most practiced.

Another little girl about five years old, in another street got killed when 'run over' by a bus.

Incidents leave their mark.

At one stage I acquired an old 'wind up' gramophone with two records, 'The Swan'-Carnival of the animals and 'In a Monastery garden' which I played incessantly, at one stage we used an old pram going round the 'Grove' playing it. I often reflect on this old 'wind up' when looking at the modern set-up of Hi-Fi's, Television and Mobile Phones. One of my playmates was a

brilliant exponent of the Harmonica (mouth organ) I often wonder whether he progressed musically into other regions, I do know that like many others he served in the Forces. Later

apparently marrying a German Girl. Such is the pattern of life.

Despite the adversities prevailing domestically and bearing in mind the poverty which existed at that time, My growing up period was happy, rendered mainly by devoted parents a new start in life with a new home and good schooling with very good Teachers and very strict too. During the class of one Teacher if you shuffled your feet against the Steel base of your desk you got the cane. Fact.

I took part generally in School Sports but did not, at the time specialise in any particular one.

At about nine years of age, my Father bought me a second hand bike, a "Runwell" made in Wolverhampton. A prized possession and never off it. The relevance which, unknown to me, at that time was the object which was to symbolise a control over my life some years later.

An older lad earlier had managed to acquire an old bike and between him and the bike within a short time all of us learned to ride. The last phase which I shall always remember was when he took his hands from the rear of the saddle, "trust me" " Don't loose Charley---Charley--c-h-a-r-l-e-y"- (Charley was way back) I went straight into a lamp post. Both bike and I were ok and the lamp post is still there. On the whole, although I was always in trouble, those were happy days of learning what life is all about and it's RUDimEnts . It's amazing what you learn from your pals.

I used to build wheel trolleys made from four pram wheels and a plank of wood with an old wood draining board for the seat, with a swivelled front portion for steering. We had fun. From an old pram which the lads had found, we detached the wheels complete with axles fixed the one axle to one end of the plank, the other with the aid of a nut and bolt drove the bolt through the other end of the plank and through the centre of the axle fixing it with nuts, so that it swivelled. We then nailed the draining board to the rear of the trolley. With a piece of rope we secured one end to the left hand side of the front axle, the other end to the right hand so that when seated our two feet were placed either side of the front wheels on the axle, so that it was steered both by the feet and the rope. We took it in turns pushing or seated steering. The ideal locality was on an incline where one walked to the top and rode down. Repairs were found necessary over a period. 'Improvisation' was learned at an early age and over the years has been used to advantage.

I must recall an incident which took place in my early teens. I regularly visited "Town" -The City, on Saturday mornings, and would return possibly with flowers (jonquils) . On this occasion I bought my Mother a small cut glass vase and was on the 'Top deck' of a 'double deck' bus returning home, the bus, turning from Bull Street into Steelhouse Lane where the Tram Terminus

for trams returning from Erdington was situated and where the 'Conductors', (you remember those polite people who collected fares, told you where you could get off, in a nice way, also chat to you,) would alight from the tram and with the aid of an extended rope, would detach the electrical arm contact from the overhead wires and run round to place it on the reverse part of the tram ready for the return journey. This process was taking place at the precise moment that "our" bus turned into Steelhouse Lane with the result that the extended arm struck and entered through the top right hand louver above where I was sitting and with the momentum of the bus moving swung round the top of the bus in an arc extracting itself through the left hand louver but leaving its pulley wheel lodged in the bus. The now, very pale passengers who had as one, ducked low, just stared at the deposited pulley wheel.

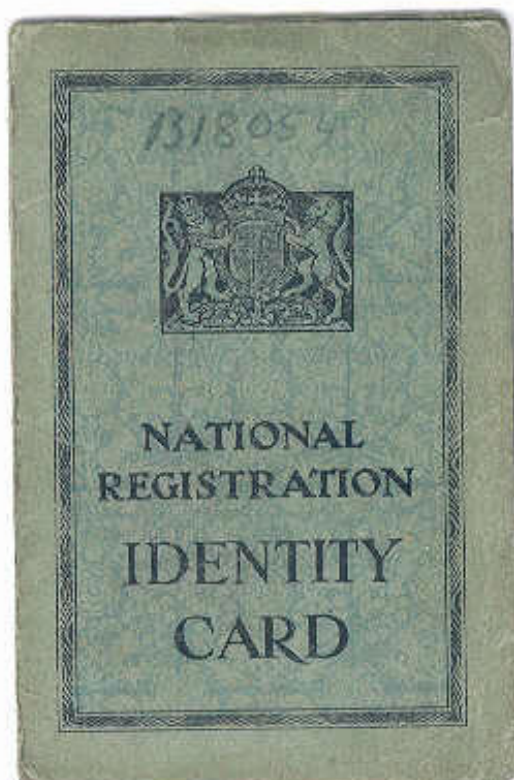
The conductress came running up the stairs to enquire whether anyone was injured and taking the names of those on the front seats. Fortunately although shook up no one was injured, but it was not until I got home that the vase which I had purchased for my Mother – was no more. I never claimed,* thankful I wasn't injured.

Unlike today with the adoption of America's method of Insurance Claims?

THE EARLY WAR YEARS

(1939 – 1941...13-16)

"When War Broke Out" a familiar phrase from war time comedian Rob Wilton, I, was still at school (September) and all schools were immediately closed for a period. However, at thirteen and due to leave school in the December, I with one or two other lads was obliged to continue schooling to complete our education, to our dismay and disgust of course. This was the start however, of the evacuation of many children from areas regarded as 'vulnerable', to the countryside. The film "Goodnight Uncle Tom" with John Thor is a wonderful portrayal of this era.



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1947-48
GENERAL CBI 10

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← HOLD Pages I-VIII in one hand and
TEAR ALONG THIS LINE

PAGE 1

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS

This is to certify that
W Jinks, Junr. 24/DN 11971.
is a member of a voluntary fire-fighting party which is recognised by the Birmingham City Council, and possesses the power of entry and of taking steps for extinguishing fire or for protecting property or rescuing persons or property from fire, which are conferred by the Fire Precautions (Access to Premises) Order, 1940.

F. H. C. WILTSHIRE,
Town Clerk and A.R.P. Controller.

Date of appointment 7.3.41.

Signature of Holder W. Jinks.

Headquarters
Twelfth Army Group
Europe

I need not speak of your past accomplishments, other than to say you have reflected great credit upon yourself and your command.

We are now fighting on German soil, and we are in contact not only with the soldiers of our enemy but also civilians of Germany. As conquerors, we must now consider our relations with the people of Germany.

It is imperative that you do not allow yourself to become friendly with Germans, but of the same time you must not persecute them. American soldiers can and have beaten German soldiers on the field of battle. It is equally important that you complete the victory over Nazi ideas.

To guide you I have issued these special "battle" orders. They may appear to lead along a narrow path, but they are NECESSARY. You personally must prove to the German people that their acceptance of Nazi leadership is responsible for their defeat, and that it has earned for them the distrust of the rest of the world.

O. D. Bradley
LIEUTENANT GENERAL, U. S. ARMY
COMMANDING

No. 65709

HOME GUARDS
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The Bearer of this Card:

(Name) L. M. JINKS
(Address) Wooton Grove College Road
Edmington, Birmingham 22C.

has been duly enrolled as a Local Defence Volunteer for the City of Birmingham.

ZONE COMMANDER
H.G. Birmingham.

Date of Enrolment 29.1.41

National Identity Card No. 2457 65709

W. Jinks.
(Signature)

At the outbreak of war aged thirteen yet, having served three and a half years in the army By the time of my release nearly 22-years of age. Gone, were the best years of my life. Some however, never saw their 21st.

"Neighbourliness" so important and instrumental in overcoming adversaries in those days became more emphasised at the outbreak of war. It should be clearly understood that the overpowering influence to everyone at that time was 'Fear of the unknown' what the morrow would bring and what the final outcome would be, anyone can be wiser after an event.

What was known were identity and ration cards for both food and clothing the Shortage of such commodities in shops including cigarettes? Queue's for such Shortages were common, people joining them not knowing what was available.

FATHERS FIRST WORLD WAR MEDALS MY MEDALS AND WITH DISABLED BADGE BRITISH LEGION BADGE



I well remember Winston Churchill; he still got his cigars, directing that the Gravity of beer should be raised in order to raise the moral of the public. In fairness to Winston the cigars were sent over complimentary in admiration of his leadership and no one would wish to deprive him of 'his' cigars.

On leaving school and three months into the war 'Job hunting' was the menu. My Mother wanted me to be a Carpenter so went to work at a carpenters shop. Unfortunately it didn't last very long for I was disgusted at the Carpenters filthy appearance and Snuff taking habit which turned me completely off the project and particularly at 10/6 pence a week.

Munitions were the order of the day and through my father who had moved to another company on an "Inspection" job at another 'Firm' (thankfully) soon found a job in engineering.

It was pure coincidence that on the particular morning that I left the Carpenter, I was walking down a street away from the carpenters when I was spotted by a workmate of my father who knew me and who was standing outside the rear entrance of the firm during his break. He called my father out and within half an hour I had a job working for the Chief Electrician. The particular job that I was put on was a rotating spot welding machine and involved Spot welding cartridge holders in smoke bombs, these being about five inches in diameter.

It should be understood that by this time the bulk of industry had been transferred and converted to wartime munitions which was a remarkable achievement. It was whilst on this particular job that I experienced the deviousness of man.

I very soon became proficient on the machine and the Chief Electrician seeing the potential of the job as a good piecework earner, after three weeks brought in his niece to operate the machine transferring me to preparing and cleaning the canisters for welding. On confronting him on the move he reiterated that my age (14) prevented me going onto piecework.

After approaching my father and a sympathetic Foreman learning of my plight, the next day I was transferred into the Machine Shop on a Drilling Machine.

The job entailed countersinking "Oil Retainer Plungers" for the 'Spitfire Engine '. Very soon I became proficient at this task and shortly adopted a system which increased production fourfold.

It was here that I discovered what workmates and socialising was all about. Being the youngest there I was of course initially regarded as the tea and errand boy and accepted the tasks gracefully and got to know my way about and to know other workers, this knowing, not only included kindness but pranks, to which I was of course vulnerable and was at one stage given money to go to the shops for some 'pigeons' milk. The shopkeeper was very understanding and gave me a packet of 'Milk of Magnesia' to take back. I was never sent again.

The charge hand was very kind to me to the extent of taking me with his wife regularly to the 'Theatre Royal' in Birmingham and it was here that I saw Richard Tauber in his production of "London Town" and many other Shows including "No Orchids for Miss Blandish" –gruesome !

At this time conscription was taking place and many of the operators were being called up. Workmates, who you had got to know, to like or dislike, to depart from your life, some not to return home at all.

It was also at this time that I witnessed tragedy, the death of a "Belt man" whose arm was caught in shafting when repositioning a repaired shafting belt whilst the shafting was still running, rather than stop all the machinery. He was flung to the ground from above severing his arm and shoulder blade. He was a man in his sixties and was the father of the Chief Electrician who started me at the factory. He died two days later.

My other note of tragedy at this time was one morning when the young lady who I worked next to received a phone message that her brother had being killed during the "Raid" the previous night

when an incendiary bomb exploded in front of him, a piece penetrating his heart killing him outright.

RADIO, many by this time possessed one and was a boon to moral , not only for up to-date news but as entertainment. There was Tommy Handley's "Itma", it's that man again, "**Monday** night at eight" which comprised varied entertainment which included "Dick Barton –Special Agent" there was a program which included a "Mr Goldie" who's introduction included a piano sonata by litz.

William Joyce the German propaganda broadcaster was listened to some evenings. Two singer comedians the "Weston Brothers" made up a song referring to William Joyce as "Lord Haw Haw" .Following the introduction of the song, he, thereafter referred to himself as "Lord Haw Haw. At times what was amazing was the detail and accuracy of subjects which came over, in particular relating to areas of previous air raids. He was executed after the war for treachery.

Prior to the modern "Philco" radio which we had, my Father earlier, had acquired a "Crystal Set" which was powered by an"accumulator" and which my Elder Sister frequently took to the local "Wireless Shop" for re-charging.

Television of course had been introduced but one was very fortunate to possess a radio. During periods of important events, News vendors would circulate "Special" printed editions of newspapers on foot conveying reports on those events. Television broadcasting was suspended during the war.

Air raid shelters had of course been built within the Factories and frequently, the Sirens would sound whilst working, for everyone then to go trooping down to them. Usually during the Day time they were of short duration.

A tannoy system had been installed in the factory at the instigation of the government in order to maintain moral and each morning and afternoon "Music while you work" was broadcast throughout the country. In between the system would play occasional records which were few and far between to the extent that repetition of those they had become sickening to hear? Unfortunately

two in particular repeated time and time again were "Ravel's Bolero" and "Chabrier's Espana" which I regret I now hate.

During my early teens I associated with some decent lads and indulged in following the local football team "Aston Villa" of course, being fortunately our nearest team which like today's supporters we followed religiously (in the broader sense of the word) in addition to being fanatics of the Snooker Table. Later of course as we reached the stage of looking the age, indulging in visits to the local 'pub'. Incidentally with the hue and cry about smoking, what happened to the public house "Smoke Room"?

At one stage on a roster system we carried out "Fire watching" at the billiard hall which in a way we relished, being provided with food and tea making facilities in addition of course to playing Snooker "Free" until about two o'clock in the morning. The proprietor was very good to us and as mentioned in addition to providing food there was sleeping facilities. He later lost a leg , I think through 'Diabetes'.

By this time the Americans had entered the war and troops with supplies were coming over in their drones and at one stage a large camp was set up on a housing estate in the 'Queslett' area of North Birmingham. The U.S. Forces Post Office was also set up bordering on Sutton Park. It was during this period of course that at seventeen most friends, relatives and even Family members were in the Armed Forces and of course the feeling of missing out came to us,

whereupon four of us resolved to 'go for it ' and finished up after a lunchtime drinking session at the recruiting office in Dale End two of us opted for the Navy , the other two the Army, we immediately underwent a medical examination, valued at that time at over £100, all of us passed and experienced no problem in supplying samples ?.

The rest of course, for myself is history, whereby the personnel Manager of the Company where I worked, returned a Form to the War Department endorsed "Employed on Urgent War Munitions" consequently this cancelled my entrance until later being conscripted in the April following my eighteenth birthday.

THE BLITZ

(1940 -194214-17)

At the outbreak of war a "Blackout Curfew " had been imposed whereby during the hours of darkness no lights should be shown from street lighting, houses and cars etc. Cars were fitted with diffused Headlamps . Although of course, not as many on the roads as today nevertheless, Petrol rationing was imposed and which restricted travelling distance. Households and shops, were obliged to fit blackout Curtains made from specially manufactured fabric and which Householders and the like were obliged to purchase. "Wardens" patrolled the streets on the look out for "Blackout" infringements for inadvertently showing a light. A hazard of course was out walking, particularly on an extremely black night, bumping into objects or even other people. One night in particular I myself bumped into what I recall was a 'Stamp Machine' outside a post office finishing up with a 'Blooded' nose. Some carried torches which also were subdued otherwise a familiar shout would be heard "put that light out". My Sister writing one evening to her fiancé hadn't noticed that darkness had ensued and as a result was fined. One thing that was looked forward to was the reinstating of street lighting.

We also set about building "Anderson" shelters. I dug one for the Family and then helped neighbours. They were a corrugated structure of sections half buried in the earth and bolted together to afford a semblance of protection against the blitz. Psychologically at least they were effective. The Queens Road area of Aston was heavily bombed and included a "Land Mine". Seeing the devastation shortly afterwards was a grim reminder of the 'reality of war.

We had relatives on my Fathers side living in the area, his Sister Aunt Elsie, Uncle Fred with Cousins Alfred and Stanley and who came each evening for a period to stay overnight, returning next day, not knowing what they would find. Whether the house would still be standing, or neighbours still alive. How fortunate are people of today.

One day my Mother was cleaning the windows of the house when a plane passed over so low that she could clearly see the German Cross. The plane crashed nearby and three shop workers from the local " Coop ", who belonged to the 'Home Guard ', including the Manager complete with revolver, raced in the direction of the plane. Unfortunately, they were beaten to it. At the height of the blitz, moonlight saw the lighting of smoke drums positioned at vantage points to create smoke screens to cover vulnerable areas. Moonlight nights of course were an advantage to the Bombers enabling the navigators to follow river courses to the intended targets. In addition, Powerful Searchlights were used and Mobile Ack-Ack Guns toured areas letting off salvo's now and again. It was stated after the war that, although ineffective, they were a great moral booster. Barrage Balloons were hoisted on long cables at vulnerable locations particularly as a deterrent to "Stuka Dive Bombers". Their flying range was limited however and none penetrated the Midlands. As soon as the Warning sirens had sounded the regular trounce to the shelters had already started. Families carrying necessities for a night in the shelter such as Hot water bottles, Candles and Torches, Flask's of hot drink, blankets etc. all being well wrapped up.

Very shortly- the sound of ack-ack guns followed by the heavy “drone” of engines – heavy because of the loads being carried, they must have flown in formations of about a dozen planes. A little later the terrifying distant sound of “Crump” – “Crump” of high explosives. Everyone hoping that the sound would keep its distance or that there would be nothing left to drop by the time they came over. Flares were dropped at certain stages. Unless one has survived through a Blitz one hasn’t experienced ‘Fear’. “Fear of the unknown-what next- will we see tomorrow”

“how long will it last” tummies start rumbling – signs of fear, we were terrified, worse, was seeing others terrified. If one can imagine the sensation of everything being ‘drained’ from you under a particular circumstance, then repeat it time after time, that is the feeling in a Blitz.

When the situation permitted and we could look out from the shelter the initial sight was of a distance glow in the sky of a fire or fires probably in the City Centre. I well remember one such night a Mother shouting “You Bu...ers” ..Such was the futile response of the helplessness one felt under such imposition and onslaught into one’s life. No more terrifying sound however, is that of the rushing sound of a bomb or the combined lighter rushing sounds of incendiaries, some packed with explosive anti personnel devices.

It was against the incendiary bombs of course that the community came together using the supplied Stirrup pumps in a bucket of water to douse them. Incidentally, Incendiary Bombs were dropped in what was termed as “Breadbaskets” probably in a group of about thirty or so and of course by the time they hit the ground were distributed over a larger area.

As mentioned, in some cases anti personnel explosives were incorporated leading to a devastating effect on personnel. In some cases the bombs entered rooftops to explode in rafters or upper bedrooms only to be discovered by the reflection of the glow from the upper part of the house.

Relief of course came at the sound of the all clear. One evening the warning sirens sounded at 6-00 pm the all clear sounding next morning at 7-00 am a period of thirteen hours. People then, to travel to work, some only to find devastation where they worked or workmates missing from their machines, leaving one wondering whether something had befallen them. Most were suffering from lack of sleep particularly after a period of night bombings. Bad weather was a godsend restricting the activities of the “Luftwaffe”.

The ‘Nuffield Factory’ situated opposite the then ‘Castle Bromwich’ Aerodrome and whereby completed Spitfires were towed from the factory across the main Chester road onto the airfield where pilots waited to test and then others to fly them to designated Airfields in other parts of the country, quite a number of women pilots were engaged on this task. The Nuffield factory was one of many Bombed – with loss of life and so also was the BSA factory at Small Heath which was built on a two tier basis but tragically was hit rendering the upper floor with Machinery to descend onto the lower floor. I understand that this incident was the largest loss of life in one incident in Birmingham.

The castle Bromwich airfield was later developed into the “Castle Vale” Housing Estate. The war and its implications reinstated both a patriotism and fellowship long since lost and forgotten in the progress of time. Neighbourliness assumed itself once more and where there were occasions for a party and particularly a Wedding, stored rations were brought out to contribute to and ensure a successful gathering. My younger Sister, but older than me, worked in the City for a High Quality Furniture Store, ‘Chamberlain King & Jones’, there had not been a raid the previous evening but, on going to work this particular morning, it was to discover the street cordoned off and relays of hosepipes strewn across the roadway. The store for some unknown reason had burned to the ground during the night. Both the Manager and workers stood by, all in tears. The reason for this

destruction, unknown??, however, as an afterthought , had this occurred preceding a raid and which would have lit up the whole City, what would have been the consequence?

I remember vividly the night of the heavy raid on Coventry. It was a clear moonlight night and drones of planes were heading in that direction. As mentioned Ack-Ack guns played their part to a certain extent and on this particular night we watched fascinated as puffs of exploding shells traced a “U” in the sky –following the course of the aircraft.

At sixteen, I was on “Fire Watching” and later in the Home Guard which involved Manoeuvres and firing range which of course gave me a taste of what was to come in the Army. Here again a sense of belonging, comradeship and patronage was felt and as mentioned reflected itself in the increase in neighbourliness which was already established at that period of time in households.

Following a night raid and on going to work next morning we learned that a “Land Mine” had been dropped close to a Large Electrical Factory near where we worked, but had not detonated and was suspended on telegraph wires. The road of course, having been cordoned off. During the Lunch Hour we went to see it. It was an awesome site this massive canister suspended on the end of a parachute. Curiosity satisfied we didn’t stay long.

Following the devastating raid on Coventry, such incident was afterwards termed as “Coventrated” for any similar incidents, other areas of heavy bombing of course were Hull, Liverpool and Exeter among others of course but I saw for myself the effects on the latter two.

One night a Birmingham bus depot was bombed destroying a large number of buses, some were able to be driven out from the Flames. Thereafter all buses were parked away from the depots.

Eventually in response and thanks to the final intervention of America and the arrival of the B52’s the onslaught and devastation was reciprocated tenfold and morale received a tremendous boost particularly when Hamburg regarded as equal to Birmingham was set alight and virtually developed into a ‘Fireball’, Pavements, apparently melting. Such was the retaliation for our suffering. To the “do-gooders” in this country I would say:”you were not here to suffer and undergo the experience of a Blitz instigated by Germany and which initially destroyed Warsaw”.

Ration Books being the means of purchasing truly created an austere period. Many a time I queued for cigarettes for my Father. Sometimes you could get chocolate. There was a Wine Lodge in the Lower Priory in Birmingham “Smallwood’s” and as we were medically registered we could periodically obtain Brandy Clothing, which of course was available with a “Clothing Book” was manufactured to a Wartime standard of ‘Utility’ , a plain and expedient method of manufacturing goods.

THE ARMY

(April 1944 –October 1947, Age18-21)

As mentioned, like many seventeen year olds, witnessing the departure of relatives Friends and workmates and assuming an air of patriotism, (I wonder what the attitude today would be with so many unpatriotic souls in our midst?) Four of us trounced off to the recruiting office and in due course received our medical examinations and signed on the dotted line. It was here that I was to receive my bitter disappointment, for within a few weeks my pals were drafted into the Navy and Army accordingly, myself being left in limbo until, upon investigation, discovered that the Personnel Manager of the Company where I worked had “put a spoke in my wheel” by declaring me to be in a reserved occupation. Eventually I was released only to find that my choice of Navy was no longer available due to my physical grading of a “B” and was conscripted into the Army.

My Mate Les who succeeded in the navy myself finishing in the Army



Upon conscription, apart from the usual Armed forces of Army; Navy and Air Force; conscripts had the additional choice of entering the 'Mines' as "Bevin Boys" named after the Minister Anuran Bevin. (Jimmy Saville being one) .I also believe that Merchant Navy Seamen remained in that Service. Within a short time I departed for Formby in Lancashire situated between Southport and Liverpool for Primary Training . This being my second only train journey, but this time accompanied not by School Chums, but other recruits. All strangers to each other but, being in the same predicament very soon assuming an atmosphere of "togetherness" to embark on this new venture which brought most, away from home and Family for the first time in their lives.

On arrival at the Primary Training Camp we were quickly introduced to a Company Commander and NCOs and within a very short time derived of our civilian clothes and kitted out into Khaki. Later parcelling our own clothes for return to our homes. My mother apparently wept on receiving it.

for a few days. Well the
ship got hit slightly
on D. Day but we managed
to get back alright after
being towed all the way
from the French coast. We
have been over twice since,
now things seems to be
settling. It was a lovely move
we hit. I called to see
your family and they all
seemed very well and anxious
to see you. So Micky is
in France nice work. I hope

Tuesday. 24. 8. 44

Dear Bill

Just a few lines
in answer to your most
welcome letter received last
night. Well you asked me to
tell you about my experiences
Well you have asked for it.
Before I tell you I just
want to say that (Mickey has
been very badly wounded in
the head,) and Morky and
Marden are ok. Richard is
suffering from exhaustion he is
still in the 20th General
Hospital Bayeux in France.



As mentioned, for most, it was the first time away from home and family and the first night witnessed the sound of sobbing. Very soon however, a sense of comradeship soon developed, friendship quickly springing up between lads helping each other to settle into new surroundings, new type of clothing, new procedures and a disciplined way of life.

I was stationed with a wonderful set of lads from the "Black Country", down to earth and concerned for each others welfare. What surprised me however was that the one lad could not read or write? It therefore gave me great pleasure to write and read letters for him for the period that we were together. Other lads used to suggest items for inclusion.

Mick



What was quaint to me in particular was the variety of dialects. Already of course familiar with that of the "Black Country" I considered that of the lower Bristol countryside area most pleasant but most outstanding the Workington country area of Cumberland with its phrases of 'thou' 'art' 'wilt' 'canst' 'wouldst thou' 'hast tha' and thine and reflected a dialect and phrases from long, long ago, what I term as Old-world. Those most difficult to understand were those from Durham and Newcastle areas and do remember that these were dialects not yet influenced by

BBC Jargon and well before television could influence countrywide dialects and expressions.

I went away with an every day pal, a good snooker player, what we called a "Shark". He was transferred to the Leicestershire Regiment but unfortunately was later killed in Holland. The first of many. Another pal was killed in Italy and yet another wounded in France, two other pals being wounded in Germany. Another 'Army Pal' was killed when on army manoeuvre's at the camp, the lorry transporting them overturned injuring others (Fete Accompli).

A lot of these lads went to the far east to fight against the Japanese. Seeing them kitted out for the far Eastern Zone was a stern reminder of the implications of war.

A further disaster occurred at a later stage at Dalton in Furness when a Ball Bearing Anti Personnel Mine which an Officer was demonstrating to recruits exploded killing him outright with

one or two others and maiming many. I was in the Conishead Priory, at Ulverston converted into a Military Hospital at the time and spoke to one or two recovering. I afterwards saw for myself the Nissen hut involved, it being absolutely peppered with holes leaving much to the imagination.

I had by then moved further up the coast to the Morecambe Bay area in the South Lancashire Regiment and after further infantry training was appointed to the H.Q. Company on 3" mortars.

We were involved in general training and acting as Artillery bombardment cover to advancing infantry troops. We practised in Morecombe Bay, compensation, for lost sheep being made to

Farmers by the War Department.

One day we were training in the Lakes and as was the procedure commenced firing Mortar Bombs, onto a designated plain, in front of infantry advancing to attack a vantage point. Suddenly the Battery Commander, a sergeant commanding the Four Mortars shouted "cease fire" and raced in the Land Rover to where the infantry had stopped advancing. Apparently unbeknown to us a Mortar Bomb's "Flight" had broken off in the Mortar Tube rendering it short in trajectory and had fallen short of target. Fortunately the infantry commander heard it's wavering flight noise and shouted for everyone to fall flat and it exploded harmlessly a short distance away. The Mortar commander relayed for the Mortar Barrels to be upended, one which revealed the broken 'flight'. Such are the hazards.

Prior to the Mortars, we were on manoeuvre's high in the Lake District when we hit a boggy area and pulled the one lad out, who was up to his knees in the bog, with the aid of a rifle and sling . He was terrified, and so were we.

It was at this time that we frequented the railway which passed near to the camp and which passed through Carnforth Station. I mention this fact because at this time there took place on that station the Filming of "Brief Encounter" with Trevor Howard and Celia Johnson and which made popular the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto, a larger 'Dummy Face' was fixed to the clock on the platform when filming to lay emphasis to it.

THE PRECEEDING EXTRACTS ARE FROM TWO WARTIME LETTERS FROM PALS

IN THE FORCES THE FIRST FROM MY MATE LES IN THE NAVY THE SECOND

FROM ANOTHER PAL WHO LIVED NEXT DOOR? AND WROTE FROM A MILITARY

HOSPITAL, AFTER BEING WOUNDED IN FRANCE. NOTICE THE REFERENCE TO MICKEY IN THE SECOND LETTER ALSO THE WARTIME CENSORS STAMP.

It was at this time that I had the pleasure of seeing the Conductor Dr.Malcolm Sergeant at the Liverpool Philharmonic hall and Australian pianist Eileen Joyce at the Southport Concert Hall she played Grieg. In addition to viewing the wonderful new Liverpool Cathedral, not complete, the Liner "Marie De'l Mar", so mammoth and of course the Royal Liver Building. The rear vision of Dr. Malcolm Sergeant with his sleeked black hair touching the collar of his tail coat remains with me forever.

During the time away from home, "Letters" were very important and , not only from the Family ,some which included cigarettes, but also from pals, also away in the Forces in different areas of combat all letters of course having previously been censored by the Forces censor.

I had written to my younger Sisters Fiancé, Ken, on the one occasion but regretfully it was later returned stamped "Missing in Action"

Mentioning cigarettes, it must be understood that at the time most smoked, finding that along with the gravity increased beer their effects were both nerve calming and tension relieving. Rations of both cigarettes and chocolate were provided through the camp NAAFI (Navy Army &

Air Force Institute) which were a boon and where most lads congregated in the evenings. There was also a Concert hall in the Camp where occasional shows or Cinema Films took place.

My Sisters Fiance' on the left with the other members of the fateful Bomber Crew brought down over Bochum



Amazingly, during the war there were a number of disputes both in industry and Services.

One such dispute, occurred at Manchester, when the Salford gas works went on 'Strike' for a short period with the consequence that troops were called in to attempt to maintain Services under the direction of supervisors. Emergency accommodation and facilities were quickly assembled and working in shifts I think it was about eighty of us managed some form of output for a couple of weeks. When it was all over the Lord Mayor of Manchester saw us all off at the Railway Station thanking us for our efforts. An incident and break in our training.

One would think that under Wartime emergency regulations – and there were many- Disputes or strikes, which could harm the country would have been banned.

My spell in the hospital was the result of a varicose condition and which had been the cause of my Physical downgrading.

I have my own conclusions on the present unsatisfactory state of hospitals with patients contracting disease. Having been an in-patient on no less than eight occasions which included The Birmingham General Hospital – three times, Good Hope Sutton--three times and the Queen Elizabeth – Once. My first hospital visit I was directed to the Bathroom for a bath – in addition to my having had one at home. The second visit was the same, the third visit I was asked if I had

had a bath, the fourth visit I was again asked. The last visits I was not asked, therefore to my mind it is the Filth which is being taken in by prospective patients. In addition, the Sisters in the old days were meticulous in cleanliness and as a patient was discharged, so his Locker was taken into the back wash room and thoroughly cleaned of the previous occupiers remnants from personal items and clothing etc., ??)

WARTIME VE (VICTORY IN EUROPE) POST OFFICE STAMP



It was about this time that my elder Sister entered the "Women's Land Army" and was located at Brinklow near Rugby in Warwickshire the life which she enjoyed immensely. She was courting an observer in the RAF at the time.

My younger Sister, now working at the Board of Trade was also courting a young sailor in the Navy.

Tragedy struck the Family when the Lancaster that my Elder Sisters Fiancé, Bert, was flying was brought down over Bochum in Germany.

It was during the period of mourning that tragedy again struck when my younger sisters Fiancé, Ken, was killed in the channel when his ship was sunk. (Letter returned)

His Brother, also in the Navy having gained compassionate leave from the Middle East came to impart the bad news to my younger Sister. Here he met my Elder Sister mourning her loss. Both, suffering the tragedy of losing loved ones shared in their grief for three months. They then Married. Their love for each other still exists although my Sister passed away three years ago. Such tragedies experienced in life leave a lasting impression, rendering one humbled and appreciative of life and its fortunes.

As mentioned with a troubled leg through a vein I entered the Military Hospital situated in the Conishead Priory at Ulverston in Lancashire and following an operation to rectify the problem I was later sent to Convalesce at Hamilton near Glasgow. The Race-course along with Stables, had been requisitioned and converted for use as such.

Here again I was humbled, for the majority of those convalescing were from action in Europe. Experiences related to me were awesome and instilled into me a sense of both gratitude and good fortune.

THE LADS OF THE ROYAL ARMY PAY CORPS STATIONED AT THE POLISH RESETTLEMENT RECORDS OFFICE –GODALMING SURREY



My period spent at Hamilton has this day left a lasting impression of the kindness and warm hospitality of the local inhabitants. Not a day went by but that we received invitations to parties and gatherings. Nothing was spared and food and drink was plentiful. Were it not for the climate such inhabitants are where I would chose to live amongst. Another lasting impression of Scotland was that of the Clyde valley in Early Autumn and witnessing the gathering and departure for the winter of the wild Geese, a spectacle of hundreds of birds with accompanying noise circling and then flying off in a specific direction leaving not one remaining and silence. Such occasions however, are not everlasting and shortly I was transferred from the South Lancashire Regiment to the Royal Army Pay Corps at Exeter. The City which, was so badly bombed during the war. Initially with three others we were billeted out with a Landlady who I would not wish to come across again. Treating us like school children, I think that her attitude was a reflection of misgivings in not having had children of her own. Her attitude and behaviour caused me to reflect the possible plight of some evacuees billeted out in similar circumstances, unlike that shown in that wonderful film "Uncle Tom". With John Thor.

I myself with the others were most delighted when we were transferred to the Bye-Pass Camp after about a month of travelling to and fro' the Camp.

One Sunday afternoon five of us decided to catch a bus which passed the camp to Sidmouth which lay on the coast. We enjoyed the trip and visit there, however, at around 9-30 pm when we decided to catch the bus back to camp, only to find that the buses had stopped running. We were most fortunate it being summer for we walked the fourteen miles or so back to camp trying to identify stars on the journey .We arrived back at camp at about 3-30 am . The subjects we spoke about and discussed were countless but most enlightening. During my time at Exeter I ventured into corresponding with a newspaper columnist relating to conditions at the camp on certain matters, an action forbidden under king's regulations to serving personnel. This action eventually became known to the Commanding Officer to whom the matter referred and I was shortly transferred to another camp at Whitley near Godalming in Surrey and close to Guilford. This was known as "The Polish Resettlement Corps Records Office which of course related to the thousands of Polish Service personnel who had managed to escape to this country and fought side by side with Allied Troops to free Europe. The bulk were stationed in Scotland and

surprisingly, a large number married Scottish Girls adding of course to their origins of Celts, Vikings and Norsemen.

We British Administrative Staff of the records office, along with Polish Officers and Clerks worked very well together, only one expression comes to mind, "Gindobre", anyway, we benefited from the Camp facilities administered by the Polish Force . Their tailoring, Hairdressing and Cooking was second to none.

I befriended a lad who lived in Esher quite near the Thames and was invited to his home one week-end. We both enjoyed classical music and I was delighted on the Saturday evening to be taken to my one and only visit to the "Proms" at the Royal Albert Hall. On the following Sunday we, along with his Brother and Sister had a rowing boat out on the Thames.

This was my introduction to "Class" – the upper class of society and its domestic implications. I was fascinated during the Sunday Dinner when I was introduced to his Father, having previously met the rest of the family. The wife bringing the Sunday joint to him at the table for him to carve and distribute. During the dinner I was questioned on my background and employment prior to entering the Army and although the hospitality and visi

Typical Navy recruits Group in Training.



Les

Being stationed in Surrey found us nearer to the American Camps and as a consequence (we had an army radio in the barrack room) we were able to tune in to the American forces network station "AFN music-Stuttgart from which we were able to listen to the up to date modern music, in particular to that of Glen Miller and his all too familiar "Moonlight Serenade ". Regretfully Glen Miller was lost over the 'Channel' when flying back to this country from Germany.

DOC

b. Drunkenness will not be tolerated. Penalties will be severe.

6. Never to associate with Germans.

a. We must bring home to the Germans that their support of Nazi leaders, their tolerance of racial hatreds and persecutions, and their unquestioning acceptance of the wanton aggressions on other nations, have earned for them the contempt and distrust of the civilized world. We must never forget that the German people support the Nazi principles.

b. Contacts with Germans will be made only on official business. Immediate compliance with all official orders and instructions and surrender terms will be demanded of them and will be firmly enforced.

c. American soldiers must not associate with Germans. Specifically, it is not permissible to shake hands with them, to visit their homes, to exchange gifts with them, to engage in games or sports with them, to attend their dances or social events, or to accompany them on the street or elsewhere. Particularly, avoid all discussion or argument with them. Give the Germans no chance to trick you into relaxing your guard.

7. To be fair but firm with Germans.

a. Experience has shown that Germans regard kindness as weakness. Every soldier must prove by his actions that the Americans are strong. This will be accomplished if every soldier treats the Germans with firmness and stern courtesy at all times.

b. Firmness must be tempered with a strict justice. Americans do not resort to Nazi gangster methods in dealing with any people. Remember, your fair but firm treatment of the German people will command the proper respect due a member of a conquering nation.

Headquarters
Twelfth Army Group
Europe

I need not speak of your past accomplishments, other than to say you have reflected great credit upon yourself and your command.

We are now fighting on German soil, and we are in contact not only with the soldiers of our enemy but also civilians of Germany. As conquerors, we must now consider our relations with the people of Germany.

It is imperative that you do not allow yourself to become friendly with Germans, but at the same time you must not persecute them. American soldiers can and have beaten German soldiers on the field of battle. It is equally important that you complete the victory over Nazi ideas.

To guide you I have issued these special "battle" orders. They may appear to lead along a narrow path, but they are NECESSARY. You personally must prove to the German people that their acceptance of Nazi leadership is responsible for their defeat, and that it has earned for them the distrust of the rest of the world.

O. H. Bradley
LIEUTENANT GENERAL, U. S. ARMY
COMMANDING

SPECIAL ORDERS FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS

1. To remember always that Germany, though conquered, is still a dangerous enemy nation.

a. It is known that an underground organization for the continuation of the Nazi program for world domination is already in existence. This group will take advantage of every relaxation of vigilance on our part to carry on undercover war against us.

b. The occupational forces are not on a good-will mission.

2. Never to trust Germans, collectively or individually.

a. For most of the past century, Germany has sought to attain world domination by conquest. This has been the third major attempt in the memory of men still living. To many Germans, this defeat will only be an interlude—a time to prepare for the next war.

b. Except for such losses of life and property suffered by them, the Germans have no regrets for the havoc they have wrought in the world.

c. The German has been taught that the national goal of domination must be attained regardless of the depths of treachery, murder and destruction necessary. He has been taught to sacrifice everything—ideals, honor, and even his wife and children for the State. Defeat will not erase that idea.

3. To defeat German efforts to poison my thoughts or influence my attitude.

a. The Nazis have found that the most powerful propaganda weapon is distortion of the truth. They have made skilful use of it and will re-double their

efforts in the event of an occupation in order to influence the thinking of the occupational forces. There will probably be deliberate, studied and continuous efforts to influence our sympathies and to minimize the consequences of defeat.

b. You may expect all manner of approach—conversations to be overheard, underground publications to be found; there will be appeals to generosity and fair play; to pity for victims of devastation; to racial and cultural similarities; and to sympathy for an allegedly oppressed people.

c. There will be attempts at sowing discord among Allied nations; at undermining Allied determination to enforce the surrender; at inducing a reduction in occupational forces; at lowering morale and efficiency of the occupying forces; at proving that Nazism was never wanted by the "gentle and cultured" German people.

4. To avoid acts of violence, except when required by military necessity.

For you are an American soldier, not a Nazi.

5. To conduct myself at all times so as to command the respect of the German people for myself, for the United States, and for the Allied Cause.

a. The Germans hold all things military in deep respect. That respect must be maintained at all times or the Allied Cause is lost and the first steps are taken toward World War III. Each soldier must watch every action of himself and of his comrades. The German will be watching constantly, even though you may not see him. Let him see a good American Soldier.

We visited an American Army Camp which was second to none. It was then that we relished their National drink of "Coca-Cola" containing genuine Maple syrup. Their hospitality to us was Commendable and greatly appreciated.

I will not bore you with details of the facilities provided for the American Forces (good luck to them) instead I must mention the value placed by British Forces on the Services provided by none other than the "Salvation Army". Facilities provided were second to none and which included free letter writing materials. Many was the expression "coming to the "Sallyanne"

EARLY—POST-WAR

(1947 – 1983 Age 21 – 57)

I entered the Army at Formby – Lancashire on the 6th April 1944. I was released to the Army Reserve on the 16th October 1947 at Aldershot having served three and a half years from the age of 18 to nearly 22 (Dec-10) On demobilisation of course we were fitted out with a 'demobilisation suit' complete with shirt socks and shoes in return for the Army uniform complete with army equipment. The atmosphere and general feeling was strange and full of trepidation and of light-headedness, it must have been a semi realisation that this was the end of an era and a new beginning.

For years afterwards each Saturday, I would travel to the City Centre shopping for clothes. The fashions of the day. This again was a reaction from the austere days of the inability to acquire clothes and of a design to your choosing, not the Army uniform or later the wartime "Utility" labelled clothing but rather an independent attitude to choose as I please.



My Father being an ex-serviceman from the first World War, was a member of a local British Legion Club. Within a short time I followed suit and became a member followed by election as the Branch Secretary and which office I fulfilled for about five years.

It was in my capacity as Branch Secretary that I organised a 'Raffle' in order to raise funds for the completion of the Club Premises it being estimated that the club would be short of about £200. Books of tickets were printed all members playing their part by either buying or selling tickets. A total sum of £663 was raised, quite a sum In 1950.

It was during this time that I acquired my first Motor Car. A second hand Vauxhall, which had been parked, with a "For Sale" notice on it's windscreen, near to the Company Works where I worked . Price £39? It was fun particularly when I first bought it to take home .Two of my pals came with me and we drove it back home in Top Gear all the way not being able to change it.

The 'Selector' was worn. It is said that your knowledge of the rudiments of a car stems from your first one. The learning was invaluable. I learned to drive partially in the Army . The lads of the MT section of the H.Q. Company in which I was attached whilst on Mortars taught me. Mainly because they wanted a Driver to bring them back from the pub on the evening? I passed my test later with the goodwill of a driver who my Company employed.

THE SEQUENCE OF CARS WHICH I HAVE HAD ARE AS FOLLOWS

(1) The Vauxhall 12 a pre war model which I have already mentioned.

(2) The Rover 14 pre war hand built, not used since before the war and bought of a local,

Newsagent. My Mother maintained – The most comfortable car she had ridden in. Mind you, she hadn't ridden in many, however, it was a lovely car.

(3) The Jowett Javelin ; the company with which I worked manufactured Rear Axles for Jowett and tested specimen axles on a Model provided. This of course created my interest in the car.

(4) Austin A35 Van from new. My first new car and very economical very compact though.

(5) Jaguar 3.4 Mk II A Director of the Company where I worked passed away and the Company wanted his car to go to someone who would look after it .I was fortunate to be allowed to buy it at an extremely low price. What a car?? I had it for eight years. Took it to the 'Isle of White' on the Ferry.

(6) Ford Capri from new. Felt like going in for a "New" car and liked the Capri. Had it for seven years until it was stolen from the garage one evening. After stripping it of most parts; Engine; Gearbox; Wheels; radio of course, it was set on fire by the Thieves.

PRE-WAR ROVER 14

POST –WAR JOWETT JAVELIN



(7) As it occurred at the time of my taking my early retirement, I didn't buy another for nearly ten years. Only then because I was embarrassed at being asked at times if "I wanted a lift". This from new was and is a Vauxhall Astra. I've had it for ten years having done 16,000 miles. I do more miles on my bikes (three) than in the car.

Jaguar 3.4 Mk II



Vauxhall Astra



The number of Cycles, that I've had over the years are in excess of a dozen. Most, as with other keen Cyclists, were in response to equipment updating and the latter purchases on the basis of self build , Purchase of the Frame , to order, first being made, then over a period purchasing ancillary equipment such as Gears ; Chain ring Set ; Wheels & Tyres ; Saddle; Handlebars ; Brakes ; Pedals Etc., The frame cost could vary according to Quality and Manufacture, the equipment of course, being to the choice of the individual , but the bulk being In the upper range of the popular manufacturers. Total cost therefore, could vary from a lower range of £1200 to an upper, in excess of £2.200. Approximate weight 9-kilogram.



Following demobilisation I found work at a large engineering works at Witton starting as a "Progress Clerk ", the company at the time having returned from Bridgewater in Somerset after a two year unsuccessful venture to establish itself there, but failed, due to the lack of skilled labour in that area. At my time of joining, the Company employed approximately sixty personnel and which over the years reached twelve hundred by which time I had achieved Stores supervisor in addition to being nominated Branch Secretary of the Association of Scientific and Technical Staff,

the position which I held for nearly Twenty years. It was a most intriguing position, not knowing from one day to the next whether your day would involve direct departmental matters or Union matters and meetings with Management.



Typical Stores layout showing Castings in storage with a unique bottom photograph of a Blackbird nesting in one of the castings. Offspring were fed by stores personnel.
The Pallet in question being moved to a safer spot by Drivers to avoid disturbance.

In my supervisory capacity I prided myself with an atmosphere of compatibility with all workers which comprised Storemen; Truck Drivers; Clerks Mail and Female and of course the usual labourer. Also a Charge Hand later promoted to Foreman. A total of approximately sixteen personnel. I prided myself with a good organising ability which I think has been shown in many

other ways and most days left work with a clear conscience of having achieved a good days work, unlike many who do not appear to possess consciences.

There were problems of course deriving from either labour shortages or mechanical problems with trucks (Fork Lift) Material shortages and sometimes Union disputes. The 'shop floor workers' of course had their main engineering union which like many other unions at this particular period had their 'ups and downs' of disputes. The staff Unions of course regarded themselves as more responsible in negotiations and attitude although, having their moments. At one stage entering into a three day dispute regarding incomparable awards to those on the 'shop floor'.

One day the Works Manager called me to his office for an 'off the cuff' talk, but eventually stormed out. Our Chairman came to me shortly afterwards wanting to know what had happened, I explained that the Managers mistake was not only calling me in to his office on my own, but also slating the union and it's members so I gave him a reciprocal 'Tit for Tat' for the attitude of the Company. Obviously with others present this would never have taken place.

The Company was part of a well known, large Manufacturing Group associated with the Motor industry and periodically exhibited the product at the Earls Court Exhibition Centre in London. I had the pleasure on several occasions to travel down with Company Exhibits and set up the "Stand" with others for the ten day display.

It was whilst undertaking the task of Union Secretary that I had the pleasure of attending many local Branch and division union meetings in addition to attending Annual conferences as a Branch representative. Two in particular stand out in my mind one at Eastbourne on the south coast the other at Harrogate in Yorkshire. The one at Eastbourne because having gone down in the car I decided to follow the event with a visit to London for two or three days. Unfortunately the first two days in London were spent in a Hotel Bed with food poisoning acquired from the Eastbourne hotel following a meal of Ham.

Fortunately I soon recovered thanks to the kindness of the London Hotel Management and I soon pleased with visits to The British Museum; Madam Tussauds; and a walk along the Thames embankment with the extensive view of the Houses of Parliament, all three I believe a must for visitors.

My Yorkshire visit was one of appreciation of the Yorkshire countryside and the splendour of The "Swan Hotel" at Harrogate.

Of all these meetings and Conferences was of course the significance of the speeches.

Some were great orators like the General Secretary of our union 'Clive Jenkins' with his distinguishable Welsh dialect.

There have been great orators who I have admired, Winston Churchill of course whose use of the English language was second to none and well known for his phrase in the House of Commons in response to another member who instead of calling him a liar came out with the expression "I would regard the honourable members remarks as a terminological inexactitude".

A close runner up of course was "Enoch Powell" a beautiful orator. Hitler of course was regarded as such and was the reason for his "rise to infamy".

All of course responsible for "inspirational "speeches. I am puzzled however, when hearing the interpretation of Adolph Hitler's speeches, the contents which fail to inspire me. Obviously it was the dictatorship's influence which conquered Germany. Goebells, Hitler's Propaganda Minister

was an excellent orator; although short in stature he was large in influence and one of the greatest propaganda Ministers known. There wasn't and still is not a position, similar in this country but, no doubt a department dealing with the subject it being a weapon of literate and verbal means far superior in effect than many weapons.

Reverting to my supervisory position at the Company, a nasty incident occurred one Friday when I notified the lads of the following Saturdays overtime arrangements. The one worker objected that he had not been included. There being a limit to the number involved he was informed that on the roster system he would be considered for the following Saturday. This situation apparently was not good enough for him because later after a period of arguing on the matter he suddenly came up behind me and struck me with a metal casting fracturing my cheek bone and whereby I was taken to hospital to be operated upon. The worker was arrested and charged with assault He was of course dismissed and later in court received a pitiful "to be bound over" by a Woman Magistrate who I don't believe had ever seen the inside of a Factory or knew of it's working conditions. I have always considered myself and been regarded as fair and impartial in my functioning as a Supervisor.

In addition to my working capacity of a supervisor and Union Secretary I was sent on Supervisory and Management courses which I found of great benefit. In addition I went on a "Fork Lift Driving Instructor" course and on completion over the next few weeks, set up an instruction course within the company, to successfully instruct some ten Fork Lift drivers who were then provided with a Company proficiency Drivers License. The scheme was so successful that the facility was extended on request to a small local Company.

It was immediately after the war that attention of most people not only turned to settlement domestically but also leisure activities. Ten Pin Bowling came to the fore and the local cinema – The Pavilion, was converted to a Ten Pin Bowling Centre by none other than Douglas Fairbanks

Junior's enterprise and I had the pleasure of being introduced to him at the opening night after being given a complimentary ticket.

Thereafter along with workmates we formed a Bowling team which we named the "Pocket Strikers" and we turned out pretty good after joining the league and winning a cup. As previously mentioned I have found in life that we live in cycles and after a few years the novelty soon diminished and the Bowling Centre premises were later converted to a "Squash Court Centre" and here again my interest and activity was now centred on "Squash" joining the "League" and maintaining quite a standard of fitness.

It was during these incidental sports activities that my interest in cycling once again came to the fore. Within a short period a group of us embarked on week-end runs to different venues and it was not long before we formed ourselves into a Cycling Club by which regular runs were arranged each Sunday, Cycling to various parts of the Midlands and visiting such places as Worcester; The Malvern's; Broadway; Stow on the Wold; Stratford on Avon; Evesham; Bridgenorth; Stourport on Severn Etc Etc. and such places that I would never have visited under normal circumstances.

For the next few years myself playing the part of Organising Secretary, membership of the Club, which was mixed, grew from a nucleus of half a dozen stalwart's until membership peaked at 142 . Membership registers still in my possession showing this. Over the years the club developed it's Racing Sections for Time Trialling; Road Racing; Social activities and at times Camping in North Wales, those involved riding from Birmingham to Aberystwyth and just beyond to the Camping site at Clarach Bay for two weeks holiday.

Parties involved varied between Fourteen and at one time eighteen, all occasions excepting the eighteen were ridden on the bikes the route taking us through the "Plynlymon Pass". a total of 124 miles and with stops taking us between seven and eight hours. Of mixed gender of course, boys and girls and on the occasion of the party of eighteen some of the girls went by train.

At about this time I had acquired the 'Jowett Javelin' (second-hand) . A wood framed chassis with a "Flat Four" engine , a car with it's design features, well in advance of it's day. This was one of the few items which I purchased on the 'never-never', heeding my fathers advice "to keep away from money lenders", however, in order to accomplish the purchase a one off bargain I entered into a 'Bank' loan. In order for it not to prove e lengthy 'stranglehold' over my financial resources, I undertook a part time job in the City Centre as a driver for a 'Car Hire Company ',which involved' Two Evenings weekly 7-00 till midnight plus one day week-end either Saturday or Sunday.

It was with this car that I took my parents for their first ever holiday, to Aberystwyth. I had organised a camping holiday for the club at the usual site at " Clarach Bay " but prior to the date in question I had taken a neighbour and his family to relatives in mid Wales for their holiday and to later collect them. After dropping them off and whilst having a meal before my departure, a conversation took place which was to the effect of my wishing to take my parents on Holiday for the first time,

whereupon I was provided with the address of a relative in Aberystwyth who would accommodate them. Instead of returning home I proceeded to Aberystwyth to the address given and there and then arranged for accommodation for my Mother and Father for the same two weeks as the Club's Holiday.

My Mother and Father were ecstatic when I told them on my return. Two wonderful weeks were spent on their first holiday ever and for some time afterwards many an hour was spent by them going through photographs and reminiscing.

One particular holiday I shall never forget , our route to Aberystwyth took us through Bridgenorth, where the entry into the town took us down the very steep "Hermitage Hill" the road was slippery and the one lad Ron, came straight off his bike. It was obvious he had injured his arm, apart from his dignity, placing us in a predicament. This is where a good 'Samaritan' in the form of a motorist came to the rescue and complete with bicycle took him to the Hospital in the 'Upper town' area. We followed and awaited the outcome of an X-Ray. It was later confirmed, as suspected, that the lower part of his arm was broken and was to be set.

CITY SLICKERS OFF THEIR BIKES FOR A DAY OUT IN ABERYSTWYTH
WITH CONSTITUTION HILL AND THE PROMENADE IN THE BACKGROUND



This therefore had 'put paid' to his cycling!

The equipment for the camping venture had been loaded into a van the day before, this, had been provided by the engineering company associated with the club and was due to be driven to the camp site during the day. A phone call was made to the security gate of the company where the vehicle would depart from, requesting that a message be passed to the driver, Jim and President of the Club, asking that he pick up Ron complete with bike, from the hospital on the way through.

RON

The rest of the club continued on their journey and within half an hour after arriving at the camp site, the van arrived complete with a smiling Ron who, later after a couple of visits to the Aberystwyth hospital, otherwise enjoyed his holiday although off his bike.

CHORE TIME – "SPUD BASHING"



Over the years we accumulated a variety of camping equipment: Tents; Ground sheets; Primus Stoves; Cooking Utensils; First Aid Kit There being fourteen of us the one year, we decided to hire a fishing boat to take us Mackerel Fishing. A memorable day not only for the fish that we caught, but on the return the sea got choppy with the result that first one of the girls went a sickly green and most of us very soon followed suit hanging over the sides. It very soon passed off as

soon as we landed and if you've never tasted fried Mackerel cooked within two hours of being caught with fresh bread and butter you haven't lived.

MEALTIME –NOTICE RON WITH HIS ARM IN A SLING

Constitution Hill- this side of Aberystwyth



My usual chore of Bike Repairing.
Notice fresh from the Army I still Smoke



MY FOLKS WITH CLUB MEMBERS



Surfing Outline



At one stage the club was joined by four members of the Birmingham School for the "Deaf & Dumb" both factors enjoying the company immensely. When asked how they were aware of overtaking traffic, the reply was by vibrations through the Handelbars.

MORE CHORES



AND LEASURE



Every Club and Social Circle has its Comedian. Ben, our Chairman undoubtedly was ours. Born in Canada and contracting Poliomyelitis at a young age before coming to England and although leaving him with a slightly deformed leg, his was the inspiration to us all and showing us how to get the best out of life. On the one occasion, out with the Club, he was that comical, that I rode

straight into a hedgerow, getting up in one piece but still laughing, the others more so at my reaction. Later he emigrated with his Wife and family to Canada and like many others, still keeping in touch.

**BEN THE CLUB CHAIRMAN GIVING VENT TO HIS
SUSPICION OF THE BACONS CONDITION.**



SHOPPING EXPEDITION



Bob Maitland – Guest of Honour at the Clubs First Annual Dinner, discussing activities with myself and fronting a display of the club memorabilia. The dinner was attended by Midland area Cycling Association officials, also the Chairman of the Industrial Group.



"TIME TRIALING"

In its heyday 1953-54 the Club ventured into many areas, publishing a magazine periodically with the aid of the Industry General Sports Manager the company which, quite a number of us worked and through its medium highlighted the activities and achievements of the Cycling Club.

An incident must be told showing man's ingenuity and ability to improvise. The Club were out cycling and were somewhere near Evesham when someone's inner tube burst. At the time we only carried spares of repair kits. (spare inner tubes are now carried) The tyres worn at the time were what we called 'Balloon Tyres. As it was not at all possible to repair the inner tube (in shreds) we stuffed the cover with grass to form the shape replaced it on the wheel and with one or two replenishments the member got back safely.

'Time Trialling' was of course the beginning and introduction to the racing aspect of the sport.

Early Sunday morning witnessed the early rising at about four-o'clock of early time trialists – first off at 6-00 am. the night previous having been spent checking the bike – gear functioning – tyre pressures – cleanliness and lastly putting out and checking ones cycling kit. Then, next morning setting off in the early misty dawn—perhaps a few birds starting to twitter- also meeting up with perhaps another potential rider. Always dependable to be there at the start, of course, were the timekeepers and other officials and sometimes where necessary, dependant on the course, Marshals at danger points.

At the "push off" one went hell for leather on the pedals to reach the agony and breathlessness of the initial effort which left everything virtually bursting to exploding point at which stage you reflect to yourself "why submit yourself to this point of agony – when you could be lying comfortably in bed". But suddenly you start to relax to a rhythmic and momentum of pedalling, then unexpectedly start to enjoy that which you are enduring...then you spot a figure in the distance. your "Minute Man" ..the rider who started before you.. can I catch him. But, suddenly there is a wiring of gears and the light thump of tires pounding on the road...Oh no ! it's the rider who started after me passing me like a rocket ..can I keep up with him ? but, gradually fading in the distance. Was it that breakfast, or that day I should have trained, or that late night . At the finish, you know you did your best and looking at the times you didn't do to bad, out of the forty riders you came twenty eighth, and that "Big Head" who passed me came Second (I'm glad he was beaten)

On the ride back with a couple of the other riders, you laugh and you joke, but most of all comes the realisation that you have competed with other lads , that you have entered into a "Spirit" of competition, you have found this innermost spirit of competition...Yes ! I must be realistic and fair to myself and resolve to not forego that which I must do to better myself , to train sensibly and methodically to a sensible program, to diet properly and forego the niceties of life in order to place myself in a more competitive position, so as to enter into ' Competition' with others. It was with this first club that a venture into Road Racing was made. The course centred around the Bassett's Pole area and considering that this was an entirely new area and experience for the club it was extremely successful. The then B.L.R.C. organisation for racing cyclists furnished the club with Rules and implications by which a license permit was obtained, course measured and determined, Police notified, Marshall's appointed also placards obtained and finally after receiving entry forms following the publication of the event, posting of start sheets. An invitation was extended to a Wolverhampton Beauty Queen Miss Angela Vaughan to be a guest at the event and to start the race off. She was both collected and taken back to her home. As mentioned the event was regarded as highly successful.

ENDURANCE I have deliberately captioned this section to highlight that which was undertaken by the Club.

During this period the club was affiliated with the Midland Counties Cyclists Association under which endurance runs were organised.

The one event in particular , 'The Weston Super Mare Run and Back' was the most gruelling and in order to train for the event , during the week preceding, seven members of the club decided to embark on a similar endurance run. The Group started of on the Sunday morning at 7-30 am and which took us through Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Worcester, Malvern, Ledbury, Ross-on Wye, Monmouth, Chepstow, then onto the 'Anstey Ferry' crossing the Bristol Channel toward the A38 returning through Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Rubery.

A total of 174 miles had been ridden, returning home at approximately 7-00 pm . I fell asleep in the bath. This, as mentioned was regarded as a training run for the "Weston Run" which would take place the following week.

Preparations by the club in support of the members riding, were to use the "Works" van to proceed along the route to vantage points and where necessary render aid by way of repairs and refreshments, we carried primus stoves, water and tea bags plus biscuits etc. also of course a First Aid Kit .I accompanied the van.

The 'Run' was scheduled to start at Rubery at 7-00 pm (a night time run) on the Saturday evening and was scheduled as a 200-Mile event. The evening was cold with a feeling of Frost.

The first vantage point arranged with the lads was this side of Bristol, where we parked ahead of the group and brewed tea ready for them to come through. Unfortunately all Thirty plus riders stopped which resulted in a skirmish sharing tea cups. The appearance of the riders was pathetic to say the least and we could do nothing more but to try and provide for all of them. The feeling of all riders who were from different Midland Clubs was I think that it was a provision of the organisers "The Midland Counties Cyclists Association" which was their failing in not making such provision. Needless to say, on stopping, we were amazed to see that their breath had actually frozen on the front of their jerseys. The van was a large one which was just as well for the night was a nightmare and during the return journey we picked up riders who had succumbed to the conditions and mileage. It was the last time the club entered this event.

THE CLUB ON TOURING RUNS



Do not misunderstand my criticism of this particular incident because Cyclists and Cycling Clubs generally, who affiliate to cycling associations such as what is now "British Cycling"; "Cycle Time Trials"; "Cycle Cross Association" ;" Cyclists Touring Club" and "Union Cycliste International" depend on such organisations for both guidance , Insurance, licenses representation and event organising generally. Without which of course, cycling as we know it today would not exist.

RACING TEAMS –TOP SENIOR-BOTTOM JUNIOR

WITH JUNIOR & SENIOR CHAMPIONS IN THE CENTRE



A road race took place in the grounds of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire at one stage and by which a team was entered from our Club. Because of the distance we travelled down by Van and



cars which carried the bikes and I took the opportunity of taking my parents down in a second car, a "Rover 14" which I had now obtained.

BLenheim PALACE OXFORDSHIRE

The Duchess of Marlborough with John our Club Champion holding the Duchess's Dog in place of the Trophy which had not been returned by the previous years Winner. (The young lady in the background later married a club member)

The Start of the Main Race

JOHN ON THE LEFT LAPPING THE LEADING BUNCH
A TEAM OF THE TIME WHICH SERVED TO INSPIRE





THE CLUB AT BOURTON ON THE WATER WORCESTERSHIRE.



My One regret is to witness the misgivings of the "Country Spoilers" dumping their rubbish in hedgerows regardless of the consequences and at a time when they cannot be seen. I had the pleasure on one remote occasion to witness a motorist doing likewise, being so incensed I got off my cycle and threatened him that if he didn't put it back in the boot of his car I would report him with his registration number to the local Council. It worked – but if looks could have killed – however, I have no doubt that he would dump it elsewhere. Country smells is an area hardly sensed by many. Funnily enough my one delight is the smell of a Farmyard, It must be because of it's reminiscent of the countryside. My one hate is to see or pass through a field that has had deposited Cowshed slurry, which is why I always peel and not just wash root vegetables and to my mind is the "Root Cause" of E-Coli.

As mentioned previously it is said that we live in life cycles mostly of seven year duration and by which both our attitudes and desires in life undergo change. This first Cycling Club of course underwent change with not only members coming and going but also in practise. Surprisingly after about twelve years the Club Folded. Such is progress and of course which coincided with the increase in motor vehicle production and interest in motoring generally.

Over this period I had myself entered into the motoring era, in addition of course to Cycling. I had at this time the "Ford Capri" and the Company where I worked had entered a slack period and with a revision of production methods and re-organisation of the company set-up, it was determined that the workforce of approximately twelve hundred must be halved ? (1983). This then involved myself in the capacity of Branch Union Secretary, in negotiations to determine how this was to be effected. Initially it was agreed to start with "Voluntary Redundancies" with after further negotiations, agreed severance money. Redundancy money, was payable for complete severance of the job and against the number of years worked This procedure was carried out both for Shop Floor Workers and Staff, successfully for about Four Months.

At one stage I myself was asked to go and see the Personnel Director who suggested that I could consider redundancy and by which a satisfactory financial arrangement could be made. The final offer was one not to be refused and one which enabled me to 'Buy' my Council Flat outright and to cancel, a pre arranged loan from the Bank. The 'right to buy' Council Houses or Flats was introduced by Margaret Thatcher during her period in office. Bless her ?? I had worked for the Company for thirty Four Years. 25th October 1948 - 3rd September 1982. The following week I had been indulging in a spot of Home Decorating when police informed me that my car (the Capri) had been stolen from my Garage and had been found burned out in another area of Birmingham, everything having been stripped from it Engine; Gearbox; Wheels; Radio Etc. Having overcome the trauma I decided that now not being at work I would forego the luxury and resort to the Bike.

The Birmingham Probationary Service in association with Birmingham City Council set up a project just off the City centre, initially for probationers called "Birmingham Wheels" and which of course was based on occupying them in projects such as BMX Cycles, Roller Skating, Bumper Cars, and Motor Bikes. The principle being, to create interest in the projects, in addition to maintenance. Initiated initially to keep them out of trouble. In this respect my attention was drawn to an advertisement for a cycle maintenance person for the BMX project. I responded to the advert' and was given a twelve Month Contract, the maxim period allowed. I worked there from May 1984 until the following year during which time I attended a three day first aid course at the British Red Cross in Solihull and which proved most useful during my time at 'The Wheels'. The one incident which I shall never forget, was when one lad on the BMX Track, had a nasty fall and the handlebars of the bike swung round between his legs. I carried him to the office and rendered emergency first aid whilst waiting for an ambulance. The attendants complimented me on my first aid. The casualty came to see me two weeks later to thank me.

When I first started, there was a total of eighteen bikes in the 'shed' only seven being rideable when I left the total rideable had risen to fourteen. As one can imagine repairs were constantly being carried out.

The twelve months which I spent at the project were most memorable and what was outstanding was the effort and interest that everyone put into the project. I was given a lovely 'Departure' Card on leaving, signed by all the project personnel and wishing me well in the future in addition to a departure gift.

After leaving the 'Wheels' project I received a letter from another project this time from "Action Sport" which had set up a cycling workshop in Aston Park and would I be interested in Assisting? Which, I did so for about four months helping to set up this project.

A MEMBERS WEDDING WITH CLUB MEMBERS IN THE BACKGROUND



On leaving work I had decided to have some free time to myself, but as can be seen this didn't last long and after some D.I.Y in the flat, the yearning for something to occupy my restless mind soon overcame my spell of leisure and soon found a job as a Car Hire Driver, this proved interesting from the viewpoint not only of conveying people to different venue's but the particular Company in question operated a contract with Birmingham Prisons and by which prisoners along with escorts were conveyed from prison to Law Courts or hospital or other prisons and vice versa. Although very enlightening and of great interest, the unsocial hours involved, proved too unsatisfactory and I left after about seven months. Later, I moved to a complete change in life and occupation.

WHAT A TEAM ?



The best years of my life have been spent on a bicycle with the companionship and rich sense of humour of other Club cyclists on countryside tours and visits whilst enduring both the miles covered also at times the inclement weather but in the main the enjoyment of sunny weather. All which giving us moments never to be forgotten. As already indicated the Club was of mixed membership and over the years Four Marriages between members took place.

MY FAVOURITE – NOT **MY** DOG BUT HE TOOK TO ME!



It should be understood that road conditions at this time were more favourable to Cyclists, with the lack of traffic, indeed, at times we rode in groups of about twelve with no hindrance to traffic, unlike today.

LATE POST WAR

(1983 – 2002, Age 58 – 76)

It wasn't long however before the yearning for companionship on the bike took over and through the event of the Worlds Cyclo Cross in Sutton Park and assisting in it, I was very quickly drawn into the local Cycling Club, eventually taking lads out on runs to different parts such as Evesham; Worcester; The Malverns; Holt-Fleet; Arley ; The Wrekin: Bidford and which soon developed into organising Holidays to Youth Hostels and which covered Worcestershire, The Cotswolds, Wales and The Lake District. I shall always remain a member of the " Youth Hostels Association.", in support of the association on principle.

Six of the Best-Hand Built



It was whilst a member of this second club that my interest in bike maintenance and eventually wheel building was aroused and helped many of the lads not only in repairs to their bikes, but building bikes from scratch including the wheels. Over the years I must have built up to thirty pair including many repairs. This became that well known that 'the club' by arrangement purchased a 'Stock' of wheel spokes and for a nominal charge of 10p per spoke used plus a donation added, this would then revert to the club funds.

My contribution to Cycling in general was recognised at one stage, through the local "Observer Newspaper, in a New Years Honour presentation Award in 1998.

Membership comprised a multi talented fraternity, many going to University, some travelling, one in particular to Africa on more than one occasion. Another, through University to South America on Medical Research. One or two in various capacities of Design, Police, Teachers, Managers, Etc, which I think is indicative of the type of person attracted to this sporting pastime with it's proven capabilities of character building .

SUNDAY MORNING WINTER START



BEFORE THE TOUR



Over the years during Tours and Hostelling, many were the mishaps, indeed, on two separate occasions members were hospitalised for short periods. To me these were traumatic moments for concern and worry and as a sentimentalist this of course didn't help. However, such moments

were quickly overcome and soon forgotten. What of course was most pleasing were those many occasions when motorists stopped to assist and on the two occasions phoned for assistance.

On the one occasion in the Lake District one rider had a bad spill and a Doctor following, not only stopped to render assistance, then phoned for an ambulance, but, accompanied the ambulance in his car to the hospital. Such response of course serves to render faith in mankind.

On another occasion a bad 'spill' took place, the one lad Chris whose bike was only two weeks old was severely damaged rendering the Front wheel unusable, the Front Forks also being damaged. Fortunately Chris wasn't too badly hurt and by various means got him back to the Hostel.

Later after the Holiday the Lads 'clubbed' together and raised £140 for Chris and toward replacing the Bike. His Father however refused to accept it but, insisted that it be put toward the Club Hostelling fund and from which there developed various donations to accumulate a substantial fund to offset many costs.

A lighter side to Bike damage, not Chris's but Jason's who finished up in Carlisle Infirmary for two days but soon recovered. His was the accident where the Doctor attended.

The 'disposal' ably assisted by Paul a Club Stalwart.



TWO UP HARDNOTT – THE LAKES



CROSSROADS IN THE COTSWOLDS



MENAI – ANGLESEY



STOW ON THE WOLD YOUTH HOSTEL



COTSWOLD VILLAGE



SPONSORSHIP Cycling for the Club enthusiast can be very costly and in order to offset these 'running' costs, many clubs, where possible obtain sponsorship whereby in return for an Annual donation of between £2000 and £5000 clothing is purchased displaying the "Logo" or details of the sponsor. As can be seen in the photographs, at one stage in the history of the club and due to the initiative of two members, being the sons of a Carpet Business owner, sponsorship was obtained and by which as is shown a smarter full kitted appearance is represented by the Club.

Readers may be puzzled by the term 'Running Costs', then, let me elucidate:-

Already there has been the purchase of the Machine at between £1200 & £2200

Racing Top:-£30-£40 Shorts x 2:-£60 Helmet:-£60 Shoes:-£40-£80 Cape:-£30 Shades £40+

(Some lads have purchased Shoes @ £120)

Winter Top:- £40; Winter Bib Tights:-£30; Leg Warmers:- £20 Gloves £12; Mits:-£8

Racing License Plus Association Fee :- £40; Race Entry Fee :-£10..each entry x 8+

Club Membership :- £20 ..Incidental season replacements:- £40

Totals: Minimum :- £610; Maximum :- £660

The object of Sponsorship therefore is not only to offset costs necessary in pursuing the sport but to also alleviate such cost to the younger element and where possible to sponsor up and coming potential champions in their attendance at Continental Training Camps during the off Season, in particular Majorca.

There are many hidden costs of course which would include travel costs to events.

ANGLING AT BIDFORD ON AVON



CLIMBING FROM BORTH – NORTH WALES



STOCK ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE LOCALS



I yearned, instinctively for something to occupy me work wise. Eventually, after a period of D.I.Y. in the Flat and following a casual visit to the local 'Job Centre' I chanced on a situation for a Gardener/Handyman. I was interviewed by the Lady of the house who was obviously pleased with my credentials for I commenced in what I would term as 'Service' with the Household on the following Monday.

Although I started on the basic job of gardening it soon developed to involve washing cars which included a "Rolls" walking the dog (Chan) one or two miscellaneous chores and over the months to eventually driving (but not the Rolls) . On one occasion which I shall not forget, I was hosing down "The Rolls" and turned the hose on the opposite side to see a window wound down? To refer to the moment as one of panic is an understatement.

I initially started Twice a week (Mon & Wed) from 8-30 am until 12-00 midday, eventually however this was adjusted to Three Times a week (Mon-Wed & Fri)

When walking the dog I was always amused when after about half an hour I would feel a tug on the leash and turning round to find him sitting down and looking in any direction but mine which, was an indication to me that he had walked enough. I carried him back. This he relished.

Over the years The Master of the household passed away, also the dog, a beautiful Pekinese.

The present situation prompted a move from the large Bungalow to a luxury apartment, where I continued in her service but, mainly now, odd jobbing and driving each day. In fairness to myself over the years I drove accident free.

Over a period with the insistence of the Lady, Hours were reduced to 9-30 am until 11-30 am. My remuneration was sufficient to cover my total weekly Food Costs plus.

The 'Lady' regarded me as reliable and punctual and I worked and drove for her for 19-years until she passed away in November 2002 aged 92. She remembered me in her Will. Instinctively, I always maintained an attitude of someone in 'Service'.

CONTRASTING ENGLISH LANDSCAPES





CHAN



CHAN'S HOME



The Garden which , I maintained .

Cycling activities was already now more prominent and the present club which I belong, as already mentioned, had involved me in Club Runs and Hostelling, my attention was soon drawn to organised Open Road Racing the club itself already organising, in co-operation with other North Birmingham Clubs, inter-club seasonal Time Trials. 1986 saw the first closed circuit Road race followed by a Sutton Town race in 1987 and 1988 saw the inauguration of open road races and which have taken place since. Present Races taking place each April at Yoxall. Details of all entries received being entered and eventual programme produced on the computer, which is my second main Hobby.

These races proving most popular on the Racing Calendar and on a number of occasions entries being returned due to excess applications.

SUTTON TOWN CENTRE RACING



SUTTON TOWN CENTRE RACING



BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE MILK RACE 1990



YOXALL ROAD RACING



CONCERTED EFFORT



THE PRESENT

Now, totally Work free, having expended my yearning for continuance of some form of industrial absorbance in life, I have now assumed a more leisurely style of life.

ACTIVITIES Cycling of course, prominent in my main activity and possessing three Bikes one "Mountain Bike" and Two Racing Bikes, and belonging to a Cycling Club maintains my main activity and interests and sociability in life and as previously mentioned, keeping my hand in not only with Wheel building but also repairs, particularly with the lads on the estate, where I have a flat.

THE PRESENT



GENERAL FITNESS My life in the Army included a daily set of fixed exercises, these I have continued on a daily basis since leaving the Army. Each morning first thing I look out from my bedroom window and inevitably I see a runner maintaining his daily morning ritual for fitness. This is his devotion to maintain and hopefully to improve himself. A strict diet is maintained.

COMPUTING My last two years of employment created an interest in computers by virtue of the transition of Records to computerised recording, which enabled me to be party to its introduction for recording by Computer the movement of material stocks involving receiving; issuing to machine shops and despatches and through its medium I myself introduced a container control for containers issued to suppliers for delivery of materials. The saving on clerical work and its expediency was immeasurable. This of course rendered records available for viewing in other areas.

For me, it provided an insight to it's potential in that very soon I possessed my own computer in a small "Commodore" and from which I gained the rudiments of computing and over the years by way of upgrading and buying both new hardware and software and learning from others, I now operate a top of the range computer with it's ancillary equipment and operate a "Web Page" on behalf of the Club which includes updates on club information and pictures relating to both past and present activities and results of racing. (<http://members.aol.com/royalsuttoncc> & <http://www.billjinks.com>)

Operating and programming the computer is one of my main activities and realise that it helps in keeping my mind active, in addition to keeping the 'Fraternity' informed of activities including pictures. Also enabling me to regularly communicate by E-Mail to both relatives and Friends in possession of the same medium.

My one embarrassment is to seek advice from a now, fifteen year old Schoolboy on Technical/ problems with which I am confronted. He is well rewarded and has a brilliant future.

PHOTOGRAPHY As has probably been noticed yet another of my pastimes and now having acquired a 'Digital' Camera, the results of which are remarkable, leaving one with confidence to aspire in the future.

HOLIDAYS One of my many present day delights is of course my annual pilgrimage to Spain- to Ibiza.

I suppose over the years I have visited Ibiza about eight times. I love the climate, the people and the relaxation it provides me; Sunbathing; Swimming and Reading , I have that much 'going' at home it leaves me no time to lose myself in a book. A Specialist telling my father the finest way to offset nervous tension and to acquire piece of mind is to 'loose oneself 'in a book. I like a good Adventure or Detective Book. To each his own??

ACHIEVEMENTS Possession wise, as already mentioned one's priorities in life should govern the sequence of obtaining possessions not in order to keep up with the Jones's or purchasing a luxury item before a more essential item to life is purchased.

For piece of mind neither a lender nor borrower be. My Father always warned "keep away from money lenders".At this present moment in time, I can claim satisfaction, with that which I possess, my own Flat; Car; Three Cycles; Television; Mobile Phone Etc; Independence; Good Friends and Neighbours and wish nothing more than, good health and happiness. What more could one wish?

OTHER INTERESTS Occasionally if a topic arises either in the evening newspaper or locally which I feel that I must respond then I will send a letter accordingly to the Editor of that newspaper. I would emphasise 'occasionally ' and do not make a habit of the process but, having had over the years a ninety percent publication success is proof, I think, of writing meaningful letters.

One of my pet subjects is so called 'Local Government' or Councils, those people residing in their "Ivory Towers" and who are completely oblivious to their responsibilities to the community and only survey the city immediately beneath their feet. Blind to the dilapidation and degradation of residential areas.

This same Council also bans the Flying of the flag of Saint George on the Council House and obviously has not only got its priorities wrong but also its patriotism.

ENTERTAINMENT

FAVOURITE :- Nature Programmes; Travel.

RADIO :- Classic FM

TELEVISION & FILMS

Nature and Landscape content; Travel:-

- Heart of the Country with Tony Francis.
- Kilroy ?- neighbours – The Bill –Time Team.

- Auctions –
- Hospital programmes but which concentrate on patient care and not relationships of the Staff.
- Dislike:- Coronation Street and East enders and strongly oppose the present trend in Television and Film production for the inclusion of bad Language and scenes of violence which creates an adverse influence to children in their upbringing. What is distasteful is to hear such language perpetuating between school children in the streets – it appearing to be more predominant among girls particularly those smoking cigarettes. I chanced to be in a local shop when a toddler no more than Four came out with the Four Letter “F” word , obviously proving that such language was being used in his household – this I have proved
- to my own satisfaction.

Such being the teachings at home, greater the pity for teachers having to tolerate such behaviour which is transmitted into the Schoolroom.

READING Alexander Kent and Douglas Reaman prominent in Naval and seafaring writings being a forerunner for the “Hornblower” Television Series. Also Detective Stories. When younger, I was an avid reader of Sexton Blake.

MUSIC :- Both Inspires and Consoles.

Favourites :- Rondo Veneziano ; James Last; Tangerine Dream ; Jean Michel Jarre ; Pet Shop Boys; A-Ha and Erasure have all been prominent in my liking over the years however, I along with my Father have always loved the Classics – Beethoven ; Mozart ; Tchaikowsky ; Wagner ;

Handel ; Elgar. I think in that order and I detail below my favourites but, as I think many cinemagoers would agree “ John Williams “and “John Barry “should now figure in that category.

Favourite Pieces

Bizet..”Duet from the Pearl Fishers” Jussi Boerling & Richard Merrill

Saint Saens..”Symphony No.3 (Organ) last movement

Karl Jenkins..”The Armed Man –Agnus Dia (10)(12)

Samuel Barber..”Adagio for Strings.

Mozart...”Piano Concerto No21 “ 2nd Movement

Pachelbel...”Canon in D”

Ennio Morricone Gabriel's Oboe (Film the mission)

AdiemusIV .”The Eternal Knot” TV Series “The Celts”

Mozart..... Requiem – Kyrie

Handel....."Messiah"

Bruch....."Scottish Fantasy & Violin Concerto"

Beethoven... Symphony No6 "Pastoral" and Eroica.

Wagner.....Valkyre; Lohengrin; Tanhauser; Pilgrims Chorus.& Flying Dutchman.

Rossini..... "Overtures"

Elgar "Nimrod" –Enigma Variations also 'Where Corals Lie' from sea pictures.

Janet Baker.

Tchaikowsky..Piano concerto No.1

...and many-many more.

Favourite Instrument :- The French Horn ..with it's mournful tone, also the Bassoon.

Hated instrument :- The Xylophone.

MUSIC DISLIKES:- Jazz and Gershwin, Ludovico Einaudi, Michael Nyman, both latter modern composers I find their music too repetitive .

My One Regret is being unable to play a musical instrument myself. No excuse for we had a piano when I was young (my Fathers pride and joy) he used to play it in a sort of left handed manner but he played some lovely tunes (We later sold it to get a Television) Both my Sisters had Music lessons. I often wonder if it would have made any difference had I been afforded the opportunity although how my parents could afford to send my two Sisters in the first place I do not know and it was some time later that this was stopped because of the cost. At least again, my parents had done their best.

Obviously I tinkered on the Key's without much success and later in life I bought a Spanish Guitar, but again without much success. I didn't concentrate sufficiently and like today I had too many other interests.

DIY Have successfully carried out DIY on the flat which I purchased when the 'Right to Buy' was introduced, the one benefit that 'Maggy Thatcher' did for the 'Working Class' This coincided with My Early retirement and remuneration which allowed me to cancel a pre-arranged Bank loan and pay cash.

Such tasks include Fitting New Doors (manufactured at Worcester prison – bought locally)

All ceilings tiled to avoid heat escape and to subdue noise. Bathroom wall tiled, kitchen half tiled. Wall decorating. Fitting Electric Night Storage Heaters in each Room, Helped by my Nephew. Flat contracted for complete re-wiring 2-years ago including fittings; replacement of shower unit. Fitting a fire surround.

MEALS Dislike eating out – not trusting others preparations.

BREAKFAST Cornflakes or Porridge then Toast with Marmalade .

LUNCH Scrambled eggs or Spaghetti or Pilchards or beans on Toast. Olivio Spread (not Butter)

EVENING MEAL

Micro waved mixed vegetables and Greens with either Chicken Pie or Chicken Portion no other meat. Fish and Chips (Micro')

SNACKS An Apple or Banana or seasonal –Plums or a Peach.

Do not touch Cheese (Allergic) Butter or Any other meats except perhaps Lamb. As can be seen, a 'Plain' food eater and never touch 'Takeaways'

Curry I hate, A necessary additive for rancid meat in Asia.

DRINK Glass of Sherry (or two) during the evening. I would possibly indulge in a glass of Dinner Wine on occasions I have neither the inclination (nor capacity) to indulge like many, in Beer or Lager. Although, I would agree it to be an excellent socialising medium whether for good or bad,. I hate Beer Bellies. I do not frequent public houses.

STILL LEARNING

I've been to Spanish Language classes two or three times and although get by with the rudiments I think I must be way past the learning stage. O.K. ! I am past the learning stage. (adios)

LIKES (1) The countryside (2) The song of the Blackbird (3) The sound of a Fox barking during the night.(4) Humour (5) Compatibility

PET HATES (1) Getting Creases when Ironing (2) Making a purchase from a shop – to find you've forgotten your money. (3) Stepping into something (4) Going to catch a bus – to see it go sailing by.(5) In the shower, turning on the water to find you haven't switched it on.(6) Getting two eggs from the Fridge and after putting bread in the toaster turning round and only seeing one? (7) Beer Bellies (8) More Beer Bellies(9) Switching a light on and the Bulb goes.(10) putting another Bulb in and it's a duff one that you thought you'd thrown away.(11) The Cold (12)People who refuse to conform to normal acknowledged practices of clean living and good neighbourliness.(13)Papa razzes (cause of death of Diane) (14) Meeting someone and you can't remember their name.(15) A Nightmare or bad dream (16) In the past getting ready for Work then realising its your day off (17) More Cold.(18)Mimicry.

Telephone:- (1)Hurrying to answer the phone and it stops ringing. (2) You answer the phone and the receiver of the caller is put down without a word (3) You are in the little room and the phone rings.(4)Pressing Buttons to speak to someone – if you are lucky.

HEALTH Have learned very quickly any unusual symptoms which persist more than two or three days , not to hesitate to seek additional advice after of course adopting accepted normal domestic treatment.

SMOKING As previously mentioned, years ago especially during the War and serving to calm the nerves most people smoked. The most difficult part however is to stop the 'Habit'.

I must say that I was highly successful in adopting my own method, but of course, it is a sequence. That which prompted me some fifty years ago was a programme illustrating a cancerous lung . I therefore embarked on this sequence: - 1. The last process in smoking is inhaling so I started to reverse the habit by trapping the smoke at the back of my throat – but still

smoking . I was at this time smoking from twenty to twenty four cigarettes a day. 2.Next I refrained from lighting a cigarette when the urge is foremost i.e. first thing in the morning and after a meal. Soon I wasn't smoking until about 9-30 am and the next one not until 11-00. within two weeks I was down to thirteen a day and gradually the craving started to wear off.

Bear in mind, that I was still undertaking the 'Habit', that of lighting up a cigarette and puffing away at it. What is most adverse to this effort is socialising where your friends or perhaps the company at a meeting, pass the cigarettes around.

Within three Months I had stopped smoking and to prove it to friends, I lit a cigarette puffed at it (but not inhaling) and put it out again. It's worth a try. Health and Monetary wise.

SUPPLEMENTS or Vitamins. As we age, as is noticed by many, a slowing down of the bodily system starts to take place and is associated with aches and pains, the medical practitioner (when you eventually see him) will tell you "wear and tear" . Perfectly true but he will also Not mention, is that your system is also starting to fail to produce essential elements for the maintenance of the system so that in addition to offsetting the wear and tear symptoms, supplements, to replace those not now being produced, should be taken.

Most common of course are the Multi-vitamins plus mainly Vitamin 'C' but in addition, for those 'getting on' I would suggest the following and the reasons.

COD LIVER OIL :- Aid to Joints-Bones-Skin-Hair and Nails.

ECHINACEA :- Blood purifying agent.

GLUCOSAMINE :- Aid for Joints-Mobility and an aid for osteoarthritis.

LECITHIN :- Assists the function of the Brain-Liver and Heart.

SELENIUM :- Anti Oxidant.

ZINC :- Anti-inflammatory Agent.

GINGER :- 'Gingers you up' motion sickness.

SLIPPERY ELM :- An aid to intestinal sensitivity.

For the health conscious I would recommend the "Bloomsbury Good Health Guide" as a good reading medium Many of the articles refer to experiments made with the cooperation of students.

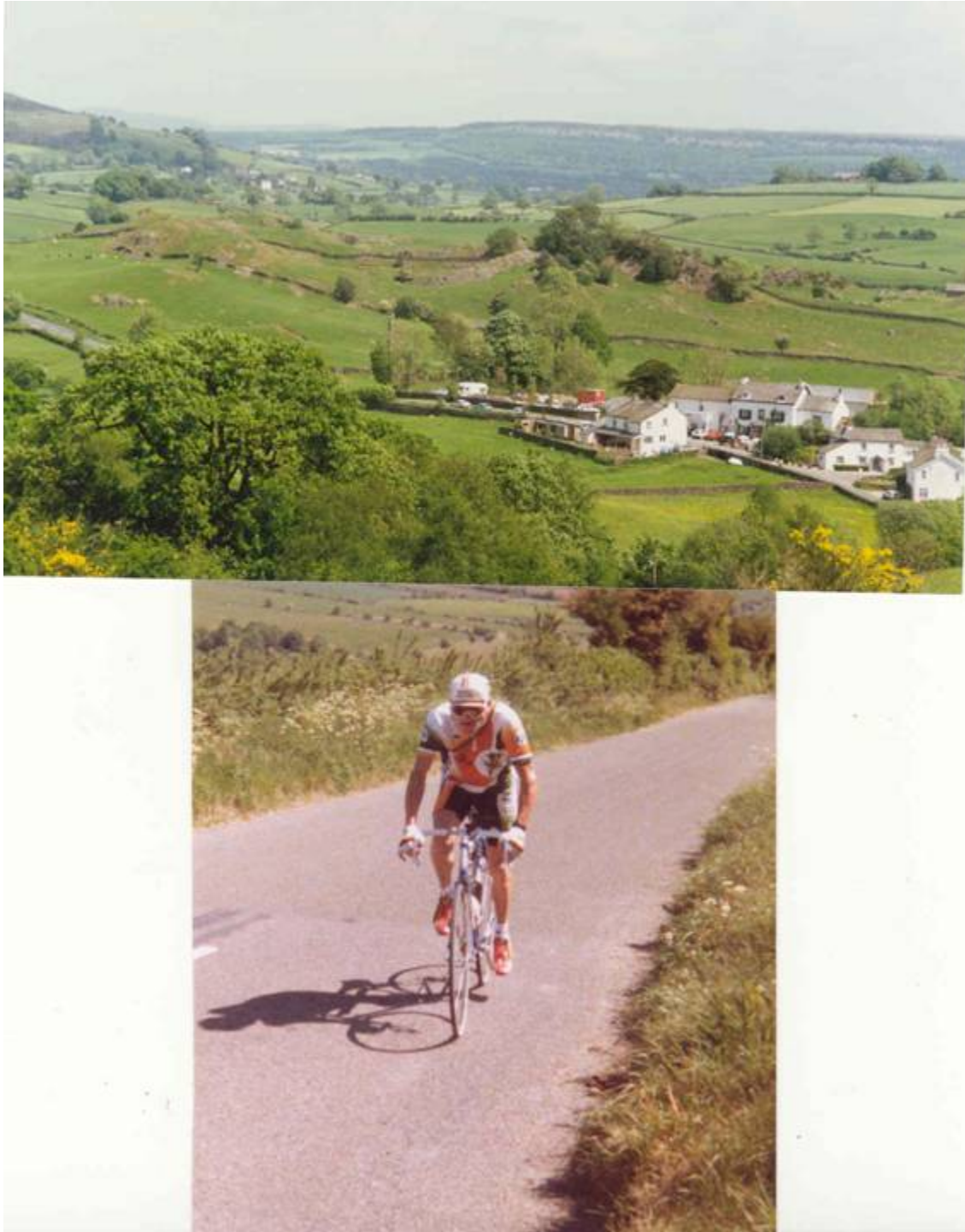
Obviously the above is a generalisation and purely suggestive and one should apply the above on the principal of "to each his own" bearing in mind medication as applied by the practitioner, and to balance against a Multivitamin content , also one's individual needs.

I have taken the above over a few years balancing the intake accordingly but, always the Cod Liver Oil, in Capsule Form. (In liquid form, finding that it 'repeats').

Incidentally " Slippery Elm" is a remarkable aid to inflammatory bowel conditions.

When reviewing Homeopathic literature relating to Vitamins and supplements the variety available could render one with a supplement of twenty- plus capsules a day. It is essential therefore that the choice should be to the needs of the individual remembering the adage "one man's medicine is another mans poison".

In advancing years, where practical, it is essential to maintain both a physical and mental occupation to the body and mind, in addition to maintaining some form of social contact either by way of a social circle (a club) exercise class or some local regular gathering.



STATUS Single, established by pattern of life , inclination, circumstance , Value of independence. Looking after myself with the ability to do cooking; washing; cleaning. Some poor souls have to seek a partner to do everything for them. What price the teaching of domestic Science today. The Armed Forces teaches much toward independence of character. We should adopt the same system as many continental countries such as Spain on a twelve month conscription principle.

It would certainly cut down on “Vandalism” “Muggings” and “Layabouts”. What a skirmish among immigrants? And others, who have arrived for “Handouts”.

TALKING How many people when casually talking to another person either a friend or relative consider whether you are the first person they have spoken with for quite a while so that instead of a ‘Hello’ and ‘Goodbye’ would welcome a ‘Chat’ and to pursue other topics either because they are ‘lonely’ or wish to perhaps discuss a problematic matter which when discussed with another can either be eased or resolved. It’s not a question of being “nosey” but one of undertaking a genuine interest in a person and their Welfare and where possible to assist them.

ONES’S DESTINY As outlined at the start of the First Chapter is governed by the following:

PROVIDENCE; LUCK; FAITH; OPPORTUNITY; INITIATIVE; FETE ACCOMPLY.

Reflections

1. That life is a gift and a challenge to take advantage of opportunities that befall us.



2. To maintain and improve our status in life in that a lower status exists for the uninspired.

3. Although Providence & Luck provide the paths to follow we are Masters of our own destiny.

4. A sense of humour must be maintained in order to avoid insanity.

5. The success of man lies in his fantasising.

6. Do things for others and you will never be lonely.

7. A problem shared is a problem halved.

8. Providence has played a major part in my life and believe that coincidences and Omens also play a great part. A simple e of an Omen: - If preparing for a picnic and it thunders take heed.

9. Ones own instincts and judgement are the forerunner of establishing confidence in oneself.

10. Many adversities in life will have to be overcome and at times one will discuss situations with others and in this respect one must take heed of good advice from the experienced.

11. Never blame others for your own shortcomings.

12. When witnessing deformities; mental and physical handicaps; or life's adversities in others, the sympathetic reaction must be "there but for the grace of god go I"

INFLUENCE Domestic and Global incidents and developments can be of concern to the individual, but one must determine that which is of immediate affect to us and we ourselves can influence. To elucidate :- some years ago a member of the Company where I worked was so concerned and influenced by the Vietnam War that eventually the concern created such a burden on the mind that special treatment was undertaken for several months. The point to be derived is that we have our limitations to that which we can effectively influence matters of concern, but again to prioritise that which immediately affects our lives , particularly as, at the present moment communication within the Globe is that spontaneous as to bring events and conditions prevailing in areas into one's living room.

Although my mother was at one stage a Sunday School Teacher and therefore my upbringing was commensurate to that principle , I could never be regarded as a Christian in the Biblical sense although, putting into practise some of it's teachings particularly from the "Good Samaritan" aspect. I have strong reservations about many of the Bibles contents and in so far as Catholicism is concerned I resent the influence which it exerts over it's "FLOCK" . An example: immediately after the war this country was acutely short of labour, consequently the government set out to rectify the position by recruiting labour from initially Southern Ireland, then the West Indies and subsequently Asians. Initially, in my capacity, I employed two or Three Irish Lads in addition to West Indians. After about a month and in conversation with one of the Irish lads, he said that he had received a visit from the local Catholic Priest demanding to know why he had not attended Mass as he had been notified of his departure to Birmingham by his then local Priest. Should any man have such a controlling influence over another.?

Reincarnation, a belief of some. Alternatively, the American idea of being frozen for return at a later date. In reality, when experiencing living a life both with and the passing of relatives and friends in death, one realises the value of the one opportunity given and to return to a life minus those associations and understandings would be incomprehensible.

Although not denying anyone their Religious faiths, I resent a religion which influences and imposes itself against the will and wishes of others and also allows it's believers to resort to violence and terrorism.

A personal experience to the "Good Samaritan" aspect of life was when touring in the Lake District, on one occasion. I had ventured on my own on a short run, toward the Wrynose Pass away from Ambleside where we had established our base at the Hostel. I had been Cycling for about twenty miles when I incurred a puncture. Not to worry though, as I carried spare Inner Tubes. However, when inflating the Tube the "Mini Pump" which I had bought especially for the tour, snapped in half rendering me isolated and leaving me to start a walk back which I did not relish but with the hope that another cyclist would come my way and with the possibility of a pump in their possession. Within ten minutes however, a car pulled alongside and the occupants, a young couple on Honeymoon from the Isle of Man and on their way to Ambleside, without

hesitation and complete with disassembled bike, dropped me outside the Hostel. It is at such moments that faith in mankind is restored and to wish such people a Happy and prosperous life.

An incident during this period should raise eyebrows, a West Indian proved to be quite intelligent and very good at his job. Being short of a Charge Hand I submitted him for promotion with the unexpected result that Union representatives from the shop floor raised strong objections to this proposal on "Principle", consequently I was obliged to withdraw this proposal. Against this response you must draw your own conclusions.

SEQUENTIAL and Priority procedures are important in life, particularly where financial budgeting is involved. Many a household has entered into luxury buying before fulfilling essential household comfort requirements. Similarly in carrying out tasks it is essential to list a priority sequence of procedures rather than later discover that a task carried out should have been carried out later. An example, is the painter who varnished his Wood flooring starting from the Doorway ??

GROWING UP It is at a latter stage that one assumes their own personality and character in life some to be admired, others however to be resented and to clash with the more mature characters which, regretfully, leads to friction particularly within the Family Circle and ultimately to dissention resulting in departure, thereby being a further stage to life.

BEREAVEMENT Whether it be a very close relative a Friend or distant person, it is inevitable that it will occur and when it does the emotional impact and trauma it creates is one that is never forgotten. One must, if possible grieve immediately and allow the impact to oneself to be felt; otherwise it will prolong itself to the extent of an eventual self destructive process such as one may never recover. The deceased would surely have wished continuance of life to the full for the bereaved. It is with such passing that full realisation to the value and preciousness of life is realised and that one must renew life to its full advantage. Time and sweet memories, being the healer.

TEENAGE UNSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR Caused by the failure of local Councils to provide and maintain up to date community centres for use during out of school hours which, under the supervision of an overseer, would involve provision for both physical and mental occupations including music and by virtue of such provision enable youth to give vent to their exuberance and emotions to good advantage..

IDENTITY CARDS Like 'Wartime' firmly believe in issue of such cards in order that a National Register may be maintained to establish who belongs and who does not. Have no time for so called "do-gooders" who create nothing more than an impediment to progress in the guise of encroachment on freedom of the individual.

Dedications

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER WHO ENDURED SO MUCH IN THEIR LIFETIME.
ALSO TO MY PALS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE LAST WAR AND WHO WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING.

WHEN THE GREAT REAPER COMES TO MARK AGAINST YOUR NAME HE WILL NOT ASK
IF YOU WON OR LOST BUT HOW YOU PLAYED THE GAME

CONSUMMATUM EST