



26,000 Days of Experiences

This is a portrait of the lives and adventures of Eileen and Trevor Wicks, and is a compilation of pictures, photos and text. We sorted through thousands of old photos and slides. Some of the most memorable pictures have helped us recreate a snapshot of our adventurous life.

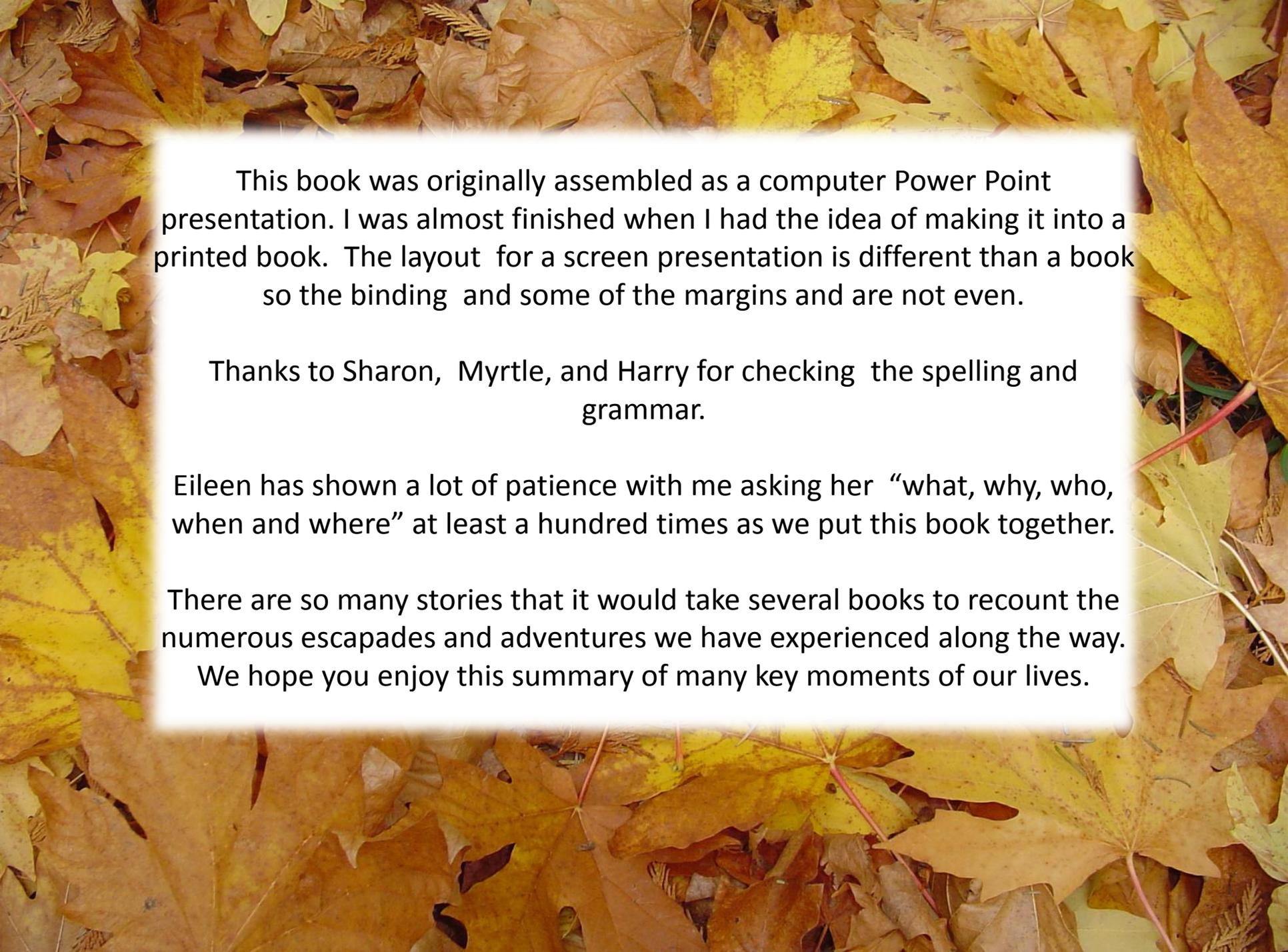
Chapter	Page
EILEEN'S EARLY YEARS	5
TREVOR'S EARLY YEARS	17
EILEEN'S TEENS & WORK	27
TREVOR'S TEENS & WORK	38
TRAVEL, MARRIAGE, EMIGRATION	48
SAINT & MOVING WEST	59



FARM LIFE & RED DEER	72
OUR ACREAGE AND GROWING FAMILY	85
ROCKIES, VISITORS, NEIGHBOURS	112
HEADING FURTHER WEST	123
ERRINGTON HOMES	128

TRIPS GALORE	152
COUNTRY MICE MOVE TO TOWN	175
BUCKET LIST	186
RELICS, THE MED & NEWFIE	204



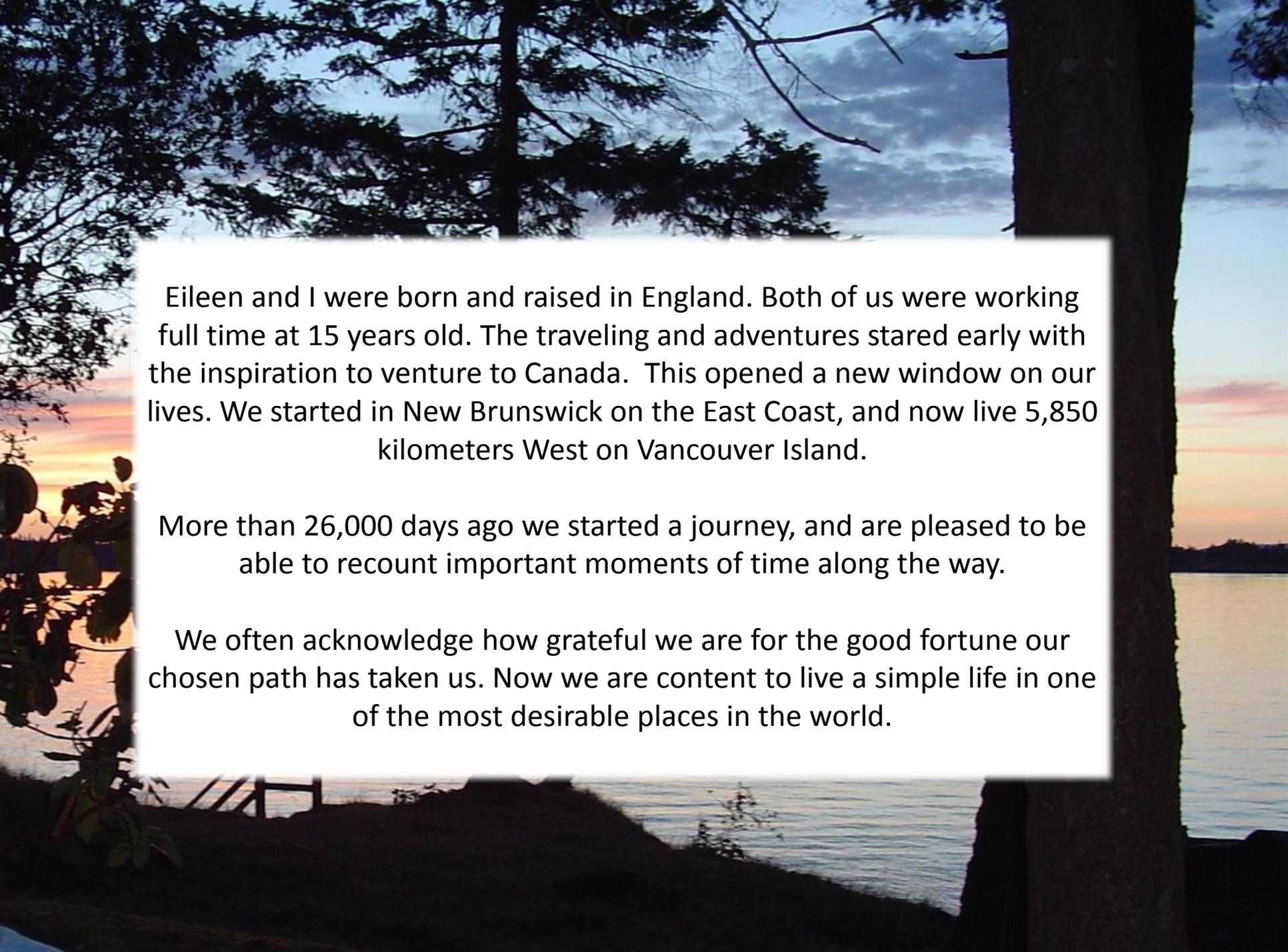


This book was originally assembled as a computer Power Point presentation. I was almost finished when I had the idea of making it into a printed book. The layout for a screen presentation is different than a book so the binding and some of the margins are not even.

Thanks to Sharon, Myrtle, and Harry for checking the spelling and grammar.

Eileen has shown a lot of patience with me asking her “what, why, who, when and where” at least a hundred times as we put this book together.

There are so many stories that it would take several books to recount the numerous escapades and adventures we have experienced along the way. We hope you enjoy this summary of many key moments of our lives.



Eileen and I were born and raised in England. Both of us were working full time at 15 years old. The traveling and adventures started early with the inspiration to venture to Canada. This opened a new window on our lives. We started in New Brunswick on the East Coast, and now live 5,850 kilometers West on Vancouver Island.

More than 26,000 days ago we started a journey, and are pleased to be able to recount important moments of time along the way.

We often acknowledge how grateful we are for the good fortune our chosen path has taken us. Now we are content to live a simple life in one of the most desirable places in the world.

My name is Eileen Oliver and I was born on January 3rd 1948, at my home at 7 Priory Court in North Cheam, Surrey England.



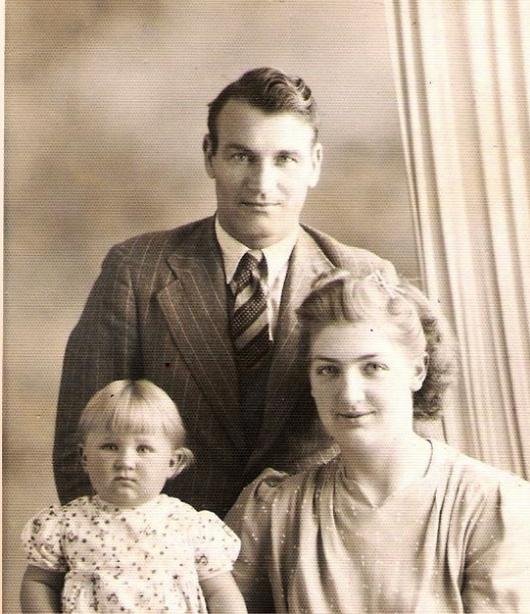
At the age of 7 or 8 months old, I set off on my first adventures heading for the wide open spaces.



#7 Priory Court,

6 EILEEN EARLY YEARS

My parents were Joan and Gil Oliver and I had an older sister Christine



At around 2 years old, I remember having to be careful because the road out front of our house was busy with traffic.



Christine and I dressed up in nice beige jackets that Mum made for us; she was good at dressmaking. I remember having to stand still and not really wanting to.



As a toddler I was confined to the small yard. I was always wanting to climb the wall and play beyond it.



When I was little, our family didn't own a car, but many people in our neighborhood travelled on the bus. We liked collecting the tickets that people had left behind.



Dad bought a motor bike and sidecar for family trips. The picture shows Christine and I, and two of our cousins from Yorkshire.



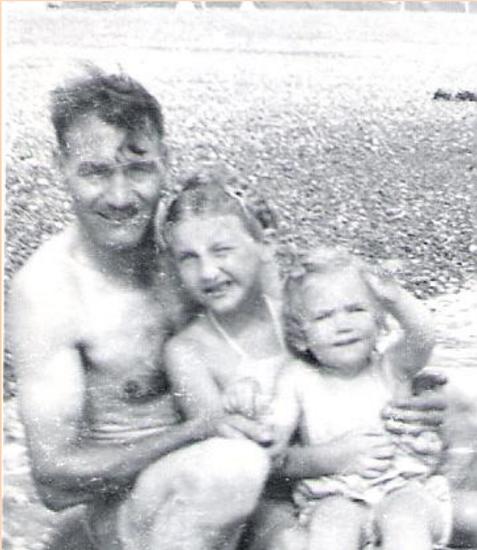
North Cheam was about 60 kilometers from the seaside resort of Brighton, on the south coast.



A day trip to the beach by train or on the motor bike was a real treat.



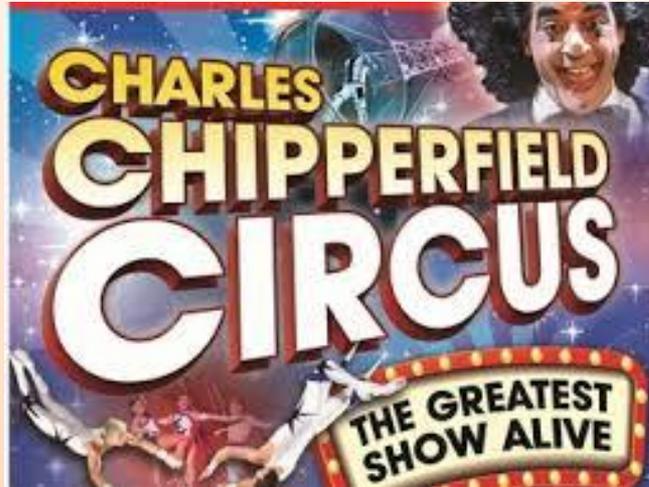
This is where I started my hobby of collecting rocks.



The pier at Brighton was always a good place to have some fun, with entertainment and side shows.



Dad used to get some free tickets to the pantomime or the circus. I was soon in training to be a performer with Uncle Tony and Chris.



I spent hours in the saddle on an ass. Look no hands!!



At 7 years old I joined the Brownies and my sister was in the Girl Guides. I still have some of the badges we earned at skills training.



There were two large parks close to Priory Court, so a walk or short bus ride, provided an opportunity to run and play



I learned to swim at an early age and always enjoyed a chance to splash at the beach and in Cheam pool.





My Dad had an adventurous life. He was sent to sea at the age of 13, with his initial training on a sailing ship. This picture taken in South Africa in 1931. He traveled around the world in the merchant navy.



Dad told me about tribesmen in Africa loading freight and chanting into the night; many of them had never seen a white man before. In Australia he worked on the Sidney Harbour bridge. He also sailed into New York and Vancouver.



My Mum worked in the London Fire Service where she met Gil after he was discharged from the Navy

I had heard many stories of my Dad's travels, which inspired a spirit of adventure in me.

12

EILEEN

EARLY YEARS

I started elementary school when I was 4 years old and was excited because I was ready to learn. I found it was very regimented; we had to line up, be quiet and we were disciplined if we misbehaved. We all wore uniforms which were a dark navy gym slip with white shirt and a coloured tie - which changed depending on which team you were in. My team and tie were red.



I did quite well at reading, writing, and arithmetic. The academic subjects were supplemented with singing, country dancing and outdoor playground activities.



This photo was taken when I was about 8 years old.

My grandmother lived in Balham, close to the center of London, and we visited her often. Both my Mum and my Nanna made ladies hats, to make extra money. I can remember taking them into the big city to be sold in stores.



As a young child it was an adventure travelling on the bus and underground. I can remember seeing the remnants of buildings and people badly injured from the 2nd world war.



My friends father worked in a big office building in London, and my Mom took me there one day. It was a tall tower, and it was the first time I can remember going up an elevator in a high rise building. We could see all across London, and the River Thames.



In the city, we would play with children from many nations. Hopscotch, skipping rope, and tag were favourites.



I had a old lady friend in Cheam, she was a single Jewish lady. I would visit her often because she lived next door. I called her 'Little Lady'

Around 1958 my Nana and her partner Claude moved more than a hundred miles north east into the county of Norfolk. They moved into one half of Black Cottages in Ellingham in to the river Waveney valley.



A year or so later one of these cottages became our new home. The cottage was small; our family lived in the left half. Dad still worked on the London fire department, and was only able to drive to the country once in a while. It was tough for Mum to find work and raise us two girls, mostly on her own.

I was 9 years old when we moved to the country, quite a contrast from living in the city. Ellingham is a farming village, with the flat river valley at our back door. Midway between the towns of Bungay and Beccles, the pretty countryside offered endless opportunity for adventure and exploration.



Similar cottage



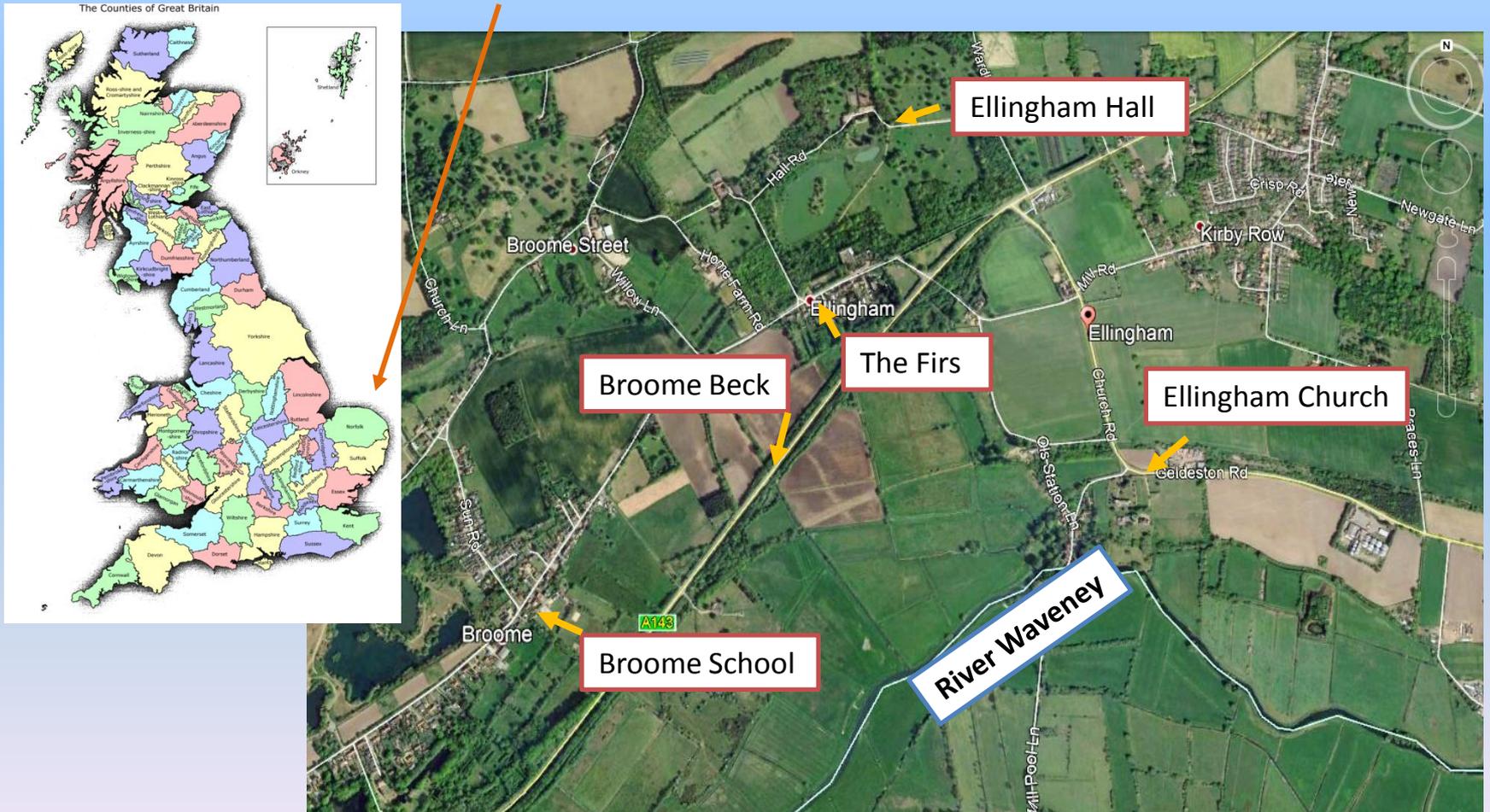
Picking the sweet smelling primroses and wild violets is one of many childhood memories.

Next door to our cottage was a small very old farmhouse with a sweet old couple that I used to visit. Collecting eggs and helping in the kitchen was something new for me and I learned lots about country life. The Locks Pub was down across the marshes, it used to flood most years when the river backed up.



My name is Trevor Wicks, and I was born on May 31st, 1946 in the small village of Ellingham in Norfolk, England, which is on the border of Norfolk and Suffolk.

The River Waveney created a wide fertile valley.



18 TREVOR EARLY YEARS

The Firs, the house where I was born, is located on the Yarmouth Rd, (the old A143) across the road from the Ellingham Hall estate. As was usual in those days Mum was attended by a registered midwife, who delivered most of the babies in the rural area.



My Mum and Dad in front of the Firs



An early picture with my Dad, Brother John and a toddler, taken next to the greenhouse at the Firs



Here I am, a little older, with my Brother John.



Usually on Sunday afternoons we took a trip to the seaside or to visit relatives. We travelled in a motorbike and sidecar, later graduating to a Reliant van similar to the one below. Its top speed was about 35 mph, and felt like riding in a motorised tin can. I got quite used to traveling on three wheels.



I think the licence plate was OVF 582





From the age of four to eleven I attended Broome Elementary School. For most of that time I walked the mile to school along woods and fields, and over the bridge that crossed Broome Beck. In those days there were lots of birds and I enjoyed watching the kingfishers that nested in the river bank below the bridge.



22 TREVOR EARLY YEARS

I learned to swim and fish in Broome Beck and spent many hours catching gudgeons and sticklebacks in a jam jar. A summer pastime was picking blackberries from the fence lines, mushrooms from the cow pastures, and chestnuts from the woods in the fall.



The gamekeeper at Ellingham Hall was always keeping an eye on us young'uns to make sure we didn't upset his pheasants. I'm sure that if we had found one caught in a fence, we would have taken it home for a meal.



alamy stock photo



We went to many events and activities in the region. Pantomimes ... Circus ... Yarmouth Pleasure Beach... Steam engine rallies ... Stock car racing ... Wrestling ... Speedboats and fireworks at Olton Broad..





I was 11 when we went to the 1957 Royal Norfolk Show. The RCMP musical ride performed. I was looking around the exhibition on my own, when to my surprise in a flurry of officials, I was standing about 6 feet from the Queen.





Similar house

At home we always had jobs to do; harvesting hay and bunches of elm twigs for the goats, mangles and acorns for the pigs, eggs to collect, and piles of fruit and veg to grow and store.

A few times I stayed with my uncle and aunt in Shipdam, about 35 miles away, in a quaint old thatched house without electric power. Uncle Walter had a horse and wagon and I learned a lot, as we drove the horse from door to door around the country villages.

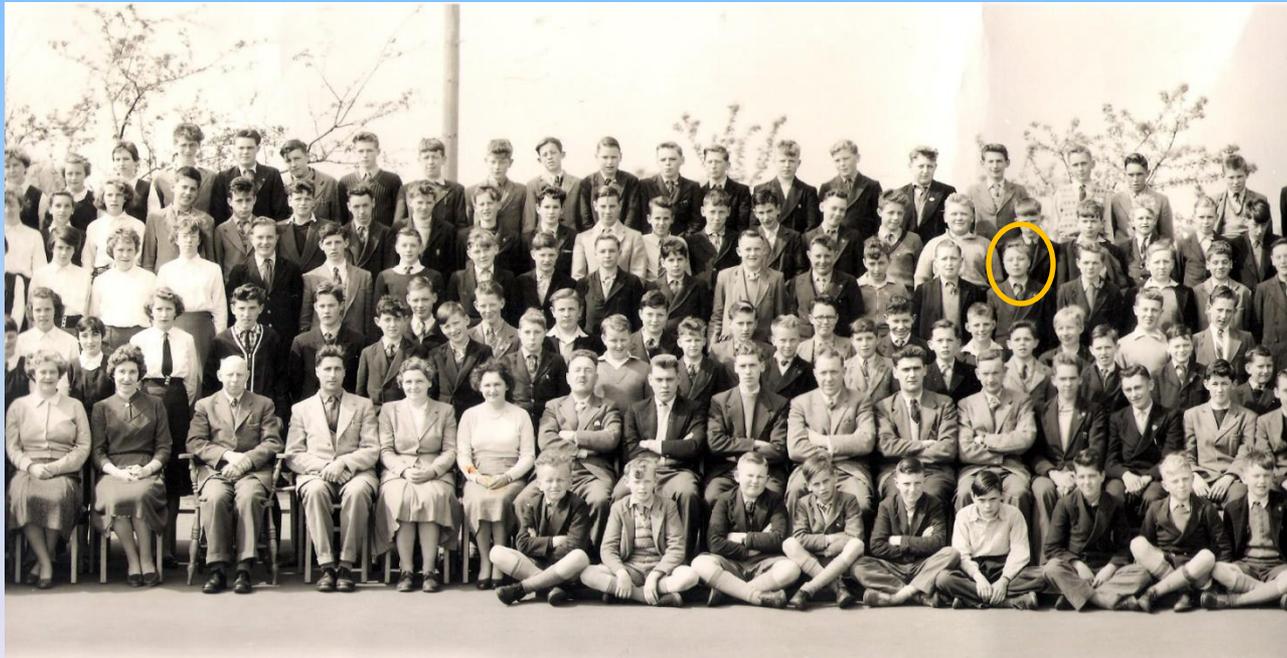


He sold paraffin, soaps, pots and rich dark vinegar, etc. He travelled different route each day on a two week rotation.



26 TREVOR EARLY YEARS

Starting September 1957, I attended the Bungay County Modern School from 11 to 15 years old. The school had about 420 pupils and 18 teachers. We had a good education with the regular basic subjects laced with rural science, woodwork, handwriting, and a lot of very physical activity.



BUNGAY COUNTY MODERN SCHOOL.

April 1959.

The last two years of school I was appointed as prefect. This was a mainly for the school to have supervision while the teachers were off duty.

Black cottages are situated close to the village of Geldeston



I loved living in the country, I could run, ride my bike, explore and feel free. There were always plenty of friendly people to visit and talk to, so I made lots of friends. I spent a lot of time in the little village of Geldeston, about a kilometer from our house. There were lot of water activities with the river and boat-yard, locks and streams in the area.



The busses, which stopped between the Wherry Inn and Village Hall, could take us into Beccles or further afield.





This is me doing leap-frog in the school yard. The old school has been expanded now and the roadways have changed.



I attended Ellingham Church School which was over 1 ½ kilometres to the west of our house. We had religion teachings every morning. Our head teacher was Mrs. Minns, I like her even though she was very strict. We did learn a lot from her. It took a while to become accepted in this tight-knit rural community, as I came from the big city and had a very different accent.



I was at this school for two years, then moved up to the Beccles Secondary Modern School, a 15 minute bus ride away.

My parents bought me an old black bike that I rode to school in all weather. Many times the narrow roads were blocked with cows heading for milking; the same cows that blocked me when I was going to Ellingham Church on my wedding day. Dairy cows feeding on fresh grass leave quite a lot of shit on the road, which I also had to avoid.



The bike was my ticket to cover a bigger area, down to the mills, and to see friends further afield and into Beccles. I had a battery lamp on the front and back so I could ride in the dark.

We used to swim in the Waveney quite often. Although the water was usually clear there were often long strings of water weed, eel nets, and anglers, who didn't like us disturbing the fish.





Ellingham church in 2013.
I am standing near the choir stalls where I sat for services about 50 years earlier.



Soon I was introduced to the Ellingham church choir. The acoustics in the church were lovely, and I was happy to go to choir practice and sing every Sunday. We sung hymns and anthems in all seasons, Christmas, Easter, Harvest Thanksgiving when 'All was Safely Gathered In'.

Chris and I were both in the choir for a while; Chris left after about a year.



During the long sermons I looked up at the lovely stained glass windows.





The marsh soil was very rich and we soon had a productive vegetable garden. Nana really liked flowers, and there were lots of blooms in the small greenhouse and amongst the old established fruit trees.



Living in the wide open country, with its wildlife, marsh creatures, and dozens of species of birds, was very different to life in Cheam. We soon had a cat, several rabbits in the cages I built, and Nana had chickens.



I used to walk for miles down to Geldeston locks where there were usually boats visiting. The locks were the end stop of connected rivers and waterways of the Norfolk Broads. The old 'Locks Pub' was the only place boaters could get a beer on a hot day.



Mum and Dad, Chris and I in the back yard at Black Cottages.

This photo was taken about 1958 when I was 12 or 13.



The rooms in our cottage were very small. The living room, kitchen, and scullery were downstairs, and two small bedrooms were up the narrow winding staircase. Chris and I shared the smaller bedroom, which was a challenge as my sister was more than 4 years older than me. About 1960 Dad retired from the London fire department and moved up to Ellingham. He use to fix up old worn-out cars. I can remember car engines hanging under the apple tree in the back yard, and Dad covered in grease.



Now the old cottages have been renovated into one nice house, with indoor plumbing, I'm sure.



Until Dad found some work our family was quite poor. We never had enough money and often had to make-do for food and basics. Mum rode her bike for miles doing cleaning and housework. One of Dads jobs was loading and hauling sacks of coal.



We took advantage of the natural abundance in the country. Mum did sewing projects and alterations at home. Payment was usually with a barter of some fish,



and once a pheasant complete with head and feathers. Mum, a city person, wanted nothing to do with it, but we managed to make it into a meal. Dad found some better work at a hardware store in Beccles. I earned a little pocket money picking beans and berries for local farmers. I was still at Beccles school until 1962.



34 EILEEN TEENS & WORK



I went to school in Beccles for 4 years. I was quite good at academic subjects and really liked the physical education classes. I was a team captain for sports.



A couple of days before my 15th birthday in 1963, I started work at Clowes Printing. I had to work very hard to keep up with the machines and meet the incentive bonus productivity scheme. We were mostly young unmarried girls in the book sewing room. About 100 of us did the same job. We produced millions of books each year, that were sent all over the world. We worked and had fun together, and some of us still keep in touch.



In July 1962 I met up with a young man from the village called Trevor Wicks. We kind of bumped into each other down at Ellingham mills. Soon we were seeing each other on a regular basis. In September my sister Chris and Derek were married in Ellingham church and Trevor was invited. This was the first time he met most of my family.



Myself

Derek

Chris

Mum

Dad

Nanna

My Mum made all of the dresses for Christine's wedding; mine was royal blue. The day went very well and after the wedding I had a bedroom to myself.



These pictures were taken at the mills about 50 years later.





Above are some of the friends I worked with. I had to leave Clowes when I was married as they did not employ married woman.

One annual event we looked forward to, was the 'Printers Ball'. Clowes employed about a thousand people. For many of us it was the first time in our lives we could dress to the nines and be treated to fancy food, entertainment, and dancing. We were not actually treated because most of the cost was deducted from our meager pay checks, but we didn't want to miss out.



Several girls from work, and school buddies, played field hockey. We competed for the Beccles town team and participated in tournaments as far away as Ipswich.



Chris and Derek started a family, and a few times I rode the bus to Oulton Broad to baby-sit Julie and Lynn.



My uncle John had a very successful machining business just south of London. When he and his wife Doreen came to Ellingham for a visit, heads would turn, because he was always driving a fancy car. He used to race his E-Type Jaguar, and if I was lucky, he would take me for a spin on the country roads.



For most of the time my country road trips were much slower and often interrupted when I had a chance to feed the wildlife.

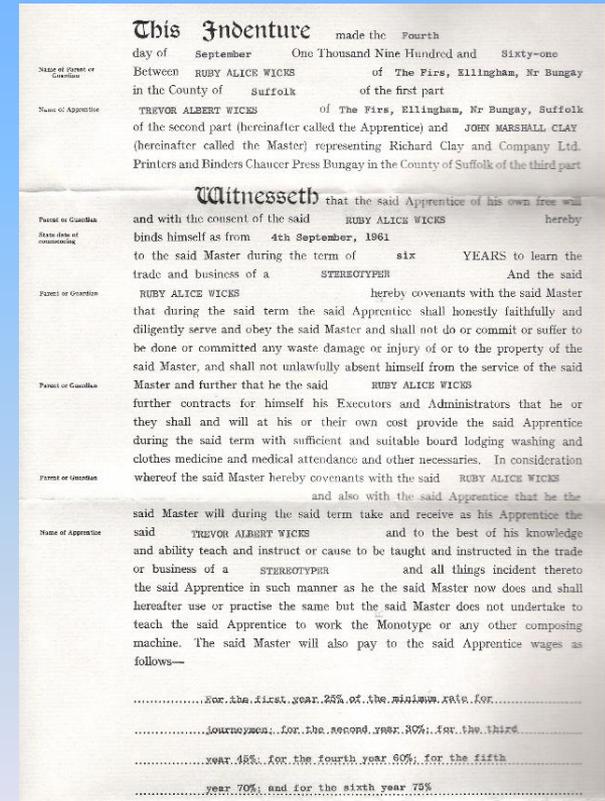
I was enlisted in Cubs in Geldeston. One activity was called **bob a job** - we went from house to house in the village looking for odd jobs. For each job we were payed a 'bob' or shilling, which was about 15 cents. Some of the 'jobs' lasted a few hours. Later I joined the Boys Brigade in Ellingham. I remember marching, gymnastics, parades, and uniform inspections.



At 12 years old I joined the Air Training Corps in Beccles. We learned aircraft identification, Morse code, rifle maintenance, first aid, etc. with a very high level of discipline. We also had flight experience summer camps and sports competitions.

Summer holidays were spent making forts and tree houses in the woods. I picked beans and black currants at small local farms to earn some pocket money.

In June 1961, at the age of 15, I signed an indentured 6 year apprenticeship as a Stereo and Electrotyper at Richard Clay and Co. Ltd In Bungay. The contract was for 12,000 hours of work, with a starting wage of just under 3 pounds a week.



One of the 6 trades in the large printing works involved reproducing the letterpress images in several types of printing plates. I worked with molten lead, tanks of acidic and highly poisonous chemicals, and large machines. Initially I worked a standard 40 hour week, and after three years, I could also work 4 hours overtime. Later I worked early shifts starting at 5 a.m.

July 1962, I was 16 and working at Clay's when I first met with Eileen at Ellingham Mills. Eileen was 14 and still at school in Beccles.



We started seeing each other on a regular basis. Together we cycled and walked hundreds of miles around the countryside, swam in the Waveney, and sometimes we rented a rowboat from Geldeston boatyard and rowed into Beccles.



After work I enjoying cross-country running across the fields and marshes around the village. I saved up money and bought a new Raleigh Blue Streak bicycle which I peddled to work, and many thousands of miles around the countryside.



Whenever possible, I swam in the river with swim-fins and mask and saw a wide variety of underwater life. One time while swimming alone in Bungay Staithe I was attacked by a very aggressive male swan, which nearly drowned me.



EAST SUFFOLK COUNTY EDUCATION COMMITTEE
SWIMMING CERTIFICATE

440 YARDS

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Trevor Wicks

OF *Bungay Modern* SCHOOL

HAS SATISFIED THE EXAMINER BY SWIMMING 440 YARDS USING
RECOGNISED STROKES.

Date *15th July 1960*



J. Skell
Organiser of Physical Education.

Living near a river and close to the sea, I was always connected to water. When I wasn't swimming in it or jumping over puddles, I tried my hand at painting it.

ROYAL AIR FORCE



SWIMMING PROFICIENCY CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that *Squad R.A.F. WINGS, NO. 722 B. LADRON, A.F.C.*

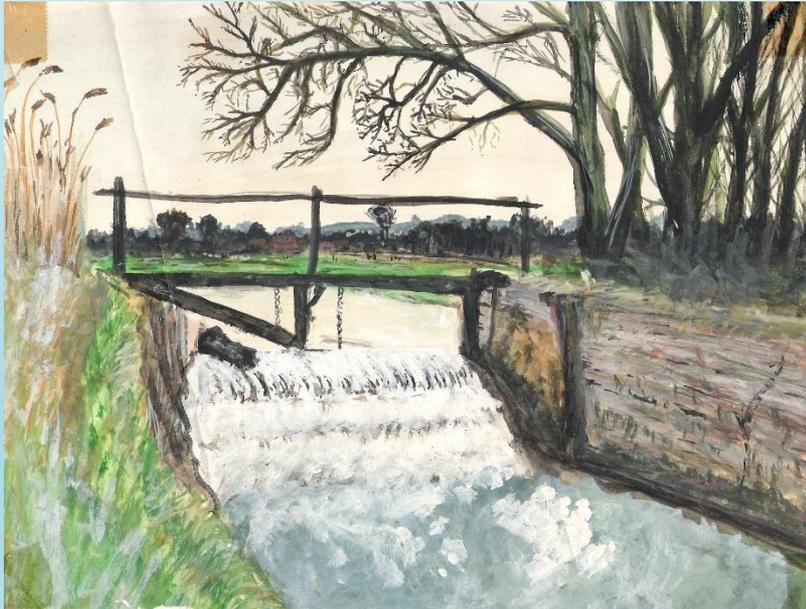
on *21st August*, 19*61*, at *HILLSBORO IDO*

attained the following standards in swimming:—

Swam 150 yards continuously using the following strokes for 50 yards each:—

- i. Breast stroke.
- ii. Back stroke and
- iii. Free style (other than (i.) or (ii.)).

D. James for *AIR COMMANDER*
Officer Commanding *AIR CADER'S*
Squad *R.A.F. TRING WALTHAM*



The old locks at Ellingham mills



The beach at Lowestoft

I had a second job working for Parravani's Dairy farm, hoeing fields of row crops, grown for cow feed which helped produce the creamiest ice cream.



I was always involved with gardening and particularly pruning fruit trees. This provided an opportunity to make some pocket change working in the neighborhood.



Beach fishing in winter was often very cold and windy, and required a lot of patience. I spent many hours watching the rod tip and once in a while, rewarded with really fresh seafood.



I used to take the bus to Norwich, and Eileen and I often rode the train to Lowestoft, Yarmouth, and even to London occasionally to see a show or visit attractions. I seem to remember riding on the last train on the Waveney Valley line into Beccles.



At 16 years old, I bought my first motorbike, a 125 Francis Barnett. Soon that bike was too small and it was traded for a bigger James 250

In the summer of 1963 my Dad and Mum took Eileen and I to south Devon for a week's holiday. Dawlish is a pretty town, and that week we traveled about 800 miles in a little Austin mini car.





Here are some pictures of Ellingham that remind me of the years spent in the Waveney Valley.

Small village life was good, and we always had the opportunity to visit coastal towns and many activities in the region.



46 TREVOR TEENS AND WORK

In 1963 we were caught up in the British music revolution. That June we went on the train to Yarmouth and saw the Beatles live.

Both of our work places had workmen's clubs with regular music, and there were many dances in the area. We danced to the Searchers at the Royal in Lowestoft and saw many popular groups perform.



Searchers - Jerry & Pacemakers

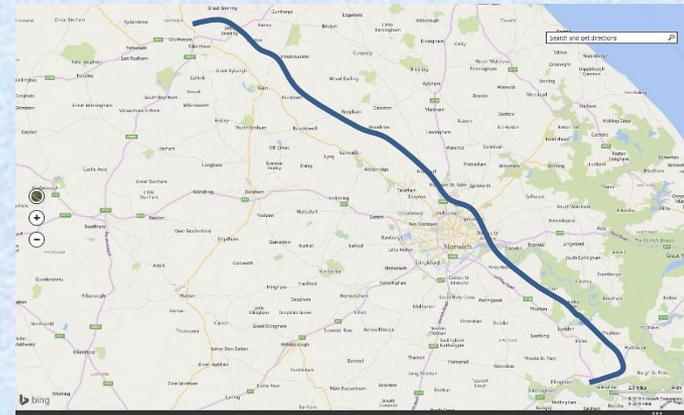


During the summer of 1964 we took our first independent holiday together at Butlins in Skegness, Lincolnshire. We went with our friends Lynette and Ted.





This actual photo from Sculthorpe Air Show 1962

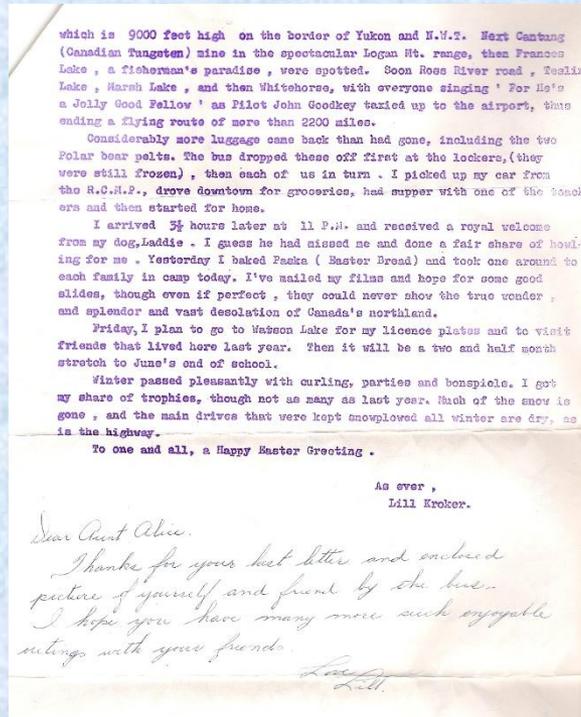


I really liked airshows, so one Saturday I pack some grub, jumped on my Blue Streak bike and cycled 50 miles to the Sculthorpe air force base. After biking 100 miles and walking around the airshow I was exhausted. It was a very full day.



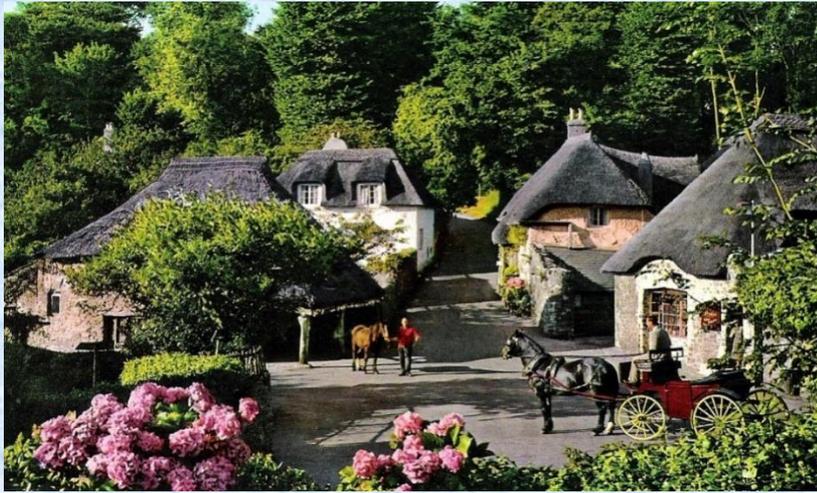
48 TRAVEL, MARRIAGE, EMIGRATION

Around this time my Mother's Mum, Nannie Frost received a letter from her niece Lillian, who had emigrated to Canada. Lillian had taught school in small communities in the north, and the letter described several adventures she had undertaken. This letter was a big influence in our later decisions.



In 1965 we went down to Canada House in London to get information. Although we were not married we had an interview, medical, and an authorization to emigrate to Canada.





Richard and Jean were married around this time

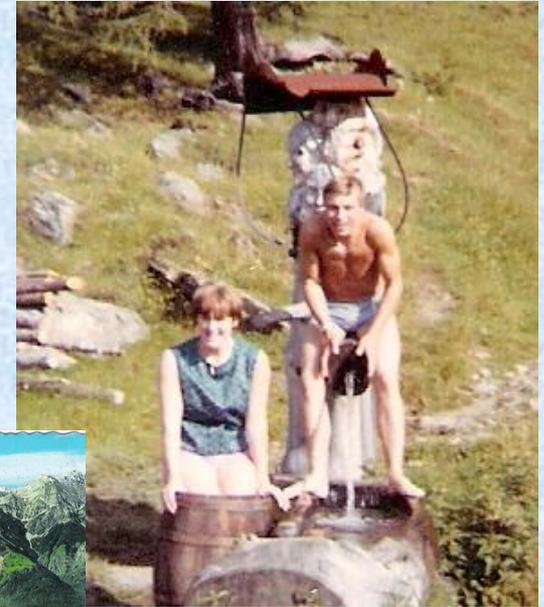


In 1965 our summer holiday was with Eileen's cousin Richard and his wife Jean. We travelled to Devon and the south coast visiting Torquay, Plymouth, Dartmore, Cheddar Caves, Stonehenge and London.



In the summer of 1966 Eileen and I took a seven day trip to Austria on our own. We took the train to London, a bus to the Dover channel ferry, a bus from Ostend Belgium through Luxemburg, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland to Sistrans in the Austrian Tyrol, south of Innsbruck. This was a life changing experience which, including meals, cost us a whopping 23 pounds.

We visited many interesting places in Austria including Salzburg and the Olympic sites in Innsbruck. We climbed mountains and swam in clear mountain lakes.



We made good friends with Annette and Graham

On June 3rd, 1967 we were married in Ellingham Church. The reception was held in Geldeston Community Hall with lots of friends and family. After our very eventful day we had one night away at a small hotel in Dunwich on Sea. We had some strange looks when we walked through the bar with our overnight bags. The lady at the desk took us up to a very small room with two single beds. A few minutes later we heard a gentle knock on the door; someone had found some confetti on the floor and we were moved to a bigger room.



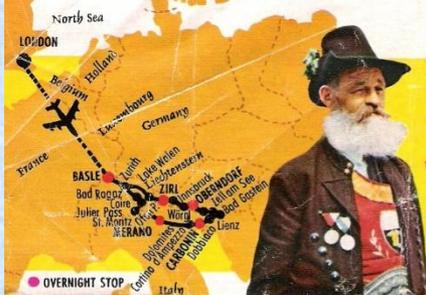
Dunwich has a very long history, most of which is now lost. The North Sea has eroded about a mile of the coastline taking most of the old city.



52 TRAVEL, MARRIAGE, EMIGRATION

28th June, 1967 we went to Austria again for a 12 day holiday. We flew from London to Switzerland. We travelled on the bus from Basle through Liechtenstein into Austria. After two overnight stops we arrived for 5 nights in Oberndorf. The last part of the holiday included two days traveling through Northern Italy to Cortina and Merano, visiting St. Moritz and many interesting places on this great vacation.







BY AIR TO BASLE - NIGHT FLIGHT (HOMEWARD ONLY) - ESCORTED FROM BASLE
12 DAYS TOUR by air and motor coach
Tyrolean Alps and Valleys
with 7 nights at OBERNDORF by Kitzbühel
 and visiting LIECHTENSTEIN - INNSBRUCK - B*DGASTEIN - LIENZ - DOLOMITES - MERANO - ST. MORITZ

TOUR 420
33 Gns
 V FORM £15

SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO LET YOU SAVOUR THE LUSH GREEN HILLS AND HIGH MOUNTAINS OF THE TYROLS AND SWITZERLAND

Departures every Wednesday from 17th May to 13th September

1st day Wed. LONDON - MANSTON - BASLE. Our coach will leave London (Victoria Coach Station) at 4.30 p.m. and drive through Kent to Manston Airport. The flight by special plane will be direct to Basle in Switzerland where we are due at 10.20 p.m. and our courier and coach will be waiting to drive us to our hotel for overnight stay.

2nd day Thurs. BASLE - ZÜRICH - LAKE WALEN - LIECHTENSTEIN - ST. ANTON - ZIRL. We will follow the Rhine River to Rheinfelden and continue via Fric and Brugg to Zürich and drive alongside the lake and on to Lake Walen where we will stop for lunch. The afternoon finds us passing through Liechtenstein into Austria, through the fine old town of Feldkirch and over the mighty Arlberg Pass to St. Anton. We follow the Inn Valley to Zirl for dinner and overnight. Hotel Goldener Löwe.

3rd day Fri. ZIRL - INNSBRUCK - WORGL - OBERNDORF - AFTERNOON AT LEISURE. A short drive along the broad valley through Innsbruck, Hattenberg and Worgl and we are at Oberndorf for lunch at Gasthof Lindner where we shall spend the next seven nights.

4th day Sat. to 9th day Thurs. AT LEISURE IN OBERNDORF. A full week of pleasure in this wonderful area. The surrounding mountains are breathtaking in their grandeur and your courier will be with you throughout your stay to advise and assist you to enjoy it to the full.

10th day Fri. OBERNDORF - ZELL AM SEE - BADGASTEIN - LIENZ - DOBBIACO - CARBONIN. This morning we will drive over the Thurn Pass, via Bruck and Lend to the famous spa Badgastein for lunch. We now pass through the Tauern Tunnel into East Tyrol and travel through its capital Lienz to enter the Dolomites. Driving through Dobbiaco we arrive at Carbonin for dinner and night stop at Hotel Pionier.

11th day Sat. MORNING IN CORTINA - AFTERNOON DOLOMITES DRIVE TO MERANO. The famous resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo is only a short drive away and we shall spend the morning there, taking lunch at our fine hotel. During the afternoon we shall drive through some of the greatest mountain scenery in Europe by way of the Pordoi and Costalunga Passes and Bolzano to arrive at Merano to dine and spend the night at Hotel Duomo Raffl or Regina.

12th day Sun. MERANO - OFENPASS - ST. MORITZ - JULIER PASS - COIRE - BAD RAGAZ - ZÜRICH - BASLE - LONDON. Still driving through these great mountains we follow the course of the Adige, and over the Ofan Pass to find ourselves back in Switzerland and to stop for lunch at St. Moritz. In the afternoon we will cross the Julier Pass and continue through Coire and Bad Ragaz to arrive at Zürich at dinnertime and thence driving on to Basle Airport. Our flight leaves at approximately 11 p.m. and at Manston our coach is waiting to drive us to London (Victoria Coach Station) where we are due at 5 a.m.

OBERNDORF by KITZBUHEL
 A charming village some 4 miles from Kitzbühel, it nestles in the valley and easy walks abound. Three cable railways from Kitzbühel offer wonderful excursions. Probably the grandest mountain scenery in the Tyrol is here and, in addition, all the entertainments offered by Kitzbühel which is connected by frequent bus and train services.

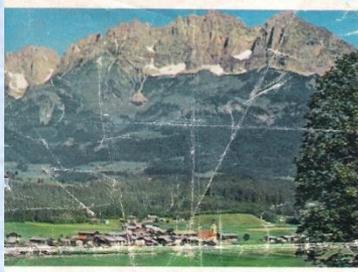
Gasthof Lindner. This very pleasantly looking Gasthof is built in the Tyrolean style. It has recently been completely renovated and the rooms are large and comfortable with modern furniture. It has a comfortable lounge and a modern dining room with a bar. Both the sun terrace and the garden are equipped with chairs, tables and umbrellas. The annexe is situated close by, approximately 20 yards, and the rooms are of the same high standard as the Gasthof.

All meals included from breakfast on 2nd day to packed lunch on 12th day.

Direct Flights to Basle by Four-engined Skymaster Aircraft



Gasthof Lindner ▲



Lovely Oberndorf ▲



Medium Season Supplement for Departures
 15 July, 19 July, 23 August 2 Gns
 High Season Supplement for Departures
 26 July, 2, 9, 16 August 3 Gns
 Supplement for room with shower (at Oberndorf only)
 1 Gn per person

We were making plans to emigrate to Canada so our first home was a temporary caravan which I bought and fixed up in Eileen's parents back yard in Geldeston. It had no electricity or running water, but we did have a mini woodstove, propane lights and tiny gas cooker that worked well until the gas froze during a very cold winter.



Eileen changed her job and moved to Clay's printers in Bungay. I often worked the early shift starting at 5 a.m. so we needed two methods to get into work. Eileen bought an old Raleigh moped which spluttered and misfired as she rode the four miles to town for her 8 a.m. shift

Later in October we rode on the James motorbike to the British west coast and Wales. We covered 700 miles in 3 days, mostly in the rain.



54 TRAVEL, MARRIAGE, EMIGRATION

Eileen played field hockey for the Beccles ladies team. Sometimes we both played when they needed more practice opposition; usually on Sunday mornings when we should have been in church ...Oh Well!



After work I went back to Bungay for physical fitness and gymnastics as an evening course. Also we both took a basic French course. S'il vous plait. and Quelle heure est-il, is all I can remember.



During 1967 we travelled up to Leeds to visit Anette and Graham and had a fun day in Blackpool.

In the fall of 1967 we booked our trip to Canada!
We built and packed two crates, to ship all our worldly goods by rail to Liverpool.
We didn't see these crates again until they arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick, all busted and bent.
Fortunately, most of the contents were okay.



The last supper before we left

After Christmas our parents were very subdued about us leaving 'home' for distant lands.
In the spring 1968 we sold the caravan, saying goodbye to work mates, friends, and family.
The first week of April we were packed and ready for the big trip across the Atlantic.

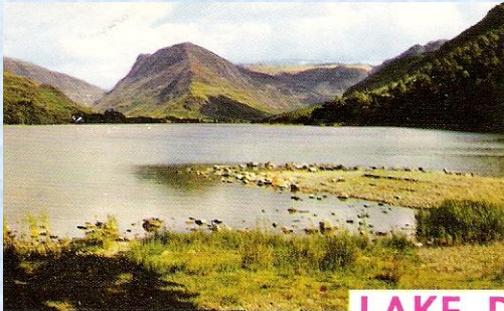
On Good Friday, April 12th, 1968, we said goodbye to our parents, and my brother John drove us west across the country.



Victor and Ruby Wicks
at the Firs, Ellingham



Gil and Joan Oliver at Black
Cottages, Geldeston



LAKE DISTRICT



Eileen's uncle Tony and aunt Theresa's lived near Liverpool and they took us sight seeing around the city and Lake District during the Easter weekend.

On April 16th we boarded the Empress of Canada to start our adventure. We sailed overnight to Greenock Scotland, picked up more passengers then headed west across the Atlantic to Canada.



We are waving farewell as the ship departed from Liverpool dock. We felt a great deal of excitement and a little apprehension, as we didn't know what was in store in a new land.



EMPRESS OF CANADA

Tuesday, April 16, 1968

PROGRAMME



P.M.

WELCOME ABOARD

- 4-00 TEA TIME—Carleton Restaurant.
- 4-30 WE SAIL FOR GREENOCK, QUEBEC & MONTREAL
- 5-30 BOAT MUSTER — on the Promenade and Empress Decks. All Passengers must attend. The signal is the sounding of Alarm Bells and the Ship's Whistle.
- 5-55 Forecast and Newscast in the Windsor Lounge
- 6-30 Dinner—Main Sitting—Carleton Restaurant
- 7-45 Dinner—Second Sitting—Carleton Restaurant
- 8-15 In the Windsor Lounge : THE FIRST BINGO !
- 9-15 In the Cinema: "FITZWILLY," starring Dick Van Dyke
To be repeated at 10 a.m., 4-15 and 9-15 p.m. Tomorrow.
(No smoking, please.)
- 9-15 Music by the Empress Orchestras in the Canada Room under the direction of Bert Annable and at 9-45
WORDS OF WELCOME brief and informal followed by . . .
CABARET for First-Nighters, with The Charltons, Avril Ellis and David Sinclair
- 11-00 In the Windsor Lounge : Snacktime

58 TRAVEL, MARRIAGE, EMIGRATION

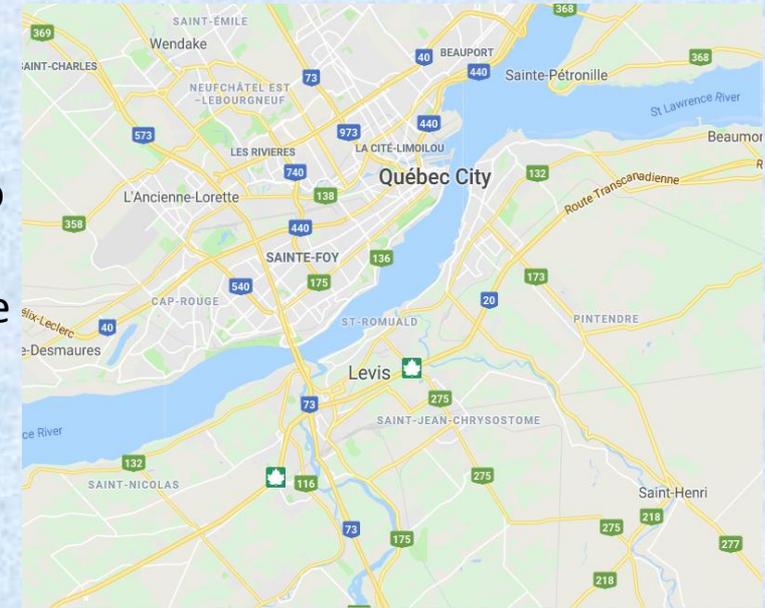
The food, entertainment, and activities on board the 5 day crossing were amazing and we met some very interesting people. The north Atlantic can be rough in the spring, but we only had one 'really bumpy' day. On the 4th day out, the temperature dropped below freezing and the fog horn on the ship blasted every few minutes. One of the crew told us we were passing close to the spot where the Titanic sank April 15 on its maiden voyage in 1912. On the outside deck we saw our first misty site of icebergs, as we wove our way south of Newfoundland toward the Gulf of St. Lawrence



We were up early the next morning and out on deck to see our first glimpse of Canada. We passed Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec. We saw our first whale and could smell the crisp clean air and the pine forests on the distant shore.



Our arrival in Canada was confusing because the plan was for us to disembark in Quebec City at about midnight. During the last day the purser contacted us to tell us that the ship would not be stopping in Quebec City, and we would be taken to Montreal the next day. We were dancing in the ballroom late in the evening when our names were called along with a few other passengers. The plans had changed again and we were escorted to our cabin to quickly pack our bags and we were transferred to the Quebec port on a tender vessel.



Early the next morning we had to make our way across the St. Lawrence to Levis to board the train that would take us to St. John. Several hours on the train gave us our first glimpses of Canada in the spring. Our Canadian contact met us at the station, and we were ready to find a place to live and work.

The next morning our first task was to get our emigration papers stamped at the Service Canada office in St. John. When we entered the officials office, he looked at us young English couple and gave a queried glance. “What inspired you two to come to St. John?” he questioned. “This is the asshole of Canada.” We were off to a good start; it had to be uphill from there.



Within a couple of days we had rented a small apartment in a rather run down part of town near the docks. Later we found out that the area was the red light district and our neighbours were members of the violent biker gang ‘Sons of Satan’. At least the rent was reasonable. We found work and were soon settling into a very different lifestyle.

We both found work in printing within a couple of days. Eileen worked at Lingley's job printing and stationary, and I found a job on a large four-colour press, printing polythene bags. We soon settled into a routine, walking a lot, and exploring the city and riding the bus further afield.



We met Alfie and Marg Thornton - an English couple. Alfie took us down to Conner Brothers wharf where we caught lots of flounders and mackerel.



From St. John we took a day trip on the Princess of Arcadia over to Digby, Nova Scotia. Friends drove us south across the U.S. border into the State of Maine.





Bob and Gloria took us to a family lobster bake on the north shore of NB. They boiled more than a hundred live lobsters in bathtubs over a big fire. The menu consisted of beer and as many lobsters as you could eat, washed down with more beer.

We had some good times in New Brunswick and it was a life experience that we will always remember.

We spent one year in St. John; during that year we had experiences we never would have imagined during our sheltered life in England.

We met some really good friends and because we were new and didn't have a vehicle, we were taken on many trips and invited on lots of adventures.



Rockwood park, swimming, skating, tobogganing



St. John in the Bay of Fundy is renowned for some of the largest tide changes in the world. We often walked the couple of blocks down to the harbour and over to the reversing falls to see the affects of the tides.

The heavy snow and temperatures below minus 20 Celsius made it challenging to walk around the city in the winter. We did buy some used ice skates and wobbled our way around some outdoor rinks.



We witnessed some massive fires and the demolition of hundreds of old wooden tenement buildings while we lived in St. John. It was quite a shock to see destruction on that scale.

Later in 1968, I changed employment and started at Lingley's Printing, the same place Eileen worked. I was mostly on the guillotine while Eileen was upstairs in the gathering and binding room.



Late summer 1968 we had our apartment broken in to and most of our valuables stolen. Our neighborhood was a *'little rough'* so the police told us they would not bother to investigate. We also had some unsettling incidents with the neighbour biker gang. A street fight erupted one Sunday afternoon; after a lot of yelling, sirens and crashing, we found ourselves facing a very bloody biker. His head was gushing from a blow with a broken bottle. Stammering in broken French, we were *'kinda'* forced to clean him up, as well as the big mess in our communal bathroom.

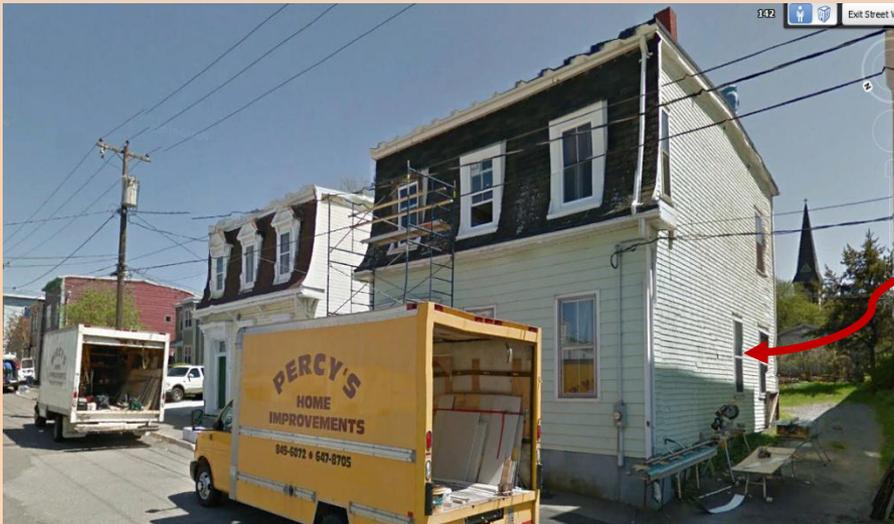


The *'writing'*, crime, and the blood on the walls, was telling us it was time to move out West.

We soon made contact with distant relatives June and Tony Raven, who worked on a farm north of St. Albert, Alberta. They were in the process of leaving the dairy farm and developing a poultry operation nearby. The dairy farmer was looking for help and supplied a house and garden.



We told Alfie Thornton our plans to move to Alberta, he said he would be replacing his car soon, and his very well maintained Sunbeam Minx was for sale. We agreed to purchase the car, however, we were afraid to leave it parked on Britain Street as it would have been stripped.

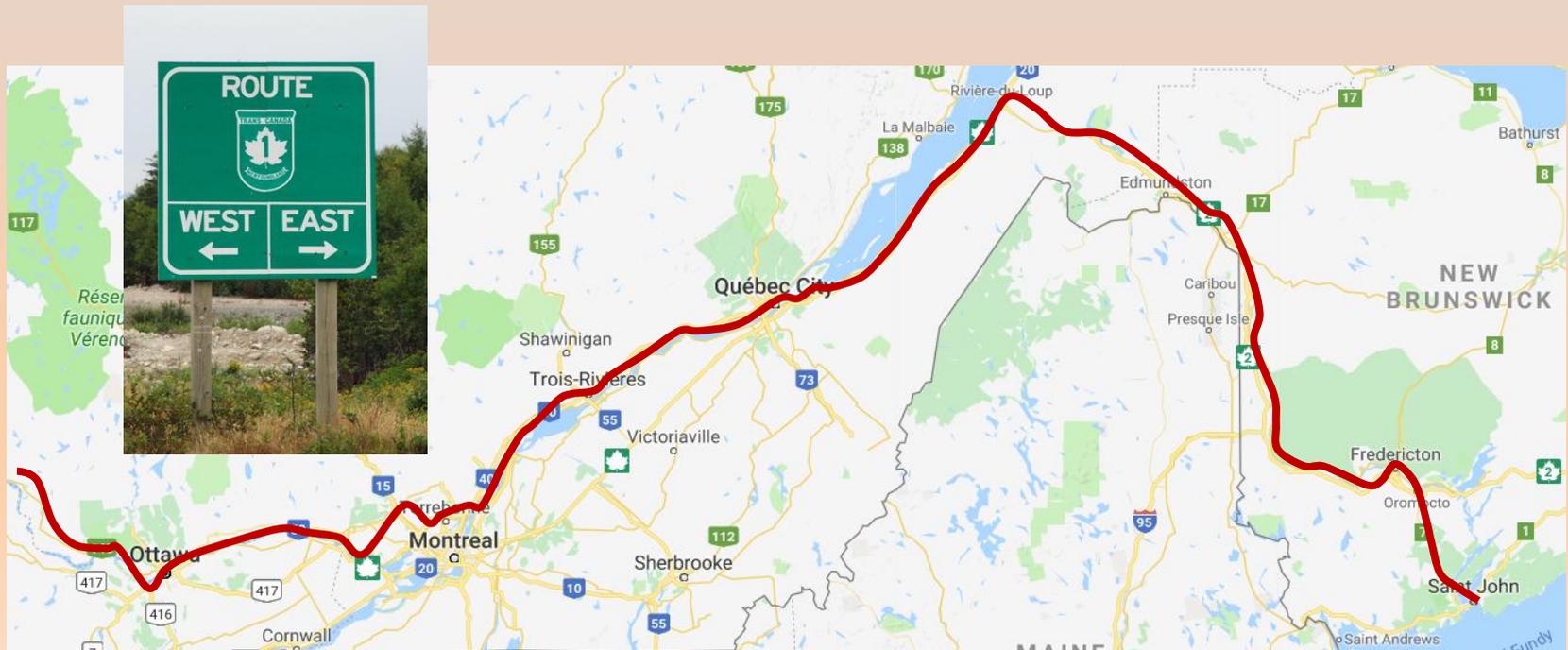


The image on the left is a Google street view of the apartment at 150 Britain St. We loaded and parked our Sunbeam under the open window overnight. We didn't get much sleep, so in the early hours before dawn we started driving our first car, on the other side of the road.

Note: Percy's Restorations working on the building.

66 SAINT JOHN & MOVING WEST

Exactly one year after we arrived, we began our 5,000 kilometer trip across Canada from St. John, New Brunswick to Alberta. It was almost the same distance as the trip year before across the Atlantic. Starting quite cautiously we made our way north-west and soon joined the Trans-Canada Highway, which would take us most of the journey to St. Albert. There was still some snow on the ground in places, but as we drove into Quebec the weather was nice. We were off to a good start.



We planned to take ten days for the trip with some sight seeing in Quebec City; we had only seen it at night the year before. We passed by Montreal as we had been warned about aggressive drivers, then we spent two days in and around Ottawa.



We stayed a couple of nights in Ottawa with a friend of the Thornton's that we had met in New Brunswick. We saw many of the sights around Canada's capital, and then it was time to get back on the road again.

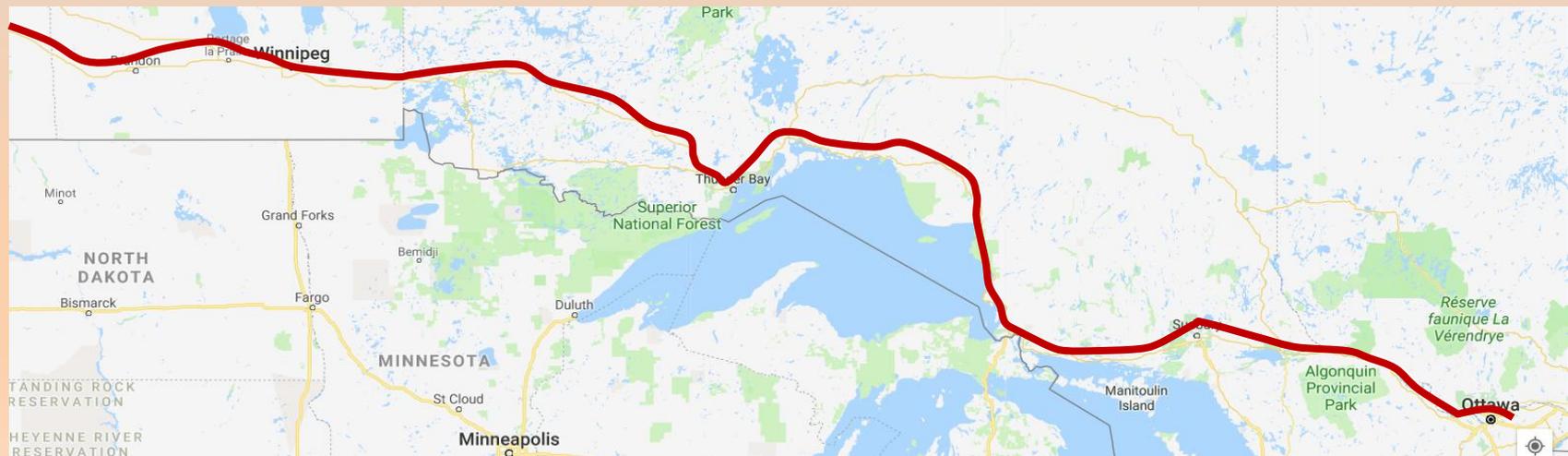


68 SAINT JOHN & MOVING WEST

The trip became a little more interesting when heading along the open highway west of Ottawa. We met an Ontario highway patrol car on a lonely stretch of road, miles from anywhere. I saw him swing around in the road after we passed and he turned his flashing lights on. I had only been driving in Canada for four days and I was about to get the only ticket I have ever received. Now I have driven a couple of million kms and, touch wood, ... that was it. It was a technical ticket because our N B licence plate was applied with an in-transit sticker.



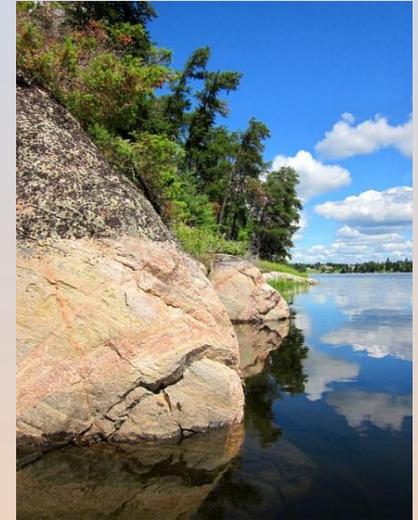
We had inquired and were told that the sticker would be good for one trip. The police however did not agree that the sticker was good for a cross-country expedition. This cost us fifty bucks.



After the police incident we had an interesting and very scenic journey through Ontario, and saw many pretty lakes and waterfalls. The winter snows were giving way to the first signs of spring.



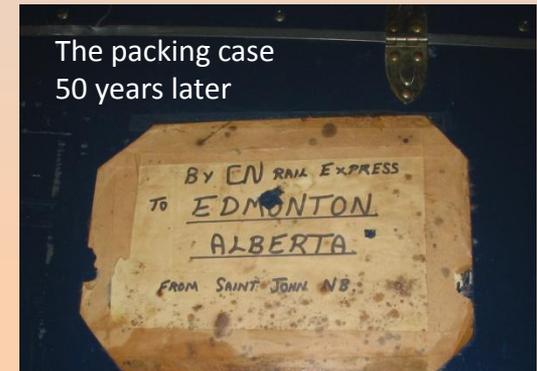
The Trans-Canada meandered along the north shore of Lake Huron passing numerous parks and view points, with trails leading to the many interesting rock formations of the Canadian Shield.



At Sault Ste. Marie the road turns north around Lake Superior toward the next overnight stay at Fort William - now called Thunder Bay.



The packing case
50 years later



While we were driving, some of our belongings were on the train again.

70 SAINT JOHN & MOVING WEST

Heading west from Lake Superior we passed by countless small lakes, after a long day of driving and sightseeing, we were closing in to the Manitoba border, and our first glimpses of the prairie lands that stretch 1200 km to the Rockies.

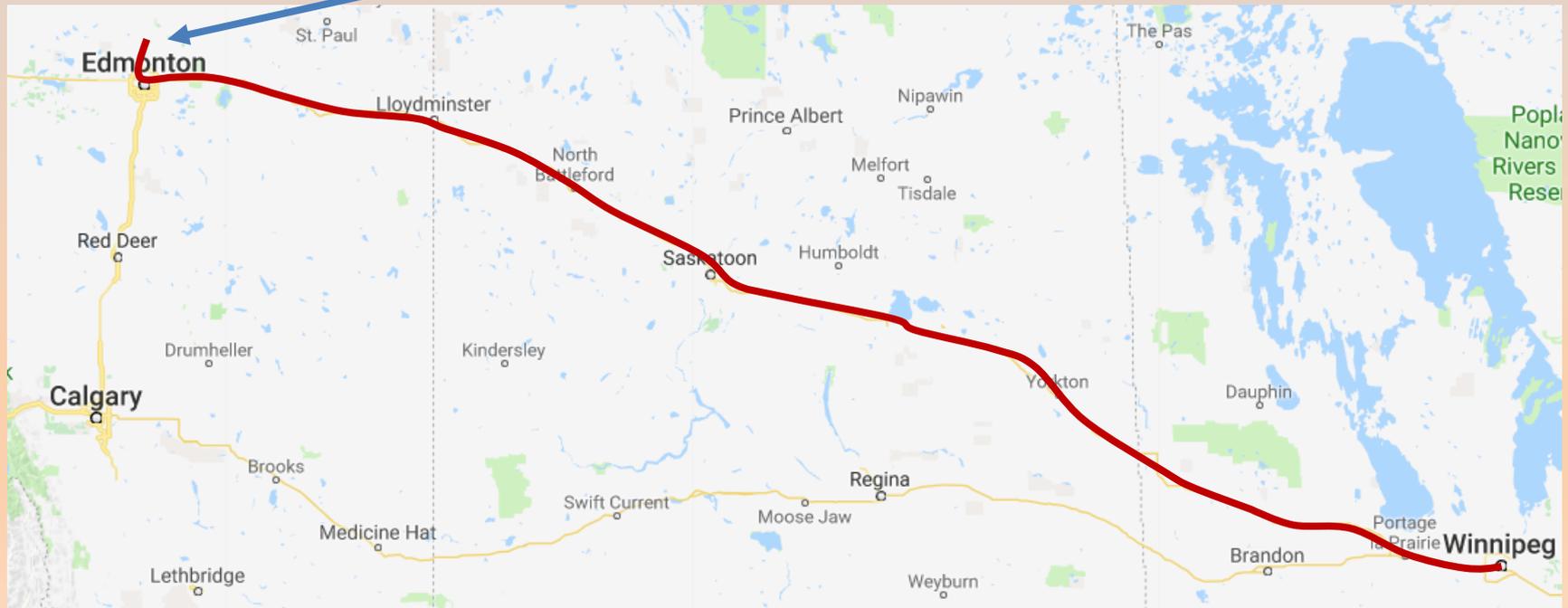


We were in grain-farming country and we saw massive machinery working the rich land. Quite a contrast to hand hoeing kale at Paravani's small farm in Ellingham.



After leaving the undulating, rocky, forested 'shield', the topography and scenery changed dramatically. Soon the straight road stretched for kilometers, and the land was sooo flat we could see the curvature of the earth. Kilometer long trains with several locomotives pulled grain and loaded mineral cars across the vast expanse.

The Sunbeam Minx was running well and the kilometers were going fast. We had passed through Manitoba and Saskatchewan, spending our last night on the road in Lloydminster, located on the Alberta border. We looked forward to seeing the dairy farm and our house, which was now a 5 ½ hour drive away.





After the long drive we arrived at the farm, which in 1969, was 9 km north of St. Albert. Today the city has developed 4 km closer. We met the farm owners, the Bocock family, an old father and his two middle aged single sons. They were hospitable, religious, and hard-working. The house we were to live in was a cute barn-shaped home that needed some paint and fixing, but quite was comfortable. The picture below is a recent air photo showing a lot of development in 50 years

The farm had a mixture of dairy and beef cattle, and they had a lot of farm land which produced grain, hay, and silage for feed. The barns had many cats to control the mice population. It didn't take us long to find a friendly kitten.



Work started the next morning at 4:30 am, getting 100 cows into the parlor ready to start milking at 5:00 am. It took until 7:00 pm to get everything cleaned up after the evening milking. I worked seven days a week with every second Sunday off. We did get free milk, the house, and they even paid me about 275 dollars a month..... A real deal.



The dairy farming business is a lifestyle that changes with the seasons, and the priority at the moment. Learning to 'pull' calves, and the feeding, cleaning out, and bedding the dairy and beef cattle was just the start.



While I was working on the farm, Eileen worked at Ted and Lois Holes market garden beside the Sturgeon River, north of St. Albert. Lois was a wonderful lady; about twenty five years later she became Alberta's Lieutenant Governor, an accomplished author, and a highly respected figure in the province.



Ted and Louis invited my parents for a meal when they later visited from England - we popped in to say hello, and found ourselves sitting down for lunch.

I was soon driving and operating all kinds of machinery and equipment, hauling barley, plowing snow, and packing silage. I also learned a lot about keeping machinery running in - 40 degrees C



On Labour Day September 1st, 1969 I was combining the last field of grain on a bright sunny afternoon. We had heard on the radio, that a big snow storm was heading down from the Arctic. Later that afternoon the sky turned dark and the temperature dropped like a stone. I was shivering cold and running the pull-type combine as fast as it could. I dumped a load of barley into the grain truck just as it started to snow. It was getting dark when John Boccock came roaring toward me in his pickup.

“Trevor, we have to keep going to get this crop off.” Combining in a heavy blizzard with a foot of snow, I followed the slight ridge of the swath. I finished the harvest but had no idea which direction to get off the field. I finally found a fence-line and made my way back to the farm with a hopper full of frozen grain.



After the apparition with the house I helped move and set up another house and a very large barn that was moved onto the farm.



Another strange experience was when I was cultivating a very large field with the big tractor. Backward and forward time after time. Then suddenly I turned at the far end of the field, to my amazement there was a house in the distance, next to the place I had turned a few minutes earlier. I really thought I was having an apparition. I had never seen a complete house being moved on a truck trailer.

An amazing phenomena was the northern lights. Sometime they were so bright you could read a newspaper by them. One cold clear night we walked along the gravel road to the west of the farm. The Aurora was dancing light overhead when we started to hear this crackling swishing sound. We were hearing the solar wind from the sun.



There were many new experiences during the first year in Alberta.

The Bocock's were sponsors of the Miles for Millions, 25 mile walk around Edmonton. I was given the Sunday off and we walked the 25 miles around the city along with the Raven family and Jim Hole. The international group of young performers 'Up With People' came to the farm's giant Barbecue





June and Tony Raven were the contact relatives who were starting in the poultry business. Tony was a keen cycle racer. I didn't have a bike and had not ridden a cycle in two years. Tony lent me a racing bike and I was racing with a bunch of regular cyclists about 30 km on Highway 16 to Spruce Grove and back.

We had never seen the Rocky Mountains so June and Tony took us to Jasper for a couple of days. We had a great time and saw a lot of beautiful places. In the restaurant we were having dinner and decided to have steak. We had never had steak before. How would you like your steak??? Ah...ah... "cooked" I said to laughter, what dressing on your salad? Ahah "no idea" never heard of dressing a salad before.





One weekend in the summer they took us for quick trip down to Waterton Park and into Montana. It was lovely to camp in such a beautiful area.



One weekend a couple knocked on our door at the farm and said they had a message from someone in Beccles. It turned out they had emigrated to Edmonton from Beccles and had found out where we lived. We knew many people in common from around the Waveney valley.



We left Montana and made the long drive north through Calgary. On the outskirts of Edmonton a huge storm was developing to the west. Within a couple of minutes we were in the middle of a tornado! Wind, rain and hail buffeted David's big car and he pulled in to shelter under a gas station awning. Everything not fixed down was blowing around with large chunks of ice falling from the sky.

Life on the dairy farm was having some hiccups. I had developed a severe allergic reaction to the cleaning chemicals in the dairy. This prevented me from doing my job. The brothers, who were both my boss, used to argue intensely about which job I should be doing next.



Eileen had changed jobs in the fall to work at a printing place in Edmonton. During the worst, cold, snowy winter weather, she drove the Sunbeam Minx every morning along the St. Albert trail into the city.

When we left England we had promised to try and make it back to visit in two years. In early spring 1970 I handed in my notice to the farm, and Eileen quit the printing job. Storing our goods and chattels in a barn, we took the first of many trans-Atlantic flights to England. We were fascinated looking down on the Arctic, Hudson Bay, Baffin Island, Greenland, Iceland and the Scottish coast as we headed for London.

Just before we left Alberta for the holiday in England, we found that Eileen was pregnant. We broke the news to my Mum and Dad when they met us at the Airport. Dad had rented a car from Browns at Loddon to pick us up from London. The welcome home became very subdued, when we explained that Eileen was pregnant, and that we were going back to Canada, without jobs or a place to live.



John..Angela.. Stephen..Dad.. Eileen ..Trevor



My parents had expected us to return to live in England. The visit became very eventful; in less than four weeks Eileen lost the baby and was attended to by the same midwife, nurse Mattocks, that had delivered me, in the same house 24 years earlier. My Grannie Wicks died after a lengthy illness, and Angela had a baby, Melanie, born on May 11th.

Grannie Wicks outside Conway House in Shipdam, Norfolk.



Alberta School Hospital (ASH) is now called Michener Center, and was an institution for about 1000 mentally challenged children and youth. The facility had extensive landscaped grounds, many individual wards, and accommodation for the permanent staff. A complete farm produced everything from milk, beef, pork, and eggs, to tomatoes, spuds and vegetables of all kinds. There were also thousands of flats of flowers and other plants. Eileen worked in the laundry for a while, a hot and stinky job, and then went back to printing at a local business.



I was hired on the grounds and garden staff cutting grass, planting flowers, maintaining the grounds, and weeding and harvesting many tons of vegetables. The ‘trainees’ (challenged children) helped in many aspects of this work. We had to oversee and keep as many as 40 trainees busy at jobs as diverse as

shovelling snow, to plucking hundreds of chickens, picking peas, and watering flower beds. Keeping track of these children was always a challenge, as some would wander off, and some had seizures.

During the mid-winter period 1970 -71, I had to work on the wards. The typical ward had a very high staff turn over and I soon found out why; 72 children lived on each ward. When I walked in the door of the lower functioning ward the smell was often enough to 'gag a maggot'.



Feeding, clothing, cleaning, entertaining, and caring for that many very needy youngsters, 24 hrs a day, required working shifts - and a lot of patience.

During orientation I was warned that some trainees could be very aggressive to new staff. I was in the dayroom on my second day, when an older kid lunged at me from behind and sank his teeth into my shoulder; teeth marks were visible for about a month. I had been warned. Many of the children were heavily medicated and during a change of pills became so aggressive they had to be restrained in straight jackets for much of the day. I had to work Xmas day and bins of donated neatly wrapped gifts were distributed in the dayrooms. By the end of my shift there was nothing recognizable left, just small pieces of junk. ... roll on spring.

Fortunately my second winter ward duty was in a high functioning ward, where most of the children went to ASH School. Life was more civilized; the few months went quite fast and soon my job changed again. The garden/grounds foreman, who was my boss, had been caught stealing and doing shady business deals with government property. I was summoned for an interview with Alberta Public Works as the farm and veg gardens at ASH were being phased out.



I was to be transferred from Health, and engaged as foreman for the grounds maintenance for ASH and the other government buildings in Red Deer, including the highways dept, airport, and courthouse. Our department had a workshop, I had an office, we had a staff of 6 people. The work changed somewhat, I was encouraged to take several courses on grounds management at Olds Collage.

In September 1970 we traded the polished shining Sunbeam in for an 8 cylinder Ford truck. The trade took place at a British car dealer and he gave us more than we paid for it. We looked around for a good deal on an acreage and found a 5 acre farm site for \$15,000. It was located about 20 km northwest of Red Deer on a gravel road in farm country.



The property had been neglected for a few years, and needed lots of fixing up, paint and hard work. The site had a two bedroom house, separate two-car garage with a room above, big barn, machine shed, hog barn, and chicken house. Everything needing fixing up, including the grounds. Two massive wood piles heated our house, after I cut up the logs with a hand saw.



The old house as it was when we moved in

About a month after we moved in we had an evening get together / house warming organized by the very friendly neighbours. They brought gifts and snacks to welcome us to the community. During the evening Eileen became very unwell and almost passed out. We had to ask our new neighbours to leave and I rushed Eileen into Emergency, she had lost a lot of blood with a ruptured tubular pregnancy.

Eileen only just survived that incident, the neighbours helped out a lot, as we faced our first winter in the Aspelund community.



The community was so supportive of each other, and we soon made a lot of very close friends that almost became family. We all helped out if someone needed assistance; farm work, rounding up cattle, building or whatever. At Xmas time we all drove around to the old or infirm and sang carols and dropped off some goodies. We joined the local 'Unifarm' organization that met about once a month.



The meetings did involve some farming issues, grain prices and the amount of hay for sale; a big part was the community and socializing. The Aspelund hall was the venue for many local functions, dances , etc.

The party line was always ringing because we heard several people's calls; we answered the phone with 2long 1short 1long

Our first ever dog was Tundra, a Samoyed who lived with us for 17 years. He was a great dog, very good natured, and defended our livestock from wild coyotes, many times.



88 ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY



Our connection with the Elliott's had an interesting twist. Grandpa had a piece of land on the north side of Sylvan Lake. This old ranch had some shacks, a small barn, and several horses. The old cowboy had a sign offering trail rides posted at the end of the driveway. Sylvan Lake attracted a lot of tourists in the summer and someone had to be onsite to prepare the horses and lead the trail rides.

Our overnight luxury accommodation was a very old, dirty, overgrown Airstream trailer. There was no phone so sometimes a group of enthusiastic trail victims, who would show up expecting full service. This was all part of the wilderness experience, and we enjoyed it a lot.

Even though I had never sat on a horse before, I was soon grooming, saddling and guiding trail rides for the public. Many of these people had never ridden before either...It was a learning curve for us all.





My horse riding did not stop with passive trail rides. Our neighbour Don Carlyle phoned one evening; “Wicki. If you’re not busy tomorrow we really need help, rounding up, castrating, inoculating and branding all of this years new calves”



The next morning I was assigned a very spirited cutting horse. With a number of hardened cowboy types, I was in no position to say my arse was sore from several hours in the saddle.



The day rounded up with an ample serving of beer, steak and fresh, well washed, (I hope), prairie oysters. These were harvested from the calves during the day. ...Nuts....

90 ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY



Betty and Orville
Van Slyke

Photos and names of
some of the many
friends and neighbours
we were close too in
Central Alberta.



Sue Jim Laverne
Parks



Dave Patsy
Carlyle



Carmen Eileen Chris
Solomonds

John and Jean Buit,
Eileen and Will Ironside,
Agness and Philip
Schmidt.



Archie Sarah
Carlyle

Dorothy and Bob Carlyle,
Don and Donna Carlyle,
John and Wilma Busaan,
Louise and Bill Pickering.



Our ten years on the acreage were not without some seriously heart-stopping moments. One morning I had worked night shift at ASH, the drive home was in a blizzard with heavy blowing snow. On the Sylvan Lake highway I was one of the first people to approach a terrible high speed head-on car crash.

One of the victims was our neighbour Donna, who the evening before had told us that she was pregnant. She was very seriously injured; I had the challenge to find her husband working somewhere on the big farm, and drive him past the accident scene to the hospital. She survived, after many months in hospital and so did her baby.

I used to help out at the dairy farm down the road after work, packing silage with a big tractor during milking time. One day, as I cycled in to the yard, I was aware that something terrible had happened. People were running and crying; I ran to the silage pit to see the big tractor upside down. With some help and big jacks we were able to extract the lifeless body of their youngest 9 year old son from under the big machine.



ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY 92

Another potentially disastrous accident happened in the same yard a few years later. The farmer was in the process of building a very large feeder barn. The dozens of massive trusses were placed on 2x4 wood frame walls, and a crew was inside the framed structure installing a heavy feed conveyer system. I went down to the farm, as they needed help. The farmer was concerned because a very strong wind had risen from the west; the entire structure was swaying with each gust.



During this time we had various livestock and I was in training as a rodeo rider.

The obvious fix was to nail diagonal bracing between the walls and the trusses to stop the swaying. I was up a step ladder nailing as fast as I could, when with a deafening roar, the whole bloody building crashed to the ground, with me and possibly several others inside. I was bruised and scraped but found myself wriggling out between broken trusses. Luckily the other crew had just finished and left for the day and no one was seriously hurt.

In 1971 we felt our house was too quiet and needed the sound of children so we applied to become foster parents. Our place was approved and we waited for our first placements. Early in 1972 I came home from work to have an evening meal with our friends Chris and Carmen. When I came into the house there was a strange quietness and some pointing into the spare bedroom. I looked round the door and two very timid somewhat frightened children were sitting on the bed. We were foster parents of Rick and Joanne who had been apprehended from very troubled circumstances.



Joanne and Rick went to school in Bentley, a small country-town north of us next to Gull Lake. It was about an hour on the school bus from our place. They stayed with us on and off for about 8 years.



Our lives had become a little more intricate with fostering and all the work on the acreage. Eileen finished work at Fletcher printing and found out that she was pregnant again, with the baby due in September.



In July 1972 I left for work in the morning - our vegetable garden was growing well and the canola crops in the field were bright yellow and waist high. During the hot, humid morning I worked on vegetable gardens at ASH. By mid-afternoon the sky out west had turned a deep green - we were in for a big storm.

On the way home I picked up a large 27 cu ft deepfreeze that I had ordered. Half-way home with the new purchase in my truck a hail storm hit with unbelievable fury and I had to shelter under some big trees. Arriving home was a shock; the fields were pulverised to black dirt, and our lovely veg garden was gone. Windows were broken, roofs damaged, trees stripped of leaves and bark, no birds or insects seen for weeks, and nothing to go into the dented freezer.



Joanne and Rick's brother Eddie was in foster care in Sylvan Lake; his foster parents were hard working, elderly dairy farmers. On September 8th, 1972 we took Joe and Rick to visit their brother. Heading back along the highway at night, we had a shock. An oncoming car crossed the line and was heading straight toward us.



That was enough to scare the crap out of anyone. We avoided a crash, however, within an hour Eileen had gone into labour. I found someone to look after the children. Eileen had a shower and was feeding the chickens when I arrived back to head 20 km to hospital. About noon next day we were delighted to have our baby Sharon Marie.



Joanne and Rick had a baby sister.



96 ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY

In September 1972 Eileen presented us with baby Sharon. July 1974 we adopted Danie Lee. Dan was 11 months old when we first saw him in Edmonton.



In a little more than two years our family had grown to six, plus we always had Jo and Rick's relatives and school friends staying over.



Danie .. Trevor.. Sharon .. Eileen.. Joanne ..Rick



As we became more settled we started having lots of visitors, one year we had 15 weeks of visitors.

Both our sets of parents, my brother and family, cousins, friends, and friends of friends. We enjoyed showing them the lovely places in Alberta. We took many visitors to the Rockies, Waterton parks, the foothills, Drumheller, etc. Our truck and canopy had lots of use over several years.



We were often asked if Sharon and Dan were brother and sister. We always said "Of course, why did you ask?"



Sharon and Dan's friends spent a lot of time playing in our yard. I built a fort, sandbox and they had a swing set to keep them amused.



98 ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY

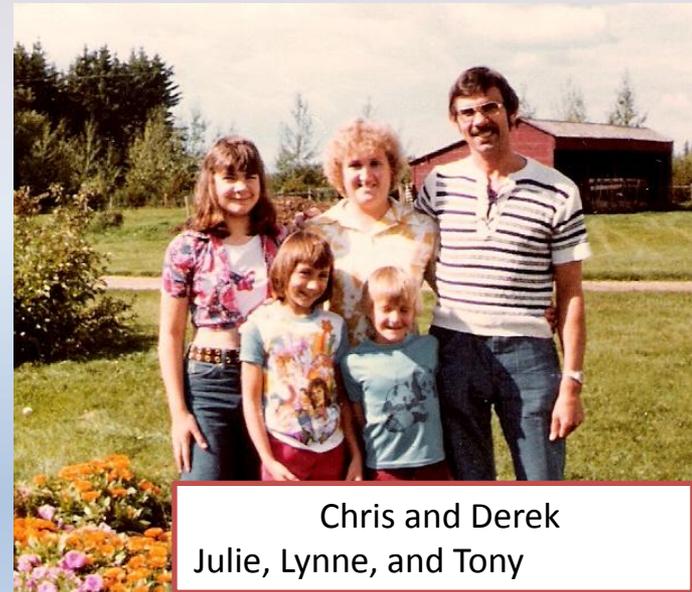
One June, after a heavy rainfall, the Blindman River, which ran past the end of our road, was flowing fast. I packed up my old red canoe with enough grub and gear for 4 days and put the boat in the water at the bridge on the Aspelund Rd. The Blindman joins the Red Deer river, heading east before the big river turns south into the badlands. The Red Deer river was running at a good speed as I made my way the more than 200km to Drumheller. At one point I had a dilemma as hundreds of Canada geese that had nested along the river accumulated in front of my canoe. As I paddled downstream. I just could not get past them, when I stopped, then they stopped and the numbers kept growing.



In April 1973 Eileen's sister, brother in law and family emigrated to Canada from England. By coincidence they left England in a ship almost 5 years to the day after we left. They traveled across the country by train and finished in St Albert.



We drove up to see them soon after they arrived and we visited back and forth several times during the next years. With most of the family now living in Canada, it was only a matter of time before Chris and Eileen's parents would come out to join them in December 1982.



Chris and Derek
Julie, Lynne, and Tony

ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY 100



Rick John Joanne Julie

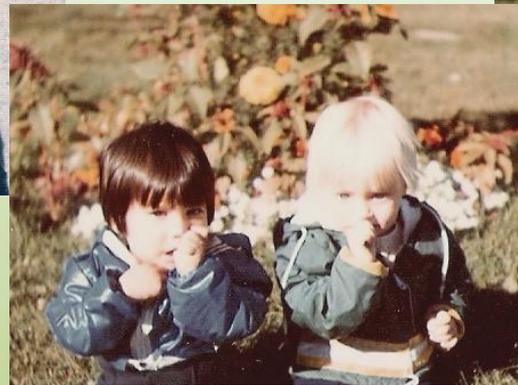
We often had visiting children around the house and accompanying us on trips to the lake. We had many evenings around the campfire in the back yard, with a speaker and music playing into the night.



The soil was sooo rich, and the sun shone a lot. Our gardens produced a massive amount of food. We had two deep freezers, a cold locker in town, and we canned and stored lots of food as well.

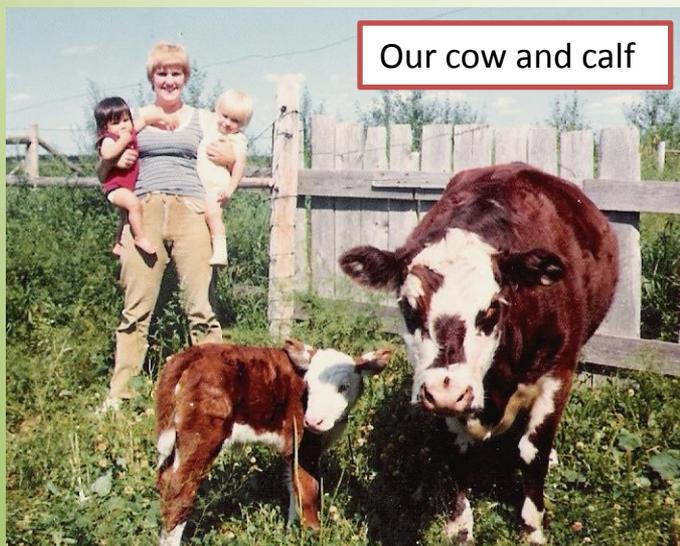


As the children matured they began to travel and work for a living, although sometime it was difficult to get their attention.





We were always surrounded by animals. We kept pigs, lots of chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys, rabbits, even a goat that was impossible to keep in the yard.



Our cow and calf

For a while our place became a quarantine station for Don's imported Simmental heifers purchased in Europe. They were held in quarantine before they could be released into the regular herds. One heifer called Beckie, had a bull calf Edon at our place; one of the few Simmental bull calves in Canada at the time. Edon went on to sire many of the early 'exotic' Simmental offspring.



My mum with Tundra and some of the cattle



We had some sheepish incidents. In the winter, we let our sheep run free in the yard, where they had lots of feed. One day we had a call from the dairy farm; our sheep had wandered most of a mile down the road and were causing confusion in his milking barn. The cows were not impressed.

My parents were over to visit and we took a day trip to Edmonton. When we arrived home, one of our five sheep was missing. We searched around the yard and neighborhood. We had had nearly a foot of snow and I followed every track as far as the valley.



We finally found the sheep next to the house.

I had dug a narrow trench to bury a length of power cable; the sheep had fallen in and was covered with snow, it had not moved for three days, and we had walked within feet of it, many times. When we lifted it out it stumbled a bit then took off.



The sheep sometime went into the shed and ate dog food, if the door was left open. Rick's job was to get the sheep out; one day he ran into the shed and came out backwards at high speed, hanging on to the back of the sheep.



Winter sports could last for six months, so we took the snow and ice seriously. Driveway shoveling, water trough ice chopping, and windshield scraping were only part of it. Sharon and Dan trained for the winter Olympics and Eileen trained for skiing and dog sled competitions.



One year the ice on the Blindman River froze like a sheet of glass. One New Years, the community had a big pot luck at Bob and Dorothy's. After the big meal a group of us went skating and the strong valley wind blew us along the river almost a mile to the bridge. It was more of a struggle to skate back into the wind, but it was good fun.



As foster parents we were invited an inaugural meeting of the Red Deer and District Foster Parents Association. With some arm twisting and the fact the nobody else wanted the jobs, Eileen was elected secretary and I was the first president of the RDDFPA. This opened up several interesting experiences, conferences and workshops. At one overnight conference in Edmonton we were intrigued by crowds of people and security at the hotel we stayed at. The Aga Khan walked past with his entourage. Another weekend conference was held at the Banff Springs hotel.



After a couple of years our home was listed as a short-term detention center. The police and social services placed children who needed emergency shelter. We provided about 15 children a residence for a while. I helped chaperone a group children out to the foothills near Ram River Falls in June. It turned into a big challenge, as the first night camping, most of the tents collapsed under about 2 feet of snow. We all survived.

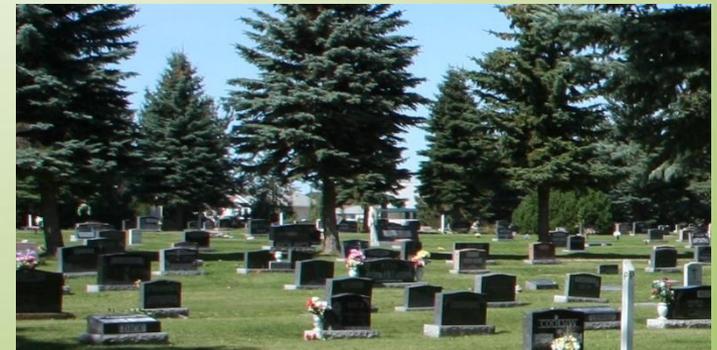
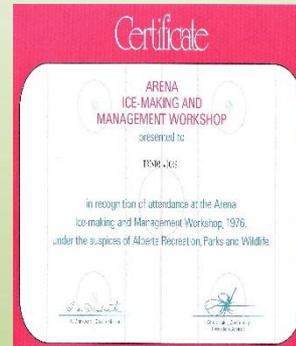


106 ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY

In July 1974, there was a major reorganization with Alberta Public Works in Red Deer, and my job would change again. I decided to apply for a position with the Town of Lacombe as Parks and recreation foreman, working with the town's operations and maintenance of facilities.



I worked for the town for about 18 months involved in a wide variety of functions; developing new parks, ice making in the arena, outdoor and curling rink, overseeing ball fields and cemetery. We had a year-round crew and extra help in the summer. The town was expanding very rapidly, and the demands of the job were met with staff cutbacks.

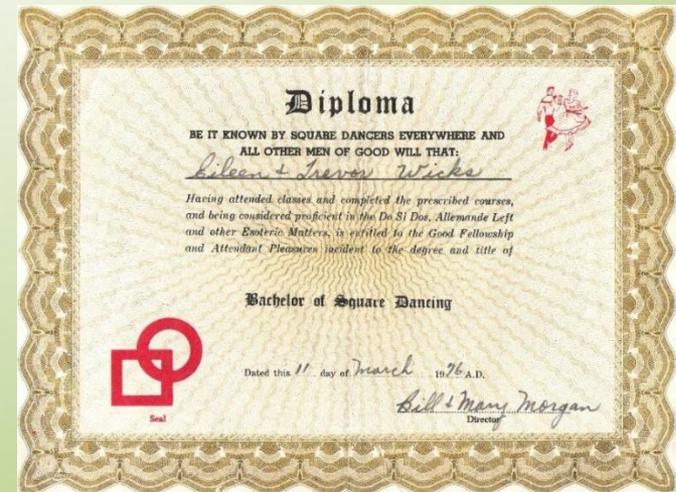


In 1978 Eileen decided to take career training at the Red Deer College, as a Rehabilitation Councillor and Child and Youth Care worker.

Dan was in a college day-care program while Eileen was in class. She had to be home on time for Rick, Jo, and Sharon to get back from school. Eileen was selected as valedictorian at her graduation. It was a real honour.



For fun we took up square dancing, and had some good times. We even received a diploma as Bachelors of Square Dancing



Mid December 1977 we had just finished plucking and freezing about 100 chickens when I asked Eileen if she would like to spend Christmas in England with our families.



We phoned up the travel agent on a Saturday. They said there were four seats available on a flight in three days.



Our surprise visit to England 1977

We had to get into town and pay the fare before the agent closed. We said yes and jumped into the truck as fast as we could. Our parents were surprised when we phoned and said we had just booked and we would see them in three days. Panic set in as we realized all the things we had to do before we left for England. We somehow arranged for someone to look after the foster children and livestock. I built and filled feeders that would last several days, we packed and were on our way.



In the fall of 1977 we had a major medical emergency with Sharon. She was just 5 years old at the time. She developed severe abdominal pains and was admitted to Red Deer general hospital. Soon thereafter they did abdominal surgery and found a heavily infected, ruptured appendix. Sharon lost nearly half of her weight, and was in the hospital for a month.



She recovered well, a couple of months after the surgery.



When Dan was adopted, we were well aware that he had quite serious health and cognitive issues. It was some time later that we came aware of the term 'fetal alcohol syndrome' now classed as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. There were many challenges to understand the unusual developing brain. Danie had a lack of fear of anything, and had little response to consequences, pain, or cold etc.

We had to watch him constantly to prevent him from injury or hurting himself. Climbing as high as possible was his favourite activity. Sometimes he would just stop breathing until he became unconscious, and we had to give him emergency resuscitation.

110 ACREAGE AND A GROWING FAMILY



The landscape maintenance business progressed well and I had dozens of regular customers including shopping malls, hotels, some large service/manufacturing, companies, municipal and county government work. A wide variety of vocation with no two days the same, was always challenging and rewarding - and I never needed to advertise.

After I resigned the job at the Town of Lacombe, in the fall of 1975, I worked in construction for a while, then at a river boat builder. The firm built high speed jet boats, which of course we had to test run. This was quite exhilarating especially as the boss tried to drink as much rye whiskey as the boat used in fuel.

I decided to become independent, and to embark in a stand-alone landscape / maintenance business. I bought a small tractor and some attachments. Pretty soon I was busier than a one armed paper-hanger, and bought a second tractor.



Our small two bedroom house was too small for our rapidly expanding family. The first project involved building a bedroom in the basement. Soon I decided to build a big addition to the house adding a family room, porch and two more bedrooms.



Most of the construction was learn as you go, and I picked up most of the lumber from a family sawmill out west in the foothills. Now the house was big enough for everyone and we had paid off the mortgage.



We painted all the buildings, fenced and cross-fenced the property, cleared and seeded grass and pasture, even rented an adjoining piece of land for our livestock. We planted dozens of trees and shrubs. It is rewarding to go back after 45 years and see the house standing and some of the trees grown to maturity.

Picture taken in 1980



End of Part 1

**The adventure continues
in Part 2...**