

Once Upon a Time Stories

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Preface

These stories are mostly about yesteryear, mainly factual, sometimes with a little literary license. My apologies to all those who feel maligned, you probably deserved it! Thank you for providing the stimuli for these recollections. The times of these tales vary from the dark ages of the 1940s to the present day. The English grammar would make Miss Mair turn in her grave; but the occasional Latin quotations would make Mr. Sullivan proud. I find it difficult to write a meaningful introduction to these ramblings; there is no theme or focus other than personal recollection. Also among these stories of yesteryear there may be some repetitions, inconsistencies, inaccuracies, exaggerations and downright untruths. The same incident may be described very differently, depending on the context; they are there for the reader to spot, comment and criticize. No offence is intended to any individual identified or implicated. Apologies for all these shortcomings will be given freely. So I shall let you, my loyal reader, be the judge. Anyway, I do not expect to become rich from this publication as there will only be a nominal charge of one penny, payable in installments over the next decade.

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Chapter 1

As the Clock Turns so do the Hats of our Lives

My first recollection of hat wearing was my uncle's sailor hat at a fancy dress parade in the small Holderness village of Sproatley. My uncle Ken was in the Royal Navy in the second world war and was killed, while on leave, by a bomb as he stood outside the neighborhood air raid shelter in Whitworth Street, Hull. I was very proud of my inherited authentic sailor hat but disappointed at placing second to a friend of mine who wore a tatty homemade affair in a village fancy dress competition. *C'est la vie* as they say in Sproatley. The winters were cold in those days and chill blains were in vogue, so mothers knitted gloves, socks and hats for their kiddywinks. I had a green balaclava which covered my head and neck with only a little round hole for my face. I remember sucking on the piece that covered my chin and feeling the soggy mess which froze before I had walked my mile to school, uphill both ways. It rained hard and often in those days, so the elementary school kids had peaked caps to keep their hair dry. One day, in 1948, at recess, I went out into the Sproatley Endowed School yard without my hat – bah t'at as they say in Yorkshire – and got wet hair. The teacher, Mrs. Thompson, wife of Gilly Gaffer (Mr. Thompson, the headmaster), was upset and was obliged to teach me a lesson by referring me to her husband. One gentle stroke of the cane on each hand – don't forget your hat next time it rains.

My dad wore the classic cap to work, rode the bus and walked down the street with hundreds of others, right out of a J B Priestly novel. When he took me to watch the Hull City football team, every one wore their best caps and I joined in with my school cap. I remember my dad joking "If you can't fight wear a big 'at" I think that he was referring to the need to develop a strong verbal offensive defense to offset any physical altercation.

At age eleven I made it to grammar school by passing the dreaded "eleven plus" exam. In those days, less than 10% of the cohort passed this life changing hurdle. Everyone

wore uniforms at the Malet Lambert High School, ours were green and yellow. The blazers were bottle green, with a yellow braid all around the edges. That year (1949) they brought in a new cap design – bottle green with two broad yellow stripes crossing in the middle – just like hot cross buns, our Easter favorite. Needless to say our cross town rivals at Kingston High School, The Grammar School, Riley High School, Beverley High School and Hymers College found this distinctive design, as opposed to their choice of crimson, to be a great opportunity to poke fun on the busses that zigzagged the city and the villages of the Holderness plain. This rivalry was played out on the cricket and football fields with equally ornate uniforms. Cricketers always wore white with hats to keep the sun out of their eyes and to distinguish them from the other side along with blazers and striped sweaters. Nowadays the game has gone from bad to worse as most teams, even international ones have substituted colorful gear, adorned with the emblems of their sponsors, for the sober whites. In the sixth form, our Grammar School hat lost the yellow stripes but retained the badge which was a smaller version of the one worn on our blazers. Perhaps the most gaudy cricket cap I had in those days was that of my East Park Baptist church team – a deep cream with a maroon circle.

In those days soccer goalkeepers wore large rat catcher hats, again to keep the sun out of their eyes. My brother, a goalkeeper who had considerable success at the game, gave me his cap when his head grew too big for it. I wore it on school trips to the mountains.

Nineteen fifty-six took me out of school and into the Royal Air Force where we were given two hats, one hard peaked cap for ‘dress occasions’ like parades and a beret for every day. You were not supposed to salute officers with your hat off and once a week you presented your hat to the bursar to receive your wages – I got 16 shillings for my first weekly wage. I could have earned more than that picking potatoes! Once I got all dressed up for a parade in the local town. We assembled on the parade ground – “tallest on the right, shortest on the left; go!” We shuffled about, looked to the right, stuck our right arm out sideways to get our distance from the next guy and if you were

not in a straight line you could see the drill sergeant at the end of the line, which was not a good thing, unless you were a masochist.

“Eyes front!”

“Attention!”

“You five guys at the left end of the line are too short so we don’t want you in the parade.”

But I had the last laugh. I was able to avoid drill and PT for much of my 3 months basic training by playing soccer and volleyball for my squadron. There are advantages in these games for the altitudinally handicapped.

I entered my motorbike phase when I started work at the Birmingham Accident Hospital where I used to treat patients with head injuries who had fallen from their motor cycles. So, I invested in a hard hat. First I had a motor scooter and fell off a few times, then I graduated to a Commodore, which could really go and I fell off a few more times. But the hard hat must have worked, as I didn’t suffer anything more than the odd scratch. In some states in the US it is still not required that motorcyclists wear crash helmets. Also, many people don’t wear bicycle helmets, I never did for years. Now that I am older and wiser I would recommend everybody who has a chance of falling off a bicycle, that is everybody who rides a bicycle, motorized or leg powered, to wear a shock absorbent hat.

Head injuries are bad news. It is also important to wear a hat if you are a bee keeper. These hats are like the old safari hats, with wide brims covered with fine mesh netting that zips into your beekeeping suit. Another place for hats is on the building sites and oil rigs that I used to visit a few years ago for my job associated with drilling equipment design. These hats are especially good when things fall unannounced out of the sky.

I didn't wear many new hats of note for a while, other than the afore mentioned cricket caps, until I graduated from college and we all had to rent mortarboards to parade up the aisle and receive our diploma. That morning Eileen and I also walked down another aisle, but I did not wear a hat although Eileen made her own white hat with a wide floppy brim. More academic hats came in four years' time. This time it was a soft floppy black thing that signified a doctorate. A few years later, in Hong Kong, I had a complete set of academic robes made in the Birmingham colors – a flowing maroon gown with a silk hood and the soft floppy black hat. These robes are used on important academic occasions and Eileen used our investment many years later as she presided over her Business School graduation ceremonies.

Since those early days of hattery I have acquired many other hats, mostly to keep my head warm but sometimes as a fashion accessory. The keeping head warm thing is important in northern climates where it is essential to have one's ears covered. Mostly we had colorful stocking hats with or without bobbles, and mittens to match. Caroline was so attracted to the market for these indispensable items that she started a business with a website - www.peacockhats.com - (sadly now no longer active). She made good use of her time during her ride to work on the New York subway and makes beautiful assemblages for kiddiewinks and adults alike. Go buy some. You know that you are old when people give you hats for your birthday. I now have a fine assortment of ratting caps and trilbys and Russian army fur hats and an assortment of stocking caps, which come in useful for running in cold weather. Runners use hats to keep away the cold and keep off the sun. Some races like the prestigious Boston marathon give out running caps adorned with Mercedes and Ronzoni emblems.

My hat story wouldn't be complete if I didn't mention that many people wear hats, like Abraham Lincoln and the queen and people who have lost their hair after receiving radiation treatment for cancer. Dr. Seuss wrote about cats in hats and magicians pull rabbits out of hats. Chefs wear hats to show their importance and keep their hair from mixing with the soup. English bobbies wear fine hats and astronauts have to wear hats to let them breath in the vacuum of outer space. Perhaps I should finish with a poem:

Hats are useful, hats are pretty.

Hats can be found all around the city

Hats hang on hooks and lay on the floor

Don't forget your hat when you go out the door.

Over my time, I've worn many hats

Some for duty and others for pats

On the back for my time

Isn't it hard to make these things rhyme?

Chapter 2

Crowd Control

At our high 50 year high school reunion a few years ago, I asked Pete Lloyd what he had been doing over the years. “Crowd control”, he quipped - he had been a school teacher! When groups of children, or adults especially, get together they participate in “group think” and sometimes reach a false consensus. The remedy is “leadership” – crowd control, which may involve sanctions or other variants of punishment, from a simple reprimand to the cane. Sometimes these leaders are our teachers, but often they are those colleagues with malicious intent. I shall now reflect on some incidents that some of us would rather forget.

We had a new teacher for our 3rd form Latin – Mr. Sullivan. Now Mr. Sullivan was a nice, tall, fresh faced young man, straight out of college. He knew “Mentor” off by heart but failed miserably in crowd control. I still recall *amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant* and *bellum, bellum, bellum, belli, bello, bello*. Now as you will remember, Latin is not particularly exciting, although I found it to be invaluable while I was learning anatomy. So we liked to add a bit of entertainment to the class by noisily dropping pencils and rulers on to the floor. The practice escalated to pushing books, such as “Mentor,” on to the floor with a resounding slap. Eventually Mr. Sullivan’s composure broke when he caught one of our classmates, who shall remain anonymous, in the act. The guilty party was ordered to the front of the class and commanded to touch his toes. The angry Mr. Sullivan delivered six of the best and believed that he had established crowd control. Not a chance. A short time later the girls’ hockey team played against the staff and Mr. Sullivan showed considerable skill. The crowd of unruly onlookers took up the chant - 2-4-6-8 who do we appreciate? G-I-L-B-E-R-T! The headmaster, during assembly the following day, gave the whole school a lecture on the importance of good behavior and respect for one’s elders and teachers. The individual perpetrators were not captured on that occasion.

There were a few other teachers who resorted to the cane, either to the hand or backside. One teacher used a short strap on an innocent Johnny Bernstein’s hand. Now

Johnny was my friend, a good footballer. Mr. Greenhalgh, the punisher, was also into football but less accomplished than he thought. This incident made me very sad. These punishments were often the prerogative of the headmaster, Mr. Parslow or his deputy, Mr. Croft, I recall. They were fairly rare events at Malet Lambert High School thankfully. Another incident that did not escalate to caning, but perhaps should have, was when we took a school trip to the Reckitt's factory. Andrew's father worked there as a graphic artist and today you may still see the sword he drew on a bottle of Dettol. Anyway, some of our classmates started to fill their pockets with small items from around the factory. These misbehaviors were noticed and everybody was told to empty their pockets, which resulted in quite a large haul of evidence. There were other incidents of stealing from center city shops that went unnoticed. Why do children steal? I must add that, although tempted, my parental and Sunday school teachings were generally successful, except perhaps for the odd apple from neighbors' orchards.

As prefects, our main duties were crowd control, by personality or by the threat or implementation of sanctions. We kept order in the corridors, in the school yard, in the assembly hall and in the dining room. We, symbolically, indicated our importance by different hats and ties. We sat on the stage during morning assembly; we had a room all to ourselves behind the stage. We trained to be leaders of men. Crowd controllers. On one occasion I had to deal with school yard bullying. The situation escalated and I had to put this bigger than me fifth form bully on his back. I was a legend in my own mind, a hero, a failure at crowd control?

At this stage I must confess that I once again failed very badly in my performance and behavior in crowd control. Between my first career in physiotherapy and my return to university to study ergonomics, I spent a year as a school teacher in Birmingham. My formal assignment was to teach physical education and English in the aptly named Hope Street School, which was in Balsall Heath, an inner city district with a low reputation. I marched my students along Hope Street to the local church hall for gym lessons, the other way along the street and across the busy main road to the swimming pool and along the notorious Varna Road to the playing fields. One day it was raining and the girls were using the school hall so I had to conduct my lesson in a classroom. I

chose to discuss the finer points of badminton, not a good choice. There was this big youth who was clearly the leader among his classmates who chose, probably because of lack of interest in the finer points of badminton, to disrupt the class. My attempts to discourage his antics escalated to the point where I threatened the cane, clearly another poor choice. So as the whole situation began to get out of hand I marched the boy off to our rather ineffective headmaster and recounted the gist of the story. I signed the punishment book and gave the boy two on each hand. He said to me “you only hit me because I’m coloured.” On reflection this action probably led to an increase in his status with his followers. He may have forgotten the incident 50 years later, but I have not forgotten my failure in crowd control. At Hope Street, we had a diminutive music teacher who treated misbehavior by having the students place their hands on their heads for a long period. She was remarkably effective where other teachers were pathetic in their attempts to manage these inner city children with unfortunate backgrounds. My boys’ cricket and soccer teams won the city championships and many pupils earned swimming badges. Note – children thrive on positive encouragement and recognized success.

I was faced with other crowd control incidents while I was at Hope Street. I took a bunch of students on a youth hosteling holiday to the Lake District. We had a poor start when a couple of boys unscrewed the bulbs from the train compartment ceilings and threw them on to the track. I was able to persuade the guard that this was simply high spirits and that it wouldn’t happen again. Mostly we had a great time in the Lakes despite the rain, but managing a bunch of teenagers on a mountain side is like herding cats. Against my advice, one particularly energetic boy ran down a hillside and tripped and broke his arm. I had to hitch hike to Workington to have it X-rayed and put in plaster. On our return to Birmingham I took the boy to his home in Varna Road. I handed him over to his mother who was clearly dressed for business.

While at Malet Lambert, we experienced many other crowd misbehaviors while watching the city’s football and rugby teams. All that is needed is the situation and the spark, the potential is everywhere. I believe that I am a little better at controlling large

classes nowadays, especially if I ignore their impolite but non-disruptive use of cell phones.

I played football for about 75 years, my last six a side was indoors with a neighbor's team in Decatur last year. During these years I also coached and refereed teenage and adult games. Now referees have a whistle to help them with crowd control although knowledge of the game is by far their biggest asset. As a player, I only once received a yellow card when a defending player was unlawfully shielding the ball from me as it rolled over the goal line. Perhaps I did gently contact his ankles in my enthusiasm to keep the ball in play. The referee on that occasion, Mike Williamson, was my friend and neighbor and an Industrial Engineering colleague at the GM Oklahoma City Assembly Plant where I was doing a consulting project. The biggest challenge in crowd control in the amateur game is when a losing team decides that it has been badly treated by the ref. The ringleader on such occasions encourages his teammates to rebel, both verbally and physically. On a couple of occasions I had to summon the two captains and ask whether they wished to enjoy the rest of the game or go home. This seemed to work. The professional game is another kettle of fish. The players are "professional" and understand "professional" fouls, like surreptitious jersey pulling, shielding the ball, obstruction and slide tackles that take both ball and feet. The larger problems come from the spectators who are universally partisan and who are known to frequently question the referee's eyesight and intelligence. As a referee of children's / teenager's games I found that the main culprits were usually the parents who, given their limited exposure to the game in the US, were prone to giving advice to anyone who would listen – players, coaches and spectators of both teams, and the officials. My response was usually to smile, thank them for their advice and then get on with the game. The number one job of a referee is to keep the game moving with only minimal interference, where necessary. The same is true in rugby.

Crowd control in cricket is usually a much more polite duty. Perhaps the most explosive event is when the bowler oversteps the crease and the umpire has to give the batsman enough time for a free swing at the ball. "No ball", he bellows, while sticking his arm out at right angles, more as a communication to the scorer some 50 or more yards

away. The raised finger signifies the end of the day for the unhappy batsman who invariably complains that the ball hit is bat when given out LBW and that the ball hit his pad when given out “caught behind.” “Run out” is another dilemma. Often the umpire finds himself moving quickly into an advantageous location and then focus on two places at once – the batting crease and the removal of the bails – for the order of occurrence of these close in time events. The uncertainty of many of these occurrences leads to the challenges of crowd control, but nowadays technology, in the form of instant replays, has all but removed the uncertainty in the professional game. Fortunately the amateur game is still saddled with uncertainty that is only resolved at the bar after the game.

Running, notably marathons, is another thing; here there are crowds of runners and at times crowds of spectators crowding the roadsides. Imagine, 20,000 runners chomping at the bit, waiting for the starter’s pistol. Then pouring down Main Street preceded by a police car with lights flashing and sire’s blaring. During the first few miles the crowd of runners jockey for position because slow wannabes filter to the front despite the organizer’s efforts to carrel them in pace linked carrels. The apparent Brownian motion, is made worse by the odd shoulder bump and the occasional ankle tap. “I’m sorry old chap, you were blocking my way.” Sometimes the crowds in the race are constrained by natural hazards, such as the width of the road, and sometimes by the crowds of spectators. One notorious crowd squeezing occurs annually at Wellesley College where the screaming students jostle to slap the now single file runners on the back and wish them well. The noise from this notorious Boston Marathon gauntlet can be heard from a long way off, some likening it to an Arkansas chicken farm. After this unparalleled experience the runners charge (or crawl) up Heartbreak Hill where at the top the rowdy crowd runs the gauntlet of the Hash House Harriers handing out pints of beer, a very welcome respite on a hot day. Then, finally, the runners, now spread a little less densely, turn down Boylston Street to the finish line. And here starts the long walk with crowds of jubilant athletes each laden down by a finisher’s medal.

Chapter 3

Where do all the birds go?

This is not about the science of ornithology, rather it is an anecdotal collection about the birds of my life. I started out as, and continue to be, a Peacock by virtue of my parentage, which goes back a long long way - check it out on the Internet. I like my name, although from time to time it has been the cause of teasing, as when my Grammar School French teacher, Mr Rutter, called me "le petit paon" which was translated into "pongy" by my school friends. My mother had a Yorkshire terrier called "Pongo."

When I was a little boy, in the 1940s, I lived in a village called Sproatley which had a population of 193 people and many more birds, as well as the usual dogs, cats, rabbits, cows, sheep, horses and the occasional goat. Now the people population has grown tenfold and many bird habitats have been destroyed. My bedroom window looked out over the fields, hedgerows and woods some eight miles to the city of Kingston Upon Hull which showed as a silhouette of smoking factory chimneys on the skyline. In the mornings, large flocks of rooks flew to the South East to go to work or search for food. They returned in the evening to the woods around our village, especially those down Park Road, near Beadle's farm. They made a lot of noise at dawn and dusk and lived in rookeries in the tops of the trees in the woods. Sometimes we saw a couple of crows which were larger and blacker than the rooks (which have a blueish tinge) and didn't hang around in crowds or flocks.

I used to walk across Park Road, through Fifteen Acre to Sourlands Wood which had been somewhat decimated by the woodcutters. Sourlands, which before the war had many majestic trees, was now overgrown with lots of sad looking rejects, prickly bramble briers, and nettles. The good trees were felled as part of the war effort and during the post war building boom. The residual vegetation did however provide a great habitat for pheasants and partridges; they made a great fuss when disturbed as

they flew off to find cover. In the middle of Fifteen Acre there was a small round plantain, called Roundy Plantain. It was home to a rookery. There were also lots of pheasants in the Burton Constable woods further down Park Road by the gamekeeper's cottage. We often trespassed in these woods and scared the pheasants and were in turn scared by the gamekeeper with his shotgun. Every year this gamekeeper organized a hunt for bird hunters to provide pheasants for Christmas dinner. On Boxing Day there was also a hunt in which local horsemen chased foxes led by a bunch of red coated hunt leaders, one of whom had a horn which was blown when a fox was chased from its cover by the fox hounds. The young kids of the village congregated on the village green to see the start of the hunt arguing about the relative importance of the red coated toffs and farmers as indicated by variations in their uniforms.

Sometimes we sneaked around the game keeper's lodge (that is "Old Lodge" as opposed to "New Lodge") and went to the lake which housed a couple of majestic swans that swam around the perch, roach and pike. I caught lots of perch and roach from a punt with my buddy Billy, they just took the worm readily and then the hook. We caught so many one day that we had to throw most of them back. Pike were another thing, 20 or 30 pounds and lots of teeth, like a shark. I caught a couple of big ones one day, using small roach as bait. We banged them on the head as they slithered around in the flat bottom of the punt. Pike are very tasty, but they have a lot of small bones. When I grew up, to the grand old age of 11, I went to grammar school on the bus into Hull with a walk across East Park which had a lake with more swans. And again when I was sixty something I went down to Nassau Bay near Houston. I had a house on Nassau lake which had swans, including some black ones. Swans are nice. Owls are nice too. Rooks are noisy.

Hedges are interesting places, we had hawthorn hedges around our garden which I cut with hand shears and a bill hook for the big stuff when I was a teenager. All the farmers' fields in and around the village had hedges and ditches for irrigation. I learned to cut down and lay big hedges with a bill hook when I worked on the farm, and clear the ditches with a shovel and a sickle for the long grass on the edges of the ditches. A well

laid hedge is a sight to be seen. Lots of different kinds of birds lived in these hedges, in nests. Our garden hedges had nests for blackbirds, thrushes and sparrows. Once I found a cuckoo's egg in a blackbird's nest. These cuckoos are lazy and don't bother building nests, but they do have a nice song. We also had red robins, yellow hammers and blue birds. Every now and then we saw a wren. The house sparrows, identified by their black breasts, made their nests in the house gutters. Starlings are a nuisance they mess up the road and make a noise; they have big families.

I know all this stuff about birds because my parents bought me a book called "British Birds in Their Haunts" for my 10th birthday. It was a very thick treasure, with lots of colored pictures. I don't know where it went to, but I found it on the Internet:

British Birds In Their Haunts. Edited And Revised By W. B. Alexander, M.A. M.B.O.U. Illustrated With 64 Coloured Plates (251 Figures) By William Foster, M.B.O.U. And 5 Black-And-White Plates (18 Figures) By Roland Green, M.B.O.U. With A Glossary Of Common And Provincial Names And Of Technical Terms. Twenty-Fifth Edition, Johns, CA, Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1948

When I was about thirteen, my dad bought me an air rifle and a pistol, both of which fired little lead pellets. I suppose that this was because we lived in the country where shooting game was common although I shot at red, white and blue paper targets and bottles on posts. One day I shot a blackbird and it fell out of the tree. I cried. I don't like guns.

We had two chicken sheds in our orchard - one for our family and one for Uncle Walter's. The two families moved out to Sproatley at the beginning of the war to escape from the bombing. Uncle Walter and Auntie Edie and their family moved back into Hull after the war. Uncle Walter was a motor bike fanatic, he helped me restore and repair my first motor bike when I was 20. Chicken sheds are interesting places.

They are square wooden structures with sloping roofs to let the melting snow slide off. They have a large door at one end for people to enter and a small hole at the other end for the chickens to walk down a ramp into the chicken run, which was made of wire fencing to keep the chicken's in and the foxes out. The chickens perched on horizontal poles and pooped on the floor; they laid their eggs in nest boxes. We also built a duck house and I dug a small duck pond in the middle of the orchard, which had all sorts of apples, pears, gooseberries, damsons, lilac and brambles. Ducks are funny, there are lots of them on East Park boating lake to keep the swans company. After the war, we built a pig sty, using the old boiler that we had turned into an air raid shelter by covering it with dirt. We gave the pigs nice straw to sleep on and fed them mash from our left overs. We had the pigs slaughtered by Mr. Fell, the butcher, at Christmas and salted the choice cuts on boards in the pantry so we had pork and bacon for a few months. I like bacon, but the pigs were unhappy when I marched them along Park Road to the butcher's shop near the village green. We kept a cockerel with the chickens and reared chicks by keeping the eggs warm in a little container placed near the fire. Spare cockerels were also good to eat, sometimes we had one for Sunday dinner. I had to clean out the chicken sheds and the pig sty every week and pile the poop and straw on the manure pile under the damson tree. We used the manure to grow great potatoes, peas, beans, raspberries, turnips, radishes, cabbages, cauliflowers, rhubarb, sprouts, and mushrooms. We had beautiful rose arches over the back path and front door.

There were lots of visiting birds. Seagulls flew inland from the coast, which was only a few miles away. In the spring, we had migrating swallows who made pretty solid nests under the gutters. I have had lots of friends in the past who had budgies and parrots in cages. When we lived in Hong Kong on the sixth floor of Fulham Gardens we had a budgie in a cage, the children enjoyed the company. When daughter Caroline was being born, we hired a Phillipino maid, named Rose, to help me with the Ginny and Lily, and the budgie. Rose let the budgie out of the cage and it flew out of the balcony doors and down to a tree. She rushed down the elevator, I think with children in tow, rescued the bird from the tree and carried it back to its cage. Rose was nice, if a little scatterbrained. On one occasion, she dropped a bucket of water out of the kitchen window on to a Mercedes. I carried baby Caroline down with me to recover the bucket and explain the accident to the Mercedes owner. I wonder what happened to Rose and if she ever got a budgie of her own.

I don't much like parrots, they are noisy and selfish.

I like turkey for Thanksgiving dinner and I make delicious rissoles out of the leftovers. We have lots of wild turkeys around our house in Rochester, Michigan.

When birds migrate they like to fly in arrow head formations, much like the fancy jet aircraft at air shows. Usually one leg is shorter than the other but the birds seem to manage to fly in a straight line; sometimes a bird or two lag behind the rest. Over the years I have seen lots of these streamlined bird groups. Geese are pretty impressive and well disciplined; rooks, starlings and sparrows are not at all disciplined; they fly in bunches.

As I sit on my balcony in Santa Clarita, Ca, writing this gibberish, I cannot see a single bird. There are lots of cars on McBean Parkway and the moon is rising. Where do the birds go? I guess that, like us, they just go home.

Chapter 4

Rationing

Once upon a time, many breakfasts ago, a bunch of bad guys tried to take more than their fair share of Europe and Asia and America. Some bad guys marched into Poland and France and dropped bombs on me in England. Their Asian buddies blew up Pearl Harbour in Hawaii and marched all over Asia. This was war. So the good guy governments said to their citizens: "we need to spend all our money on making airplanes and destroyers and nuclear bombs and guns, so you dear citizens will have to tighten your belts." We all played our part in the war effort. My dad, my uncle and my granddad all went to work in a factory that made warplanes and bombs instead of grain milling machinery. I seem to remember somewhere from the Bible that some dudes turned their plough shares into swords. What goes around comes around.

Because we didn't like bombs being dropped on us we moved out of town (Hull) into a little village (Sproatley), but that didn't work, because the bombs kept coming and making big holes in the fields around our house. Now the government was getting very anxious about the situation so they decreed that the belt tightening must continue and, to make sure, everyone was issued with an identity number and a ration book. I still remember my identity number; I use variants of it for my Internet passwords. The ration books with our identity number on the front cover had lots of pages with little squares for stamps. There were stamps for milk, butter, sugar, flour and bread and meat. My mother was cunning; she pooled all the books together and made sure that we all got our share of food. Meanwhile my dad liked to have a change from making war planes so he made a garden to grow food. I was a little too little to dig, but I was able and willing to hoe the weeds from between the rows. Now if my memory serves me right this was the plan of our garden, starting by the back door and going down to Mr. Taylor's farm shed driveway. First there was a strawberry patch, then some rhubarb, a row of black currants and a row of raspberries. Then we started the vegetables - carrots, cabbages, sprouts, cauliflowers, parsnips, beetroot, peas, beans, leeks and, my favourite, the potatoes, and mushrooms in the corner. As we also kept pigs and chickens and had an orchard with apples and pears and damsons and

gooseberries and blackberries, we, or rather I, didn't notice the rationing except when I had to go with my mother to the butchers and bakers and grocers to order our allowances, which were later delivered to our door step. I forgot to mention that the farmer whose cow sheds were at the bottom of our orchard delivered milk to our front door every morning. As Whitney Houston said: "didn't we almost have it all?" despite the rationing. But we still had the bombs which in those days weren't rationed. As they used to say: "the cost of one bomb could feed a family for a year".

So plough shares, swords, ration books, gardens and bombs; what goes around, comes around, and in the words of Peter, Paul and Mary, "when will they ever learn?"

Chapter 5

Grease and The Teenager's Dilemma

"There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle. "That's some catch, that catch-22," he observed. "It's the best there is," Doc Daneeka agreed."

The Prisoner's Dilemma, which is similar to Catch 22, is a classical game theory situation in which two prisoners have to decide whether or not to admit guilt or claim innocence while not knowing what the other prisoner will do. In game theory there are optimal solutions to this problem if the (expected) payoff for each combined outcome is predictable.

The teenager's dilemma has two forms: "should you ask and risk refusal or not ask and risk regret?" "Should you kiss and tell or not tell, or should you not kiss and tell or not tell", because nobody will believe you either way or everybody will criticize you for saying, or not saying. That's Catch 22.

In the case of the teenager's dilemma life goes on and, to continue with the clichés, "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger." "You learn from your mistakes," but "there's no fool like an old fool". In practice it doesn't matter as "life is like a box of chocolates," the trick is to enjoy the chocolates. Also history shows that it is the (real or self-proclaimed) winners that write the history books. Finally we should note that

"Ludum non victoriam amare." The teenage dilemma is epitomized by the school dance. Should you or shouldn't you? Dare you or daren't you? Before we get to our school dance it may be more entertaining to reflect on some great movies on the theme of the teenager's dilemma.

Most of you may remember the 1970s stage and screen musical, "Grease" about romance at Rydell High. I shall play Danny! (in the earlier version of this diatribe I named names and assigned roles, but in the interest of protecting the guilty, I removed these references. If you would like to hear more please send \$100 and a postage paid return envelope.) Now some of you may object to this gratuitous casting, some may unkindly suggest a Napoleonic complex, some may point to the many differences between the 1950s and 1970s, but the pen is mightier than the sword. The lyrics of "Summer Nights" pose the teenager's dilemma – "tell me more, tell me more". John Travolta's macho posturing was priceless acting - "Greased Lightning" and "Cool Rider". Then there was "Look at me I'm Sandra Dee", "Hopelessly devoted to you" and "Tears on my pillow." These lyrics tell the story of the games that surround the teenager's dilemma.

The Princess Bride (<http://megashare.sc/watch-the-princess-bride-online-TXpNeE1RPT0>) was another romantic movie about the beautiful Buttercup and a farm boy. Now I wasn't sure in which role I should cast myself; my first thought was Westley the farm boy, but he really was a bit of a romantic wimp subservient to that arrogant young lady. "Farm boy... fetch me that pitcher." "Farm boy fill these with water – please". "Farm boy, polish my horse's saddle. I want to see my face shining in it by morning." "You can die too for all I care!" "As you wish". The dread pirate Roberts would show an alternative side of Westley. I did consider the role of Fezzic as "Giant" was my nickname in elementary school and he really was a nice man. I also thought of playing Inigo Montoya, he had that memorable line in the sword fight scene: "Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die." And Vizzini in the poisoned goblet scene: "Hah, you took the poison, they were both poisoned." Another Catch 22. Perhaps I should settle for Grandpa:

Grandpa: When I was your age, television was called books. And this is a special book. It was the book my father used to read to me when I was sick, and I used to read it to your father. And today I'm gonna read it to you.

The Grandson: Has it got any sports in it?

Grandpa: Are you kidding? Fencing, fighting, torture, revenge, giants, monsters, chases, escapes, true love, miracles...

The Grandson: Doesn't sound too bad. I'll try to stay awake.

Grandpa: Oh, well, thank you very much, very nice of you. Your vote of confidence is overwhelming.

In the 1950s none of us drove ourselves to school, a prerequisite in Grease, although from time to time we found friends who had access to wheels. In fact I recall the odd trip in a car to a dance hall in Hornsea on Saturday nights. For country boys like me the choice was between bus or bike, and curfews ruled, even when we got to stay the night at our in-town aunt's place. Hornsea was quite a trip on a bike, but sometimes we made it on our bikes to a church hall dance, down Beverley Road I think. We did have the village institute in Sproatley where on Friday nights we watched movies from the front row while our older cousins made out on the back row. And once a year there was a dance for the big kids organized by the Women's Institute. Now that is an organization. Every year delegates from all over the country assemble in The Royal Albert Hall to sing "Jerusalem:"

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/jul/09/womens-institute-anniversary-debut-album>

Unlike Rydell High, we didn't have a beach in East Hull, but we did have Friday night swimming at the East Hull baths, ably managed by the fiery haired and tempered Mr. Albert Royle. He played left fullback for the staff team and was prone to taking both ball and legs in one scything swing. Now Mr. Royle had swimming talent – he could swim a full length with only 4 strokes. And he was a stickler for discipline, just as he was for layout of our algebra proofs, QED! Boys on one side and girls on the other and ne'er the twain shall meet, until afterwards, but back then curfews ruled and the trolley buses whisked us quickly in different directions and distances on our way home.

The third opportunity we had for fraternization was a walk in East Park after Sunday school. There were all denominations up and down Holderness Road – Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational. I don't recall a Church of England, but those of you who visit Sproatley could go to the 1200 AD St Swithins. Our East Park Baptist Sunday school group also met on Friday or Saturday nights at the Astoria and if you were lucky and within the curfew you could get to sit in the back row and take someone home, and face the teenager's dilemma.

The big opportunity was the school dance for sixth formers. Now very few of us knew much about dancing so "Little Jim" Swainston, our PE Teacher, paraded the boys and girls into the gym. He ordered two lines, girls on one side and boys on the other and frowned on those who juggled for position. We were then instructed to march forward raise your left (right) hand and place the other hand on your partner's small of the back (or shoulder). Precise placement was mandatory and the six inch apart rule was monitored strictly. We started with "The Yellow Rose of Texas" – slow, slow, quick, quick, slow while rotating counter clockwise. I recall that, at that time, I had a pen friend in Waco, Texas; she filled one whole letter with the lyrics of "Mr. Sandman" and talked about the school dance. We then graduated to the fox trot and finally to the Waltz. 1,2,3, 1,2,3, 1,2,3, 1,2,3.....and "Unchained Melody." In this case the six inch rule was reduced to three and hand placement rules were (marginally) less stringent. In 1956, I was introduced to Bill Haley and the Comets, and "Rock around the Clock"; now that was a great leap forward, perhaps too much of a shock for our high school administration. I remember seeing that movie in Cardington where, in October 1956, we went to register for National Service; we were thrown out of the theater for dancing in the aisles. Happy days!

The teenager's dilemma roared into our lives at the high school dance. After all what is dancing but the preamble to another dilemma? It's all about thrust and parry; sometimes the parry was preemptive. There was fairly strict protocol starting during the run up to the dance. The studs sent discreet messages to their targets; I shall leave it to your infallible memories to identify who was which. Preliminary moves were made early at the dance, a sort of trial teenager's dilemma, searching for reciprocity.

Sometimes these early moves were conclusive after which there was minimal contact until later in the evening. It was traditional to finish the evening with a slow waltz – “Save the last waltz for me.” The lights were dimmed and the dilemma evolved. Should I or shouldn’t I? If you raced across the room or engineered a strategic place for attack then you got “first refusal” to your request for the last dance and first refusal to your request to escort the target home. The protocol was usually, but not always, first come first served, which introduces another mathematical method – queuing theory. If you were not first in the queue you had the option of jumping to another queue, balking or renegeing. Yet another operations research technique applies – the allocation or matching problem, in which most people get their first choice and the system is optimized by an overall “minimal regret,” with a few having to opt for third choice. The actual teenager’s dilemma occurred at or before the beginning of the last waltz, but on occasion, where a request was made in good faith, a refusal based on a prior commitment was offered, creating considerable embarrassment. From a distance and with the passage of time these maneuverings were hysterical, because of the uncertainty involved and the timidity of the players.

The dilemma really is not a single discrete event. It continues on the way home after the dance and repeats itself in various forms for the rest of our lives. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. *Wer angibt, hat mehr vom Leben.* Pride comes before the fall.

*Gaudeamus igitur
Iuvenes dum sumus.
Post iucundam iuventutem
Post molestam senectutem
Nos habebit humus.*

*Alma Mater floreat,
Quae nos educavit;
Caros et commilitones,
Dissitas in regiones
Sparsos, congregavit*

Chapter 6

These Things Shall Be

In March 1949 the wind and rain attacked mercilessly the uncovered knees of the Grammar School aspirants on their way to the daunting “11plus.” Their primary school efforts with sharp pencils, pens and blotting paper were about to be rewarded. Within hours of taking the test the e-mail results arrived - we were to go to Mally in the fall. None of this Hull Grammar School or Kingston High nonsense, this was the “Green and Yeller.” Little did we know that we were about to face a group of ogres, sorcerers, wizards and witches devoid of souls and sympathy:

“If you don’t score more than 7 out of ten on your weekly tests you will join the parade outside the staff room door at lunch time for a retake, and if you fail again then your after-school shenanigans behind the bike shed will be in jeopardy.”

“Please miss? What are afternoon shenanigans?”

“Never mind mon petit paon, when you get out of short pants you will know.”

“Now children open your literature books and write your name neatly on the inside of the front cover – just like that little angel on the front row - Hermione Redbird.”

“But miss”, said David Potter, the resident genius, “When will we get to the exciting stuff like MacBeth and Coleridge and John Bunyan and Lady Chatterly’s Lover?”

“Hold your horses, young man; first we must deal with sentence structure and dangling participles and split infinitives and the use of the passive voice and how to use one sheet of blotting paper for a whole month.”

“By the way the toilets are outside and you have to wait until break time unless it is a dire emergency”

“What is a dire emergency?” piped up Sir John Peel.

“A dire emergency is what girls have, not boys”

“When do we have break time?” said Mac Sideburn, speaking for the “jock” community.

“Not until after you have drunk your milk. Everyone has to drink a third of a pint a day so that you don’t get post menopausal osteoporosis.”

“What is ‘post menosis’ miss?” said the wide-eyed TinaPuddle.

“Ask Miss Crackerjack, she teaches biology or maybe Miss Berrynice if you think that it is a religious education question.”

“Who would like to be milk monitors?”

“Please miss, can I be milk monitor? please miss please, because my big brother is an important prefect and he said that if I volunteer then I can become an important prefect one day and get to have three bottles of milk for myself every day and sell the other leftovers on the black market,” said the eager Android.

“You learn quickly my boy, perhaps when you grow up you will become a chocolate salesman.”

Ring, ring ring.

Out into the corridor where those trainee ogres called “perfects” crammed us against the walls in single file and clipped our ears if we got out of line.

“Northbound on that side, southbound on the other and no U-turns except in the main hallway”

“No running along the corridor, unless you want the mandatory sentence of 50 lines: “I must not run along the corridor’.”

“But if we don’t run we will not get the best football pitch”

“Don’t worry about the best pitch, those fifth form bullies will kick your ball onto the roof and you won’t get to play anyway, you will have to wait until Friday lunchtime when Trigger Magee goes onto the roof to collect all the balls that mysteriously appear from outer space.”

Now Trigger Magee should have been a rocket scientist instead of a mathematics teacher and Methodist lay preacher. He understood the equations of motion as applied to the trajectory of tennis balls and how much hoof is needed to get them onto the roof. But instead he was content to ride his bicycle to the center of the universe (Sproatley) on Sunday evenings to explain how apparently fidgeting and inattentive youths on the front row should pay heed to his sermon and live a good clean life. Trigger was an outdoors kind of guy. He banished one small boy to the rigors of youth camp in Angelsey where that small boy got to learn about the meaning of life and washing dishes. This put that small boy in good stead for his later ventures into the Armed Forces and the temptations of the Orient. Trigger was a risk taker; he took groups of teenagers on field trips to the mountains, without insurance. The Lake District and Snowden were character-forming experiences.

The memorable Trigger also ganged up with Ding Dong Bell to mold those changing voices into what was euphemistically (optimistically?) called a School Choir. Now Ding Dong discriminated – in his mind there were As, Bs and Grunters. But when you reached the lofty regions of the sixth form, you were expected to participate in everything and Bs and grunters became As. The more obvious tenor grunters were placed strategically next to Mr. Magee. These Things Shall Be, Gaudeamus Igitur, Full Fathom Five, Jerusalem (I never quite understood what that had to do with England's green and pleasant land) and Elgar's patriotic Pomp and Circumstance were ingrained into the souls of even the most tuneless among us. Take my hand, I'm a stranger in paradise was popular among the young but less so with Mr. Bell, who had greater respect for Borodin and the Hull Choral Society.

Now Bryan first son of Mally, king of the mountains, was the fastest runner around the East Park Lake. In fact he was one of the fastest runners in the city, a fact that was established one cold rainy day on Beverly Westwood when a hundred or more would be Zatopeks changed the golf course greens into ploughed fields. Mallo was also "The Man" who lead the fine performances of the animals and the narcissistic Noah in the play of that name. I played the tiger and had an important line –"ARRRRRRR".

The second form brought us face to face with ancient and modern languages. Amo amas, I love a lass. Bellum bellum, you big fat bum. A, ab, absque, coram, de, sine, tenus, ex or e, and if rest at be intended let in, sub, super be appended. So much for the Dative. So much for the daunting Miss Higson and the flamboyant Mr. Sullivan. Now that was an opportunity for the simple minds of the classical stream. 'Two Four, Six, Eight, who do we appreciate? G-I-L-B-E-R-T was the spectators' cry as the staff played the girls hockey team. The Latin class members reaped his wrath, again. The first wrath reaping incident had involved the accidental pushing of books off the desk on to the floor with a resounding clap; followed by a complimentary clap on the backside for the perpetrator.

Gym twice a week was fun. Clothes were changed but sweat was not rinsed. Our teacher was Little Jim, the dynamo from Carnegie Hall.

"How do you get to Carnegie Hall?"

"Practice, Practice, Practice" said Mr. Swainston.

The best gym lesson was "pirates". We got out all the apparatus – beams, bars, horses, ropes, rope ladders, mats - and chased each other around the gym. The more adventurous also used the balcony and no arms were broken, which was lucky as insurance and lawyers hadn't been invented in those days.

"Today we will study the noble art of boxing", said little Jim. "Rule number one: Keep your guard up"

But one of us had short memories on rules and David Truckmichael punched that one of us on the nose and one of us didn't like boxing any more.

Ring, ring, ring, End of class, get changed quick, but linger long enough to see the girls come bounding in their harvest festivals (all is safely gathered in). Now girls can't climb ropes, but they excel on the floor exercises. They could vault and had rhythm, unlike their timid male classmates. Ladies don't sweat, they just feel the heat. Some of them wielded a mean hockey stick.

The school dance was approaching and we had to learn how to fox trot, quickstep and waltz. So we had mixed gym class. “Boys on one side girls on the other, no shuffling to gain advantageous position. Height doesn’t matter. Hah! Now walk forward, face your partner, boys raise your left hand, girls your right, clasp hands. Now boys put your right hand on your partners waist and girls put your left hand on the boys shoulder and one, two, three, one two three, one, two, three, one, two, three, one, two, three. Now for the quickstep” – “The Yellow Rose of Texas”. But Mr. Swainston was behind the times because, by that time the Texans were into Grease and Sandra Dee; my pen friend from Waco told me all about it. “*Mr. Sandman bring me a dream, make her complexion like peaches and cream; give her two lips like roses in clover and tell me that my lonely nights are over, and so on.*” But although many of us were also behind the times we all knew about the importance of the last waltz – it meant that you had to walk home with somebody across the park. Terrified. My how times have changed.

We began to catch up at the Astoria on Friday nights. Bud or Wally Westmore had to be the makeup artists. If you were lucky you could get on to the back row, but wherever you sat, the mid movie break brought the theater alive. “Mr. Sandman,” “Heart of my Heart”, Love Letters in the Sand”, “Singing the Blues” and “Yes I’m the Great Pretender”. It would be a couple of years before Bill Haley and Elvis arrived and some of us were thrown out of a Wolverhampton cinema for dancing in the aisles.

Field day football was a big attraction. “Don’t run along the corridors”. Get changed, you must have clean boots. Do you remember those hard toe caps and sharp stud nails? Now one Murphy made good use of those weapons on an occasion when a somewhat small though agile adversary was diving to head the winning goal. The rules say that you can’t kick an opponent on the chin and make him bleed unless that opponent puts his head where your foot should be, which sometimes leads to intellectual discussions of where a head is supposed to be. These academic analyses were of little relevance to the assembled East Park Baptist Church Ladies Bright Hour, whose afternoon tea drinking was interrupted by the muddy and bloody result of the little one’s introduction to Newton’s Laws. The little one was a slow learner. One field

day, he tried to copy his big brother by playing in goal. Big brother had explained the craft of diving at the opponent's feet. Unfortunately the opponent that day was one Geoff Flagpole, a hefty youth. Only fools play in goal.

The highlight of the football year was the annual game against the teachers. Mr. Greenhill fancied his chances, Mr. Swainston was fast and it was most important to give Mr. Royle a wide berth. Charlie Gibbins was the best strategist in the business, but age and cunning failed to beat youth and talent on those occasions.

Cricket was another thing. Net practice with Tex Rutter and his slow left arm chinaman, which didn't always turn. On one occasion a slightly overpitched delivery was summarily dispatched back over the bowler's head. This audacity was rewarded with advice on the placement of the feet prior to a lofted drive, which generated a disrespectful dialog on the relative unimportance of foot placement when the ball was half way to the girls' playing field. Mac Sideburn had a growth spurt – just look at the photographs. So he delivered the ball from a height and short of a length and taught the little one how to play off the back foot and across the line and the importance of protective equipment. The little Alcroft had a run that started on the boundary line and delivered daisy cutters. The stodgy Batty took all day but eventually became the opening bat for Hull CC, so much for good form. Len showed promise, but with an odd delivery; I'll bet he is playing still.

Friday night was swimming night at the East Hull baths. Remember those curtains? Boys on one side and girls on the other and ne'r the twain shall meet, until afterwards. Daddy Royle could swim a whole length with only four strokes. We got to do badges, pick up bricks from the bottom and swim with our clothes on and do bombs from the diving platform. And ride the last bus home with the drunks.

Although the Empire was built on the playing fields of Eton. Malet Lambert was about preparing young men and women to go into the prestigious profession of teaching language, science and a few practical professions. It was argued that the oldest profession was in fact teaching. Some of us got an early apprenticeship and learned a lot about crowd control, when our mentor turned his back. "Bonjour, messieurs et madams" said Monsieur le Dennis, "parke le derriere sur la chaise."

Mathematics; Mr Greenhall, Charlie Gibbins, Daddy Royle, Trigger Magee and Dorothy Northridge. We blasted through arithmetic, sailed through geometry, my favorite, flew through algebra, tripped through trigonometry and then there was calculus. Q.E.D. Math, Physics, Chemistry for the engineers. Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Math for the doctors; Languages, History and Geography for the teachers. But the little one was awkward; he took Math, Geography and Zoology because he didn't know what he wanted to be if he grew up, and still doesn't. Anyway his schedule didn't fit so he got to have private Math lessons with the beautiful Miss Northridge for a whole term. Now how could a young man be expected to concentrate on differential equations? But he must have learned something.

The real fun was cutting up worms and frogs and rats under the eagle eye of Miss Crackles (when she wasn't exploring bomb site flora). We learned about herring and mosquitoes and looked down the microscope at amoeba, paramecium, flagellum and lots of other bugs. The less than watchful eye of Mr. Frow the valent monitored our mixing efforts. Isn't organic the stuff you buy in the expensive grocery stores? Aren't catalysts trouble makers. The best part was the physics of sound and vibration as taught by Professor William Haley and his astrophysical entities. How did we ever pass the General Certificate of Education?

All pupils had to go to school, but going to school was different for different pupils. There were those who just walked across the park or the girls playing field and there were those who rode their bikes. Those from the other side of town caught the No 40 bus and many others caught trolley buses, number 64 I think. But the country folk used

“East Yorkshire”. The headmaster’s daughter, Sue, from Preston, dapper Dave from Ganstead, big Brian from Sproatley, Robo from half way to Hornsea and Maureen the beautiful butcher’s daughter from Skirlaugh. (ask me how she had me demolish the biggest icicles of the century, just as the Skirlaugh headmaster was getting out his camera). “Late bus” was a foolproof excuse, unless an eagle-eyed teacher caught you loitering in the park.

Woodwork. Don’t laugh, 65 years later my dove tailed tray is still structurally sound though I think it got a B- for aesthetics, my bookshelf holds penguins and my copper ashtray has historical significance. Mr. Ainsworth taught us well, to respect sharp things and to sharpen blunt things. He also showed us how to use a sweeping brush – an important life skill. I think that Mr. Ainsworth and Mr. Gibbins were both riders of bikes across the girls’ field. But the ancient Mr. Naylor was made of robust stuff. He rode his bike from Bilton and had the strength to draw the two circles diagram that represented the differences in atmospheric pressure around the world and why it always rains in England and Oregon. The Geography room had a podium from which his fatherly face beamed with understanding. Picture this elderly teacher poised with a piece of granite above his head, the granite comes crashing down on the edge of the front desk and the teacher falls off the podium. He made sure that we knew the difference between chalk, sandstone and igneous rocks. And the wolds, moors and pennines. He also recognized the importance of commerce and shorthand and foresaw the time when boys as well as girls would sit in front of a keyboard. He was a mathematician turned sheep farmer who eventually found his true calling as a school teacher. But he was a bad umpire – he once gave me out LBW to a ball that was clearly pitched outside the leg stump.

Picture this: Four o’clock, the bell rings, pack your three hours of homework, no running along the corridor, out the door and into the Park. Over the bridge, a quick detour to the swings and roundabouts, up Westminster or East Park Avenue to THE BUS STOP. What a great little area. Darlington’s paper shop, Adolfson’s barbershop, a sticky bun shop, a sweets and tobacco shop, a cobbler’s shop and a fish and chip shop and Murphy’s greengrocers. Now by the time the Aldborough bus got to THE STOP it

was often so full that the fearless youths had to stand on the step until the bus emptied its short riders, then up the stairs to breathe in the smoke. On a bad day you could get the Preston bus, get off at Wyton Bar and walk three miles home. The strategically minded East Yorkshire folk caught the 40 into town and then waited in Paragon station, catching a few engine numbers, before the 5.30 bus.

Girls bicker, especially sisters. If you really want friction put a couple of them together on the tennis team. The sisters Skinner could even disagree while the tennis ball was in motion. But they played a mean game. Now and again the boys got to play. On one occasion we played the Grammar School that had on its roster a Yorkshire champion. Cricket is easier.

Easter trips – Stratford, youth hostels, stately homes and Shakespeare. “Out out dammed spot. Is this a dagger I see before me? To be or not to be and through this chink I see another.” But the real fun was on the bus, rushing, lacking in gallantry, for the back seat where the contrary Mary assembled here gang of girls. Now tell me this; who would write down in a journal what they had for breakfast in the youth hostel and who had a crush on who or was it whom had a crush on what and why did we waste time with grammar when literature was all around us. That girl was destined to skewer her Harold with another well flighted arrow.

Speaking of rock and roll would be somewhat premature. But we did have Lonnie Donegan and his skiffle band, - did you know that the Beatles started out as a skiffle group? A reasonable replication was assembled in the school gym to perform a rollicking rendition of the Rock Island Line with washboards and strings. It was a hit, I wish I could find the photograph of that motley crew. We were every bit as good as the Beatles, we just didn't get the breaks.

The school play was perhaps the most memorable event of the year. On one occasion we had a dress rehearsal on the morning of the opening and were encouraged that the headmaster was there to watch. His perceptive eye saw that we were pathetic - we missed our cues, tripped over the carpet and forgot our lines. Immediate cancellation. But the sympathetic director discussed the matter in the headmaster's oak paneled study and we rehearsed again successfully in the afternoon. Practice makes imperfect or pluperfect or future perfect or just perfect. Anyway we had sold all the tickets and parents are very forgiving. Noah brought out the best in us Thespians. The animal costumes, including my Tiger skin, left something to be desired but the enthusiasm of the cast enabled the assembled company to keep its heads when all about us were losing theirs and blaming it on us. Speaking of casts, the highlight of the following year's Berkeley Square was the cast on the lead's (Murphy) leg. But it didn't cramp his style while the light lowerer (me) lightly lowered the lights during the final scene.

Football was fun. For a few country folk it meant the 7 am bus into town and then onto another bus to Riley High, Kingston High, Beverley High, Marist College or the Grammar School. Hymers didn't play football. Positions were traditional. Holy Holy Holy, two full backs and a goalie, three half backs and five forwards and stay in your positions and mark your man and dream of Boothferry Park. Billy Bly, Neil Franklin, Raich Carter, Brian Crispey the local boy and Wilf Mannion and Eddie Burbanks and Ken Harrison and Bill Harris and Viggo Jensen, what a great bunch of heros. I remember 40,000 spectators and my dad lifted me over the fence onto the track and I touched the football, twice. But then there was Rugby League. What a bunch of thugs in that scrum and Brian Darlington (from Malet Lambert) was fast but could not hide and Johnny Whiteley was the greatest loose forward of all time. Rovers in those days were the pits even though they played on the dog track next to the tram sheds across from the Astoria. Did you ever see "This Sporting Life" with Rachel Roberts and Richard Harris? Great movie. That loose forward from Wakefield Trinity could hold 5 full pints in one hand. And the once a year visit of the Yorkshire cricket team to the Circle with Len Hutton the first professional captain of England getting a hundred and he wouldn't sign my program after I had waited all day.

Athletics. The big event was the mile handicap when a well handicapped third former ran away from the field and Mac Sideburn won the cricket ball throw and the tug of war between the Houses was the highlight of the competition. Pull together lads, brains will beat brawn, no chance, not with Chewy on the other team. Two great Malet Lambert athletes got to represent their city in the Yorkshire Games in Barnsley. Now the path to this prestigious event was somewhat fortuitous. The agile Mally boy cleared the opening height of 6 feet at the Hull meet and was followed by a heavy youth who got the aluminum pole stuck in the pit, and broke it. He did the same with the replacement pole and bent the bar in the process, which brought the competition to a premature end with the yours truly being declared the winner. Off to Barnsley on the bus, with the lanky long jumper Andrew. Met the competition. What height will you come in at, said the cocky Mally boy? 12 feet said the lanky youth. So the Mally boy failed three times at 8 feet and came second in all Yorkshire, but didn't have the nerve to collect his medal. Resumes are made of this? Andrew would have won his broad jump competition had he not overstepped the takeoff board by about three feet, 3 times! Ludum non victoriam amare!

A good many of us opted, signed up, were conscripted to one or other of the armed services. Did you ever see the movie "The Virgin Soldiers" about youths like us thrown into the Malaysian jungle? You should, you might see yourself. Andrew and I were very close to this action; close, but no cigar. But I'm getting ahead. Square bashing.

"Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Squad, Halt, About Turn, Left, Right... You've got the picture? But there's more.

"Laddie am I hurting you?"

"No sir, corporal, sir."

"Well I should be I'm standing on your hair. Get it cut and report to the pan room after dinner by way of a reminder that an airman with neat hair is a real airman; understand?" "No sir, sergeant, corporal, sir, I thought that this was the age of self expression and Bill Haley and the Comets, sir, sir."

“Well you’d better think again, airman and don’t call me sir, that’s for officers and gentlemen what I aren’t, so put a sock in it and get you hair cut.”

It could have gone down hill from there, but the corporal asked for volunteers to play volleyball, and being all of 5 foot 5 the little one volunteered for that and football and hardly saw the drill square for the rest of his time. There were some noteworthy incidents, one particular one at the encouragement of Andrew who suggested that we should be flippant in our answers to a test on the history of the Royal Air Force. This flippancy got me on parade three times a day! What goes around comes around; my son is a somewhat impulsive youth too, and sometimes lacks good judgment, like when he jumped in the pond and lost his glasses.

Now some servicemen stayed in England, some went to Germany, but Andrew and I got to go to Hong Kong, where the only war was with the US Marines in the China Fleet Club. Tough duty, ask Andrew. I look forward to your war stories and tales of children and horses and cricket and holidays and husbands and wives, and grandchildren, I have 12!

Chapter 7

Those things that were. (are bound to repeat)

*THESE things shall be, -- a loftier race
Than ere the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls,
And light of knowledge in their eyes.*

*They shall be gentle, brave, and strong
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire, and sea, and air.*

*Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.*

*Man shall love man, with heart as pure
And fervent as the young-eyed throng
Who chant their heavenly psalms before
God's face with undiscordant song.*

*New arts shall bloom of loftier mould
And mightier music fill the skies,
And every life shall be a song,
When all the earth is paradise.*

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

I sang this hymn regularly but never read the words. Clearly these high social and political aspirations were unachievable during our generation's tenure. We have been responsible for untold numbers of "regional conflicts" in the name of religion; we have failed to deal with famine and disease, poverty,

hunger and crime; we are well on our way towards destroying our western bodies with food and drugs, and devastating our earth to feed our appetite for transportation and consumer goods. Now terrorism has raised its ugly head. But there have been a number of successes - our revolution was the information revolution – television, cell phones, computers and the Internet. We also cracked the dna thing. Our problem is keeping up with these monsters and our vulnerability to the exploitation of knowledge. All upsides have downsides.

But when we look back as individuals, we tell a different story – we have all made great contributions through work and family. Perhaps our guidance was personal rather than social:

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream--and not make dreams your master,
If you can think--and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings--nor lose the common touch,*

*If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And--which is more--you'll be a Man, my son!*

Rudyard Kipling

Or perhaps imperialistic forces guided us, remembering that we also presided over the disintegration of the British and Russian Empires.

*Land of Hope and Glory,
Mother of the Free,
How shall we extol thee,
Who are born of thee?
Wider still and wider
Shall thy bounds be set;
God, who made thee mighty,
Make thee mightier yet.*

A. C. Benson 1862-1925

More likely we followed the advice of Yogi Berra:

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it!"

I know that's what I did.

Now we are at another fork in the road – age 80 and graduation, without pomp and circumstance, into retirement. Like it or not we have to accept our diplomas.

*Gaudeamus igitur,
Iuvenes dum sumus;
Post iucundam iuventutem,
Post molestam senectutem
Nos habebit humus,
Nos habebit humus.*

Perhaps with a little dose of Scotch we may still be singing:

*Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In Yorkshire's green and pleasant land*

My favorite metaphor is the marathon – remember the second half starts at mile 20! The first 10 miles were like our education – just read the books and pass the tests and coast along. The next ten were a reflection of our training and our inherited talents – you get what you deserve; you come to forks in the road; take them; all roads lead to retirement. But the last six miles are all uphill, nobody prepared us for this, it's a test of character and determination. May the force be with you!

Running marathons teaches you that most runners lose all of the time and all runners lose most of the time, ergo runners are a bunch of losers. But with a little help from the age handicappers, you may win a few if you keep trying. Soccer teaches you that you lose control of the ball every few seconds and the sound of falling timber tells you that you will have to wait until next week to make that elusive century in cricket. Failure may be good for the soul, but we mostly remember the 10 good shots in a round of golf, and forget the 90 bad ones, unless they call you Dave.

A Trip to Mars, with the 1956 MLHS graduating class

So what's next? How about a trip to Mars?

*Wider still and wider
Shall thy bounds be set;
God, who made thee mighty,
Make thee mightier yet.*

Thanks to our serendipitous choices of forks in the road we have a complete, well-trained team from the 1956 MLHS graduating class:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Dave | - | Propulsion - Give me a steady half g please |
| Andrew | - | Navigation - I said Mars you fool Neddy, not Neptune |
| Maureen | - | Food - How about steak and eggs, fresh from the farm? |
| Mary
radiation will. | - | Health management - If the micro gravity don't get you the |
| Barry | - | Physical conditioning - If it's physical, it's therapy |
| Mac | - | Diplomacy - the little green people didn't invite us |
| Tina | - | Social services – we're going to need a lot of those |
| Shiela | - | Communications - what would we do without the newspaper and all the adverts? |
| John | - | Marketing - baubles and beads worked before |
| Lorna | - | Habitat development – a handyman's dream |
| Dorothy -
flying buttresses? | - | Mars tour guide – how did those little green men build |
| Pete | - | Book keeper - <i>If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss, Pete will be
happy</i> |
| Bryan | - | Crop production – irrigation of the red dust without water |

- Maureen - Laboratory services – HDL’s LDL’s and PSA’s
- Sue - We will not need your log peeling skills, perhaps you can teach the greenfolk how to smile.
- Dave F - Fuel – Nuclear is cleaner than coal, if it doesn’t leak
- Jean - Translator from greenspeak – if you shout loud enough they’ll understand
- Geoff - Detention of the little green people because they complained about taxation without representation
- Geoff L - Environmental services – see if we can mess up another planet
- Margaret - Psychological counseling – plenty of business here
- Sandra - Kennels – we will always be in need of a doghouse
- John G - Greenskeeper – those red greens could do with a little work
- Colin - Scout - maybe the green people have the talent to put Hull City back on the map
- Jenny - Facilities management – what facilities? We’ve got to build them first
- Janet - Water management - with help from hubby; what water?
- Brenda - Croquet – to bring out the meanness in us all
- Valerie - Hockey, needlework and the Mars faction of the silver strollers
- Keith - Architecture – a clean slate, go for inflatables or subterraneans
- Pam - Choir – Non nobis domine – it may have sounded bad, but it felt great; singing is good for the soul
- Peter A - Greyhound racing - nostalgia
- Dave B - Economics – let’s invent the “muro”

- Ken N - Skiffle master – washboard
- Allan - Politics – we will be outnumbered by the greens, so what about colonialism
- Pat B - Mars peace – Remember the 60s
- Pat E - Primary school ma’am – little green and white children
- Ken B - Percussion – music may be good for the soul, but banging a drum is a great way of converting energy.
- Brian - Emperor – so?! - Napoleon was a little man

The journey was somewhat long but uneventful and most of us were basket cases – osteoporosis, muscle wasting, radiation sickness and psychotic. A perfect landing, thank you Andrew for pointing us in the right direction and Dave for hitting the brakes at the right time. OK everybody out of the space ship for an hour of PT to get those muscles working, don’t worry about the lack of oxygen, try breathing something else for a change. This one-third g will let you break all the trampoline records for rocks and rolls and twists and shouts.

Mary and Maureen, tell us the news of the crews. Cholesterol and PSA are just fine, perhaps all that in flight exercise helped. Just a few broken bones, kidney stones, neurovestibular dysfunctions and some fried bodies. Didn’t those NASA life scientists warn you about the radiation?

Now Mac if you can handle Grenada, you can handle all these little green people. John will help you with a few free samples of food supplements from his Shacklee days, Alan will teach them how to form a political party and Pat will advise you on amnesty for those misguided greenfolk who threw Mars rocks at uninvited visitors while Geoff will incarcerate the ringleaders.

OK Lorna, you will work with Keith to build this City. Just check out the local preference for burrowing holes in the ground. Sorry Keith no fancy concrete, steel and glass rising up to the heavens – we need function before form.

All you gardeners, follow Brian; Janet will get hubby to find the water or perhaps Dave will find a by product of combustion, if he can get that CO₂ to work. We need to get the raw materials to Maureen for processing – we need to balance color not content of food.

Sheila, I'm sorry but we have no copiers, you will have to write all your material by hand, just like the monks did, you may need a little help from your friends to meet the midnight deadline for the Mars Daily Mail (Should we call it the Green Mail?)

Now for an explanation of why we collectively messed up our time on Earth. We created engineers who made machines that kill people and deplete the earth's resources. We trained doctors to keep old people alive and place a burden on the health services. We created politicians with pride, prejudice and no brains. We created religious leaders who made war in the name of peace. We created teachers who forced little children to sit still. We created lawyers and jailors to incarcerate the true entrepreneurs.

The only useful profession is entertainment – even the US constitution talks about the pursuit of happiness. So why don't we make Mars into the biggest combination of Butlin's and Carnival Cruise Lines ever. So there is work for most of our crowd. Every afternoon will be games day – cricket with Len, hockey with Val, trampoline with Barry, soccer with Colin, golf with Dave, orienteering with Andrew. And every evening music, music, music if you put another muro in. Flowers in our hair, provided by all our gardeners. And beer to make us fat, flatulent and happy. And food glorious food to rot our teeth.

Perhaps we may need a little help from our psychological counselors and social workers and prison officers, but not to worry the best treatment will be a one decade sentence to listen to recordings of the Goon Show and Journey into Space and Dick Barton and The Archers.

Chapter 8

What are Aunties for?

Once upon a time I was a little boy who only liked to eat a few things like chips, apple pie and bread and treacle, and chips. I really was a bad eater. Most of all I hated boiled eggs, the very smell of them made me want to throw up. I think it is something to do with hydrogen sulfide. Nowadays I still can't bear the smell of boiled and scrambled eggs but I do like omelets and poached eggs. In fact, nowadays I eat almost anything, even Chinese, Indian, Thai, Malaysian, Indonesian, Japanese, Inuit and Mexican food. French, German and Spanish food are OK too, but not Hungarian and Russian. When I was young I did drink milk, which came in one third of a pint bottles to all the children in the country. After the war that was waged by Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler, Clement Atlee became the new Labor Party Prime Minister. He nationalized everything including trains and buses and long distance freight trucks. I'm glad he did not get to nationalize the grammar schools and school dinners. We also had ration books for food. I used to walk home from the village school at lunchtime to eat things like shepherd's pie, rissoles, chips and pancakes. I did like fried tomatoes, but not mushrooms, lean bacon was OK, so was pork with apple sauce and roast lamb with mint sauce. I wasn't into beef with horseradish sauce, but now I am.

When I was eleven I passed my eleven plus exam and got to go to grammar school – Malet Lambert High School - in the big city in my short grey pants and green blazer, cap and school tie. I hated school dinners. And this is why aunties are the greatest invention in the whole wide world. Auntie Doris lived down East Park Road, which ran from Holderness Road, along which the bus ran, to the Park, across which was the grand 1932 Malet Lambert High School, site of the most horrible school dinners. Auntie Doris, she wasn't a real auntie, just a friend of my parents from East Park Baptist Church, had two older children who went to schools across the city and a daughter just a bit younger than me who also went to Mally. They called her Helen. On Mondays, my mother packed me some sandwiches and I dropped them off at Auntie Doris's on my way to school. East Park Avenue was a quiet street with not many cars in those days, so we kicked a tennis ball all the way to school every morning. When the lunch

bell rang at twelve o'clock, I ran across the park to Auntie Doris's, gobbled my lunch and then ran back to school to play football in the school yard before the bell rang for the afternoon session.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I ran around the lake, along Lake Drive, across Holderness Road and along Aberdeen Street to 55 Ryehill Grove where my Auntie Edie lived. The run took me about 15 or 20 minutes. Auntie Edie was married to my dad's brother, Uncle Walter, who rode motorbikes and had a little repair shed at the bottom of the garden, where a few years later he helped me to maintain my motorbike and once persuaded the nice policeman that I needed to drive quickly along Ryehill Grove to test my full range of gears. Uncles are nice too. Uncle Walter was a perfectionist who didn't believe in derailleur gears, he said they would never catch on. But he was good with motorbikes. Anyway, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Auntie Edie always made me chips, she too was the best Auntie in the world.

One day while I was going fishing I fell off my bike and broke my little finger, so my dad took me to the Infirmary to have it mended. We had a couple of hours to wait for the next bus so we went to Uncle Walters. Nobody was at home, so we found the key under the door mat and let ourselves in so that we could listen to the football match on the radio. But the radio was broken; so my dad tried to mend it and made it worse, much to Uncle Walter's dismay. But this didn't stop my twice weekly jaunt across the park for Auntie Edie's chips.

On Wednesdays, I went along Westminster Avenue and across Holderness Road to the fish and chip shop where I bought three penny worth of chips for my lunch. They were very generous with the vinegar and we usually had half a bag left when we got back to play on the swings and roundabout in the Park. On a good day, I could get my chips, play in the park and still get 10 minutes of football in the yard before the bell. On Friday lunch time, I went to Auntie Muriel's, my friend Dave's mother. Dave's father picked us up outside school in a different car every month, and took us back just in time for the bell. Auntie Muriel was a friend of my parents, her chips were the best in the world.

We usually played football or cricket for school on Saturday mornings and so I usually didn't get home until 1.30 with my dad who worked Saturday mornings. Sometimes after football I went to my dad's work where he calibrated all the factory's micrometers on Saturday mornings. We walked down the street to catch the 1 o'clock bus home. By the time we got to Sproatley the village fish and chip shop was closed so we had to wait until Saturday night to get our daily dose of chips. The Sproatley village fish and chip shop was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Barker with help from Mrs. Butler. Mrs. Barker, Mrs. Butler and my mother took turns in playing the organ at the Sproatley Methodist chapel across the village green from the fish and chip shop. They weren't called auntie. We didn't eat chips on Sundays.

When I got into the sixth form, I had to eat school dinners and sit at the head of a table and teach table manners to the younger students. School dinners in those days were not a la carte like they are now, they did not know how to make chips, but after a while I got to like them just a little bit. Kids nowadays are spoiled with choice, they can even choose chips every day.

I did have a few real aunties – my father's sisters, Nelly, who lived in Sproatley and Margaret, who lived in Stockton, and my mother's sister Winnie, who lived in Africa. I also had lots of imaginary aunties; in fact, most of my parents' friends were called auntie this or auntie that, unless they were uncles. They were all nice to me but didn't give me chips for lunch like Aunties Edie, Doris and Muriel.

So, the bottom line is that aunties are great especially when they give us chips.

Chapter 9

Down to the Boysenberry Tree

New York is an amazing place, if you can get there. Since my departure from Houston just over a week earlier, I had two thousand odd miles on my Chevy truck when I neared the end of the 'Jersey Turnpike. The traffic had been getting thicker for quite a while and my only map was one of those large-scale things. What was more to the point, I did not really know where I was going. I had been to Astoria once before but on that occasion I had attacked the monster from the North and had planned a little better. Anyway, I ignored a couple of bridges and turned right over the Washington Bridge around the City and back across another bridge to Flushing where I turned left. This last hour had taken me at least an hour. Traffic stopped or crawled, bridges were being repaired. Did the creators of these wonderful structures ever anticipate the abuse to which they would be put and the challenges of renovating them in real time? I started going up the street numbers. Time to get the cell phone out. The availability of instant communication with a reliable information source obviates the need for good planning. Unfortunately, my daughter was not a reliable information source – she rides the subway.

“Turn around”

“Can’t”

“You must, you’re going the wrong way”

I turned around, got down to 123rd or something and then hit water. One way streets, dead ends, five calls on the cell phone, no good map, useless daughter, made it at last. Planning is maybe a good idea, but it would have spoiled the adventure and I would have learned less about how to mend bridges while the traffic is still running and about the neighborhoods of Queens.

The purpose of this leg of my trip was daughter maintenance.

My trip had taken me to some exciting places. I had visited the University of Western Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, the University of Maryland Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory the Baltimore Shock Trauma Center, a conference with the Nation's political, business and labor leaders on work in the 21st century and a meeting with a couple of distinguished science fiction authors, who challenged me to sit down and write. All these people are creative geniuses. I never cease to be amazed and stimulated by such people and their ideas. But do they worry about maintenance? – The design of things to be used robustly and continuously in the real world. In this real world, there are harsh environments, some natural but most man made. People abuse their environments and themselves and worry about maintenance often when it is too late.

This brings me back to my daughter. I sat down at the kitchen table and stubbed my toe on an odd-looking plastic box with a hinged lid and air vents.

“Is there a gerbil in there?”

“No, I'm recycling, I bought this box and some worms and a book and we put all our waste stuff in there and we have compost”

“What is the compost for?”

“To grow things in.”

“Where.”

“I don't know, perhaps on the window sill.”

Now the stuff that goes into the toe stubber is mostly the inedible bits of food items and paper. The plastic and metal waste goes into other containers for contribution to the Borough's recycling efforts. The politicians like to spend our tax dollars tidying up. It goes without saying that my daughter is a vegetarian, who at the behest of her medical sister takes vitamin supplements. She is into personal maintenance. She also likes to run, with encouragement from her aging father, but not very far. She firmly believes that if everyone did their little bit of maintenance then the world would be a better place. Dream on!

The highlight of my visit in Florida was Oz – a computer that generates an integrated display of all the things that a pilot needs to know in an aircraft cockpit. When traditional designers design things they add a display or control to reflect the particular feature of the system – like the speed, gas and temperature gauges in a car. Often these features are dealt with independently in the drivers mind and they can be used effectively and efficiently throughout the life of the vehicle. But when systems get more complex like in an airplane cockpit or on an oil well drilling platform, many of the features are interrelated – like speed, altitude, attitude and control configuration. If the pilot has to use a dozen or so displays to communicate this information, then integrate it in his own mind, decompose the big picture and make the appropriate adjustments, it behooves the designer to help with the complex cognitive features of this task. Oz saves time and reduces workload. Similarly, the controllers of oil well drilling rigs have to integrate information about feeds, speeds and pressures. Intelligent, integrated displays reduce the cognitive demands. Contemporary designs create robust systems that can be operated safely or restored to safe operating levels whatever demands the context throws up.

Design for use – that should be the creed of all engineers. But how many bridges and airframes have collapsed due to unanticipated strains due to wind, weather and repetitive stress insults. Even the Liberty Bell cracked! People fail in similar ways. We sometimes fail catastrophically like breaking a leg or having a heart attack and sometimes we fade away gradually – due to abuse, under use or over use. Bridges and people need to be designed for maintenance and operation. Chairman Mao was reported as having said that *“it is no use looking across the river unless you know how to build a bridge”*. Knowing how to build a bridge or a body demands the integration of maintenance and operations. Appropriate monitoring and maintenance can prevent heart attacks, arthritis, stress fractures and rust. When I was a little boy, I was told that if I wanted job security I should take a job painting the Forth Bridge – when you get to the end you start again at the beginning. That’s why I get up and run every morning – it’s my contribution to preventive maintenance.

My next stop was to visit old friends in Cary, North Carolina – the home of SAS. Software has to be designed for use and abuse too. But my visit was to an executive of a large timber company. The tree huggers' enemy number one. But contemporary timber companies understand forest management – maintenance of a continuous supply of timber for many applications. Nowadays, timber composites are found to have more desirable properties than raw timber – composite decks need less maintenance! Just as with modern clothing fabrics, wood and recycled plastic make good houses and newspapers. The highlight of this visit was nine holes of golf at the SAS country club. My scorecard showed an impressive 46, but this was helped a liberal dose of guest rules. How does one acquire and maintain motor skills? The experts in expertise at the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition say practice, practice, practice, providing that the practice is dedicated. Look at Tiger Woods. But I am not so sure. I play once or twice a year and shoot better than many people who play twice a week, and who take lessons. Before you get the wrong impression, I should hasten to point out that I shoot worse than many other people. Perhaps there is something in the way different people were designed that makes the acquisition and maintenance of motor skills more or less easy. *“Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, some have greatness thrust upon them.”* (Malvolio in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night)

The University of Maryland Space Systems Laboratory Neutral Buoyancy Pool is 25 feet deep and 50 feet across; it contains 367,000 gallons of water. Mechanical equipment, research equipment, technicians and researchers engulf the pool. The product of the SSL is research. Complex organizations need maintenance. The mechanical systems wear and the human systems need constant feeding and stimulation. Graduate students from many disciplines bring the stimulation needed to maintain the vibrancy of the organization. But good graduate students don't grow on trees; they need funding. And funding is dependent on the condition of both the leadership and that of the parent organization and chief customer – NASA. Parents and founders need to provide the necessary support and training so that one-day the children and organizations will thrive robustly in the outside world.

Leadership means having at least a fifty-year plan, not a four-year one. My visit to the DC 2001 Jobs for the 21st Century Summit showed me a lot of four-year people. The president and his entourage of secretaries (Labor, Commerce, Education) focus on the next election. Political strategy is about timing. Design of spending systems to support educational, health, the military, employment and social security reform must show short-term promise. Fortunately the fundamentals offered by the founding fathers have so far resisted the dynamic hostile environment created by modern politics. We have a robust system, but so did Greece, Rome, Turkey and Britain. On the stage with the politicians were the appointed captains of industry and elected leaders of labor. They too should have 50-year plans, but are often subject to the whims of the board, who represent their fickle stockholders. Harley Davidson, Microsoft, Wall Mart, Monster.com and Marriott have great products and their leaders claim that this is because of their strategies. But during my 14 years with General Motors I saw their market share drop by 20% and they thought that they had robust strategies. The Japanese automakers focus on quality and Europeans' focus on engineering and styling proved to be more powerful strategies. The USA has also seen a fall in the proportion of the workforce represented by unions. Perhaps this is because the unions had a more important role in the old days, but this age of affluence has perhaps made them something of an anachronism. But has it? There are still bad jobs and, to use the words of the AFLCIO president, "indecent wages." How can the philosophy of worker influence thrive in this modern market economy? I suspect that organized labor, like General Motors, will have to change their strategies if they wish to maintain their market share. Perhaps the labor partnerships forged by the Saturn Corporation and Harley Davidson will be more robust than the confrontational strategies of yesteryear, although the eventual failure of the Saturn experiment in the face of attack from within the labor union bodes ill for such arrangements.

On Friday morning I was up bright and early for my morning run. Down 21st Avenue to Astoria Park, along the East River under a couple of bridges and back around through the neighborhoods to 42nd street. Astoria is a community of row houses, each with a small well-kept garden. A little old lady was sweeping her section of the sidewalk – if only everyone would do their bitBut the city was built before the invasion of the motorcar. Like plaque in arteries, cars line both sides of the streets and the city fights back by making all but the main roads one way. The designers of Midwestern suburbs

got it right – they built houses with one, two, three and four car garages on large lots – so that their occupants could clog up the main roads. Suburban sprawl and downtown decay are reflections of a failure to design for maintenance of the health of communities. Perhaps Sun-city has it right and anyway golf carts use less gas. But back to my run around Astoria. A wonderful view of the skyscrapers of what was once the world's biggest city. Look down over the fence along the river and there is nothing but trash. Like most large cities Astoria cannot handle the habits of visitors to their park. I have traveled around the world and been impressed by the cleanliness of many European cities. There is a clear difference in the United States between those states with pop can return incentives and those without. A design for maintenance strategy, but what about those non-returnables?

A notable feature of Astoria is the absence of large chain retail organizations – this largely Greek neighborhood thrives on the American dream of small family business. Macro and local economic pressures take their toll, but the inherent motivation of families is robust. Henry Ford and Harley and the three Davidsons started small, now they have bowed to the challenges of efficiency and productivity and have factories in Brazil. The production line appears the best way of optimizing throughput. By breaking the organization into micro operations and by following the principles of one piece handling, vehicles can be vomited from sleek factories in a steady stream that is responsive to market demand. I am reminded of my National Service days in Calne, Wiltshire – the home of Harris Bacon. Sausage factories make use of every part of the pig. Indeed contemporary food processing reduces the production line to 2 second cycles – one thirtieth of the speed of typical automobile assembly lines. The multiple tasks of small business are fulfilled by a handful of people – the owner arranges the shelves, serves the customers, keeps the books and sweeps up the trash. Job enlargement. In large production line industry the control obsession of management is supported by the seniority principle of the unions. Thirty years of short cycle work plays havoc with bodies, brains and souls. But hey, the pay is good, especially when I can get overtime. Human abuse, without adequate maintenance, must lead to the collapse of the organization. But never mind, there is plenty of cheap, willing labor in the third world. Perhaps industry will have better luck than the Christian missionaries of yester year, at least in the short run. The Christians did attempt a planned maintenance strategy – regular church attendance and pastoral care. My aunt and

uncle were missionaries in Africa, now Africa has aids. The forces of nature trumped the planned health maintenance strategy.

The trash around Astoria Park and the East River is largely composed of food containers. Why do we “contain” food? For longer life and convenience. But why don’t we contain the containers? Because we haven’t addressed life cycle planning. Many cities have very good recycling programs and those warm fleeces attest to the opportunities. Interstate transport of beer and pop cans results in the absurd response of the state laws that punish the entrepreneurs. The public isn’t too good at sorting out the trash, they leave a lot of sorting to the trash companies, but that’s just the cost of doing business. Fast food is usually eaten on the run and the car window makes a very convenient disposal pathway. I heard that some of the companies are working on edible containers. Now about that mission to Mars. Our experience with trash on Mir and the International Space Station has proved to be something of a challenge. Not only have we to deal with food container waste but also we have some 100,000 pieces of other junk in orbit. Sounds like an opportunity for life cycle design – the re-entry incinerator helps – dust to dust, ashes to ashes.

One of the bridges over the East River was being worked on. There were large tarpaulins hanging underneath. Now this particular bridge is an arch bridge unlike the suspension bridge from Brooklyn to Staten Island, which is much longer. Maintenance operations include inspection, repair and preventive painting. Those involved get a great view of the city, and if they obey the redundant rules, don’t fall off or don’t fall very far. Don’t knock OSHA! The Mir Space Station experience was only a little different. You don’t fall off you just float away. But the Mir systems were not sufficiently robust for the hoped-for lifetime. A large portion of the crew activities was dedicated to unscheduled maintenance and repair. This wonderful device was like a handyman’s dream house, but eventually it was seen as a hopeless money pit so they ditched it in the Pacific and the international partners decided to buy a new home. The ISS is a superb feat of engineering and international collaboration; it is a learning experience. But is it designed for maintenance? I am not sure that it is even designed well for assembly. What did we learn from Mir, and Dragonfly? We should have

learned that scheduled preventive maintenance is a must and we should plan the crewmembers time accordingly. Picture EVA suited astronauts with paint cans and brushes, oilcans and flashlights, wrenches and hammers and spare parts and lawnmowers doing their daily fly around. The problem with apartments in New York and the ISS is that they don't have garages and basements to keep all the necessary tools, equipment, spare parts and trash cans that are necessities for suburban living.

In Astoria Park, there is a very large swimming complex, without water. Urban service establishments, named after famous aldermen, grow old like their sponsors. The obsolete high school in Rochester, MI was reused as the City Hall. The Washington memorial recently got a face-lift, like many of the other granite giants in the nation's capital that succumb to the excretions of our insatiable appetite for personal transport. Speaking of which, the by products of suburban dog walks are dutifully scooped up, wrapped in plastic and put in the trash, unless the unsuspecting homeowner is not vigilant and gets his lawn fertilized for free. Looking on the bright side, it might even save the rivers and lakes from death by fertilizer and pesticide. But I agree with the homeowner on this one, I don't like other people's waste on my front yard.

Down below the swimming pool, near those massive bridges that reach out to Manhattan, is a World War I war memorial. I was told that I, too, lost an uncle in that war to end all wars. Why do wars happen if people inherently like stability? It's because stability and war have a lot to do with the differences in opinion between stabilizers and stabilizees. However, the United Nations, like the League of Nations will provide peace maintenance forces, if every one pays their dues. Robust dictatorships do work for a while, but like dynamically robust democracies they require a lot of maintenance. The Greeks gave us democracy and logic, the Romans built roads, and the British gave the world parliamentary government, language and cricket. Ironically, the England team forfeited a match recently following misbehavior by its fans. It's just not cricket! The modern equivalent is business and the stock markets and business ethics, whatever they are. A common currency and common processes; but what about the common folk? Never mind we will pass restrictive laws to maintain diversity

and the minimum wage and entitlements. Organizational maintenance is a costly challenge. Sometimes revolution works to speed up evolution, just read the history books. The present administration seems to favor less government – how about privatizing NASA? Would the shareholders approve the maintenance budget?

Children maintenance is a lifetime challenge. When they are little all they need is warmth and food. They then need clothes and entertainment, then more clothes and less entertainment, they can do that for themselves if parents are not vigilant. Then come cars and college. Just when you think that you did a great job, or got lucky, you find that college is about education, not learning a trade. So now they need housing and health care and graduate school. In Astoria, there is a cooperative apartment complex called the Acropolis – after all it is a Greek neighborhood. I once bought a Chinese junk named Ramshackle, Ramshackle by name ramshackle by nature – luckily it sank in a typhoon and the insurance company paid up. So this Acropolis place was built in the 1940s and looks like Fort Knox. Perhaps it will give my daughter the stability she seeks, if we can afford the maintenance fee.

Sunday morning, down 42nd street with my daughter, left along 21st Avenue, past the neat gardens and parked cars and down to Astoria Park, left along the river, past the overflowing trash cans and more trash by the riverside, under two bridges, past the out of commission swimming pool, the World War I memorial and on to the end of the path. In a little clearing on the right there is a Boysenberry tree, good to eat and produces every year; trees know all about life cycle planning!

Chapter 10

Chicken, Ziti and Pot Roast

The day of my accident – last Sunday - was a busy one that floated by like a dream. Later I learned that the dream was fueled by two shots of morphine. I was happy and chatty. The next few days brought the delayed reaction where my mood was less than positive: Never again, biking is stupid, these monster hills are suicidal. Gravity Rules OK!! As the week wore on the pain diminished, the flexibility returned and the pounds accumulated. Yesterday I surveyed the scene of my catastrophic crash, summarized the evidence from many other stories and concluded that I was lucky. Today we will celebrate the one week anniversary of this debacle and thank those that carried me through what turned out to be trivial troubles, only escalated by the fact that they were personal.

The food barrage started on Sunday evening after my return from the hospital and the road rally in search of more drugs. Eventually we found the pain killers at Walgreens, who didn't recognize the Embry Riddle insurance, despite the fact that their name is printed clearly on the card. The deli roasted chicken, potato salad and iron filled spinach arrived courtesy Nancy after husband Ken had driven his exciting machine on the drug rally. This chicken lasted all week and eventually ended up in a sort of mix with hot sauce, vegetables and spaghetti.

On Monday Karen - the world wanderer showed up with delicious ziti – just put it in the oven and wait until it bubbles she said. She then listened politely as I recounted the adventures of yesterday, with incredible detail and exaggeration of the steepness of the cliff, my ground and air speed prior to impact and the enormity of the pain. Have a nice trip Karen, say hi to Italy, enjoy the pizza, wine, beer and fashion, and take lots of photographs.

Unfortunately, Karen's ziti was quickly trumped by neighbor Eileen's chicken. The phone call came before I had chance to warm the ziti. I responded dutifully and happily to the summons to the dinner table a few doors down the road, with Eileen and Jim. After all here was a chance to entertain another audience. Earlier that day Eileen had visited her favorite health food store and bought some Arnica Montana pills and Anaphor Healing Ointment. I was unable to apply the ointment just then as my scrapes were covered with sterile dressings. Eileen and Jim supervised the ritualistic taking of the pills – don't touch them with your fingers and let them be absorbed through the tongue. They will work wonders on your aches and pains and not fill your body with all that dangerous pain killer medicine. The chicken, sweet potato and salad were delicious. Jim and I swapped notes on hospitals and trauma – a year ago he was tee boned by a truck and escaped with a broken thumb. When I returned home I found on the Internet that Arnica can be fatal if taken in excess, but that the homeopathic concentrations were pretty dilute and that they did indeed have analgesic properties, so I was likely to survive the night. Thank you Eileen.

Half the ziti saw me through Tuesday. Also on Tuesday I saw the doctor and he changed the dressing – that hurt. Nurse Niki called me and reminded me of my morphine induced light heartedness on the previous Sunday afternoon in and around the OR. I also got a get well soon post card from the Fire Department.

On Wednesday, Bob and Harumi showed up with pot roast – enough to feed an army. Once again, I sat them down, served them wine and repeated in graphic detail the events of my disastrous day. After my tale of woe, Bob mentioned that he was 73 and that he was about to celebrate his first anniversary this coming weekend. A year ago, he had had a heart attack on the steps of the condo that I later bought from them. Ken and Nancy had saved his life by administering CPR. Bob is an old Industrial Engineer who escaped into sales over the years that I stuck with that profession in GM and academia. Bob and Harumi are such a pleasant couple and now have a pool table on the lower floor of their new house overlooking the City of Prescott. However, Bob does have a mischievous streak. While passing by the condo a week or so ago he hurled a golf ball over the wall and shattered my bedroom window. Or at least that was my

story – the ball actually just popped over the wall to attract my attention for a chat. On the pot roast occasion, I escalated the equipment in the story to a dirt bike, the speed to 100 mph and the vertical fall to a 50’ precipice. The pot roast lasted for three meals – tasty.

The following day Bob and Harumi came by again to trim my shrubs in preparation the weekend visit by wife Eileen. I must admit that I had let the shrubs sprout longish branches and the detailed attention by Harumi did make a big difference. I wonder how long I can make hay while the sun shines out of this accident. On Thursday I visited Bob the barber who had just returned to duty after a heart attack. He fitted me in at short notice and reduced my straggly mop down to exactly 1” all over. We discussed heart attacks, wipe outs and golf. He is now comfortable with a straight 200-yard drive, which is good because my condo is at the 180-yard mark on the ninth hole and the target of many a slice. Earlier Paul had explained the reason for me moving condos from the 225 yard mark. Now I can honestly claim that I can drive as far as my condo.

Eileen arrived on Friday afternoon and reminded me of her broken shoulder a few years ago. That was bad.

Throughout the week, I was educated on the increasing triviality of my experience by listening to the stories of mountain biking accidents – broken ribs, shoulders, collar bones, heads and faces. A few years ago, I saw a girl go over the handle bars on a dirt road in Rochester, MI and ended up with a badly bruised face and split lip. A very sorry, tearful sight. On the lighter side, some 57 years ago I went fishing with my 12-year-old buddies near Sproatley, England. We rode our bikes with our rods roped to our handlebars and our bait and lunch in our saddle bags. Some three miles into our trip – in Burton Constable Woods, I veered off the road as boys tend to do, hit a gully and flew over my handlebars. The result was a dislocated little finger at the proximal interphalangeal joint; the end piece pointed sideways. Various country folk tut tutted as we road home, saying, “You should get that seen to.” My dad arrived home from work at one o’clock that Saturday and we caught the 2.10 bus back into the city and

walked to the infirmary, my finger still pointing sideways. I woke up in the Emergency Room with my finger pointing in the right direction, but with my hand and lower arm wrapped in plaster. While waiting for the bus back to our village we visited my uncle Walter, who was not at home, but had left the key under the door mat. We tried to turn on the radio to listen to the Hull City football game but it wouldn't work properly. My dad tried to mend it and it never worked again, much to his brother's disgust.

I have only had a few sports injuries in my whole life; these two bicycle related ones being the worst. Perhaps there is a message there somewhere.

Other excitement on Thursday was the arrival of Chris and Christa who will rent my old condo for the coming year, or two. Chris is enrolled in our graduate program and Christa is a nurse with a job down at the Yavapai Regional Medical center. They have two cats rescued from the pound. Chris had just driven a large Ryder truck with all their family belongings all the way from New Orleans, with Christa following in the family car. Quite a trek and, like Eric and Rachel, they are starting on an exciting new phase. They arrived at 1.30 p.m. were greeted by a bevy of neighbors and we sat around the table with tea, while they told us about their experiences with Katrina. By this time my injury is receding to a general classification of negligible.

Saturday brought the department barbeque at Eric's mansion. A cozy affair in very pleasant surroundings. My colleagues concluded that they would rather have me on morphine although one kindly suggested that my normal behavior was not much different. On arrival home, we were accosted by Ken and Nancy with margaritas which brought the best sleep for a week. Today is Sunday, the one week anniversary of my downfall; we have invited all the kind souls who helped me during the week for nibbles and wine. By now the memories of their kindness far outshines those of the wipe out. This morning Eileen and I visited the scene of the accident. Hill, what hill? Gully, what gully? My humiliation is complete.

Chapter 11

IDK

A young man hobbled into the gym, with a stiff right leg and a walking stick in his right hand, just like “House”, but this was in 1962. He handed me a piece of paper, signed by the emergency room house surgeon, which read: Diagnosis – IDK, Prescription – Provocative Knee Exercises. Now IDK can stand for “Internal Derangement of the Knee” or “I don’t know”; in this case either or both definitions would work. In those days before sophisticated imaging, provocative knee exercises were helpful in differentiating between a tear of the cruciate ligaments or a meniscus or damage to a collateral ligament. It should be noted that the knee joint enjoys considerable rotation in the flexed position, but none when it is fully extended and that a tear in the medial meniscus, which is attached to the medial ligament may occur when the foot is firmly fixed and the player bends and twists his knee with full weight bearing. If a tear occurs then sometimes a fragment of cartilage is displaced towards the center of the joint and the patient is unable to fully extend his knee. In less serious tears McMurray’s test may be greeted with a loud and felt click as the flexed knee is externally rotated and straightened.

On the occasion in question there were some inconsistencies. The patient had his walking stick in the wrong hand and his knee was fully straight, but “locked.” I applied every trick in the book to “unlock” the patient’s knee, both passively and actively, but it wouldn’t budge. I did, however elicit some, perhaps exaggerated, cries of pain. So, I sent the patient back to the ER with a confirmed IDK and the doctor signed his insurance certificate and told the patient to continue the exercises that I had prescribed and return in three weeks’ time.

Dutifully, the patient returned as asked and the house surgeon sent him upstairs for me to have another try. The patient appeared in the gym with the referral slip- IDK, provocative knee exercises. But this time it was his left leg that was stiff and his walking stick was in his left hand. I tried again to make something happen, but again without luck; so I sent him back downstairs and the busy house surgeon repeated the return in three weeks instructions and signed the insurance certificate.

Now in those days I had a motorcycle which I parked around the back of the now demolished, Birmingham Accident Hospital. I had a motorcycle despite the fact that a good part of my day was spent in treating patients with significant limb fractures and head injuries, sustained in motor cycle accidents. A short time after dealing with the stiff legged IDK patient I went to collect my motor cycle to run a midday errand. As I walked around the side of the hospital I bumped into my patient, happily riding his bicycle, walking stick strapped to the crossbar. I sent a cryptic note to the house surgeon entitled NIDK – Now I Do Know, Prescription – no more insurance.

George W Bush: "There's an old saying in Tennessee — I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee — that says, fool me once, shame on — shame on you. Fool me — you can't get fooled again."

Chapter 12

Ugly Flying, Ugly Cricket

A few days ago, my flight instructor, Sara Woolsey, delivered the ultimate barb – she said: “today, Brian, your flying was ugly.” Ugly is a very powerful and unequivocal word. Ugly is ugly. There are not grades of ugly. Beauty is not relative, beauty is all encompassing. Some purists would say that this harsh polarization is unfair; others would describe the “halo” and “pitchfork” effects (Peacock 2004), in which a single judgment item dominates the decision process. ‘Single’ may have been a little optimistic for the flight in question. A perceptive philosopher once said, “in nature there’s no blemish but the mind, none can be called disabled but the unkind.” In the present context disability is the inability to behave and perform as directed – by the voluminous flight training literature with which the poor student puts himself to sleep every night. The directions for flight maneuvers, such as stalls, landings and wind circles are clear and precise. Flying is not an art, nor is it a science; flying is a technology; deviation from the rules is ugly and, what is more, dangerous. The poor deviant may be unable. But was the instructor unkind? I was always taught that it is rude to make mock of dumb animals. But she attracted my attention.

Some 50 years ago I was batting in the cricket practice nets. Our teacher and coach “Tex” Rutter bowled orthodox slow left hand with an occasional “Chinaman” thrown in for good measure; I don’t think that he could bowl a googly, but you never know with these French masters. Anyway, he over pitched one outside my off stump and I promptly put it back over his head for what in a real match would have been a six. “Peacock”, he said, “that was an ugly shot, look where your feet are.” In cricket a beautiful drive is one where the bat comes through vertically close to the front foot; an ugly drive has a somewhat angled bat with a gap between it and the front leg, leaving the batsman vulnerable to the “Chinaman” or left hand bowler’s off break. I replied to Mr. Rutter’s comment about my feet with an insolent, “but look where the ball is!” Mr. Rutter just smiled in recognition that his message had not been received.

Now of course observers with a more delicate, sensitive and diplomatic bent would argue that ugly and beauty are relative, and that both cricket and flying are indeed art forms, based on probabilistic science and subjective interpretation. They would discuss personal style as indicated by deviations from the rigid rules. In flight training, these deviations are categorized – outstanding, good, marginal and unsatisfactory – another cruel “U” word, a euphemism for ugly. Ugly is merely a convenient articulation of a polarized perception. Ugly is attention getting. Ugly flying is ugly. Ugly cricket may be momentarily successful but in the long run doomed to failure.

The foregoing sets the scene for a more discriminating profile of what constitutes ugly flying. Flying is as simple as ABC – aviate, navigate, communicate, in that order of priority. First the wannabe flyer has to learn about flight; what keeps an airplane up in the air and what puts it down on the ground? Putting an airplane on the ground in a hurry can indeed be ugly although my crash investigation colleagues revel in their descriptions of horror. In practice, flight is reduced to a plethora of checklists and rules, which must be followed in precise detail and order. – push this thing and then pull that thing; look here and then there, do this and then that. Those accustomed to driving in a gravity friendly context must change their ways. The steering wheel does not steer the wheels in an airplane, in fact sometimes you have to steer the wrong way to go straight. The brakes and direction controllers (the pedals) are one and the same thing as far as the feet are concerned, but they must not be confused, otherwise takeoffs can become very ugly very quickly. The brakes don’t work in the air; if you wish to go slow point the front end up, if you want to go up push in the throttle; if you want to go down, pull out the power. If you want to turn a corner you have to add power, otherwise you’ll go down and sometimes you have to “turn” the other way with your rudder to prevent going down.

Some years after I had incurred the disdain of my high school cricket coach I had amalgamated a sufficiently good track record to become captain of my university (Loughborough) cricket team and once again had the opportunity to contrast effectiveness with ugliness. We were playing our local rivals –Leicester University –

which was some 12 miles from Loughborough. I had won the toss and elected to bat first. Our top of the order batsmen fell like ten pins and; coming in at my customary number seven, I had the challenge of averting a disaster. So I proceeded with a mixture of beautiful and ugly batting which, with lady luck on my side, resulted in a quick 50 and the day was saved. On one occasion their quick bowler bowled a slightly over-pitched ball outside my off stump and I promptly put it over square leg for six. He stood glaring down the pitch at me and said “that was an ugly shot, look where your feet are”, to which I replied, in character, “look where the ball is.” When the other team went into bat I had the additional pleasure of exposing my rival’s own ugliness by bowling an in-swinging between his bat and pads and taking out all three stumps.

A short while ago my friend and colleague, Mike Polay – a Vietnam era F-4 pilot - sent round a video of a Russian test pilot doing aerobatics in a powerful jet. The video was accompanied by a note extolling the beauty of aerobatic flying, especially when accentuated by colored smoke. Now Mike claims that he has never been at a loss for words, so I tried to test his claim. I replied to his e-mail and said “so, I bet he can’t play cricket.” And Mike was temporarily at a loss for words. However on the occasion of his retirement roasting he took the opportunity to counter my insolence by issuing a “Notice to Airmen” (NOTAM) which read “Clear the skies while Peacock flies and clear the ground while Brian’s around” referring to some malicious reports of ugly taxiing and flight maneuvers.

The lowlight of my recent flight was an attempt to perform a ‘power on stall’. This maneuver is supposed to mimic an over rotation after takeoff, with a clean and full powered airplane. Given the context of the exercise the reader will at once recognize that the maneuver should take place with minimal sideways drift to prevent incursion into the flight path of airplanes taking off on a parallel runway. Also, and perhaps more to the point, this exercise should be completed with minimal loss of altitude owing to the close proximity of the ground. Parenthetically it should be pointed out that CFIT and UFIT (Un controlled flight into terrain) are both very ugly maneuvers. On the occasion of my lesson I correctly and beautifully reduced power to 1200 rpm to lose airspeed and set up the conditions for the stall. I then proceeded to pull back on the

yoke and add a little power. This tentative behavior, coupled with fidgety feet on the rudder, resulted in a very ungainly sideways, downward, and crooked slippery slidey sort of thing, which stimulated my instructor's choice of "ugly" during the debrief. My plea that at least my landing got a 9 out of ten was insufficient to prevent the other "u" word – unsatisfactory for this flight module.

Now in cricket as in flying it is possible to improvise on the basic beautiful style for situational effectiveness. For example, if the bowler has packed the off side field and is bowling outside the off stump, it is perfectly acceptable to use the pull, hook or sweep to guide the ball into the empty leg side field. Such strokes, although somewhat unorthodox, cannot be described as ugly or unsatisfactory, but they can be risky as the stroke involves playing across the line of the ball thus requiring more precise timing. Many great batsmen (Don Bradman, Mike Smith) used these tactics to good effect, but they had learned to play beautiful strokes before venturing into the risky realms of the "u" side".

In flying it is possible to use "cross controlled" actions with rudder and yoke and even subtle use of throttle and flaps to achieve graceful outcomes. But such combinations, in the hands of an inexperienced student can both appear to be very ugly and in the absence of a guardian angel sitting in the right-hand seat can result in a very ugly outcome. As in cricket, one should master the basics, before attempting to bridge the delicate division between ugly and beautiful (Peacock (2002).

Peacock J. B. (2004) "Bias in Human Judgment: Is your Halo Slipping?" Ergonomics in Design

Peacock J. B. (2002) "The More I Practice, the Better I get: de Jong's Law", Ergonomics in Design

Chapter 13

Houses

It's been a long day, started yesterday, with a flight from Los Angeles to Detroit via San Francisco. Red eye, didn't get a wink of sleep, well, perhaps half an hour. Read a book, or rather bits of "The Camel Club" by David Baldacci, our new neighbor in Amelia Island. Tom drove me down to Van Nuys, where I caught the shuttle to LAX. I had to wait half an hour because my ticket said 1.28 and the doors to the 1.30 bus closed 2 minutes before departure time. I actually asked for the ticket before 1.28, but the transaction didn't process until 1.28 and the doors closed at 1.28. Bummer! The shuttle is great! Bombs down the freeway in the fast lane and gets to the airport in just over an hour, 3.10. The flight from LAX to SFO departs at 6.00 pm so I had time to peruse the glossy shops and get some nibbles in the Delta Sky Club washed down with red wine. The food gets a bit old, even the South-Western Chili was quite anemic. The Internet is fast but the ladies behind the counter are tired. The flight from LA to SF is spectacular, with lots of mountains, valleys and ocean, it was the trainee pilot's birthday, apparently, he passed his test today. Good job, and a surprise round of applause from the passengers.

LAX is a zoo, animals and all! The evening snacks were predictable although the tomato soup was tasty when sprinkled with shredded cheese and those caramelized onion things. Baileys was the drink of the day, or evening to be more precise. The SFO – DTW flight was full, but my usual isle seat provided some relief through the opportunity to walk up and down the aisle from time to time and analyze the various conscious and unconscious states of my fellow passengers. Body and mouth postures say a lot about what people are dreaming about. I had a big guy behind me, I mean big, I reckon 350 lbs! At least. He needed an extra strap for his seat belt. Now should I recline my seat or not? What do you think? There is an increasing number of fat people in this world. Should we pity them? Offer them gratuitous advice? Scold them or make jokes? They are a societal and personal problem that keeps the health care costs rocketing. But the real issue is how they feel and manage. Are they sad, embarrassed, accepting, stoic or not concerned. I don't know because it would be rude to ask. But it is an issue with far reaching effects perhaps greater than world wars.

Detroit advertises itself as the comeback city. There is a lot of urban blight, but the defiant resident on NPR insisted that these neighborhoods are more good than bad. Should we bomb the place and start again? Should we complain about the departure of car manufacturing plants abroad in search of lower wage rates? Should we try to understand the quadruple whammy of physical decay, poor education (not the teachers' fault), unemployment and aging? Go Tigers! Go Red Wings! Go Lions! Cities need their flags.

Rode the shuttle to the off-site parking lot. A massive area of neat rows of parking slots at \$15 per vehicle per day. All full. Cha-ching! I wish I had invested in space near an airport. Instead I invested in an acreage in suburbia. Cha-ching?? I took the tourist route home, I96 was chock a block. Up Southfield to Birmingham, then Adams to Rochester. A pretty drive, because I was going home.

Home at last. Wet and cold. The ride down Hunter Creek Lane is both scenic and soothing. Every one turns the corner to the last stage of their journey home, from wherever. Then I saw the deer. Those rascals. They eat the flowers and plants in the front garden and what is worse they mess up my bee hives. Now this was the reason for my early return home after my visit to Santa Clarita to observe the arrival of Grandchild number 10, Hunter Michael Peacock, weighing in at 8 lbs. 1oz. He definitely takes after his grandfather. The grass at 4645 Hunter Creek Lane had not grown too much, despite the wet weather, which is forecast to continue for a while. I should be able to get on the tractor at the weekend. Back in the day I used to drive a big tractor on the farm down the road in Sproatley. Home, with a list of jobs to be done, mostly bills, bookings and books.

My first action on arrival was to deal with the plight of the bees. The deer had got into the sugar water and knocked the hives about. I had to build a wall. A Trump wall! Could I get the deer to pay for it as they are the illegal immigrants? But wait, I am the

immigrant, albeit with a naturalization certificate and the deer have been using this route for as long as I remember, and probably much longer. Anyway, in the cold and rain, I dragged a bunch of branches and built quite a spectacular wall. I really don't know much, yet, about the abilities and motivations of deer. Will they take the hint? Should I build a higher and wider wall? Should I simply put up a sign to deter them? Design suggestions welcome. I'll tell you more the day after tomorrow.

The house was tidy, the garden growing, mainly weeds. The grass will wait until the weekend when it has stopped raining. Dinner was good – pasta, tomato sauce, vegetables, pork and shredded cheese, washed down with a Pepsi and rum. As I write this note, I look out over the woods and fields and around the house. Ducks flying. Lots of other birds. Deer! I'm afraid that nature does a better job than we do with the gardens, fields and woods. Many of the gardens around Santa Clarita were beautiful, albeit small when compared with our 12 acres. Artificial painted beauty, with roses galore.

The jobs are neatly stacked. House and garden, bikes, garage, trash. Book on football. Book(s) and papers on ergonomics. Stories of yester year and tomorrow.

Chapter 14

Dad, I've lost the truck

Mother and I were asleep; after all it was about twelve thirty on Monday morning. The front door creaked and then banged, gently. Just another job, but at least it informed the parents of the arrival of that boy. Something was funny though – the ever-open parental ear had not heard the sound of the truck's engine nor the tires on the gravel driveway. Perhaps that boy had learned to switch off the engine and coast down the lane and then park out by the pond; after all it was twelve thirty and that boy was only 16! Ten o'clock was his time. The stairs creaked – another job. Gentle footsteps crept down the corridor.

"Dad, are you awake?"

"Huh"

"Dad, I've lost the truck."

"Huh."

"Mum, are you awake?"

"Of course I am; where have you been?"

"Mum, I've lost the truck"

"Where?"

"In the gravel pit"

"Which gravel pit?" "Where have you been?"

"Chillin'."

"Where have you been chillin'?"

"With Jeff and Joe and Matt"

"Why are you so late?"

"I was giving you some personal time."

"Personal time is on Saturdays, not on school nights."

"Sorry."

"What's this about the truck?"

"I've lost it."

"Why?"

"I can't get it out."

"Where is it?"

"I told you, it's in the gravel pit."

"Why?"

"It got stuck."

"Where?"

"In the gravel pit."

"Which gravel pit?"

"The one at the far end of Valley Road"

"So what do you want me to do?"

"Help me."

"Where exactly is it in the gravel pit?"

"About a mile in down the hill?"

"Is it dark?"

"Yea."

“How did you get home?”

“We walked.”

“But that is about five miles.”

“That’s why we’re late.”

“Is the truck all right?”

“I don’t know.”

“What do you mean?”

“I don’t know; it was dark.”

“How stuck is it?”

“It’s stuck, we tried to push it and lift it but its stuck in a gully.”

“Why is it in a gully?”

“Because we drove into the gully.”

“Why did you drive into the gully?”

“Because we thought we could get through.”

“Why did you go to the gravel pit?”

“Because you bought me a four-wheel drive and we were trying it out.”

“The four wheel drive was so that you could get to school in the winter.” “Did you lock up the truck?”

“Yea.”

“Can anybody see it from the road?”

“No, it’s about a mile down the hill and up the gully.”

“Go to bed, we’ll go and have a look in the morning.”

“Night dad, ‘night mum, I’m sorry.”

“Night.”

“Night.”

“Morning.”

“Huh.”

“Get up.”

“What time is it?”

“Six o’clock.”

“I’m tired, I got to bed late.”

“I know, you woke me up, remember?”

“Oh yeah, I lost the truck, didn’t I?”

“Come on, it’s getting light, I have to go to work today and you have to go to school.”

“OK.”

“Let’s go.”

“It’s raining.”

“So.”

“We’ll get wet.”

“So.”

“OK. I’m coming.”

“Put your old coat on and some boots.”

"I'm hungry."

"Well grab an apple then, like me, and don't forget the camera. We'll need to record this one for posterity."

"OK."

Now the conversation on the five-mile trip to the gravel pit was very enlightening. That boy, Tom, explained that he, Matt, Jeff and Joe decided to go 'off-roading.' The board by the gate said "No Trespassing," but Tom said that everyone went down there.

"Why does everyone go down there?"

"Because."

"Because what?"

"Because that's where teenagers go."

"Why do teenagers go down there?"

"Because."

"Because why?"

"Because, weren't you ever a teenager?"

"No."

"It figures."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"What does no trespassing mean?"

"It means don't go on Saturdays, because the cops are around then. Fridays are usually OK though and they never come on Sundays."

“Did anyone ever get caught?”

“Yeah.”

“Who.”

“Lily”

“Who?”

“You know, Lily, my sister, your daughter.”

“When?”

“A couple of years ago, when she was seventeen.”

“How do you know?”

“Joe told me, Lily used to go out with his brother.”

“What happened?”

“The cop let her go with a warning.”

At this poignant moment Tom and I arrived at the entrance to the gravel pits.

“OK, where is the truck?”

“Down there.”

“Where?”

“You can’t see it from here.”

“How do you get down there?”

“You drive down the track for about half a mile and then turn down the narrow path towards the gully.”

“We’ll have to walk, I can’t take this Cadillac down there, it’ll get stuck.”

"It's raining, we'll get wet."

"So."

"OK."

"Come on. I'll have it out in no time."

"No chance dad, we tried for two hours."

"Just watch me."

I parked the Cadillac, and we set off down the path. There was not much conversation, except when we woke a group of about seven deer.

"Wow, look at them run"

"It's a pity it's not hunting season."

"There's no hunting around here."

"Everybody goes hunting down here."

"How do you know?"

"Joe's brother told me."

"How does he know?"

"He shot a seven pointer, with a bow, last year."

"How did he get it out?"

"He has a four-wheel drive truck, like mine."

"It figures."

"Teenagers don't go down here in hunting season."

"Why not?"

"It's too cold and anyway they might get shot."

By this time, Tom and I were wet, our boots were muddy and we still could not see the truck. There were a lot of empty beer cans thrown around and remnants of old bonfires surrounded by logs.

"This looks like a popular place."

"Huh."

"Have you been here often?"

"No, honest, I have only just started to drive you know."

"It looks like you have just stopped driving."

"Why."

"You lost the truck, remember?"

"Oh, yeah."

"Are we nearly there?"

"Just round this next corner, then we turn right towards the gully, I think."

"You think?"

"It was dark. It took us about two hours to get out, we must have gone the wrong way."

"I think that Bill Cosby was right."

"What?"

"He said that all teenagers are brain dead."

"Why?"

"Never mind."

“Huh.”

“I’ll be late for work, but that’s OK, I’m only meeting with the president, he’ll understand.”

“That’s good, maybe I’ll miss school.”

“Not if I can help it you won’t.”

“I think that this is the path.”

“Are you sure?”

“No.”

“Did you remember seeing anything like a tree near the turn off?”

“There was a plastic bag, but it might have blown away.”

“Try harder.”

“There’s the plastic bag, I told you.”

“Great! How far now?”

“I don’t know, about a quarter of a mile, I’m wet.”

The path began to narrow but there were clear wheel markings in the grass. Every now and then there was a mud pool and signs of wheel spinning.

“Why did you come along here? Wasn’t it obvious that you might get stuck?”

“No, the four-wheel drive was great, you just have to put your foot down.”

“Remind me to teach you how to drive someday.”

“I know how to drive, I passed my test, didn’t I.”

“I guess.”

“It’s just over there, behind those bushes.”

Now was the moment of truth. The mud-splattered truck was pointing up a narrow gully with only its left front wheel and right rear wheel touching the ground. The left front wheel was at an unusual angle. The bed looked as though it was twisted and there was a big dent on the tailgate.

“How did that happen?”

“We tried to put a stone in to weigh down the back end and we accidentally dropped it.”

“There was no way that you could have driven up that gully, just look.”

“It looked as if we could have got through last night.”

“Had you been drinking?”

“No honest, if you want to play sports in school you don’t drink.”

“But you are only sixteen.”

“I know. I don’t drink.”

“Get the camera, we need to show this one to your mother, she’ll never believe that her little angel could have done a thing like this.”

“OK dad, are you going to try to drive it out, I don’t think that you can do it.”

“I’ll try to reverse out.”

“That won’t work, we tried.”

“I know how to drive.”

“So do I.”

I got into the truck, started it up, shuttled backwards and forwards between reverse and forward and nothing happened, except a lot of noise and a lot of flying mud.”

“I told you so.”

“Thank you.”

“We’ll have to get a tow truck.”

“For once you’re right. Let’s go. I’ve got a cell phone in the car. I should have brought it down here with me.”

“I know.”

Tom and I trudged up the hill, happy with this opportunity for father and son bonding.

“First, I’ll call the tow truck, then I’ll call your school and say that you will be in at lunchtime and then I’ll call the president of that truck manufacturer and tell him that those off-road adverts are fake, trucks don’t have wings.”

“Good job, dad.”

“Hello, is that Main Street Towing?”

“Yup.”

“Can you come to the gravel pits at the end of Valley Road, my son’s truck is stuck way down in the bottom, half way up a gully.”

“No problem. I do this run at least once a month, more like once a week in the summer.”

“It’s raining.”

“So. I’ll be there in half an hour. I’ll bring the big tow-truck.”

“Well, at least I can catch up with my voice mails.”

“What shall I do dad?”

“Get a job and start saving up for the cost of towing and the repairs.”

Just then the state trooper arrived, lights flashing.

“Good morning, sir. Can I help you?”

“No thank you, we are just waiting for the tow-truck.”

“But your engine’s running and you are parked at the side of the road.”

“It’s not my car, it’s my son’s, it’s just down there a little way.”

“Good job I didn’t catch him, I’ll have to start looking around here on Sundays as well as Saturdays, have a nice day.”

“Thank you, officer.”

The tow truck arrived, lights flashing.

“Good morning sir, I’m Bill, where’s the truck?”

“Good morning, I’m Tom and this is my wife’s son Tom, he used to be my son but I’ve decided to give up being a parent. The truck’s about half a mile down this track, then along a narrow trail for about a quarter of a mile and then half way up a gully.”

“Oh, there, jump in, we’ll go the short way.”

“Which way’s that?”

“Instead of going down the track, we cut across the scrub, around that little hill and to the top of the gully, I’ll get close enough to put a rope on the truck and use the winch. I’ve been to that gully five times this year. Nobody can drive up the gully, although these brain-dead teenagers think they can.”

“It sounds like you learned your parenting from the Cosby show too.”

“Yup. I’ve got three kids, but at least they know how to drive. The only trouble that they ever get into is with the girls. Wait a couple of years and yours will start to spread his wings.”

“Thanks for the advice.”

“Hey, your boy did good. He got further up the gully than any of the others this year. There’s hope for him yet.”

“Dad, I’m sorry.”

“Bill, would you like an apprentice?”

“Sure, I train at least three a year. Mending flat tires and working in the pit under cars is very educational.”

“How much do you pay?”

“Five bucks an hour.”

“How much will this towing job cost?”

“A hundred and twenty bucks for the towing, and it looks like six hundred for the body work. I’ll have to have a good look underneath to see what other damage he has done.”

“That means about two years at ten hours a week to pay for this one, Tom.”

“But what about my homework dad?”

“You’ll have plenty of time for homework, it’s your social life that will suffer.”

“Dad, weren’t you ever a teenager?”

“No, I already told you, I went straight from high school to engineering school without noticing anything else but calculus. Rock and roll was for the rowdies.”

“Wow dad, you really were a geek.”

“Just kidding son, the difference between me and you is that I didn’t get caught.”

Bill put the hook on the truck, wedged his tow truck and started the winch. The pickup groaned, slid, bounced, groaned again and then rolled gently up the gully.

“I’ll tow this to the road and on to the shop if you wish. I don’t think that it is going to go very far on its own. How are you going to pay check or charge?”

“Charge, A hundred and twenty dollars, wasn’t it?”

“Yup.”

“I’ll call you this afternoon when you have had a chance to check it out.”

“Now, Tom, we need to go home and get a shower. You will be in time for fifth hour and I will be three hours late for my meeting with the president. I’m sure that he will understand. He isn’t very busy on Mondays.”

“Hey dad, how much do presidents earn a year?”

“A few million.”

“Maybe I’ll be a president then, but I’d rather be a rock star they earn a lot more.”

“Son, please have this discussion with you mother, I’m sure she’ll understand.”

Chapter 15

A Runners' Guide to Hills

Hills were created to torture runners and to beat them into submission. But the sturdy ones put their heads down, pump their arms and beat the hills. Some years ago I investigated some statistics associated with hills. I took runners' Boston times and their qualifying times and compared the slope profiles with the objective of creating an index of hilliness. It transpired that up hills do indeed slow you down much more (about 3:1) than the down hills help you. For the full details you can go to the Journal of the American Statistical Association sometime in 1993 or to *Marathon and Beyond* a year or so later. But statistics are boring and they don't help you on the day, although they figure high on the excuse list after the race. The here and now of hills are more important, and their idiosyncrasies. Hills have personality.

I guess that my introduction to hills was Aldbrough Hill in Sproatley (pop. 193), Yorkshire where I grew up. On top of the hill is perched the police station, a row of cottages and a pub. We also had Church Hill on top of which were the village school, the church with vicarage and cemetery, a few cottages and the base of the local mobile hardware dealer. Now small children either run or walk depending on their mood at the time; the presence or absence of hills is irrelevant – they are just there, no big deal. Their main disadvantage is that the tennis ball that they kick all the way to and from anywhere has the nasty habit of escaping and rolling down the hill. The nearest big city Hull, had no hills to speak of, except a couple of bridges over the river Hull. In those days running was not in vogue although I do believe that there was a group that called themselves the Hull Harriers. The bridges did cause the six or seven abreast cyclists to push a bit harder and puff a bit. It should be noted that in those days bikes were preferred to busses, and cars hadn't been invented.

My next move was to Hong Kong to serve in the Royal Air Force. Hong Kong has big hills that we would run over to get from our camp – Little Sai Wan, to Big Wave Bay. The paths were rough and somewhat snake adorned, but we were young and the attractiveness of the beach at one end and the mess hall at the other allowed us to

ignore the intervening slopes. Even in our late teens running was the most convenient method of locomotion. I revisited Hong Kong some sixteen years later as a lecturer at the Hong Kong University. There I was introduced to the Hash House Harriers, a motley crew. We charged around main streets and mountain paths and up and down the mountain sides and even up and down high rise buildings, just to get to the beer and hash house at the end of the Monday night ritual. On On! Even then hills were there just for fun and running up and down was not a battle, just part of everyday happenings.

From Hong Kong we travelled, via Australia, to Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was here that I decided to become a runner and attempt my first marathon. Suddenly hills became the enemy. There is a fort – the Citadel – perched on the top of a hill overlooking down town Halifax, the waterfront and the distant town of Dartmouth. My morning training took me up this hill and my dislike for hills was born. Unfortunately my longest run was two times round this eight mile circuit and my marathon time taught me another important life lesson – you get what you earn. It rained that day and I have a photograph of a bedraggled me carrying my daughter Caroline over the finish line with cars now competing for space on the road. A few months later I ran the famous Johnny Miles marathon – he held the Boston record for about 10 years in the 1920s or 30s. There were hills on this course and I was embarrassed by one of my students, a university basketball player, who passed me on a hill at mile 18. It's hard to be taken seriously when one of your biomechanics class members had just demonstrated biomechanical superiority.

One hill in our next stop in Norman, Oklahoma was a short one in Whispering Pines. Our house backed up to an occasional river three doors down from that of the football coach. The point of this hill was to get you out of breath within the first three minutes of your morning training run. It was here where I introduced the Hash House Harriers to members of the University and other citizens. We sought out other hills in and around the city, but none were particularly troublesome. Perhaps the most challenging hill was the one zig zagging its way up to the top seats in the stadium. Being a new faculty member I was assigned a pair of seats on the very top row and told that I would

gain more appreciation of the intricacies of the game from this bird's eye perspective. I was also told that my job was to help to develop a university that the football team could be proud of. It was from this minimal hill training that I attempted my second marathon around Dallas' White Rock Lake where I shaved many minutes off my time, perhaps due to the stadium steps training.

Our move to Rochester, MI planted us on Dutton Road and the infamous Dutton Hill. Even though we moved after a couple of years I couldn't escape this monster. But I met up with a bunch of runners and they explained to me the importance of hill training. We fought that beast most days. And we were rewarded with good times, both statistically and figuratively. Was it worth it? OK the marathon time was as good as it was ever going to get but Dutton hill carved an indelible mark on my psyche. It was like sticking pins in those little effigies of your boss – every step up this ¾ mile hill was accompanied by an ungracious remark regarding the object of my scorn. To be accurate, it wasn't actually my boss – I had a string of great bosses at GM. Rather it was usually their bosses, who on reflection were victims of the substantial pressures to build and sell, great cars and trucks. Perhaps they should have become runners – it's a very good way of letting off steam, hills and all.

My 15 years in Michigan brought many marathons and many hills. The Detroit marathon hills were wimpy – over the bridge to Canada and then up out of the tunnel back into Detroit. But the reward for running fast enough at Detroit was qualifying for Boston. Now Boston has a substantial net downhill slope and the first 7 or so miles are all downhill, but the trouble starts at mile sixteen with the Newton Hills. The designer of this race some 110 years ago was a sadist. He placed these hills right when you thought you were comfortably going to beat that magic 3.00. And the hills won. To be fair there are a few downs between mile 16 and 22 but there are a lot more ups, culminating in the big up of Heartbreak Hill. Sometimes they place a news camera looking down from the top to capture the abject misery of the untrained. If you look in the background of these movies you will see a jovial group of Hash House Harriers at the top of the hill handing out beer to bolster the spirits of those who have sufficient breath to sound the battle cry – On On! The Newton Hills sort out the sheep from the

goats, the boys from the men, the worthy from the unworthy. Sometimes the hill wins. It's downhill all the way from mile 22. Or is it? By now you are tired, questioning your own sanity, saying 'never again' and cursing every bump in the road. Then comes the overpass. In normal circumstances one wouldn't bat an eyelid at this gentle rise. But at this stage in the race it is a mountain. And you plod. At last you get over this challenge and try to regain your pride with a strong finish. Unfortunately in recent years these latter day torturers did it again. Instead of running straight for the turn into Boylston Street they send you down and then up through an underpass. Very unkind. But you survive and are presented with the greatest downhill in the world - along Boylston Street to the finish. The crowds, ten deep on either side of the road are cheering, the clock above the finish line is ticking, and all the runners around you have their heads up and arms in the air. You have finished the Boston, hills and all.

One day a couple of running buddies of mine – Mike and Garry – suggested that we run a marathon in West Virginia. A very bad idea – just look at the map. The start was in a park and the hill went up for a mile, and then you ran the next 25 miles, up and down, up and down, up and down. And I remembered my analysis – if a down gives you one, an up takes away 3. There are certain parts of the country those in search of a PR should avoid. But runners are fools. If race planners are sadists then runners are masochists. To prove my point I would like to take you to Houston Texas or more specifically to Kemah, Texas which recently was drowned by hurricane Ike. Members of the Bay Area Running Club are at face value a sane collection of astronauts, rocket scientists and shoe salesmen - the On the Run running store is the focus of the BARC. They trot around Clear Lake Park and then around Nassau Lake and once a year along NASA Road 1, pausing ten times for a glass of beer. Run of the mill runners whose annual jaunt to the Houston marathon qualifies many of them for Boston. But secretly they are imbeciles. They seek out the Kemah Bridge at the crack of dawn and run up and down, backward and forward at least a dozen times. Now as bridges go this is a big one – it lets a large armada of boats out into Galveston Bay every weekend. And they enjoy the pain. "Let's do another" they shout in glee. "No, let's do three more" is the response. Flatlanders are fools, especially those who add hills to heat and humidity.

New Bedford, Ma has some small hills, like up Union Street and the last mile in the Annual New Bedford Half Marathon along County Street. But these are no big deal. So my old buddy Don and I used to drive out into the countryside and do a few repeats up the biggest hill on the South Coast. The effort paid off in marathon times. But then I was suckered into going up North for a mountain race with the sprightly Don, who was full of confidence regarding his prowess, following creditable performance in similar races and a top ten age group finish at Boston. This was a five mile loop, repeated three times. Up and around and down a mountain. On trails. To cut a long story short (I shall be happy to give you the longer version if you have a couple of hours to spare), this was the time of Don's comeuppance. The hills beat him and I beat the hills.

My daughter, Lily, lived in Reno, Nevada and invited me to join her in a local half marathon. I should have taken more notice of the race name – Escape from Prison Hill. I started out fast on the level track to the base of the hill and then up the gently sloping foothill. But then the real ascent started and I was passed by elderly ladies. And then daughter Lily went past with some disrespectful remarks. What goes up must come down especially when the finish and start of a race are at the same place. With two miles to go we hit level ground and trotted in together.

Maybe I inherited some of this insanity from the Texas Posse. Earlier this year I decided to join a bunch of 20 year old ROTC cadets in the Annual Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands, New Mexico. The main feature of this race is the mother of all hills – up a highway and then further up trails with loose sand for miles and miles and miles. And this after driving hundreds of miles from Prescott, AZ, and then fighting the wind and rocky ground to erect our tents. But there is more. These cadets and many other folk with a military bent believe that it is appropriate to suffer to really remember the survivors and victims of this horrendous World War II forced march in the Philippines. So they wear full military uniforms, boots and all. And then they carry a 35lb pack on their backs. They take anywhere between 6 and 12 hours to complete this race. The blisters told the tale, but not as well as the faces of these undertrained and

inexperienced cadets. They were so happy and proud of their achievement. They had come to understand the cruelty of hills.

Some runners are born great, some achieve greatness and others have greatness thrust upon them, by hills.

Chapter 16

The pole vault

In the sixth form, we were encouraged to participate in many non-academic activities, such as sports, choir, school play, and trips to Stratford, Snowden and the Lake District. When I look back, this really was a progressive school. I enjoyed all of these activities but the pole vault escapade warrants special attention as I came second in the all Yorkshire schools' athletic competition.

I was a somewhat athletic and enthusiastic youth and the pole vault pit behind the cricket pavilion caught my attention. In those days pole vaulting and falling umpteen feet into a hard sand pit was not for wimps. Also, the aluminum poles that we used in 1955 were less effective than the fiberglass ones that were introduced a few years later. But I persevered and got to represent Malet Lambert in the Hull schools' athletic championship. There were half a dozen of us in the competition and I got to go first. I paced out my run, turned, pole pointed slightly upward, took a deep breath, pounded down the runway, jammed the pole into the box and sailed high over the six foot six bar. I returned the pole to the second competitor who ran and jammed the pole clumsily into the box and fell sideways, breaking the pole. The officials produced the spare pole and let the same competitor try again, with the same result. As there were no other spare poles I was declared city champion and selected to represent Hull in the Yorkshire school games, along with Andrew, who offered a lengthy long jump.

On the day of the Yorkshire meet we went on a bus to Barnsley cricket ground. Now I had cleared 7 feet 6 inches in practice. I met the only other competitor from somewhere in the West Riding. He was a lengthy youth with his own pole. He announced that he would enter the competition at 10 feet 6 inches. Bravely I failed three times at 8 feet and was awarded second place, but did not have the cheek to wait for my award. Andrew also had a bad day, going over the takeoff board three times, I recall.

Chapter 17

1947

My green and yellow school career actually started in 1947 after I had passed the “11 plus” which will be the topic of the another story. 1947 was the year of the big snow and my mother was in hospital with erythema nodosum. As my dad worked in Hull I was shipped from Sproatley to Skirlaugh to stay with my grandparents and attend the local elementary school. My grandparents shared a common back yard with the village butcher who had a beautiful daughter called Maureen, who was my age. Maureen took me by the hand to school where I proceeded to get into deep trouble. The lack of insulation in the school caused the snow to melt on the roof and form an impressive row of icicles hanging from the eaves. Now the headmaster was an enthusiastic photographer, like my dad, and he spotted the icicles as a Kodak moment. By the age of ten, under the tutelage of my dad and big brother I had developed a good arm which I put to good use throwing snowballs to destroy the icicles, much to the headmaster’s dismay. I also tested my arm by throwing snowballs at my grandfather and breaking his glasses when he was helping Maureen and I with our sled on the local hill. Despite these antics which nowadays could have got me diagnosed as behaviorally challenged, Maureen stood by my side and pleaded my case with said headmaster and grandfather. Many years later Maureen and I dissected earthworms, frogs and rats together under the eagle eye of Miss Crackles at Malet Lambert.

Chapter 18

Get your hair cut

During the 1940s and 50s I lived in a little four bedroomed cottage – called “Mill House” which was down Park Road in Sproatley, a village of 193 souls in the East Riding of Yorkshire, temporarily in England, but aspiring to independence. Mill House was so named because it was the site of the first mill of the Rank organization, built in the 1820s. The Rank family later split into two successful paths – one in flour milling and the other in film making. For those of you who are interested, Sproatley can be found in the Domesday Book that describes the towns and villages of England shortly after the visit of William the Conqueror in 1066.

Mill House was a detached cottage with a large garden and orchard with apples, pears, damsons, gooseberries, brambles, nettles, chickens, geese, pigs and rats. I also had a dog, named Mac – a border collie who lived in a little back garden where our air raid shelter – a large metal cylinder - was buried under lots of dirt. Later we moved this contraption into the orchard to use as a pig sty. Beyond this garden were a pair of semi-detached houses, a small gap and then a row of four small cottages full of characters. Mr. and Mrs. Mills lived in the cottage two doors from us. Mrs. Mills was an interesting village matriarch, Mr. Mills was a Saturday evening barber.

On Saturday evenings at 5 o'clock I would knock on the back door of Mr. Mills' house with my 'threpny' bit and join a collection of locals sitting in the country kitchen to listen to “Sport's Report” on the radio, while we waited our turn to get our hair cut. The results came on first, right after the stirring theme music. Next came the First Division results with big names like Arsenal, Manchester United and Liverpool; then came the second division. At that time Hull City played in the third division, but, under the tutelage of ex international Raich Carter, they were pressing hard for promotion. Raich was a brilliant player manager and it was generally understood that while he was on the field he did double duty as referee; the guy in black simply blew his whistle when told. A highlight of my youth was going to Boothferry Park with my dad to watch Raich and the Tigers. Billy Bly played in goal, Viggo Jensen from Denmark played

fullback, Neil Franklin returned from a season in Bogota, Columbia, to be the original “sweeper” – a defensive tactic that added cover to the traditional back row of a center half and two full backs. I also remember the Welshman, Ron Harris, who played half back and Don Revie, later of Leeds United fame, Eddie Burbanks, Wilf Mannion and home grown Brian Crispey who worked magic on the left wing. These were just a few of my heroes back in the 1940s, along with the wizard of the dribble – Stanley Matthews.

Back then there was only one hair style on the menu – “short back and sides”. Threponce for boys and a tanner for adults. First Mr. Mills used the clippers around the edges and then the comb and scissors for the longer stuff on top. You had to sit very still under the sheet, boosted by a big thick cushion to bring your head up to elbow level. It was rumored that he was somewhat short sighted and that he had once cut off an ear belonging to a fidgety child.

One Saturday afternoon the village football team was playing against neighboring Long Riston, in a South Holderness league match. The Sproatley team was short of a goalie so Mr. Mills, who was past his prime, played in goal. Now the Long Riston team was pretty good in those days and they had a center forward who was expected to make the pros someday. The final score was 10 – 0 and Mr. Mills had to ride his bike home after the match to cut hair. I really looked forward to Saturday nights. Sports Report on the radio, Mr. Mills talking about football with all the village pundits and then home for warm bread buns with butter and treacle.

In the 1950s I went to a grammar school in the nearby city of Hull. I caught the 8.00am bus from Sproatley and got off on Holderness Road at East Park Avenue. There was a one mile walk across East Park and the bridge over the lake to Malet Lambert, a fine school built in about 1931. We wore green and yellow uniforms; the new design cap was particularly noticeable – it was bottle green with an inch wide yellow cross. After school let out at 4.00pm we would walk back across the park to wait for the bus home. Sometimes we would add variety to this walk by kicking a tennis ball; there were not

many cars on these streets in those days. The bus home would leave the city at 4-40 and arrive at our stop at about 4-55. If we missed that bus we would have to wait an hour for the next one.

At the end of East Park Avenue was a row of shops, including a newspaper shop, a cake shop, a fish and chip shop and a barber's shop. Then name of the barber was Mr. Adolfson. We all thought that this was somewhat sinister and somehow connected to the leader of the Third Reich. But Mr. Adolfson was a nice grey haired man very used to dealing with imaginative school children. In those days it was fashionable to plaster one's hair with "Brylcream", a sort of white greasy substance that did double duty as a lubricant for bicycle chains. We even rebelled a little in those days by growing our hair a little long; not exactly shoulder length, but long enough to be combed into a duck's tail arrangement. Depending on the number of people waiting we could be in and out in half an hour and catch the early bus home. When we had more time to spare and a few pennies in our pockets we would buy cream puffs or wagon wheels from the cake shop or even a packet of chips from across the road.

When we graduated from high school back in the 1950s we were required to do two years military service. I volunteered for the Royal Air Force, fully expecting to be a jet pilot, but I found to my dismay that I was somewhat color blind which together with the results of a battery of aptitude tests fitted me for the trade of wireless operator. On a scary day in October 1956 a group of us left home and boarded a train down to Cardington – the RAF unit that would clothe us in blue uniforms and remove any misconceptions we had about the importance of discipline. A key component of this disciplinary training was the removal of much of our hair as this locus of self expression would inevitably distract us from the important task of fighting the enemy. The barber at Cardington was not a humorous man, at least a far as his victims were concerned. It was rumored that he could give you a short back and sides in 30 seconds if he put his mind to it and used sharp shears. When I arrived in the chair his shears were blunt and it felt like he was pulling out my hairs one by one from the roots. We were allowed out on the Saturday night to go to the local cinema wearing our new hair cut and smart blue uniforms (our civilian cloths had been packed in a parcel and sent home to our

mothers.) I remember clearly the movie – “Rock around the Clock”. The proprietor of the cinema was not impressed when we started dancing in the aisles and our sergeant later suggested that this unruly behavior was contrary to Air Force discipline, but that we would be forgiven on this occasion.

After a year of training and many more hair cuts we were dispatched to Hong Kong to defend that island colony against the billion or so Chinese who lived across the border. Our role was to listen to their encrypted Morse code messages. We soon became quite familiar with the intonations of particular senders and even got to listen to the Russians as they wound their way down to Vietnam. We thought that now that we were experienced airmen we could express ourselves a little. But that was not the view of one drill corporal. It had been about a couple of weeks since we had arrived during which time we acquired substantial sunburn and intestinal inconveniences. One morning we assembled on the drill square at 06.30 and stood in smart (or so we thought) formation. The drill corporal walked up and down the lines and stopped right behind me. “Airman”, he said, “am I hurting you?” “No corporal, sir” I said, “I don’t think so.” “Well I should be”, he said, “I’m standing on your hair. Be back here in half an hour with a proper haircut. Dismissed.” Now this Chinese barber was faster than the one in England and I was back on parade in 15 minutes, even after the 5 minute run to and from the barber shop, with very little hair. Now my cousin, Ray, had emigrated to Australia a few years earlier and become a sheep shearer. Apparently the common skill is to make long continuous motions while trying not to dig the points of the shears into the scalp. The Hong Kong barber had a second job in his spare time between head shearing – making leather sandals. They were smart, comfortable, durable and inexpensive and he sold a lot of them.

After demobilization I returned to England as a student, a career that I finagled successfully for about fourteen years. It was the 1960s and long hair on the head and face was all the rage. Barbers were going out of business left, right and center as a single hair cut could last months rather than weeks. I even acquired an old red and white striped barber’s pole to adorn my student apartment. I could not stray too far in those days as I studied and worked as a physiotherapist in various hospitals and long

hair was *de rigueur*. Another disadvantage of long hair was that it could become a nuisance during games of cricket and rugby. In the first case it could get in your eyes at inopportune moments; in the second case it could become painfully involved in a loose scrum.

After graduate school I returned to Hong Kong as a university lecturer, now married with a couple of chickadees. The barbers there had not lost their touch, but were more adept at styling the mid length locks that were in vogue at the time. I used to go down to the local housing estate for my monthly trim followed by a visit to the supermarket to buy groceries and practice my Chinese. Facial hair was again popular along the style of Butch Cassidy.

When the five of us and one on the way arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, I decided that I should learn how to cut hair. So I attended a three week evening course and graduated with confidence, if not skill. I proceeded to attack my two oldest daughters, aged six and seven, with a newly purchased pair of scissors. It looked so easy during the course where our efforts on our class mates were smoothed over by the instructor. But my wife and daughters were not impressed by my butchering, so after a couple of rounds, I admitted defeat. I tried again on number three Caroline's bangs when she was 13. Big mistake! I also returned to the trade some 20 years later on our dog, "Gloopy". If dogs could talk!

Funnily enough I don't remember much about the barbers in my life over the intervening years. Perhaps I will one day and provide my readers with more riveting reading. I do remember the hairdresser near the General Motor's Technical Center. You could get in and out quickly on your drive to work and arrive looking like a respectable industrialist. In 2000 I bade farewell to that great company and celebrated with a party at our house in Rochester with, friends, neighbors and runners. Now one of these runners, Chuck Maxwell, was a retired barber. He brought his shears to the party and, between beers, serviced a series of guests, all for free. I still feel that I owe

him for his generosity. Now Chuck had had heart surgery, got better and ran the Ironman many times. He often had a different girlfriend and a big smile.

My barber in Houston had an injured shoulder that made his cutting action appear clumsy. His skills were not compromised however. We always had the same opening conversation “How would you like it today?” “Cut it quite short all over please.” “Just enough to run a comb through?” “Yes please.” His walls were covered with pictures of astronauts whose hair he had cut over many years. He even had signed photographs and memorabilia that had flown in space. He directed me to the best oyster restaurant in the world – in a little village where he lived down on Galveston Bay. You could have them raw or cooked, sometimes with cheese and sometimes with herbs. It makes my mouth water to remember those morsels. Barbers are a mine of information.

For the past few years I have worked at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona. The campus barber is called Bob; a master barber. Bob is a golfer who plays on the course where I live. He is pretty good. A few months ago Bob also had a heart attack (it must be an occupational hazard). But he recovered and is carefully caressing the clippers once again. Many of the students at the university are in the ROTC and have daily (or perhaps weekly) haircuts. I usually say “see you next year, Bob”, but often return within a couple of months. At my age hair is an adornment to be cherished. Today Bob had a new razor. Barbering is a great profession.

Chapter 19

Wipe Out – Twice.

This is a story about two wipe outs and the people who were around to help when needed.

The first traumatic event was on May the seventh 2004. I was doing my first solo cross country flight from Prescott to Payson and made a hard landing which severely damaged both the nose gear and my ego, but my body was unscathed. The second wipe out was yesterday morning at 6:49:30 am. This precise detail resulted from the fact that my start time in the Senior Olympics mountain bike race was 6:49 and the fall came just 100 yards into the race. The results of the fall were some nasty grazes on my arms and legs and a great big gouge behind my left elbow. Whereas technique may have been partly to blame I had ridden uneventfully down the very same hill just 20 minutes earlier while doing a warm up. The story could end here but as with many traumatic events the aftermath is where the real interest lies.

The lead up to the plane crash involved flying the same route with my instructor, planning the early morning flight in great detail, but executing it in a less than stellar way. My earlier experience with this route involved a fly over of the runway before doing a large circle to enter the right downwind for the calm wind runway, Runway 24. On the day in question I planned and flew the same route and approach. The route included a long stretch down the Verde River, with spectacular views that are one of the big reasons to fly. Unfortunately I did not take sufficient account of the wind speed and direction, perhaps due to inexperience or perhaps due to the stress associated with this first solo cross country. My first approach was high and unstable – I overshot the center line a little - so I did a go around and tried again. This time my airspeed may have been a little too fast following a correction for a slightly low approach. Also my groundspeed was helped considerably by a quite strong quartering tail wind. I tried to burn off energy as I floated in ground effect to my touch down point some 1700 feet past the runway threshold. Unfortunately I landed “flat” and this combined with the

excess energy resulted in a “porpoise” followed by a couple of hard bounces which did the damage to the nose gear and propeller.

The airplane was difficult to control because of the broken nose gear and the trip to my eventual resting point on an adjacent taxiway involved a somewhat unconventional short cut across the grass. Incidentally this use of the grass and bending of the propeller are also part of the history of some quite senior pilot colleagues, who shall remain nameless. I did have sufficient presence of mind to do the red button routine – pull the mixture to idle cutoff, pull out the fuel shut off valve and switch off the master switch and magnetos – during this bumpy ride as my calculated fuel remaining was around 40 gallons. With this in mind the fire truck was dispatched but had to depart without any excitement. A handful of hardened aviators helped push the airplane to a nearby ramp where it remained for some considerable time for all to see. The local police constable took my report and a bunch of photographs. He was very sympathetic and offered no recrimination whatsoever.

Dutifully, I phoned back to the flight operations department and they kindly closed my flight plan and quickly dispatched a clutch of managers and experts to survey the scene. While I was waiting for this deputation I visited the local airport restaurant for coffee and pie. – their specialty. The restaurant is named “crosswinds” apparently with good reason. The posse inspected the damage and measured the marks on the runway and tut-tutted a while before sending me home in the back seat of another Riddle airplane. This is when the analysis began. I wrote down my recollection of the day’s events; the assistant safety manager dutifully wrote down the factual measurements and the managers surveyed my records. I had a short phone interview by the FAA representative and a longer one with a panel convened by the University. I also supplied the investigators with recordings made by my GPS / Heart Rate monitors. It is amazing how useful objective evidence can be and how one’s heart rate makes a jump when one is in trouble.

The next two and a half months were punctuated by a 7000 mile road trip to help move daughter Ginny and family from Kansas to Atlanta. On my return to Prescott I learned that the tut tutting had spread to higher circles. I was encouraged to start my remedial flight training under the watchful eye of my very experienced instructor, Paul. He seemed to be quite comfortable with my progress and challenged me severely with approach choices and disrupted flight dynamics during the approaches. But out of the blue I was called in by the chief flight instructor who informed me that the University was not prepared to risk letting me continue. This came as quite a surprise – I was expecting that my sentence would be a few check rides by experts in our standards group, especially as I was so close to getting my private pilot's certificate. So I started flying with a local private flight training school which brings us to this Monday morning. I showed up at the flight school with my right arm in a sling, obviously unable to fly for a few weeks.

Last Saturday I ran around Pioneer Park in the prestigious Prescott Senior Olympic games. I had often run this route in training and had to walk up some of the steeper inclines. On this occasion the 5k and 10k competitors ran together with the 10k racers taking a detour half way through. Unfortunately the detour was marked wrongly and we only ran about four and a half miles. I swear that I would have caught my age group rival, Sabin from Chino Valley, if the course had been the correct distance. Sabin was not convinced by my boasting, nor was I when he continued to tell me about his Grand Canyon rim to rim to rim experiences.

The next day was the occasion of the mountain bike race along the same route and there was Sabin again, all decked up in fancy biking duds. There were about twenty of us, including some older ladies and a seventy eight year old, whose bike reeked of experience. A few of us rode around the parking lot to warm up and then we ventured down the first hill of the race. It was quite steep, with quite a lot of loose gravel and a gully washed out by our monsoons on the left hand side half way down the hill. I negotiated the hill uneventfully and went down through the gears for the climb back up the hill to the start / finish line, just in time to see the first rider start at a great rate of knots down the hill. We set off at two minute intervals and at 6:48:50 the starter

began my countdown. I was somewhat cautious, which ironically may have contributed to my undoing. I just touched the brakes half way down the hill and skidded into the gully. All was definitely not well. About three tons of sharp rocks transferred themselves to my knees, wrists and elbow accompanied by two more tons of very fine particles. It hurt. I got up and paced back up the side of the trail, failing to admire the ambience of pinion oaks, cacti, hill sides and blue skies. I was quite surprised by the richness of my vocabulary brought on by a sudden adrenaline rush similar to the one that accompanied my hard landing a few months earlier; although on that occasion the absence of bodily harm and the need to manage the wandering airplane did have a somewhat calming effect. Fortunately the expletives following the bike spill did not reach the tender ears of the blue shirted high school students who volunteered to help marshal the course.

Soon one of the high school students left the group at the bottom of the hill and strode up to offer assistance. "Oh dear", he said, "You appear to be somewhat bloody." "Yes", I replied, "and it hurts. Please will you be so kind as to pick up my bicycle and accompany me to the top of the hill, all the while keeping a wary eye out for the next competitor as he barrels down the hill." At this time I took a closer look at my elbow and noted that some of it was missing, leaving a somewhat garish mess that would certainly test the intestinal fortitude of even the most sanguine of observers. The efficient student used his walkie talkie to alert those at the top of the hill concerning the incident. He also suggested that the 911 line would be a wise choice. There was quite a bit of tut tutting (my favorite phrase of the day) among the crowd at the top of the hill and their leader assured me that 911 was on its way. I thanked the student and pushed my bike to my truck where I loaded it into the bed and removed my wallet and keys for their likely use as this story unfolded. I then wandered for quite a while around the parking lot periodically checking my still running stop watch to assess the responsiveness of the emergency services and occasionally peering at the multiple sources of oozing blood. "What a mess", I said to myself, calmly. After what seemed an age along came this great big shiny red fire truck. The occupants were wearing their turnouts, which on a hot day can be unbearable. Then came the first of an often to be repeated set of questions, read from a checklist as I sat on a big rock.

Age, allergies, asthma? Does it hurt (on a scale of 1 to ten, 10 being excruciating), date of birth, do you smoke? Height, weight, medicines? And so on. They then took my blood pressure, pulse and inspected the damage. Nice rock side manner. Then came gallons of saline to wash out much of the junk and the EMT wrapped it all up with sterile gauze and bandages. "Can you find a ride to the ER or would you like an ambulance?" I was hoping for a ride in a fire truck but they pointed out that they weren't in the transportation business. So they rang for an ambulance and indicated that it would cost a million bucks. Fortunately my colleague Ray from Embry Riddle finished the race at that time and volunteered his wife Lori to drive me to the hospital, while he waited to pick up his gold medal. Lori was great, she is a personal trainer with lots of kind words and sound advice. She kept my spirits up all the way down to the ER and stayed with me while I answered the same set of questions over again. She lent me her phone to call my wife as I had left this indispensable object at home, just when I needed it most. Ray then showed up and between them they took my truck and bike home, collected my phone and alerted my neighbors Ken and Nancy to my plight.

I think that it was Stacy who was assigned to me during this quiet early morning period in the ER. She asked me questions, swapped my grubby clothes for a surgical gown and told me how she was an ER tech with ambitions to be a nurse after she had finished her business degree. She wheeled me up to an ER cubicle and hung around for most of the morning. She did her best with more saline for ages, turning me around and around to flush the dirt out of the wounds. She then found me the Sudoku page in the paper and switched on the TV. Next came a big nurse. He was friendly and hooked me up with all sorts of drips and things, like antibiotics and morphine. He did need two attempts at inserting a catheter into my vein. He wired me to an EKG machine and noted that I was not dead. I was a little apprehensive when the finger mounted IR machine stopped beeping for about 20 seconds. He cautioned me not to be surprised at the initial buzz caused by the morphine. I explained that I was an old hat at this stuff having had codeine at the dentists in 1947. He then asked when I had last had a tetanus shot and was not impressed by 1960; he was pretty nifty with that needle. Eventually along came Dr. McKay – the ER doctor. He asked me a bunch of questions, checked out the wounds, found that the bone was exposed, still with dirt in it, and decided that I would need to have surgery to clean it out properly. The bad news was that the orthopedic surgeon would not be available for another five hours. Meanwhile Tiger

got a bogey closely followed by two birdies and they wheeled me upstairs to the OR while he was just starting the eighth hole, but I still had my 5 star Sudoku.

I was also visited by the phlebotomist and a buddy having earlier made a pathetic attempt at providing a urine sample – I hadn't had a drink for hours. These two were pretty lively.

I was greeted by nurse Nicki who was just great. She asked me the same set of questions and threw in a curve ball. "Do you feel safe at home?" I was not sure of the drift of this one but she explained that it elicited a multitude of personal, environmental and confidence issues. I explained that my only problem was when someone sliced into my back patio which is at the 180 yard mark of the ninth hole. We chatted for ages about our children and homes. She has one son in college who thinks he likes economics but isn't sure. And her 14 year old wants to be a rock and roll star. Deja vue. I recounted the adventures of Tommy in his quest for stardom but like me she didn't feel too comfortable with the day job speech. She was also quite impressed with Lily's polar bear job. Who wouldn't be? She told me about her father who refuses to retire as a physicist. He is 84! It turned out that he taught physics to the orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Burchfield who was about to use a router on my elbow. Then came Bobbi, the OR nurse who would work with me through the surgery. She was from Memphis and talked funny. Next came the anesthetist, he asked the same questions, do you drink, do you smoke, what kind of fatal diseases have you had in the past? Finally Dr. Burchfield came bustling in with stories of his bike riding war wounds. He claimed that broken ribs hurt more than holes in elbows. "On a scale of 1 to 10 how much does your elbow hurt?" "Eleven right now!" He then explained the problems of infected bones and promised to do his best with the cleaning job.

Then the magic happened. The anesthetist stuck a little syringe into my arm and I woke up two hours later in the recovery room. No memories no dreams and a great big bandage on my elbow. Then Gary showed up. Apparently Eileen had contacted him when she didn't hear from me for a while. Gary had contacted Eric who would stay with me over night. Then Nancy and Ken came to take me home; Nancy had bought some chicken, potato salad and spinach – I hadn't eaten all day. On the way home from

the hospital we called in at Fry's to pick up the antibiotics and pain killers that had been phoned in from the hospital. Out of luck they closed three minutes ago. After a bunch of phone calls we had a new prescription for pain killers at Wallgreens in Prescott Valley. They didn't recognize any insurance – neither Embry Riddle, nor General Motors, strange. A bunch more phone calls this morning eventually located the original antibiotics prescription at Fry's and Ken collected it for me on his way home from taking his new big wheeled jeep to the odometer doctor. We sat around, ate chicken, some drank beer, and recounted the day's adventures.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being excruciating, how much does it hurt? Well it really is quite painful, especially when I bend my elbow or rest my arm on the table. And it's personal – it's my elbow. But I think that they need to expand the scale for bomb blasts and burns and perhaps even appendicitis and cancer. But riding bikes down rocky slopes is optional. Flying airplanes?

Chapter 20

Dog in a Manger

Once upon a time a dog walked into a barn and found some hay in a manger; he lay down on the soft bed and went to sleep. A short time later the brown horses returned to the barn and saw the dog sleeping there,

“Let sleeping dogs lie”, they said, kindly, “We can wait a while before we eat our supper.”

But the dog, which had a keen sense of hearing, woke up and barked viciously at the horses, saying, “Go away, I’m trying to sleep.” Now dogs don’t eat hay and they can sleep anywhere in the warm barn, but, in winter when the grass in the meadow is sparse, horses need to eat hay.

The other morning I got up before dawn and went out for my five mile run around the golf course. The full moon was up creating long shadows with the trees and eerie images on the surrounding mountains. Being December it was cold with the thermometer down to 10 degrees and there was a crispy crackle as my feet fell on the short rough around the perimeter of the golf course. Soon, the first suggestions of dawn came with a faint red glow around the mountain tops in the East; next the rising sun caught the undersides of the occasional wispy clouds creating a beautiful red aurora. I thought to myself “how lucky I am, to be running around the golf course at dawn, not only am I fighting off the abuses of eating and old age, I am also at peace with the world and can dream my dreams.”

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw some headlights coming along the cart path some fifty yards down the hill. I was running on the side of the hill, dodging rabbit holes, close to the perimeter of the golf course. The truck stopped and the occupant got out and beckoned me. I trotted down the hill to say good morning.

He said “I am the new golf course green superintendent and I have a Masters degree in horticulture and you are killing my grass.”

“Good morning”, I said, “I’m sorry about your grass; I really didn’t realize that up here on the short rough, which never gets watered by your abundant treated effluent, I was really doing any harm.”

“I’ve been running this route for more than a year and haven’t noticed any effect on the grass.”

“I also thought that Newton’s Third Law applied to grass – the more you apply a downward force, the more it grows back up.”

“Well”, he said, “You are hurting MY grass; I would prefer that you run on the cart paths.”

“OK,” I said, “I’ll try to use the paths while it is cold in the mornings, but there are some places where they are not continuous.”

“Please do” he said, and I assumed that I was dismissed.

I said “good morning” and continued on my merry way along the cart path – all this had added five minutes to my usual time.

I thought that this incident needed some analysis. I run about 5 miles, which is about 10,000 steps, of which less than a half are actually on the grass, most on the sparse rough around the perimeter, the rest being on cart paths. My shod foot is about 10” by 4” which is 40 sq in so I guess that I potentially abuse some $5000 \times 40 / (144 \times 9) = 150$ square yards each day. Now the golf course has about a 5 mile diameter and therefore an area of some 6,000,000 square yards. This means that the maximum possible damage by treading on the grass amounts to 0.0025% of the total area. Now this assumes that a footstep actually does cause irreparable damage, rather than a temporary bruising to the delicate structures. I suspect that the daily radical damage to the fairways by divots and the greens by plug marks are much greater than by my morning feet – in location, area of grass and severity.

This morning I dutifully ran on the paths. Again the early moonlight was exquisite and this was followed by a magnificent sunrise. Sometimes the paths fizzled out, so I actually had to cross fairways to find the next path. I tried hard to oblige and only found

a single white nugget compared with my usual six or seven or more. Looking on the bright side, I did find a new route – about the same distance as the perimeter. However, if I were a normal runner, which I'm not, I would have complained about the effects of the concrete and packed earth on the paths on my knees. I did question, to myself, both the green keeper's motives and the accuracy of his analysis. Golfers and runners don't mix unless you are actually a member of the cross breed of runner-golfers or golfer-runners. Generally runners do their thing around sunrise while sleeping golfers lie.

The barn was by now quite peaceful following high level negotiations between the dog's and horses' attorneys. The solution was an amicable time sharing. Anyway there was plenty of hay some of which was put aside for the dog to sleep on while the horses fed from the manger. One day a beautiful white horse approached the barn.

"May I share your hay" she said, "In return I'll help with the work in the fields."

This time the horses were upset – a white horse invading their personal space.

"Go away" they said, in unison.

"Just a minute though, we would like you to work in the fields for less than minimum wage, but you may not share our plentiful hay, nor sleep in our barn, you must commute from the other side of the tracks."

"Very well" said the white horse, "You are very kind to let me into your area; I will bring lots of my friends and family to work in the fields while you play golf and the stock market and grow fat and buy unused memberships at the gym."

"That's all right but don't expect that your children will go to our schools and colleges, otherwise they will grow up and compete for our jobs and membership of the golf club and that would never do. Anyway we wish to keep our superfluous hay, much of which is imported from over the ocean, because it shows how important we are."

Now tomorrow morning I shall run around the golf course paths and ponder the theories of trickle-down economics, nationalism and the meaning of life. Then I will start my cross country flight training and take a final exam in multi engine aircraft aerodynamics.

Chapter 21

The BARCers (Bay Area Running Club)

Ode to the 32nd Lunar Rendezvous 5k

*Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Fill the Space Center with our BARCer legs.
In training there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:*

*But when the start gun blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger;
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;*

*Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
To his full height. On, on, you noblest BARCers
Whose blood is fet from fathers of fleet foot!*

*BARCers that, like so many Prefontaines,
Have in these parts from morn till even ran
And moderated their pace for lack of argument:*

*And you, novice runner,
Whose legs were trained in Houston, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your training; which I doubt not;*

*For there is no BARC runner so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:*

*Follow your spirit, and upon the gun
Cry 'God for NASA, BARC, and Texas!'*

(With apologies to William Shakespeare, Henry V)

The Charge of the (BARC, New Bedford, Mountain Miler) Brigade

(with apologies to Alfred Lord Tennyson)

*Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Ran the one hundred.*

"Forward, the (BARC, New Bedford, Mountain Milers) Brigade!

"Charge for the tape!" he said:

*Into the valley of Death
Ran the one hundred.*

"Forward, the (BARC, New Bedford, Mountain Milers) Brigade!"

*Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the runner knew
Someone had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to run or die:
Into the valley of Death
Ran the one hundred.*

*Plodders to right of them,
Plodders to left of them,
Plodders in front of them
Shuffl'd and stagger'd;
Storm'd at Newton's hill,
Boldly they ran and well,
Into the jaws of Death,*

*Into the mouth of Hell
Ran the one hundred.*

*Strained all their sinews bare,
Strained as they turn'd in air,
Counting the miles there,
Charging a dream, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged up Heartbreak hill
Right along Commonwealth strode;
(BARC, New Bedford, Mountain Miler) folks
Reel'd from the asphalt road
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they ran back, but not
Not all the one hundred.*

*Plodders to right of them,
Plodders to left of them,
Plodders behind them
Shuffl'd and stagger'd;
Storm'd at with blister and pain,
While friend and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Boston
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of the one hundred.*

*When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made,
Honor the (BARC, New Bedford, Mountain Miler) Brigade,
Noble one hundred.*

Chapter 22

Advice to Grandchildren

- Alexander Graham Bell: When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.
- Anne Frank: Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right path, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands.
- Abraham Lincoln: Whatever you are, be a good one
- William Penn: I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, as I shall not pass this way again.
- Mahatma Ghandi: Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever
- Confucious: Chose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life
- Eleanor Roosevelt: Life has to be lived. That's all there is to it.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson: A (wo)man cannot be comfortable without his (her) own approval.
- Chairman Mao: It's necessary to study both the facts and the history of a problem in order to understand it.
- Yogi Bera: When you come to a fork in the road take it.

Chapter 23

The Writing is on the Screen for the Lecture and Examination

Back in the days of the Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Euclid and Socrates, the great thinkers gathered around them eager groups of students and communicated their thoughts with minimal use of complementary technology. Moving forward, the religious leaders used more strategic pyramid processes, through their cohorts of disciples, to spread their word widely. They also made good use of technology in the form of writings, such as those found in the Old and New Testaments and Koran. As populations grew and education became more formalized the teacher – classroom model boomed because of its efficiencies and control. A teacher could guarantee the attention of his or her students for hours at a time although recognition of the vigilance decrement resulted in rotations of topics throughout the day. Another form of control of “quality” was achieved by the introduction of examinations. These tests generally had the primary purpose of verifying that the student had remembered literally what had been taught. Enterprising teachers would seek to validate the learning by having students answer questions that involved both deductive and inductive reasoning and by conducting applied projects. Only the teachers down the educational line and the eventual employers were in a position to really validate the effectiveness of this efficient “lecture and examine” educational process.

The invention of the printing press gave birth first to the reference book and library and then to the textbook and on to the formalization of homework. These developments also started the obsolescence of the lecture and examination. The teacher could become even more effective and efficient; the students didn’t need to attend class or pay attention in class, as long as they weren’t disruptive towards those who didn’t know how to study outside the classroom. Despite the possibility that students could now study successfully outside the classroom the lecture persisted for many years. It also gave birth to other formal educational media such as the seminar, laboratory and study group. Even the textbooks were adapted to support these more effective learning media. The textbooks also began to include tests of one kind or another with answers in the back. The writing was now on the wall for the lecture, but

the teacher was resilient and continued to prosper. Anyway someone has to write the textbooks.

The examination also adapted and squeezed away from the teacher. Professional societies developed certification and governments developed licensing. Other organizations even developed accreditation as a way of controlling the quality of educational establishments. Industrial, military and business organizations developed aptitude testing in a variety of guises. The well written resume and personal performance at an interview became the keys to success.

If the first nails in the twin coffins of the lecture and examination were the printing press and textbook, the final nails were surely the computer, internet, Wikipedia and mobile personal devices. Information is now available any place any time. There is no reason why anyone cannot learn anything, anywhere. But people vary; many are not sufficiently disciplined to learn alone or not honest or capable enough to be responsible for their own examination. Most also need guidance to select wisely from the ocean of information and misinformation at their fingertips; they also need help in interpretation of the material. So the teacher is still needed; but there is still the challenge of efficiency – teachers cannot provide one on one interpretive service to all their charges.

So the teacher must have disciples, in the form of tutors and make use of focused groups – “wherever two or three are gathered together...” they will most likely converge on some level of agreement, perhaps even “the truth.” Of course we still have to ascertain whether or not individuals have understood the truth in order that they can reflect their status in their resumes. Information technology is up to this task too. First a near infinite number of questions and problems can be organized on the Internet, and satellites, cell towers, ocean floor cables and broadband wireless cities can reach around the world. We even have biometric technology to check the authenticity of the examinee and after the event software to provide a measure of plagiarism, although this is a can of worms that contradicts the whole purpose of education – to learn from others, which is far more effective and efficient than discovering everything ourselves from scratch.

So the writing is on the screen for the lecture and the traditional examination, but not for the teacher and examiner.

Chapter 24

When Things Go Wrong

Growing old is not a problem; on the other hand getting ill or injured is a pain. Lots of people get ill which makes them very sad; the cost of health care is very high, which makes the tax payer sad. Everybody gets ill at some time during their lives, some illnesses are worse than others, some are self-limiting, some are self-treated while others require a call to the doctor. Getting ill is loosely associated with growing old although some diseases are more frequent in the young, some among the elderly and things like accidents among those in their middle years, especially those who play games, ride motorcycles, drive too quickly or work on building sites.

So much for the introduction – the big picture; now for some personal details in support of the forgoing generalizations. As with many of my stories, there may be a little literary license here and there; as my niece Jenny said – “Don’t let the truth get in the way of a good story.” I attributed this quotation to Jenny until I came across the same statement in the book “Camino Island” by John Grisham. A quick Internet search took me back to Mark Twain: “Never let the truth get in a way of a good story.”

I reached the grand old age of 5 in 1943; This magnificent achievement meant that I was qualified to start primary school in the autumn, which involved a walk along Park Road to the village green, a right turn along the main road to the village institute and a left turn up Church Lane to the Sproatley Endowed School and the terrors of the headmaster (“Gilly Gaffer” Thompson) who taught the older kids and his wife who nurtured the young ones with times tables, spelling and ‘riting. Unfortunately or fortunately depending on your point of view, I contracted measles shortly before the beginning of school, which delayed my scholastic debut for a month. In those days before widespread preventive measures most children caught these infectious diseases like measles, chicken pox, whooping cough and mumps, with various levels of discomfort and just enjoyed the few weeks holiday and house calls by the village doctor, until they were free to mix again with their friends, neighbors and school teachers. For some, unfortunately the outcomes were more serious. Fortunately I

survived, unmarked, and caught up with the rest of the class through homework (at age 5!)

In those days I had a big brother who was 5 and ½ years older than me. He is still 5 and ½ years older than me and jumps out of airplanes. We read comics like Beano, Dandy, Hotspur, Rover and Wizard and every Friday went to the village institute where the mobile cinema introduced us to the wild west and cowboys and Indians. Naturally the more enterprising boys copied the Indians by making bows and arrows out of yew branches and binder band. Binder band was used in the new fangled tractor drawn binders which cut the corn and bundled it into sheaves for the farm workers, including the local teenagers, to pick up and make sheaves into stooks for the corn to dry before threshing. The arrows were sharpened at one end and we stuck chicken feathers at the other to control their flight. Anyway, my brother had heard about William Tell so he stood me along the garden path with an apple on my head, retreated about half the length of a cricket pitch, turned and fired. Unfortunately he just missed the apple and hit my head. A lot of blood ensued and I believe he received a severe scolding from my dad, when he came home from work, for missing the apple. I was proud to wear a fine looking head dressing and bandage to school for a week.

A few years later we graduated from bows and arrows to pellet guns and pistols. After all, the war was over and most people in our village liked to hunt pheasants and rabbits with their 12 bores and 22s. Mostly we shot at targets pinned on the door of the chicken shed and I became a pretty good shot. One day, while shooting targets I saw a blackbird on a branch of the damson tree next to our pig sty. I turned, took aim and fired. Down went the bird and I cried, I don't like guns. I did relent somewhat when the fair came to our town and we got to shoot for prizes in the sideshows. Another return to these deadly instruments was when I was doing my square bashing during my national service. We lay prone with rifles and shot at outlines of people with targets on their chests; I narrowly missed my marksman's badge when a nearby colleague distracted me when I was about the fire at the "enemy". I still don't like guns.

Our “Mill House” was built by Joseph Rank in 1820; it had a very large garden and orchard. In the orchard during and after the war we kept pigs and chickens in homemade sheds and stys, each with a fenced run. We used the orchard path to improvise a cricket pitch; in those days, as now, cricket was seen as the ultimate alternative to war. Anyway the bowler overpitched a ball on my middle stump and I played a lofted drive over midwicket right into the pig sty, which was under the damson tree. Now the purists would note that one should perhaps not play across the line until one has got one’s eye in. I was reminded of this poor form some years later when I hit my grammar school cricket teacher for six and he complained about the gap between bat and pad. On that occasion I had the audacity to point out that Don Bradman, perhaps the greatest batsman of all time, frequently played across the line to hook and pull. He even stepped back to cut balls pitched down the leg side when the field had been adjusted for his pull. My teacher replied that, although I showed promise, I was no Don Bradman; a crushing commentary. Anyway our orchard path game would have come to an end if we didn’t retrieve the ball from the pig sty, the run of which was made of two levels of corrugated iron, commonly used for constructing roofs. So bravely I placed my foot on the top of the lower layer of corrugated iron to climb over the fence into the run. My foot slipped and I crashed down onto the sharp upper edge of the metal fence, severely winding myself, and fell over into the pig run. Naturally the two fine saddle backs were inquisitive regarding the intrusion into their domain and ambled out to take a closer look. I got a close look at the approaching monsters, picked up the ball and repeated my slip during my hurried exit and collapsed under the damson tree holding the ball triumphantly.

We also used to play cricket in Reffold’s stack yard and most other farm yards around the village. On one occasion I was bowling and some clumsy batsman swung across the line and put the ball out into the nearby field, aptly named “The Wire”, for six. I complained about the position of his feet during this stroke but agreed that it was my job to fetch the ball. Now the stack yard was separated from the field by a fence made of strands of barbed wire. I decided to save time by crawling under the wire, like Peter Rabbit, rather than wasting the time going round by the gate. Unfortunately the bottom strand of barbed wire was quite taut and close to the ground. The result was a torn shirt and a torn back. I picked up the ball, threw it back to my friends and hightailed it back to Mill House. My dad arrived home at lunch time and declared that

iodine was the best treatment to prevent infection. Now I was aware that iodine might be somewhat uncomfortable so I ran into the orchard and hugged my Border Collie dog for protection from this iodine wielding parent. Although Mac was a very good friend he was no match for the insistence of my dad who captured me and painfully administered the iodine.

On the occasion of another local test match on our garden path I played the ball deep into the cabbage patch. I scampered up the path for a quick single, and fell. In those days the path was constructed and maintained by layers of ash from the fireplace, liberally mixed with larger cinders. Whereas the middle of the path was worn down and smooth, the sides were decidedly loose and rough. Consequently the quick single was converted into a hole in the knee. If you look carefully you can still see these scars some seventy years later. Who said cricket isn't a blood sport?

In those days towards the end of and just after the war, boxing was very much in vogue. Our hero was Bruce Woodcock, a fellow Yorkshireman, British champion and world contender after the retirement of Joe Louis. Naturally we liked to emulate our heroes so my dad and my Uncle Walter built a boxing ring under the damson tree next to the pig sty. All the village lads came to compete under the, usually, watchful eye of the adult referees. The general rule was that there should be no blows to the head, the back or below the belt. Being small for my age, but full of confidence I joined in with gusto. Unfortunately my short stature put my face where the target should be and my short arms took me too close to my opponent for comfort. The result was both physical and emotional trauma. My nose bled generously and I was demoted to a lower class, dictated not by age but by size. Some years later, at grammar school, our gym teacher introduced boxing as a way of building character. Once again my height and reach let me down as my good friend David found a way through my insufficient guard to my nose. I really don't like fighting. However, a couple of years later, as a prefect on duty in the school yard I had to put the school bully on his back behind the bike sheds. I was a hero for a day.

When I was about eight years old and living in Mill House I had another painful experience. The kitchen had a coal and wood fireplace, with an oven on one side and a water boiler on the other. We used to make delicious toast on the red hot coals; every family had an ornate toasting fork in those days. We would also put a kettle on the fire and place it on a stand on the hearth after it had boiled. There was a homemade rug in front of the fireplace, constructed of six inch lengths of cloth slotted through a base of sacking. On the rug, to the sides were a couple of armchairs, usually reserved for the adults. I was a chirpy youth, given to demonstrate my physical skills for the captive family audience. Now don't try this at home! Sit on the floor cross legged, lean forward and stand up in a smooth flowing motion. On this occasion, I sat crossed legged, leaned forward, began to stand, lost my balance and fell on the hot kettle. Naturally my audience was quite alarmed and I was screaming loudly due to the large scald on my backside. My concerned parents summoned the village nurse cum midwife who had had a long day delivering twins. She covered the scald with loose gauze and bandaged it up for sleeping with the instruction to let it get plenty of air during the day time. I guess that one took about a week to mend, before I was able to attempt the cross legged stand up trick again, further away from danger.

One day when I was a little boy about ten I was walking home from school towards The Wire for a change. Across Church Lane from the School and St. Swithens was a hardware store and yard. The owner had a large van from which he plied his trade around the local villages. His neighbor also had a large yard and a large dog. One day the dog owner left the gate open and as I passed by the dog took offense, chased me and bit my thigh. Now it was a hot day and the dog was drooling. The locals generously suggested distemper, tetanus and rabies. So when my dad came home he took me to the big house next to the church where a retired doctor lived; he had worked as the medical officer for the Port of Hull and was familiar with all sorts of ills and injuries. He dressed the wound but was cautious and advised my dad to take me into the infirmary in the city on the next bus. We dutifully followed his advice where the people there re-dressed the wound and, I recall, gave me a tetanus shot. I also recall that the dog owner was strongly advised to keep his gate closed and have his dog checked out.

As a teenager, I earned good summer money by working on the local farm at harvest time. After the corn had been reaped, made into sheaves, stooked and left to dry we collected the sheaves and loaded them onto a horse drawn cart to take them to the stackyard next to the farm house and buildings, where they would be placed in a stack until the threshing machine arrived some weeks or months later. The method of loading the sheaves off the cart to the stack involved one person on the loaded cart and two on the stack; the first person on the stack relayed the sheaf to the skillful stacker who arranged the sheaves in layers to create a neat stack, which rose to the height of twenty or more feet. The tool of choice was a pitch fork which had a long wooden handle and two sharp spines, each about 10 inches long. The handle length varied from about six feet for the person on the cart to about five feet for the careful stacker. As the stack grew in height a long ladder was needed to climb up to the operational surface. On one occasion I was working as the middle man, perched on the edge of the stack to convey the sheaf to the stacker. Unfortunately, an outer sheaf slipped under my weight as I reached for the sheaf being conveyed to me from the cart and fell to the ground some 15 feet below. Fortunately I landed nimbly and was unharmed. So I went round the stack and climbed up the ladder where the stacker said "wher've you bin?" When I explained he reminded me that he had warned me not to stand on the outer ring of sheaves. I think I was relegated to field work after that.

I developed a very painful area under my foot when I was about thirteen. It was in the middle at the base of my toes. Now you medically inclined readers will say: "Aha! Morton's neuroma!" But you would be wrong! It was a verruca or plantar wart! Nowadays, I read that one treatment for this very painful little spot is duct tape. However, back then I was sent to the local chiropodist in the city, on Anlaby Road, near the bus station. I had to wash my feet and wear clean socks for my weekly visit. The nice lady excavated the offending center, placed some medicinal compound in the crater, covered the area with an Elastoplast and charged an arm and a leg. I went back a few times for the digging and cleansing and I was able to play football after a couple of weeks.

I have played all sorts of games, including cricket, football, rugby and running but I have not had many serious injuries. Except this one, fishing! When we were teenagers we sometimes went on our bikes through Burton Constable Woods to Skirlaugh and on to the Brandsburton gravel pits where the fish were very cooperative partners in this game. It was a good Saturday morning ride, about 13 miles with our rods strapped to our crossbars. The roads through Burton Constable woods had a camber for the water run-off. Every dozen or so yards a small trench was cut through the grass verge to allow water to drain away. These small trenches were invariably covered with grass and quite difficult to see. Also, boys will be boys, and are reluctant to steer their bikes in straight lines or even have their hands on the handlebars. I recollect that on my way past the Blue Bell and down Pasture Lane I was reminded by the local policeman who lived in a fine house on the corner of Aldbrough Road and Pasture Lane, that ""ands is meant for 'andlebars!" We forgot the warning as soon as he was out of sight and continued on our happy way. As we threaded our way through the woods I decided that the road was boring so I merrily wobbled onto the grass verge. Now I believe it was Newton who suggested that masses in motion will continue in motion until they meet a larger mass or similar unyielding obstruction. So my front wheel met the roadside gully which stopped the bike but allowed my mass to continue until, under the influence of gravity, it met the earth. The first body part to make contact with the earth was my little finger which emerged at right angles to my hand. Much to the initial amusement of my friends who wisely kept their bikes on the road. I had no alternative but to turn around and ride my bike single handed to home and await the arrival of my dad on the 1.30 bus. He quickly assessed the problem and took me back into town to the Hull Royal Infirmary on the 2.10 bus. The doctors there gave my finger a magic tweak to straighten it out and put it in plaster for a few weeks. This meant that I had, by necessity, to ride my bike with one hand. Many years later, as physical therapist to the Warwickshire county cricket club I had to reduce a finger dislocation, on the field, by trapping the offending forearm under my arm, advising the batsman to look away and applying traction to the displaced digit. As a precaution I took the player off the field and on to the Birmingham accident hospital, where I used to work, for an Xray and strapping.

I enjoyed playing soccer and cricket while at grammar school. We played against the other local schools on Saturday mornings and had intra mural games on Wednesday

afternoons. It should be noted that the ladies from the East Park Baptist Church "Bright Hour" sometimes used to visit, on the Wednesday afternoon bus, my parents' house six miles away in Sproatley where my mother made excellent tea and scones with strawberry jam. This is where my later experience as a football referee conflicts with my view as a player on that notable day. It was just inside the penalty area I recall where a low crossed ball presented itself for a match winning header. It was about thigh high so I dived to head the ball into the goal for the match winner. Unfortunately my friend Colin Murphy had other outcomes in mind so he swung his right foot at the ball and kicked me in the face. There was a lot of blood but no missing teeth and no large cuts to be dealt with. I retired from the game, and still in my football kit collected my homework, walked across the park and caught the 4.40 bus home to Sproatley. The bus conductor who had often refereed my games against the neighboring village cautioned me that I should not put my head near another player's boot. I got off the bus at the village green, walked down Park Road to Mill House and presented myself, covered in blood, to the assembled East Park Baptist Church Ladies Bright Hour. You've got to imagine the scene, a gaggle of genteel ladies drinking tea with raised little fingers. They tut-tutted for about half an hour, occasionally taking a bite of scone, while my mother cleaned me up and had me change from my football kit. The East Park Baptist Ladies Bright Hour ladies caught the 5.45 bus back into Hull. The scar on my chin lasted many years.

Over the following years I had a number of minor sprains and strains to my ankles, knees and hamstrings playing football and rugby. One sprained knee (? medial meniscus tear?) occurred as I broke around the blind side of a rugby scrum to be summarily sat upon by the opposing blind side wing forward who with good anticipation, but with doubtful legality, had broken early as the scrum rotated to protect against my blind side break. The resulting plaster cast was met with great amusement by my colleagues at the Birmingham Accident Hospital, accompanied by the mandatory signatures on the cast and comical comments. Also the cause of great merriment among my friends at the Birmingham Accident Hospital was when I contracted the mumps, probably from the children's ward. The problem was that mumps is not a good thing to catch if you are an adult especially when said adult has to ride his bike to work. Another sprained ankle was sustained at the beginning of the Boston Marathon. The porta potty lines were too long to accommodate the 20

thousand runners eager to get on their way in comfort. So like many other runners I ducked into the woods half way down the hill from Hopkinton. And stood on a rock. I can still hear the sound of the ankle tear. My daughter, Ginny, was waiting to meet me at the finish so I had to continue running. The result was a black and blue foot and quite a slow time.

Not all injuries happened to me. On one occasion I inadvertently caused the injury. I was treating this chap for his tennis elbow. The prescribed treatment from the emergency room resident was renotin iontophoresis, a counter irritant. I was very careful in applying the soaked pad and bandaging it over his elbow which rested on a pillow while he sat and watched. I hooked up the machine, turned on the direct current and left it for a short while I attended to another patient, having cautioned my patient to let me know if there was any discomfort. Which he did! So I took down the application and inspected the area which showed no untoward signs, reapplied the pad and turned the current back on. After a short time with no reported discomfort I turned up the current to the recommended level. A few moments later the patient called me and said that his elbow was hurting. Now if you look at the outside of your elbow to will see and feel a small boney protuberance – the lateral epicondyle, to which are attached the superficial wrist extensors. Unfortunately direct currents are prone to take the path of least resistance and this particular direct current concentrated its efforts on the lateral epicondyle – the familiar site of tennis elbow. So I took down the application, again, and saw the very red burn. “Oops” I said, “we’d better do something about this.” So I escorted the patient back down to the emergency room. Here they dressed the offending area, discharged the patient and he never returned. I guess the counter irritation worked. Or not?

Nothing much of note happened over the next couple of decades. That is until I took up bee keeping. Now beekeeping is a very rewarding pastime, both for the bees and the beekeeper. The bees get to wander around the fields and sample the nectar while fertilizing the flowers and return happily with their loads of honey to a nice warm hive. What could be a nicer job? The beekeeper meanwhile takes away some of the full honey comb while gently brushing the bees aside. Now some of these bees are overly

sensitive regarding this symbiotic arrangement between bee and beekeeper. In fact, on occasion they may be downright unpleasant. The astute beekeeper anticipates this uncollaborative behavior by wrapping him or herself in a suit, hood and gloves. They also blow nice smoke into the hive to settle down the bees until the beekeeper has stolen enough honey for the day. On the day in question this bee was not amused. It defied the smoke, flew at the beekeeper, slipped under his face mask and into the hood where it proceeded to sting said beekeeper on his eye. The beekeeper took the implied message and retreated immediately. His appearance at the General Motors Manufacturing Ergonomics Laboratory on the next day was greeted with the gleeful photographic evidence of one very swollen eye with a caption "sometime the bee wins!"

A couple of traumatic events occurred while I lived in Prescott, Arizona, employed by Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. I was in my late 60s at the time. I sought recreation by running and bike riding. There is one beautiful path – the Peavine trail – along which you can ride or run forever. There are also a few other hills and paths on the other side of town. I was feeling quite fit so I decided to enter a mountain bike race. Bad decision! In these races the competitors start at about thirty second intervals as the beginning of the race is down a quite narrow track, not conducive to overtaking. My turn came about half way through the competitor list and I hurtled down the hill eager to catch the guy in front. Now at the side of the stone path there is a small gully carved by the occasional heavy rainfall. This gully, unlike the relatively smooth path center, is lined by fair sized rocks. Well, in my eagerness, I swerved slightly and my front wheel entered the gully. Again, Newton was right. Things keep going until there is something to stop them. On this occasion I led with my elbow, just twenty seconds into the race. I looked at the sad mess that was once called an elbow, picked up my bike and staggered back up to the start, having been passed by a couple of other competitors on their way down the hill. The official at the top took one look at my elbow and called the ambulance which arrive quite quickly, although it seemed like an age. I was whisked off to the local hospital where they put me to sleep, took about three tons of gravel out of the wound, washed it out with antiseptic stuff and sealed it with about a million stitches. That evening my neighbors, Nancy and Ken, came by and had a good laugh. They also fed me at home for the next few days as I was visited by

lots of work colleagues, friends and neighbors; the recollections of the severity of the incident expanded to fill the time available. Two wheels make no sense!

The second Prescott incident only hurt my pride, fortunately. I was doing my first cross country solo in my newfound hobby of flying. I planned the flight meticulously and had it signed off by my instructor. I took off from Prescott and soon found my way over the beautiful mountains to Payson, Arizona. Now to the uninitiated, every mountain looks the same from up there as does every road. But I survived these navigational trivia, did a circuit around the Payson Airport and lined up for my landing. Now taking off in a little airplane is quite easy. But landing needs to be carried out without error. And error is what happened. I landed hard, bump, bump, bump, slew, bump and into the ditch at the side of the runway. I came to a stop, breathed deeply and called the Embry Riddle office immediately. I didn't have to call the local fire brigade and ambulance; They arrived very quickly, but, unlike the airplane, I was unhurt. I went to the airport restaurant for a cup of tea while waiting the arrival of the Embry Riddle rescue crew; after all, I needed a ride home! The following day I had interviews with the head of the flight line and other safety folks who were either colleagues or students in my Aviation Safety class. The consensus was that I was a poor risk, having just written off the undercarriage of a very expensive training airplane (Cessna 172). One of my faculty colleagues, a Vietnam era F4 pilot, put out a NOTAM (Notice to airmen) "Clear the skies while Brian flies, Clear the ground when Brian's around." I had to transfer to the local private flight school to get my license, but I didn't return to that nasty uphill Payson runway. I also had the thrill of flying from Prescott to both US coasts and back.

Moving forward to my late 70s I had three more brushes with the health services. The first was for cataract surgery. Piece of cake; it works and I can see from here to way out there. I do have to wander around with reading glasses, which get lost or broken all the time. The next brush with the medical folk was for gall bladder surgery. I wouldn't wish this pain on my worst enemies, whoever they are. It was the middle of the night and I woke up with this excruciating pain. I called my daughter, Caroline, who was quite alarmed by my colorful descriptions of the pain. She took me to the hospital where I continued to wax lyrical about the pain, that is until they put me to sleep, made

a few holes in my abdomen and removed the offending organ. Who needs a gall bladder anyway? Not me. I blame my ancestors for my next surgery visit. This time for Dupuytren's contracture – a disease I inherited from my Viking ancestors where my little finger just curls up and won't straighten. There are other suggested contributions to the etiology, including diabetes, which I have, and alcoholism, which I don't have. Anyway the surgery partly worked on my right hand, albeit with a residual swan neck condition in the terminal finger joint. The situation in my other hand probably needs attention soon. It's a good thing I only type with two fingers.

Recently I took a trek to Everest Base Camp with daughter in law Lauren. This trip requires all sorts of medical clearances and insurance. My General Practitioner sent me to all sorts of specialists and prescribed all sorts of immunizations. I've not had more pin pricks since I joined the Royal Air Force and went the Hong Kong sixty years ago. Now I am being treated for high blood pressure and diabetes although my measures of blood glucose and blood pressure are variable and not too alarming. The knee doctor was happy. "Just a bit of arthritis," he said. I also met with a psychologist who, because I missed one (out of 30) verbal memory test (a test very similar to one I used during my PhD), I was diagnosed with mild cognitive decline. Hah! I carry out all these routines meticulously and I too get very variable results. I would like to carry out a study or at least research the literature on variability of these medical measures in practice. Meanwhile, I try to eat and exercise well, and take the pills when I remember. What more can one do? The Base Camp trek was indeed a "trip of a lifetime", if quite hard work; I lost 8 pounds!

Chapter 25

The Bridge

I have this recurring nightmare – I’m halfway across the bridge when I stoop down to tie my shoelaces. When I stand up, the bridge is moving and the gap widening. No way can I jump; I’ll just have to wait, but for how long? Fishing boats keep coming and going, up and down without stopping. It gets dark and they are still chugging and I’m hungry for fish and chips. I start to run from end to end and even think of jumping in and swimming ashore, but it’s a long way down and the water looks cold. I see the bridge keepers go home for the night and the boats keep coming and going. And then I wake up; it’s time to get up and meet the other gentlemen of leisure down at the “Y.”

By now the GOLs own that bridge – they have run across it in fair weather and foul. They have waited for the bridge to open and close, but now the friendly bridge keeper waves us through and has those impatient fishing boats learn their rightful place – in line behind these GOLs. Now GOLs are harmless creatures. They run and play honest golf on Fridays. They are old and young, fast and slow, male and female, quiet and talkative, large Kenyan and small cappuccino, patriots and loyalists, fat and thin, founder members and latter day associates, fathers and daughters, and so on and so on.

Much of the conversation among the GOLs has no meaning. Even their discussion of the meaning of life is meaningless. They waffle. They are repetitive. Their jokes have no humor; they tell them wrong anyway. A single story can last at least four city blocks, especially historical diatribes related to a race they would have won had they run fast enough. They are effusive race strategists – start out slowly and then reduce speed; save your breath for the after-race excuses; follow the leader; under no circumstance allow anyone to pass you on the inside as you turn a corner; run the diagonals even when others are trying to run straight; loosely tie your shoelaces to provide excuses for frequent rests; dress fashionably; walk before and after the water stops; avoid cinnamon flavored energy gels; talk to strangers because they may actually listen to your drivel and so on and so on.

“What has this got to do with the bridge?” you may, or may not, ask. Well the bridge is central to all that is good about the world. It represents your adventure beyond the confines of New Bedford into the wild yonder of Fairhaven. It means you are nearly at the end of your run. It is a place to pause and look at the seals and clam boats. It is a metaphor for the link to the unknown. It swings. It connects one side of the river with the other. It is strong and sturdy like the oak tree. It does not discriminate between democrats and republicans or Fords and Chevrolets. It does not complain when it is photographed or painted. The bridge is unselfish – it returns the reactionary force to ones foot without complaint. Nor does it complain about the wind and rain or the snow and ice. It wishes fishermen good luck on their expeditions and welcomes them home whether they had a good catch or not. The bridge is beautiful and knows no malice. And so on and so on.

One day three original GOLs were crossing the bridge with a famous photographer from the Standard Times. Peter Pereira. Now Peter had a story to tell, but with no words. He snapped feet and heads. He took the troubled trio from near and far, from the front, back and both sides and from above and below. He always caught a bridge spar to frame the good, the bad and the ugly. He caught smiles and grimaces. Mouths open and shut. His art communicated silent sound. He took a thousand shots and selected only one to be hung for posterity on the wall of the Y. Peter is brilliant and famous; his pictorial stories inform and offend. He tells it like it is. He paints colors in black and white. He should be President. Peter’s portraits are onomatopoeic. The bridge is his Mecca; it represents the universal link.

Above all the bridge is about running. It represents the link to the “Greater” in the Greater New Bedford Track Club. It is the link between life and health. It reminds us of our aching legs. It tells us that the Green Bean is not far away. The bridge is alive. It moves, but slowly. It groans, happily, for that’s what bridges do. It is a bridge over troubled water.

Bridge Over Trouble Water

*When you're weary, feeling small,
When tears are in your eyes, I will dry them all;
I'm on your side. When times get rough
And friends just can't be found,
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.*

*When you're down and out,
When you're on the street,
When evening falls so hard
I will comfort you.
I'll take your part.
When darkness comes
And pain is all around,
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.*

*Sail on silvergirl,
Sail on by.
Your time has come to shine.
All your dreams are on their way.
See how they shine
If you need a friend
I'm sailing right behind.*

*Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind.
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind.*

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Chapter 26

Scooters

A boy just got on the train with a heavy back pack and a scooter. He was armed for the last mile. Singapore transportation and urban planning organizations are obsessed with the last mile. This is the distance between home, work, school, food, shopping or other services and the nearest public transport system or large parking lot, around, above or below the stacked glass prison cells called offices. Public and private transport are perennial challenges with crowding on the trains and buses and jams on the freeways. The general solutions to this problem are to provide more resources and manipulate demand by incentives and disincentives. Singapore addresses these challenges far more effectively than other large cities. But the last mile remains a major challenge.

It should be noted at this juncture that “the last mile” may be anywhere from a few hundred yards to a few miles. The key definition is that it should be walkable. Walkable by whom? Certainly not grandma and probably not junior if there are roads to be crossed. So this whole last mile definition becomes somewhat fuzzy. With the advent of modern technology from powered wheel chairs and electric bicycles to Segways what was once a well-defined mile is dealt with by technology. A mile may be defined in terms of time. We used to say that it was a five minute walk if you run but a ten minute run if you walk.

When I was a little boy I walked about a mile to school. There were lots of things to see and a whole bunch of detours. One detour on the way home was to the bakers shop for some “raw” bread – yummy bread cakes- which kept me going until dinner time at 6.30. My walk from the bus to Malet Lambert High School was about a mile across East Park – from Holderness Road to James Reckitt Avenue. In the park there was a large lake with ducks and swans to see and a bridge to cross. In college there were various last miles, sometimes on a bike but often walking and talking with a bunch of friends. It is funny how a mile becomes shorter when there is someone to talk to.

Runners know all about the last mile. In marathons you see the 25 mile marker followed shortly by "One Mile to Go" next to the running clock. Will I make it under the magic 3, 4 or 5 hours? Dig deep, pull out the stops, lengthen your stride, lift up your head and run as though there is no tomorrow! This last mile is best done in the company of a running buddy. You have done many miles in training together on the trails and now this is the moment of truth, the reward for getting up at 5 to get in a run before work. The photo finish with your running buddy does not lie, although you can argue the camera angle; should the finish rule be a foot, chest, arm or nose? I remember many last miles, happy times. Some of those last miles took less than six minutes.

When I was little we had scooters, but they really didn't catch on. Recently my thirty something daughter, Caroline, bought a scooter in New York to go to work. Imagine the flowing coats and clerical collar fighting the bikes and cars and pedestrians as she swishes along the Hudson River. Back in Singapore all the small children now have scooters. Very small ones have three wheelers, knee pads, elbow pads and helmets. The older ones fly sans protection. I guess that the emergency rooms get to treat a lot of grazed knees and elbows and a few broken heads. Scooters, when compared with bikes are quite forgiving; they have a lower center of gravity and no obstruction for the emergency dismount, so recovery of balance or mitigation of gravitational forces is more likely. This, however, does not take into account the effect of speed, which shortens the needed response time and adds a significant horizontal component of force, which is countered by friction when your knees and elbows meet the ground.

Scooters need skill which is acquired by practice and selection of parents. The practice of using wheels instead of feet begs the question of evolution although graduation to the automobile over the past few decades has certainly changed the future of mankind. Imagine if we hadn't invented the wheel! But as Darwin pointed out, we are adaptable, although I don't think that Darwin had technology in mind when he talked about survival of the fittest, or did he? Technological progress leads us past powered scooters to the Segway. This beautiful creation is an abomination in practice. It brilliantly helps with balance management and speed, which is all right for the rider but not for the unwary pedestrian turning a blind corner at the airport. One day at Detroit Metropolitan I got creamed by one of those rascals, but because of my Darwin given agility, I escaped unscathed. In Prescott, Arizona the cops ride around on their Segways to round up the drunks at closing time; now there's a pretty picture! Perhaps

motorized scooters should be preceded by a guide walking with a red flag? Perhaps those little kids and reverend ladies on the sidewalk should also be preceded by a watchful parent.

So these steeds are here to stay; pedestrians like it or not. They are spread singly and in tidy groups around many cities with pay as you go credit card slots. I foresee the time when they will have trainer wheels for people like me and speed limits and licenses. They may even sprout trailers and headlights, they certainly need horns. Perhaps there will be separate lanes for ten wheeled trucks, four wheeled cars, bicycles, scooters, motorized scooters and fast and slow pedestrians. The teenager just got off the train, mounted his wheels and zigzagged out of the crowded station with only two near misses. Such is life.

Chapter 27

When we were little the goals were bigger

When we were little the goals were bigger. In fact everything was bigger, or perhaps things just seemed bigger. Adults were called big people and cities were big places. Trees were big, and mountains. A wise man, called Piaget, many years ago described the phenomenal size of objects; he hung his hat on relativity; a powerful concept. The reason why goals seemed big was because we were little. If you were a goalkeeper, a thankless task, you gazed up and around and saw great big gaps in your defenses. I was a quick learner, I only played in goal a few times because the sneaky opposition kept kicking the ball over my head. Big goals were a good idea for little people because they got to score more goals in a match. I remember, when I was twelve, beating the neighboring Aldbrough boys side 16 - nil. I think they changed goalies five times and I recall that I got seven goals. The referee in that game doubled up as the bus conductor on the dark blue and yellow East Yorkshire bus that wound its way from the big city through our little village to the seaside at Aldborough. Being a chirpy youth, once or twice during the game I gave the referee the benefit of my knowledge and experience of technical and regulatory matters related to the game. I don't think that he was amused - he told my dad of my impertinence, and my goal scoring talent. The goal scoring avalanche was partly because the holes in the goal were big, but mostly because of the lack of talent in the other side on that occasion. A few years later, I played for the Aldbrough adult side in the East Yorkshire County League. That was football in the trenches.

I continued my obsession with the size of goals into my teenage years. I liked football. In fact, like many of my cohort, I played football at every opportunity. Perhaps the best opportunity to develop skills was in the school playground. Every day before school, at the mid-morning break, lunchtime and the midafternoon break there would be half a dozen parallel games going on in the yard. We used tennis balls and played between three and six a side. Different groups had their favorite pitches. The ball was generally kept low due to the vulnerability of the gymnasium windows that formed one end of the pitches. Once in a while the big kids would bully the little kids by grabbing their ball and roofing it; roofing involved a punt up on to the flat roof of the high two story

building. Once a week, Trigger Magee, the math's master, would go up onto the roof and return the balls to the waiting juniors. This tennis ball football taught us about relativity. The smaller the ball the easier it was to score in a standard size goal. But the goals in the school yard were not standard sized. The height was generally three or four feet and the width depended on the natural protuberances along the wall, such as pillars and drainpipes.

We got to play intramural football once a week and school matches were on Saturday mornings. A funny thing happens to young boys around thirteen and fourteen, they have growth spurts. The result is gross mismatches in height and strength. I remember on one of the few occasions when I played in goal for my class this great big center forward from the other class broke away down the middle and bore down on me at a great rate of knots. Now my big brother was an accomplished and renowned goalkeeper. He played for school on Saturday mornings and in the adult league on Saturday afternoons. He taught me that goalkeepers should be brave and go out and down at the feet of the oncoming giant to narrow the angle, spread his body horizontally, while covering his face, to smother the shot. Now I wasn't that brave, in fact I was terrified of this looming monster. But I had no choice, cowardice and disgrace were not an option. So down I went, just as the big kid shot and the ball hit me right in the solar plexus. I was a hero, but I had learned my lesson, goalkeeping is for fools.

Some twenty years later I was playing Sunday morning football in Birmingham. Our goalkeeper didn't show up, something about a late night. So like a fool, an old fool, I volunteered. You can guess the result - they kicked it over my five foot five head a couple of times, so I unvolunteered at half time and tried my best to redeem myself at the other end of the pitch. That game was memorable for another reason. Halfway through the first half one of the opposition players launched a front on slide tackle at one of our players. His high foot went right over the ball and into the shin of our guy, whose tibia and fibula snapped like dead branches. Not a pretty site. From my vantage I saw the memorable sight of a leg swinging with an extra joint.

Twenty years later I was playing and refereeing in Oklahoma. I was very sensitive to dangerous play. Slide tackles from the side may look bad especially if the ball player trips over the slider after the ball has gone, but frontal slide tackles over or through the ball warrant a red card in my book. Other deliberate fouls that get my goat are illegal use of the hands - grabbing shirts. Now after all that pontificating I have to

confess that Oklahoma was the location of my only yellow card. The referee, Mike, was a friend of mine - a near neighbor and a colleague at the GM plant where I was working during the summer. Anyway, this defender was shielding the ball as it ran over the line for a goal kick, so I tried to get around him and maybe nudged him a little. He took a theatrical dive and I was in Mike's book, despite, or perhaps because of my vociferous protests. While refereeing in Oklahoma I had occasion to card a defender for holding an attacker's jersey during a corner. Shortly after this warning, he did it again, right in front of my nose, so I had no alternative but to give him a red card. Needless to say, I wasn't very popular, but I will argue still that deliberate and dangerous are two good reasons to get players off the field.

During the late fifties and early sixties I mostly played rugby, a hooligans' game played by gentlemen, they say. But I maintained my interest in football and once again became concerned about the large effect that chance had on goal scoring. So I wrote to the Daily Telegraph. I suggested that the game would be greatly enhanced if the goal were larger, say about 10 feet by 10 yards. I argued that players would be encouraged to shoot from further away and that the average number of goals in a game would increase by at least 100%. Thus there would be less contribution of chance in the result of the game. Incidentally the late great Stanley Matthews expressed a similar idea. The newspaper printed the letter accompanied by a cartoon with a midget goalkeeper in an enormous goal. Perhaps FIFA should reconsider the suggestion.

Recently I saw many replays of the goal of the century. Wayne Rooney with his back to the goal about fifteen yards out, did an overhead scissor kick to connect with a cross from the right wing and the ball went just under the bar and hit the back of the net past the stunned goalkeeper. Now this really was a fantastic goal, but Rooney himself admitted that he had only once before tried this in his career, it wasn't a rehearsed activity. Every element of the sequence was smothered in chance, from the cross, through the kick to the response of the goalkeeper. Looking into the minds of the three participants, none of them planned their activities precisely. It was a fluke, a coincidence, the greatest goal of the century! Now to give Rooney his dues, he was fighting off two close defenders, was aware of where the goal was, did a back flip and timed his scissor kick precisely, that was skill.

Nowadays football administrators, professional and amateur, like to change things to achieve some improvement in the operations, outcome and enjoyment of the game.

They make little pitches and little goals for little kids. Five a side organizers make all sorts of rules about pitch and goal size, usually they make it very small, and where people can shoot from and how big the ball should be and whether or not there should be a goalkeeper. But they don't seem to address the challenge of managing the number of goals per match by simply altering goal size. So maybe the thing with soccer is to make chance and coincidence a major part of the game. I suppose that this encourages more Monday morning analysis.

Chapter 28

My First Day at School and Other Trauma

I was late for my first day at school. There was a war on in February 1943. Groceries were rationed and flour came in cloth bags, which after washing were useful for putting on the hands and feet of small children with impetigo. This was why I was late for my first day at school and when I finally arrived a week late I was still wearing my flour bags. I remember clearly one part of my one mile walk to school – turning the corner from Preston Road into the horse chestnut tree lined Church Lane and up the hill to the school, which on a good day had a total of 35 children between the ages of five and fifteen.

There were three classes in the school each of which were associated with traumatic memories. One rainy day, against the advice of our teacher, a group of us went outside at play time (recess) without our hats. My teacher was ground in Yorkshire folklore and believed that “If one went on Ilkley Moor (or the school playground) baht’at one was likely to catch one’s death o’ cowd.” She also was a student of memory and understood that a sharp tap on each hand with a cane would be a sufficient reminder not to repeat the transgression.

My second brush with authority came when I was promoted to the intermediate class. Most teachers have both first names and family names and polite students were expected to address them as Miss “Family Name.” One day at play time a few of us jumped up and down outside the classroom window shouting “Hi – first name”. Now this teacher felt that this rudeness required the attention of the headmaster, who promptly delivered a slightly more than gentle tap on each hand to discourage us from future indiscretions.

The winter of 1947 was a bad one – we enjoyed the snowstorm of the century. My mother was ill and had to stay in the hospital and my father had to work in the factory to support the war effort, so I was shipped off to stay with my grandparents in a nearby village. My grand parents' house was next door to the village butcher's shop and the butcher's beautiful daughter was kind enough to take me by the hand to the village school. When the sun came out the snow on the school roof melted and formed spectacular icicles, which were good for photographing, and as targets for snowballs. At recess, with the encouragement of the butcher's daughter, I was quick and accurate with my snowball and beat the headmaster's camera easily. The resulting two taps on each hand with the cane reminded me that it is not wise to listen to the advice of girls, however pretty.

In the summer of 1948 I was back at my own village school in the senior class. We were very focused on preparing for the 11 plus examination, which was the means of selection for grammar school - the stepping stone to university, or secondary modern school which let one out on the wide world of labor at the tender age of 15. No one in my village had passed the 11 plus exam for four years since my brother's and cousin's successes. The pressure was on and the headmaster taught us the focused skills of reading, writing and arithmetic as well as how to always use a sharp pencil, a clean ink pen nib and careful use of blotting paper. But as always there was play-time and that summer there was a plague of locusts eating the grass in the school field. So we collected hands full of the lively creatures and released them in the class room. The headmaster was somewhat upset. We obediently followed his direction, collected as many as we could and took them outside. Unwisely, we took this opportunity to bring in more of the distractions in our pockets to distribute surreptitiously around the classroom. So the headmaster was forced to deliver three hefty blows with the cane on each hand to discourage us from further efforts to study insect behavior in the novel environment of the arithmetic class.

Later on that year I acquired a middle ear infection. Now when your child has one of these and is yelling the roof down, pay attention, middle ear infections hurt! Our family doctor lived in another village about eight miles away and there was no direct bus

route between the two villages. Fortunately there was a doctor in our village whose main function was to see to the health and safety of the people who operated North Sea trawlers that sailed from the nearby city. He lived in the old rectory next to the village school and church and was not accustomed to dealing with children with earache. My father and I took the mile walk at nine o'clock at night with the use of flashlights. The ship's doctor's little black bag contained neither an otoscope nor antibiotics and counseling was not much help to a child whose head was bursting. Eventually mother's universal cure – a hot water bottle and bed – provided sufficient comfort while nature took its course over the next couple of days.

We did not get electricity, running water or sewers to our house until 1946 and 1947. We had to use the well at the bottom of the garden, coal fires and oil lamps, and an earth toilet. Saturday was bath night – we heated up the water in a tub in the lean-to “washhouse” and took turns. Life was much easier then as my uncle's family of five had moved out in 1945 to live in the city. The down side was that, although there was less congestion at bath time, there were less hands to work around the house. One of the weekly jobs was to empty the two seater earth toilet into holes in the orchard to make the apples grow. Another was to remove the cinders from the fire grates and lay them up and down the garden path. And this was the cause of my next trauma. I was playing cricket with my brother, tripped and discovered that cinders are hard and sharp and when a seven year old trips and falls they make a hole in his knee and a scar that lasts a lifetime. The good side of this problem is that one was allowed to go to school for a couple of weeks with big bandages round one's knee, which, because in those days boys didn't go into long trousers until aged 14, allowed one to get a lot of attention from teachers and class mates.

The food rationing during the war created the incentive to use basic methods of feeding the two families and three grandparents. So we kept pigs and chickens and ducks, and the local farm workers hunted for rabbits and rooks. At the end of the war we converted our air raid shelter – a large metal cylinder about 6 feet in diameter and 20 feet long – into a pig sty in the orchard. We used corrugated iron to make a little outside yard for the pigs. Along the side of the pigsty, leading up to the chicken shed

was a cinder path, which when compressed made a great cricket pitch. One day the ball was hit into the pig's yard. I looked to see that the pigs were inside the sty and climbed over the fence to get the ball. The inquisitive pig awoke and came to help me find the ball, but I did not trust the porker's attentions so I made a run and a jump for the corrugated iron wall and my foot slipped. I landed on the sharp top of the wall with a resounding "poof" and fell to the ground, luckily outside the sty, totally winded, but safe from the pig.

Sometime around the end of the war Bruce Woodcock became the world boxing champion and all the local village youths fancied their chances of emulating this national hero. My uncle Walter made a boxing ring next to the pigsty under the damson tree. On Saturday nights a dozen or more boys and men gathered in our orchard to show their metal, while my uncle refereed. We had a fine mixture of gloves, some more padded than others. After the big kids had had their turn, we little ones were paired and instructed in the importance of footwork and defense. Unfortunately, I was not a good listener, and dropped my guard at the wrong time. Let me tell you – the nose of an eight year old is a very tender thing. I bled and cried and needed the cold front door key down my back to stop the bleeding and mother's hot water bottle treatment.

My parents thought that it was their duty to explore and encourage all the talents in their children, however hidden. My brother had been quite successful at piano and could play Handel's "Largo" and "In the Mood". The village piano teacher was a starchy person, brought up in the old school tradition of classical music and practice. My first visit was encouraging. I learned all about scales and right hands and left hands and the importance of practice. On my second visit I learned about long notes and short notes and even learned to play a tune – "The Happy Farm Yard". I can still play it. On my third lesson I demonstrated quite conclusively my failure to practice my scales during the preceding week. The teacher gave me my money back and a note to my mother which said "Brian has no talent or work ethic, don't waste your money." But she was wrong. Two of my children unquestionably inherited their fine musical talents from me.

Fortunately, I passed the 11 plus exam and went to grammar school. I found on day one that I had been assigned to the “Classical” stream. There were three streams – the Classical stream took Latin and French, the “Modern” stream took German and French and the “C” stream took French. Now there were pros and cons of being in the Classical stream – the pro was that you were among the sharpest students, the con was that you were among the sharpest students. You also had to learn Latin from the vice principal. Tests were on Wednesday morning and those with less than 7 out of 10 got the doubtful privilege of standing in line outside the vice principal’s office in order to retake the test. There were two problems here, first the whole school walked by and knew why you were there and second you didn’t get to play football at recess in the school playground.

As a student of anatomy and physiology later in life I appreciated the advantages of learning Latin, but the process was painful. In the third form (age 14 and just moving into long trousers) we had a rookie Latin master, who had majored in Latin, not crowd control. He had an unfortunate name that created the opportunity for a mildly derogatory nickname, which was occasionally used within earsight. So the students in this class developed a points system – one for being told to stop talking, two for accidentally dropping your books with a loud bang, three for being asked to stand outside the room for the remainder of an interrupted class and ten for being so bad as to deserve a significant wallop on the rear with the cane. To this day I protest my innocence in dropping my books a second time, shortly after I had got two points, and my “friend”, who had nudged the books from his desk next to mine, never owned up. A few years later I met my friend again and asked what kind of career he had pursued. He said that he had become a schoolteacher and when I asked what subject he taught he replied: “Latin and self defense.”

At grammar school we had “gym” three times a week and sports afternoon once a week. If you were good at games you got to play for your “house” team and for the school, either after school or on Saturday mornings. There were also various athletics clubs after school for those who were confident that the three hours of homework that were assigned could wait until after supper. A boxing rotation in gym led to

another nose incident, but big boys didn't cry and anyway the bleeding had stopped before I arrived home after my one-hour journey. Now in most sports there are gray areas in the rules. In soccer you are not supposed to kick an opponent in the face, unless he puts his face where a foot is expected to be – such as close to the ground while making a game winning diving header. Well on this occasion the diving header was not successful, but the defensive boot was – it made a big cut on my chin. But football players were tough in those days and what was a bit of blood anyway? So I by passed the shower, didn't wait to change out of my very muddy football clothes and headed for the bus; the bleeding was slow to stop and my handkerchief was getting a bit soggy. All my fellow passengers on the bus gave advice about going to the hospital and tetanus and don't get that blood and mud on the seat. Halfway down the road to my house I realized that it was the first Wednesday of the month – the day that my mother provided tea for the "Bright Hour" - a women's church group. Now picture this – a couple of dozen mothers and grandmothers in their best clothes and hats, drinking tea with their little fingers in the air and eating cucumber and jam sandwiches (separate sandwiches for the cucumber and jam). I made my entrance, like a brave soldier, and all heaven broke loose. Naturally the Bright Hour ladies did not want to get their clothes dirty, but were very keen to offer advice, providing it did not make them late for the bus back into town. Wednesday was not bath night – the boiler took an hour or more to heat up, so I had to make do with a kettle of boiling water. If you look closely enough you can still see the scar from 65 years ago.

During the summer holidays we used to ride our bikes to local gravel pits or canals to go fishing. On this particular Saturday we were going to a gravel pit about 10 miles away. The route was mainly along back-country roads. Running parallel to each side of the road were drainage ditches and every ten or twenty yards there was a small channel cut at right angles to the road to lead the water off into the drainage ditch. Now boys will be boys and bikes were not meant to go in straight lines and on occasion bikes would even leave the road for a bit of three dimensional fun. Well the front wheel of the bike that I was riding hit one of those little drainage channels and stopped. Since that time I have learned something of the laws of mechanics and can now explain why a body, on a bike which stops suddenly, creates a significant moment arm and an unbalanced inertial force. Gravity came into play and the action and reaction between the ground and my little finger resulted in a fracture – dislocation of

the proximal inter-phalangeal joint. By this time we were about four miles from home and the local country folk offered the valuable advice that I should go to the hospital – which was easier said than done. So we rode home, waited for my dad to get home from work at one thirty and caught the two-ten bus into the city with my little finger still bent at right angles – the wrong way. Lots of tut-tutting was heard on the top level of the bus as we told our story half a dozen times. I think that in those days hospitals used nitrous oxide – laughing gas – but anyway, when I woke up my finger was straight and my arm encased in a plaster. On the way home we visited my uncle Walter, whose radio was not working very well. In his attempt to rectify the problem, my father totally destroyed the radio, much to the displeasure of my uncle.

One of my school friends lived on a farm and his family was very active in hunting – for rabbits and foxes. The farm had lots of horses and ponies for the little kids to ride. If you became good at riding you could enter the local horse show and compete in jumping and dressage competitions. I had not ridden before and my friend, Terry, invited me to join a group on a ride to the next village, which was about ten miles away. Early on the designated morning I packed some lunch and rode my bike four miles along a dirt road to Terry's farm house. We saddled up the horses and about a dozen of us set off alternating between a walk and a gentle trot. Those of you who have ridden horses will know that it is important to hold on tight and synchronize your movements with those of the horse. Well the horse decided to use the grass along the side of the road and jumped those little channels that had been the cause of my downfall while riding my bike. Now this synchronization needs practice and luckily when I hit the floor the soft earth was in a friendly mood. Gallantly I remounted eager to don the crimson coat and join the tally-ho brigade at the hunt and to guide my steed over those massive jumps at the county show. Much later in life, never quite making it to those lofty aspirations, I learned about cumulative trauma. Mostly this modern day scourge doesn't occur where I first discovered it – in the rear end. I couldn't walk straight or sit down for a week. So much for that career.

In the evenings during summer it didn't get dark until 8 or 9 o'clock. As we had no homework and no school the next day we used to go and play in the local farmyard. In

the farmyard were stacks of un-threshed wheat, barley and oats, and straw stacks after threshing. We used to burrow into the base of the straw stacks during hide and seek games and one night I learned all about claustrophobia. I hid in a hole and pulled too much straw down to cover the opening. I didn't like that game anymore so I suggested that we should play cricket. So we did. Now the stack yard was separated from the adjacent field, which in which lived a bull, by a barbed wire fence. Being small in stature I was always more adept at the pull than the drive and on this occasion my right hand took over and the ball went sailing into the bull field. "You hit it, you fetch it" was the consensus. So I did. However, as I collected the ball, the bull began to show an interest so I rushed back and like Peter Rabbit in a similar situation, squeezed under the fence. Unfortunately, in my haste I misjudged the clearance between the bottom strand of barbed wire and my back. Once again I went home accompanied by a torn shirt and a deep scratch across my back, this time not sufficiently deep for stitches but deep enough to release a lot of blood. My father new all about "lock-jaw" as he had once carried his best friend all the way home from a football match in the 1920s. So he and my mother decided that iodine was the appropriate treatment. Understandably I was not overly enthusiastic about this course of action so I set off around the orchard with my father, bottle of iodine in hand, in hot pursuit. Well I was small and nimble and easily won the battle of the low hanging apple tree branches only to be cornered in my dog's yard. I was very fond of my border collie, but on this occasion he failed to protect me from the iodine, but perhaps he understood that tetanus was a less appealing alternative. If you look closely you can still see the scar on my back.

My dog was a natural. He could round up sheep and cows. However that wasn't his job, so I had to be careful while walking with him in the fields. In those days horses were still used on the farms to pull carts of potatoes, vegetables, corn, hay and straw. On the farm next to my house there was a fine animal called Boxer, who when not working ate grass in the field (15 acre") where I walked with my dog. One day the dog decided to sniff the left rear hoof of Boxer and Boxer was not amused. He lifted his leg and brought it down on Mac's head – just to encourage him not to go sniffing around where he was not welcome. The dog was never the same again – he started having fits, the bromide didn't work and eventually we had to put him out of his misery.

The war involved each side dropping bombs on the other side's cities. We had moved out of the city into the country at the beginning of the war to avoid being bombed. Unfortunately, our village was right below the return path of the enemy aircraft and although we put off all our lights during an air raid, the enemy still dumped the left over inventory around us. This was very good of them because the bombs made big holes in the ground and the farmers didn't have to dig ponds for their cows to drink from. Early in my grammar school career I studied biology from a teacher who was nicknamed "bombsite Bertha" because of her interest in the flora that thrived on the many bombsites in the city. I was more interested in the fauna and used to go and catch newts in the local bomb holes. One day in a field about half a mile from my home, I leaned too far over the pond and fell in. Now at that time I wasn't a very good swimmer and nobody but my dog was there to help. So I splashed about and luckily scrambled up the muddy bank. The soggy walk back home was not particularly pleasant, especially as I passed the inquisitive neighbors' houses. My reception at home was less than warm, with comments like "Do you think that clothes and shoes grow on trees?" I had come close to drowning and all I got was criticism and grounding.

During my teenage years I spent my summer holidays working on the farm. We did everything from hedging and ditching, hoeing the weeds between the vegetable rows, making haycocks, scything around the corn field so that the reaper could get in, putting sheaves of corn into stooks, forking the sheaves from the stooks to the cart and from the cart to the stack and all sorts of other jobs associated with harvesting and threshing and looking after the livestock. The thing about farm work in those days is that there was plenty of variety – over the year – but each task could take a few days or weeks. And the days were long. I learned about blisters, sore backs, aching arms and weary legs. Nowadays they call it cumulative trauma and with good cause because on some production lines the jobs don't change for years. But I survived, earned some money, got a sun tan, put on some muscle and learned to appreciate the satisfaction of hard work, because of the trauma.

When I was 18 I was an agile youth and quite good at games. So I decided to apply to study Physical Education at university. The only university (Birmingham) in the country

that offered such a program involved rides on two buses and a train – much like the journey made by Lily, from a town called Mira, in the musical Carnival. My parents had arranged for me to stay with a distant cousin, who turned out to have the greatest collection of 78s, EPs and LPs you have ever seen. On the evening before I was to leave I was demonstrating my agility to a captive audience by sitting down cross-legged and standing up. Unfortunately I was too close to the hearth, lost my balance and fell heavily on the kettle, which had just boiled for a cup of tea. The resulting scald covered the outside of my thigh. Undaunted, but decidedly uncomfortable, I made the trip. The music at my distant cousin's house was great and at the crack of dawn I boarded to bus to the university. What a surprise – the director of the department had been England's soccer captain – Bill Slater (who led the team through the preliminary rounds in the World Cup in Chile). My first question from the panel inquired about my opinion regarding the effects of a change from aluminum to fiberglass poles in the pole vault. This question was prompted by my accurate claim to have finished second in the county athletics championship in that event. In fact I had finished first in the city meet, because the competitor following me broke two poles and so that was the end of that. In the county meet I found that there were only two of us entered in this new event and the other guy was going to start at 12 feet – some three and a half feet higher than my qualifying jump. So I came second. After the interview we changed for our physical abilities assessment. First we had to dance to some music, but the atmosphere in a university gym is a little different from Saturday night in the church hall, where in the days before "Rock around the Clock" and "Footloose" dancing was somewhat staid. And anyway my scald didn't help. Next, this famous football player took a bucket of tennis balls and threw them in quick succession at me and to either side. I dived for a ball, missed it, fell on my scalded leg and that was that. Much later in life I had the pleasure of playing both soccer and cricket with this famous guy.

Instead of going to university I opted to do my National Service in the Royal Air Force. My first day in this job was a real trauma – exchange all your clothes for military uniforms and get your hair cut. Eat institutional food, wash dishes, polish the floor so that you can shave in it, lay out your locker and bed-pack as precisely as your mother told you to do. Clean your rifle and polish your boots and brasses. Then came the injections three in the left arm, three in the right and one on your thigh. The best way to ease the pain of this protective trauma was to run for miles with your rifle above

your head. “Good morning” said the drill sergeant cheerily, “I’m going to make you wish that you were never born.” “By the left, quick march.” “Eift, ight, eift, ight, eift, ight eift, - eift ight, eift ight, eift, ight, eift, squad , halt, about turn, eift, ight, eift ight, eift ight eift” and so on for hours and weeks until the error in squad heel strike was zero. Push ups, pull ups, sit ups, run, jump, climb, if you broke you were a wimp. “Dear mother and father, life is just fine, Wish you were here, Love, your son” Then it was learning to read Morse code. If you thought learning your times tables in primary school was bad you should try this. While at this technical training camp I made some facetious remarks on an exam paper and found that such behavior was contrary to the good order of the Royal Air Force. Three days confined to barracks, work in the tin room of the mess after every meal, on parade looking sprightly three times a day. Fortunately I was able to use a relatively unknown rule in the service that allowed airmen who were confined to barracks to represent their unit in sports competition. On this occasion the other side in the intra mural cricket match was captained by the education officer who had put me on the “charge”. I was able to put a few balls around his ears, before hitting his stumps, and returned to hero status and in the good books of the education officer. After graduation from the communication school top of the class I was posted to the more relaxed environment of Hong Kong, where the heat and the bugs and the parasites inflict their unique forms of trauma. There was no air conditioning in those days and the sergeant was very concerned about the length of your hair and the shine on your boots and brasses, just like home.

Out of the Air Force and on the Physiotherapy School. - paradise – just three men and seventeen girls in the freshmen class and hundreds of nurses in the hospital. The only trauma here was to the patients and some were pretty bad, teenage motor cyclists didn’t wear crash helmets. I had to go and look for trauma, so I started to play rugby, where trauma was a forgone conclusion. But I was quick and nimble and learned to get rid of the ball quickly, before the opposing forwards caught me. Then one night at practice I got my wish – trauma to the body and soul. We played touch rugby under the lights. I caught this ball pretended to pass it to the right, pulled it in, side stepped to the left and accelerated – right into the goal post. Split lip, more blood and a long bus ride to the emergency room, which happened to be next door to the physiotherapy clinic where I worked. The ER nurses were a cheery bunch and always on the look out for the opportunity to humiliate a colleague. After cleaning and sewing

up my lip the nurse asked when I had last had a tetanus shot. I couldn't remember so she suggested that it would be good if I had one. As I was rolling up my sleeve all the nurses in the ER gathered round while the nurse who was treating me shook her head and had me drop my trousers. The trauma of the needle was nothing compared with the embarrassment that lasted for weeks. A few months later I did indeed become a hero in the nursing ranks. While walking home, late one night, across a park I interrupted an attack on one of the nurses. The would-be assailant fled and I escorted the nurse home safely. But then self-inflicted trauma struck again. We treated asthmatic children with ultra violet light and breathing exercises. So my two colleagues and I decided to get a sun tan and underestimated the dose. It is difficult to sleep with a 100%, second degree erythema. The next day was the occasion of the annual inspection of the School by the National Society and we were unable to hide our glow, which resulted in some cross words from the authorities. These children in the asthma class brought with them all sorts of bugs including mumps, which they were generous enough to give to me. Now mumps not only affects the parotid glands but the disease also makes riding your bike very painful.

Graduated from Physiotherapy school and on to the Birmingham Accident Hospital – in those days the world's most advanced trauma and burns center. Apart from industrial accidents and old folks breaking their hips and wrists on the ice, the most common clients were motor-cycle riders. Mostly broken legs and heads and often ruined lives. So I bought a motor cycle, and survived. On to the next big job – physiotherapist for Warwickshire County Cricket Club. The thing about professional sports is that everything happens quicker and the ball is moving faster when it hits you. Some of my patients who had spent a whole day at the crease were black and blue, despite the body armor that I recommended. Professional sport isn't a piece of cake – you have to be good and tough. But one day trauma worked for me. The team captain was fielding in his accustomed aggressive position at short square leg and was hit on the wrist with a ball. I rushed onto the field and we immediately concluded that all was not well, so I sent him off to the emergency room. Now the reserves were all playing away for the second team so I got to play in the major leagues for a couple of hours and did not disgrace myself. During the winter I played rugby and one day I made this brake around the blind side of the scrum only to be met by a mountain of a "Number 8" who promptly sat on me. Now technically speaking your knee is not supposed to

take the weight of such mountains while twisting and bending and this occasion was no exception. My knee swelled up like a football and the doctor X-rayed it (there were no MRIs in those days) and diagnosed IDK – “internal derangement of the knee” or “I don’t know”, take your pick. The treatment was walking two miles each way to work for a month or so and missing the rest of the rugby season.

I tired of physical therapy and became a schoolteacher for a year – a great opportunity to return the favors of my happy school days. When the fifteen-year-old inner city boys got a little rowdy I introduced wrestling into the PE curriculum. The only catch was that I was expected to join in and many of them were bigger and stronger than me. Luckily this strategy was successful – the boys got to let off steam and nobody got hurt. Until one day, the girls were using the gym / assembly hall and it was raining so I could not take the boys along Hope Street to the church hall for their class. So I took them into an empty classroom and began to instruct them in the subtleties of badminton. I ran a badminton class after school for the senior class and so I expected that these 14 year olds would be interested. Not a bit of it – they were inattentive and their ringleader was a big lad, known for his outbursts of dissatisfaction with the world around him. After warning him three or four times I made the ultimate mistake of threatening corporal punishment. He responded predictably so I marched him off to the headmaster’s office and explained the situation. The boy was still flapping his wings so the headmaster agreed that I should go ahead with my threatened caning – one stroke on each hand. It hurt me more than the boy! In the spring I took a group of these boys trekking in the Lake District. We carried all our clothes and slept and ate in youth hostels. One day the low clouds moved in and we got lost in the mountains and walked twenty-two miles wet through. On the next day the boys had recovered their energy and against my advice started running down the hill. One fell and broke his arm. I had to hitch hike to and from the hospital 30 miles away to get the arm X-rayed and cased in plaster. At the end of the trip, I took the boy back to his mother, who lived and worked down the notorious Varna Road. “Here’s Norman, Mrs Mohammad, he broke his arm”. She was very understanding.

About this time I heard about a new undergraduate program called Ergonomics and Cybernetics so I decided to go back to college at the tender age of 26. It was a great move - lots of rugby, soccer, cricket and beer and I found a wife. I also found a career. But there was the odd bit of trauma. At the end of my first year I went climbing mountains in Norway with a couple of graduate students. On one occasion as we neared the summit of the Romsdalahorn it started snowing and covered all the foot and hand holds. Trauma under these circumstances would have been serious, but none occurred. On the next day we were coming down a mountain diagonally across a scree. I was at the bottom of the scree and below me was a snow slope. My colleague was higher up the scree (I had made a serious tactical mistake) and dislodged a boulder which came bounding down, hit me on the shoulder and sent me flying down the snow slope until I could dig my ice axe into the snow and arrest my slide. Meanwhile the boulder was racing me down the slope and stopped just below me – it weighed at least 50 lbs and had missed decapitating me by inches. A couple of days later we made another strategic mistake and committed to going down a steep south facing face, which turned out to be wet and very crumbly. It took us four hours and delayed our return to the lodge until way after dark. A couple of near misses but no trauma.

Between the ages of 30 and 50 I transferred this familial vulnerability to trauma to my four children. When Ginny was one and a bit we took her twice in a month to the local ER – they began to wonder what kind of parents we were. I sat on Caroline’s head when she was a baby, which perhaps explains a lot of things. Lily, Caroline and Tom all had dislocated elbows from falling off things or being pulled. Tommy had a thing with wheels – he fell off his skate board and made holes in both knees, he then made a jump for his bike, landed badly and broke his wrist; later he tried to jump across the pond on an ATV and made a big hole in his thigh and to crown it all, he tried to take his off road pick up off road and did serious damage to the truck and his insurance rating. Just the other week, while back country skiing, Lily damaged her knee a day and a half into Yellowstone. Most of the serious trauma during these years occurred to our pets. Cats, rabbits, gerbils, birds and fish all donated their lives to the education of our children in the meaning of mortality.

Now I am in the wearing out phase and get all sorts of strains and sprains while running. Once, I was running in the Boston marathon and the lines for the portajohns were too long so I took my place in the crowd of runners. About half way down the hill in Hopkinton I saw a group of runners relieving themselves in the woods so I left the course to join them. I stood on a rock and sprained my ankle. Now my daughter had driven with me from Detroit to Boston and was waiting for me at the finish so I really had no choice but to keep on running. Now sprained ankles are pretty stable if you don't twist from side to side so I was able to complete the 26 miles with not too much discomfort. But by the evening my ankle was black and blue and the size of a football. Ginny drove me all the way home and I still have the photograph for those who are interested. Running marathons is always somewhat traumatic especially if you get greedy and run too fast for the first half. When you get to mile twenty and are dragging along you are only about half way there. The pain all over the body is intense and the soul is severely traumatized. Some call it character building, others call it stupid. Old runners are always tearing things – hamstrings, groins and Achilles tendons. The tears mostly occur during speed training or when you dash across an intersection to beat the traffic. But these things only last a few weeks or months and then you start again. When runners are tired they drag their feet and irregularities in the pavement have a way of jumping up and tripping them. One morning I was trotting around the suburbs with the other joggers, walkers and dog walkers saying “good morning” when my toe caught a ridge in the road. Down I went banging my head, wrist, elbow, knee and hip on the concrete, blood spurting everywhere. A pair of dog walkers said “good morning” and we went our separate ways, me bleeding and they talking to their dogs.

Chapter 29

Power to the Pupils

(Andrew Suddaby)

How many of you remember the joy of having responsibility thrust upon you at quite a young age? In many cases it started way back at age 11, in the first form. For some unknown reason our form teacher Miss Mackay, BA – no less, thrust me in at the deep end by making me the Form’s Savings Representative. I haven’t the faintest idea what that entailed but I assume it had something to do with collecting a ledger from the School Secretary, a very kind lady called Miss Moss, and returning it with the money when we had been duly credited with our weekly deposits of one shilling. I suspect that this was a hang-over from the war-time drive to extract funds from the adult population in order to build more Spitfires, Hurricanes, Lancasters, Sherman tanks and battleships. I don’t recall ever cashing in those savings so they might still be lurking in the vaults of the Yorkshire Penny bank or wherever the el supremo of the MLHS scheme, Albert Royle sent them.

Then we took turns at being Ink Monitors – two of us at a time. Remember going along to the dark hole, near Ding Dong Bell’s classroom, where the powdered ink was mixed ready for use? Cans with long spouts that had probably served to lubricate tanks in North Africa were carefully brought back to the classroom and we gently or maybe carelessly filled the ink pots up to the brim so that our scratchy pens could deliver even more blots onto our books. That aspect of our lives came to an end when many of us acquired fountain pens – I still have mine, a small Parker Slimfold, which none of the grandchildren has sadly shown any interest in inheriting. Some of us even ‘got modern’ and used ‘biros’ (ball point pens), although these were frowned upon by many of the more traditional teachers. As soon as the ink wells became redundant we boys, who were always seated on the corridor side of the classrooms, enjoyed happy times throwing the pots past the girls and out of the open windows, always hoping to

hear the small crash as they hit the gravel path. It was even more satisfying when we were up in the high academic clouds on the first floor.

And what about being Milk Monitors? I don't recall how many of those dinky one third pint bottles filled a crate but that it definitely needed two boys to lug it all the way to the classroom from outside the boys' changing room every morning. The piles of crates, with the pre-sorted numbers of bottles for a particular class, awaited us, frozen solid in the winter and dangerously festering on hot summer days. The bigger boys who were prefects ruled that empire, and woe betide any monitors who tried to acquire more bottles out of them than were strictly needed. Back in the class room, somebody, probably one of the girls who could no doubt be relied upon to have cleaner hands, had dished out the waxed paper straws. The milk ceremony was then accompanied by the merry noise of slurping and bubbling, with a patient teacher waiting until the class had taken on board its daily dose of vitamin D.

... and Crime and Punishment

Moving on a few years to when we were in the upper forms, Mrs Fawcett deemed it not unduly risky to let some of us become cast members in one of her plays. I don't think we actually volunteered but I recall becoming a yokel in her splendid production of 'She Stoops to Conquer'. I guess that we were probably in the fourth form but it might have been a year earlier. Rehearsals took place immediately after school and whoever were our form's Milk Monitors decided it would be a good idea to requisition the surplus milk bottles during the mid-morning break. I suspect that I was involved. The crate(s) were duly smuggled into what we thought would be a good hiding place in the wings off the stage. Unbeknown to us, surplus milk was at that time traditionally seen as a perk for the members of 6A – the upper sixth. Fred Plater caught us in the act and decided to punish four of us. Not having a rack or ruler or sandshoe handy he picked up the nearest thing to hand and duly gave each of us several wallops across the backside. His choice of weapon was a poor as he found it increasingly difficult to wield the smallish blackboard with any force or accuracy. Another crime and

punishment incident, occurred a few years later when there was a very public confrontation between Mrs Fawcett and Mr 'Arty' Shaw the Art Teacher? Mr Shaw took on the set design, construction and painting for one of the plays – probably 'Noah'. I cannot recall the early part of the 'discussion' but big Arty Shaw glowered at Mrs Fawcett and announced in full voice, "You're a persistent bugger!" The classically educated Mrs Fawcett's immediate reply of, "I admit to the former but not the latter," is one that I have long hoped to use but, so far the opportunity has not arisen and, as the years go by, I'll probably forget!

I recall the time when one of our class hid in a large wicker hamper half full of costumes for one of the plays? For some reason it had been left near the door at the front of Eric Bell's music classroom. I think that it was possibly 'Golly' Elliot or it could have been Bryan Mallison. 'Ding Dong' duly arrived and apparently didn't detect that somebody was missing. Somehow we managed to keep dead-pan faces as we heard low moaning noises coming from 'nowhere' and the hamper occasionally shifted a bit. I believe that on that occasion our beloved music master ignored the cries for help for at least half an hour before reverting to a dressing down of the class clown. One mathematics and football master was more direct with a flexible rubber strap applied to hands or backsides.

One minor punishment did come my way. In the first form we were taught 'Scripture', possibly by Miss Mackay. I was uninterested in these philosophical matters and towards the end of the first term, when we had the exam, (yes we had exams each term in the first year) the boys in the class decided to have a competition to see who could do the worst. I thought that I had done really well to achieve 23rd out of 30, but there must have been some really crafty answers provided by others. Anyway, my pride at doing so badly in Scripture was duly punctured by my father when he read the report and asked me why that mark and place were so low. I got a real telling off along the lines of, "whatever you think about it, your job is to do as well as you can in all subjects."

