

Chapter 10

Crossroads and adjustments

The rug is pulled out from under me

It all began with a phone call at home during the lunch hour on Friday, June 5th, 1987. On the other end of the line was my supervisor, Ray Frydrych, who sternly said that ... “You are required to be at Mr. Johnston’s office at half past one this afternoon.” Mr. Johnston was Don Johnston, the industrial relations manager at Champion responsible for unionised employees. I hung up and told Monica the foreboding message, ending with the phrase, “Well, I suppose I’ll have to face the music.” Not knowing the reason behind the summons was nerve-wracking and as soon as I entered the office I knew it was a very serious situation.

Sitting around the conference table were Don Johnston and Ray Frydrych representing the company, and Ian Scott for the union. Don Johnston opened the conversation and then handed over to Ray who produced a typewritten document. He said to me, “I’d like you to read this.” It was a memorandum from Ray to Don Johnston dated that day. In a nutshell it described the company’s non-confidence in my work standards; citing two situations and a list of supporting reasons. Also attached was a note from Rowen Baker, product support manager, listing alleged mistakes. The memo ended with a recommendation that in Ray’s opinion it would be better for me to look elsewhere for a job within the company or voluntarily leave my job there.

I was obviously perplexed with this slap in the face, given over ten years service at Champion. Previous work performance discussions with Ray were relatively minor and I had recorded them. Generally they amounted to his personal observations and bordered on such technicalities as spoken and written verbosity, attacks on self-initiative activities and justification of the senior technical writer’s position. I even remember the first incident shortly after Ray had become supervisor in September, 1982, when he lectured me in a private office about a dispute using U.S. spelling in the publications (I had disagreed with the Marketing Department’s policy). He said, “I’m not giving you shit or anything, but the policy is clear since we send most of our product to the U.S.” The current reprimand, however, was catastrophic and the meeting ended in a sombre mood. Ian Scott, however, advised me that appropriate protection steps would be put into place.

Of course I was knocked for six, and the spectre of the reprimand did not go away but lodged in my mind to create a psychological bugbear. The effect was so serious that sleepless nights were routine; something that didn’t help one time when attending the live theatre – a Stratford Festival production – and leaden eyelids prevented me from enjoying the play.

The disciplinary action and its ramifications were to play out for the next two months before the matter was finally resolved. These eight weeks were extremely anxious ones and the union had to make a stand.

The grievance procedure

The collective bargaining agreement between Champion Road Machinery Ltd. and Local Lodge 1863 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM&AW) not only covered hourly paid shop floor workers but also some of the office employees such as myself. Union representation at the disciplinary meetings was crucial to my case and I was fully aware of this. To the union's credit, the IAM&AW union office committee backed me up to the hilt right from the beginning.

On June 16th, 1987, a repeat disciplinary meeting was held in Don Johnston's office; once again with all the main players in attendance. The company introduced additional evidence of my alleged mistakes, citing other sources of concern. After a brief discussion, the official grievance form, dated June 10th, 1987, was submitted to the company according to Step No. 1 of the rules of the collective bargaining agreement. On the form under the heading *The employee claims:* was written, "I have been disciplined unjustly. I wish to have this discipline (dated June 5/87) removed from my file", signed by Ian Scott and myself. Step No. 1 started the grievance procedure and the company was now liable for its response.

It didn't take long for the company to submit its rebuttal. On June 18th, 1987, Ray added his comments on the grievance form to justify his original written warning. At an informal meeting in Ray's office, I was advised that the grievance form would be passed to Bill Metcalfe, the director of marketing and advertising services, for his appraisal.

Senior management now assessed the situation and, at Step No. 2, the grievance form was endorsed with the statement, "I have reviewed the matter with Ray Frydrych and concur with his statement." Dated June 23rd, 1987, and signed by W. H. Metcalfe. This now paved the way for the grievance to be taken up by the union for Step No. 3 action.

Just over two weeks later on July 10th, 1987, a third meeting was held in Don Johnston's office in which the grievance was fully discussed with the top company and union representatives – Mike Sully, vice president of employee relations, and Jim Goodison, district representative for the IAM&AW. The outcome rested with the company for its final response. This came about on July 23rd, 1987, when, in the presence of myself and the entire union office committee, Ray Frydrych announced the company's official verbal warning; being Step No. 3 of the grievance procedure, as advised by Don Johnston. Consequently, the original written warning in the memorandum was removed from the issue and replaced with a less severe verbal warning. The meeting broke up and, when I conferred with the union office committee, Ian Scott said to me, "Take no notice of the verbal warning – it's not worth a pinch of coon shit."

In the meantime I had written to the union office committee with a letter stating my own points of view. These personal observations described why I refuted the accusations, citing overreaction by Rowen Baker in his note of alleged mistakes, possible over-zealousness of his staff, and Ray's clandestine investigations. It behooved me to challenge these allegations to protect my professional integrity and to ward off any pressure to make me leave the company voluntarily. Certainly my age at 41 was detrimental where re-employment was concerned and, leaving a new home, work security, social benefits and friends, represented a 'no-win'

situation. Having satisfactorily settled in an ideal living environment, I encountered a crossroads with the critical decision – *Career or Community*. Despite the diluted reprimand, the other shoe was about to fall.

In the afternoon of July 24th, 1987, Ray called me into his office for a closed door meeting. It was clear that he was feeling uncomfortable and his desktop was free of paperwork. He made a point of not taking any notes of our conversation. He casually enquired that now the grievance was over had any lessons been learned. I explained that I thought the circumstances bringing about the initial discipline were unfortunate, since I had acted according to my better judgement during the course of my research. Ray understood that my approach to the project had been compromised.

I also underlined that the resultant accusations were very demoralising and that such an incident was my first experience of such in twenty years as a practicing technical communicator. I concluded that any lessons learned applied to an improved understanding of how best to communicate with colleagues in my ‘lateral relationships’ during the course of my research.

Ray then observed that it appeared I had not recognized the ‘intent’ of the initial memorandum – that is, “... it would be better for Barry to look elsewhere for a different position within the company or voluntarily leave his job.” Regardless that the grievance was settled, he had been assigned by upper management to act as ‘the executioner’, a responsibility he disliked, and make me aware that it would be in my best interest to leave voluntarily. He promised support in the form of a reference and material for an interview portfolio. Further conversation touched on the philosophical side of the dramatic decision facing me and, after indicating my dismay, requested to return home early and this was granted.

Of course, this turn of events needed to be brought to the union’s attention. It so happened that one member of the union office committee, Ken Crawford, lived virtually opposite me. I knew Ken was at home so I visited and told him about the afternoon’s meeting. Ken was totally upset about this and told me to immediately phone Don Johnston at the office and have him come to Ken’s house. When Don arrived, I described the situation. Don said something about there’s not going to be a ‘witch hunt’ and I left him talking to Ken. Then I went home to divulge everything to Monica. I also composed a note to the union executive to record and document this latest development.

The weekend passed without incident although, of course, the situation was still in the forefront of our minds. On Monday, Ray must have been contacted by employee relations. He called me to his office and immediately entered into a tirade citing ‘breach of trust.’ I hurriedly closed the door to prevent any eavesdropping as Ray continued to rant. My parting shot before leaving the office was to say, “What else did you expect me to do?”

Other fallout from the whole situation was for Ray to physically move me from the downstairs front office to the mezzanine floor and be in the company of the three parts compilers. Evidently he wanted to distance himself from me as much as possible and this precipitated my removal from his working domain. Marco remained downstairs with the WP equipment. This happened on June 23rd, 1987, five weeks before the balloon went up on Monday, July 27th, 1987. It may also have been at the time when Ray hired Gordon

(“Gord”) Farrish, a young college graduate, as a junior technical writer. Gord was a Huron County farmboy with some mechanical equipment hands-on experience, but was keen to learn the ropes of writing technical publications and he occupied my vacated place in the downstairs front office.

As it turned out, the physical move had a minor blessing in that I could work with my other colleagues in a more relaxed atmosphere and, later, Mark Russell and I spent the lunch breaks playing chess in the back office. On the day of his outburst, Ray was summoned to the main office where obviously the union wanted full clarification on the issue of upper management’s insistence of my voluntary resignation. The outcome seemed to be in my favour, and Ian Scott visited us at home stating that upper management had overstepped its authority and “... had been told.” When we mentioned that we were undecided whether or not to embark on a planned summer vacation, Ian said, “Go ahead with your trip as nobody is being laid off.” This, of course, was most welcome news and a significant relief knowing that there was an essence of job security, and that ‘it paid to belong to the union.’ To all intents and purposes I had survived this bolt out of the blue.

A much needed vacation

Now that the dust had settled and we could look forward to a change of scenery, we started a two week touring vacation when the company’s summer shutdown period began. The plan was to explore parts of Eastern Ontario and a visit to Ottawa, the Nation’s Capital. Despite inclement weather, the first day was spent driving across country to an area called the Kawartha Lakes. Similar to the Muskoka District, this region is informally known as ‘cottage country’ because of the numerous rustic cabins (and not so rustic summer homes) – usually lakeside properties – that dot the area. Many of the cottages are owned by southern city dwellers who migrate from the concrete jungle to their ‘home away from home’ in the northern hinterland.

The Trent-Severn Waterway is a system of rivers and lakes linked together and, at various points where the water levels differ, flights of locks facilitate the passage of watercraft. In Bobcageon and Burleigh Falls we watched the activity at two principal locks; then continued to Peterborough and its famous hydraulic lift lock. The scenery *en route* was typical of the rocky Canadian Shield that featured pine forests and lakes.

From Peterborough we made a side trip to Petroglyphs Provincial Park before continuing to Prince Edward County. Petroglyphs Provincial Park contains a unique display of ancient aboriginal art, similar to the European cave drawings. A large section of exposed rock was covered with numerous hieroglyphics depicting sacred signs and representations of animal life, including the so called ‘rabbit man’, a particularly lucky symbol. The rock was enclosed in a special building to protect the artwork and facilitate viewing.

Using Belleville as a base, we toured Prince Edward County and visited the Mariners Park Museum at South Bay with its collection of artifacts that included a reconstructed Great Lakes lighthouse. On the following day, the weather had greatly improved so we walked around the town of Picton to admire the many Georgian period buildings such as the Macaulay House, St. Mary Magdalene’s Church – now a museum – and the Prince Edward County courthouse with its huge portico entrance. Nearby was “Schooner’s”, an unimposing restaurant that served excellent fish and chips for lunch.



Burleigh Falls Lock, Kawartha Lakes Area, Ontario, August, 1987.



Preserved Ancient Aboriginal Art at Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Ontario, August, 1987.



Prince Edward County Courthouse, Picton, Ontario, August, 1987.



Drill Practice at Old Fort Henry, Kingston, Ontario, August, 1987.



Merrickville Blockhouse and Locks, Rideau Canal Waterway System, Ontario, August, 1987.



Flight of Rideau Canal Locks, Ottawa, Ontario, August, 1987.



Rideau Hall, the Residence of the Governor General of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, August, 1987.



Vendors at Byward Flower Market, Ottawa, Ontario, August, 1987.



Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. Nuclear Reactor Site, Chalk River, Ontario, August, 1987.



Hydraulic Lift Lock, Kirkfield, Kawartha Lakes Area, Ontario, August, 1987.



Cyprus Lake Provincial Park, Bruce Peninsula, Ontario, August, 1987.



Family and Friends at Don and Claire's 25th Wedding Anniversary Party, Milton, Ontario, August, 1987.

We had anticipated visiting Old Fort Henry in Kingston to see the evening spectacle called the “Sunset Ceremonial Retreat.” The plan was to take the regular visitors tour of the fort, eat a picnic dinner and attend the event; then return to Belleville on the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401. Opposite “Schooner’s” was a shopping mall where we bought some provisions and stored them in the picnic cooler. We then left Picton for the Glenora ferry which is a free ride as it is a part of Hwy. 33, the provincial road linking Trenton with Kingston. Along this road is one of the federal penitentiaries located in the Kingston area.

As expected, we arrived at Old Fort Henry in time to take one of the conducted tours of the fortifications. College students, dressed in period uniforms, went about their duties as soldiers would normally have done when the fort was active in the 19th century. After the tour we found a quiet place to eat our picnic, then returned in the early evening for the start of the show. The inside parapet of the fort was a good vantage point to see the sequence of events. First to file into the parade square was a guest contingent from the U.S.A. A column of fifes and drums from the Plymouth colonial militia marched in, followed by a colour party. They looked resplendent in their blue and white uniforms, gaiters and tricorne hats. Next to appear were the fifes and drums of the Fort Henry Guard (FHG), dressed in scarlet tunics, black trousers and traditional shako hats. The band was followed by a company of the FHG soldiers that mobilised itself into a formation ready to practice the standard drill exercises. These consisted of using the bayonet, and tactical manoeuvring into ‘squares’ to discharge musket volleys. The highlight of the pageant was the “Sunset Ceremonial Retreat” in which not only infantry but also field artillery took part. The ‘thin red line’ and supporting cannons on either side performed a strategic withdrawal from one end of the parade ground to the other. The strict sequence soon had the fort’s interior filled with the thunder and flashes of discharging muskets and cannons, and black powder smoke billowing around the troops. The performance ended with discharging one of the fort’s major guns on the battlements.

The most scenic route from Kingston to Ottawa is following the Rideau River and Rideau Canal. This waterway system was devised in the 19th century to create a troop and supply route between Kingston and Montréal, thus avoiding the vulnerable international section of the St. Lawrence River. Pleasure craft navigate their way through forty-nine locks, and the road traveller can see some of them in action at Kingston Mills and Jones Falls. The locks, overseen by the staff of Parks Canada, use the original hand-operated crank handle mechanisms to open and close the lock gates. Located at Merrickville is one of the more strategic locks, which is guarded by a wooden blockhouse. At Ottawa, the canal bypasses the Rideau Falls and, in a flight of eight locks, terminates at the Ottawa River (Lac Deschênes).

The Nation’s Capital was our furthest point east and we stayed in a motel in the predominantly French-speaking suburb of Orléans; choosing to commute into the city centre by bus. A memorable day was spent in perfect weather where we were fortunate to see the huge spectacle of Changing of the Guard on Parliament Hill. Soldiers of the Governor General’s Foot Guards and the Canadian Grenadier Guards in full ceremonial uniforms, including bearskins, performed precision marches to the music of two military bands. There were inspections and trooping of the colours as the guards changed their roster. After the event we walked along Sussex Drive past the home of the Canadian prime minister to the picturesque Rideau Falls. Further on was the entrance to Rideau Hall, the official residence of the Governor General of Canada. As we arrived, the sentry guards were being changed by soldiers in full ceremonial uniform. At this time the grounds of Rideau

Hall were accessible to the public (although not the house itself), and we were able to view the imposing façade of the stately home and observe a cricket match in progress on the estate. Before leaving Ottawa we spent some time wandering around Byward Market which was colourful and full of atmosphere.

Our next stopover was the town of Pembroke, reached by driving west along Hwys. 417 and 17 (TCH). Not far from Pembroke is the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. (AECL) nuclear laboratories at Chalk River. This facility, together with another in Rolphton, are pioneer nuclear power and irradiation plants. The AECL Chalk River NRU reactor could be toured, and the evolution and technology of harnessing nuclear energy explained by knowledgeable guides. We were shown how radioactive isotopes used for medical science and cancer treatment were made at Chalk River, one of only a few such facilities in the world.

Pembroke has a certain claim to fame; known as the “Return of the Swallows.” A large population of swallows roost in a copse of trees and, at sunset, it’s a ritual to watch the birds returning *en masse* to their nests in a great rush of flapping wings and tumultuous cacophony. It was remarkable to witness how they flew directly into the trees and their nests despite the failing light of the day.

After driving through the rugged landscape of the Haliburton Highlands, once again we encountered the Trent-Severn Waterway and the ingenious method of raising and lowering pleasure craft between different levels of water. The Kirkfield lift locks worked on the same principle as the Peterborough hydraulic locks. The only difference was that the two lift chambers were supported in a metal girder construction instead of a brick and masonry structure.

We anticipated a few more days away before returning home and continued to the town of Tobermory – also known as “Tub” – on the Bruce Peninsula where we booked into the “Tobermory Lodge.” At first we put up with the disappointing accommodation, which consisted of a rustic cabin annex to the main building. The shack had seen better days and the prevailing musty odour and evidence of mould was unpalatable. The summer weather, however, enticed us out to the nearby Cyprus Lake Provincial Park (since incorporated into the Bruce Peninsula National Park), where we located the Bruce Trail that led to the rocky shore of Georgian Bay. The area is very popular with scuba divers who swim among the wrecks on the lakebed of the Fathom Five National Marine Park. Just offshore where we stood on the low cliffs, a motor boat arrived with several skin divers. Together with other recreational swimmers we watched them explore the many caves and grottoes eroded into the limestone bluffs. We returned to “Tub”, but overnight the weather deteriorated which, together with the poor lodging, convinced us to pull up stakes and we drove home the following day.

High and low points round off the year

Shortly after the initial disciplinary meeting we heard from my cousin, Don Jr., that my Aunt Marjorie and a travelling companion were visiting Don’s mother, Aunt Kath. A family reunion was quickly organized and we all met at Don and Claire’s house in Milton. It was good to see Aunt Marjorie again after our visit to Oregon in 1978. Another family and friends gathering at the Milton residence happened later in August when Don and Claire celebrated their 25th (Silver) wedding anniversary.



Apartment Building Upgrades, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1987.



Canada Day Parade Following the Founders' Day Civic Ceremony, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1987.



Barry and Apple Macintosh Home Computer at the GSS Interview, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1987.



Dad and Honey Relax at 109, Birchwood Avenue, Hatfield, England, October, 1987.



Autumn View of Cambria Road from the Apartment, Goderich, Ontario, October, 1987.



Nelson Street House After an Early Snowfall, Goderich, Ontario, November, 1987.

During the summer months a vintage P-51 Mustang (clip wing model) Second World War fighter aircraft visited Sky Harbour Airport, together with an even earlier de Havilland Tiger Moth biplane. Also the Founders' Day civic ceremony and the annual Canada Day parade were well attended under near perfect weather conditions.

Now that the landlord/developer had installed privacy screens between each unit, our apartment building was looking really smart. He also planted young fir trees and weeping mulberry trees around the property. To augment this, we bought a new *hibachi* barbecue unit and patio chairs that were first used that summer.

Early in 1986 through the Society for Technical Communication (STC), I had received a request to attend meetings at Humber College to help design a technical writing course. The design committee consisted of several practicing technical communicators, including an old colleague, David Klinger, who used to work at United Aircraft (now Pratt & Whitney Aircraft of Canada, Limited). Another ex-pat Englishman, Geoff Guest, was also on the team, which was chaired by the college programme manager, Carrie Andrews.

Humber College is a community college located in the district of Rexdale on the west side of Toronto. Journeying to and from the campus for evening meetings became fairly onerous, but the occasion to gain this experience was a valuable addition to my résumé. Within a year we had fully designed a course outline and this was officially acknowledged in June, 1987. After a further three years on an advisory committee, the college board of governors expressed their gratitude by presenting me with a certificate of recognition.

My freelancing activities were bringing in a modest income; although 1987 expenses did surpass any receipts. In an effort to diversify, I had previously registered an ancillary enterprise to "Technical Authorship Services" called "Signature Media", which was to concentrate on commercial rather than technical work. It was aimed at visual communications, e.g., posters; résumés; menus; newsletters; small-run publications; advertising copywriting; flyers, and corporate stationery design – such as letterheads and business cards. Getting the word out was largely by way of mouth, and several small jobs came from my coworkers. Of course, I designed my own business card that was handed out. Another means of free advertising was arranging an interview with the local newspaper reporter. Patrick Raftis's article entitled, "Publishing at home now possible", complete with two photographs, appeared in the July 29, 1987, edition of the Goderich Signal-Star (GSS) and generated some mild interest.

News from England by letter had its high and low points. We were pleased to know that my friend, Roger Moore, was recovering well from his near-fatal accident last November. After six months he said that progress was slow but sure and a little use had returned to his two middle fingers. Hospital physiotherapy was ongoing and, by October, he had reached the limit of his convalescence. On the other side of the coin, however, Dad wrote to me saying that Honey's health had deteriorated with advancing age. She was becoming less mobile and various ailments were affecting her wellbeing. It had reached a point where it would be kinder to put her to sleep rather than see her suffer. It was with extremely heavy hearts on October 17th, 1987, that Mum and Dad took Honey for her last ride and the inevitable euthanasia. "It was the worst thing I have ever had to do", wrote Dad, who was totally distressed. They made arrangements to have Honey cremated and then scattered her ashes in Ashfield Woods, one of her favourite playgrounds.

The year was now winding down and an early autumn brought with it the brilliant colours of the leaves as they turned into hues of red and gold. Some of the magnificent, old maple trees in our road were a picture since this was our first exposure to the new neighbourhood in the fall. Closely following autumn was the initial sign of winter, and a significant snowfall occurred before my 42nd birthday in November. We were, therefore, guaranteed a 'white' Christmas, and plans were made to spend the holiday at home. The traditional turkey, donated to each employee by Champion as a gesture of thanks, and Monica's homemade fruit cake were welcome contributions to the Festive Season. We were extremely thankful that we had overcome the previous stressful situation, and looked forward to continue living in our community of choice.

Changes are in store for 1988

Snowstorms in January and February were some of the most significant for some years. Our landlord was kept busy with his snowblower making sure that our pathways were clear, but it was a never ending battle. The winter was also being hard on wildlife and we tried to help our feathered friends by installing a bird feeder and maintaining it with seeds and other tasty morsels. We were rewarded by seeing small gatherings of evening grosbeaks and chickadees, as well as the occasional nuthatch, at the feeder. Any surplus seeds that lay scattered under the feeder were quickly consumed by squirrels and the occasional rabbit.

Work continued unabated and I still occupied a space on the mezzanine floor with the three parts compilers. We were getting used to a slightly new routine imposed in the previous November when the weekly working hours were increased from 36.0 to 37.5. However, this brought about an attendant increase in salary to \$683.25 a week, plus overtime.

Late in March we visited the Maple Keys Sugar Bush, a small conservation area near Molesworth, Ontario, where 'sugaring off' demonstrations attracted a large crowd. Among the events was a 'hammer and nail' competition that pitted woodsmen against each other. The object being to drive in as many nails as possible into a log in an allocated length of time. Along a recreational trail was a First Nation winter encampment of a simple hut made of tree branches covered with soil, leaves and other forest floor debris. To demonstrate the pioneer method of making maple syrup, maple tree sap was collected in traditional metal buckets and evaporated in an iron cauldron suspended over a burning camp fire.

Our friend, Nick Avery, had been intent on earning a Canadian university degree, and had decided to pursue an evening course at Laurier University located in Kitchener, Ontario. His aim was to graduate with an MBA (Master of Business Administration) degree. After several years of hard study and some long-distance commuting, he completed the course in April and, to recognise this achievement, his wife, Liz, decided to arrange a surprise party. Liz and Monica plotted the event over the phone and prepared the food in advance. It was arranged that on the day of the party, Nick and I would embark on an exploratory shopping trip for a pair of binoculars. This kept us out of the house so the ladies could secrete the food in various hiding places. We returned empty handed; then two other friends arrived and suggested that they, Nick and I should go for a short walk in the neighbourhood. In our absence, the ladies distributed the food and received guests who were arriving at a predetermined time. They were instructed to keep quiet and out of sight.

As we returned to the house, Nick started to become suspicious and even noticed an excessive number of cars parked nearby. The friends and I continued to act innocently and when we entered the living room we were immediately assailed with a resounding chorus of “Surprise!!” from the guests. Nick was completely dumbfounded, and mildly annoyed having been hoodwinked, but then joined in the spirit of the occasion. After slumping into his easy chair, a procession of fellow students and other acquaintances presented him with several ‘gag’ gifts. The party then shifted into high gear and Nick, still somewhat bewildered, thanked everyone for participating in the successful deception.

Point Pelee National Park near Leamington, Ontario, is a sandy promontory reaching out into Lake Erie. It had been eleven years since we last visited the park, and even though April was too early to see migrating birds, we made the area a weekend destination. The usual park facilities weren’t yet open so we walked along the main path to the sandspit that jutted into the lake and stood on the southernmost part of mainland Canada. As we returned to the car, we saw some of the park’s inhabitants – white tail deer – in the leafless bushland. The long boardwalk through the reed marsh was quiet as much of the wildlife was still dormant. A little further along the lakeshore is Rondeau Provincial Park, which also has a small population of white tail deer, and a visit here completed the weekend hiking excursion.

At the very beginning of May we heard that there would be a wild bird banding demonstration organised at the nearby Falls Reserve Conservation Area. We congregated with other amateur ornithologists to see how small birds were captured in very fine nets, banded and set free. The main hiking trail in the area is part of the extensive Maitland Trail and follows a bend of the wide, shallow Maitland River to the scenic Benmiller Falls – a series of rapids and a favourite summer swimming hole for locals and campers. With spring arriving, there was evidence of the countryside waking up, and wild flowers such as the bloodroot were blooming in profusion along the trail.

The following week saw us exploring more hiking trails. This time at the Bannockburn Conservation Area, also not far from home. The trails here were more varied and included several boardwalks as well as undulating land. A couple of interesting observations along the way were some animal remains – probably a small rodent – that was undoubtedly the prey of an owl or hawk, and several saplings that had been felled by beavers; their characteristic teeth marks being evident in the stumps.

I was enticed to look at the current car models knowing that my 1985 Pontiac Grand Am was still in topnotch condition and would command a good trade-in value. High on the list was the redesigned front wheel drive Pontiac Grand Prix coupé, a sportier model than the Grand Am and equipped with a 2.8 litre V-6 multi-port fuel-injected engine. I could also order a five-speed transaxle with overdrive. The array of controls was more ergonomically suited to the driver, and the instrumentation included both analog and digital displays, including a fuel management system and ability to switch from Imperial to metric measurements. A nice touch was the stubby gear shift lever, ideal for racing changes. One archaic control, however, was the foot operated emergency brake – a feature that I was never quite comfortable with. As it turned out later next year, it also contributed to a major problem and a serious lesson learned. Following negotiations with Martyn McGee of McGee Motors, I custom ordered a Grand Prix, resplendent in metallic red livery and grey cloth interior, which was delivered in May.



Landlord Blowing Snow, Cambria Road Apartment Building, Goderich, Ontario, January, 1988.



Hammer and Nail Competition at Maple Keys Sugar Bush, Molesworth, Ontario, March, 1988.



Nick Avery at his MBA Completion Surprise Party, Oakville, Ontario, April, 1988.



Southernmost Point of Canada at Point Pelee National Park, Leamington, Ontario, April, 1988.



White Tail Deer at Point Pelee National Park, Leamington, Ontario, April, 1988.



Monica on Wooden Boardwalk in Bannockburn Conservation Area, Varna, Ontario, May, 1988.



1988 Model Pontiac Grand Prix Coupé. The Base Model Grand Prix was Powered by a 2.8 litre V-6 Multi-port Fuel-injected Engine Coupled to a Manual Five-speed Transaxle and Front Wheel Drive. I had Reverted to a Single Colour Paint – Metallic Red, and the Optional Extra Features Included Air Conditioning, Cruise Control and an FM Radio with Cassette Tape Player. The Instrumentation Displays were in both Analog and Digital Formats. Photograph Taken Outside the Bayfield Marina, Ontario, in May, 1988.



Taking Delivery of the New 1988 Pontiac Grand Prix, McGee Motors, Goderich, Ontario, May, 1988.



Rear View of the New 1988 Pontiac Grand Prix, Bayfield Marina, Ontario, May, 1988.

At work we said goodbye to junior printer, Mike Roncken, and hello to his successor, Dave MacAdam. Also, the venerable AES Superplus IV word processor was approaching the end of its useful life as the company was converting to a standardised computer system using Windows-based PC terminals. Following a trial period, it was decided that the software of choice for Technical Publications was Adobe PageMaker – termed as a page description language programme. Ray designated Gerry Fernandes as the ‘superuser’ and expert of the software. Later all the technical writers and illustrators were released on a course of instruction to familiarise themselves with the software’s capabilities. This was a thirty-five hour course held on the Fanshawe College campus in London, Ontario, and completed in May. Although it meant the occasional day off work, the course was very intensive.

June started with Monica and I attending our friend Nick Avery’s university graduation ceremony – also known as the Commencement. This event is significant in the academic world and much pomp and circumstance surrounds the ceremony. It was held in the Kitchener Auditorium (the “Aud”) and the arena floor was full of graduating students. Their family and friends occupied the seats in the balcony. At the prescribed time, the entire university governing and teaching faculty paraded onto a raised dais at one end of the arena. The procession was spectacular as all the entrants were dressed in their colourful robes and mortar boards. There were preliminary speeches; then the graduation ceremony began as the students’ names were called out in a specific order. The procedure was for each student to kneel before the university chancellor and be ‘hooded’ with their robe and, following a short incantation, receive their graduation certificate. As there were hundreds of students being honoured, the ceremony took a long time to complete. However, it was gratifying to see a beaming and proud Nicholas F. Avery MBA wearing his robe (on loan only).

Sad news from England

Shortly after, we received some shocking news. The telephone rang and I answered to hear a very distressed voice at the other end. It was Monica’s cousin, Trecia, who tearfully informed us that Monica’s mother had suddenly died from a fatal cardiac arrest. She was 77 years old and had recently been admitted into Walsgrave Hospital, Coventry, following a second heart attack. As can be imagined it dealt us a heavy blow and Monica was distraught for a while. We had previously made plans to visit England during the company’s three week shutdown period. Now we had to alter these arrangements and the local travel agency rescheduled Monica’s flight. At work, I took the allowable three day bereavement leave and helped organise the travel arrangements.

Monica had an unenviable responsibility ahead of her, but she was ably supported by Trecia, who held Power of Attorney, and her husband, Reg. By all accounts, the funeral went well and there was a large gathering of mourning relatives and friends. Monica’s ageing father was beside himself with grief and it was clear that he would be unable to cope alone in the house at No. 305 Broad Lane, Coventry. To add to her moral obligations, Monica now had to research the city’s retirement homes as well as help settle the estate. With assistance from family friends, she found a long-term care facility, called Appledore Lodge, not very far from Broad Lane. The house was put on the real estate market and all legal matters were administered by John Dyer, a very good solicitor friend of the family. Before I visited later in July, the house had been sold subject to contract and most personal effects distributed to Trecia, Reg and their grown children.

The usual format of the three week visit to England was reversed in that we stayed in Coventry during the first week, then travelled to my parents in Hatfield for the second week. The last week was spent mainly in Coventry. The Wardair flight took me into Birmingham's Elmdon Airport where I rented a car for the duration of the visit. The first week was rather hectic and spent tying up some loose ends. We did, however, take Monica's father with us when we visited our old friends David and Susan Cross at their home in Wolston, Warwickshire. Their two boys, Anthony James and Adrian Paul (our godson) now six and one half, and five years old, respectively, kept us amused with their activities.

When we visited my parents' house, the old homestead just didn't seem the same without Honey. There definitely was a great void as everything associated with her had gone and only the memories remained. These memories, however, were enshrined in a small publication called, "Honey – a Part of My Life", that Dad wrote; a copy of which I still cherish. Honey's loss was still hanging heavy and Dad was very emotional when he recalled her last days. Although they tried hard to make light of the situation, the old sparkle in their countenances had diminished.

However, it appeared there was another underlying reason for their taciturnity. Mum was not looking too well. Apparently she was under observation concerning an undisclosed health condition. Not much was revealed and it was only until some months later that we learned that she had undergone an operation to remove a breast tumour.

With the rental car at our disposal we made some day trips around the Home Counties. We visited a number of picturesque villages such as Broughing, Hertfordshire, and Finchingfield, Essex, reputed to be one of the most photographed villages in England. Further afield was a day outing to Southend-on-Sea where, despite an overcast sky and general dismal weather conditions, we and a few other brave souls ventured onto the shingle beach to inhale the briny air. The backdrop to this scene was the venerable pier and Kursaal fun fair: familiar places of yesteryear when Mum, Grandma and I would travel to the seaside resort on the Sunday excursion train from Highbury & Islington railway station (see Chapter 1, *Post war depression*). Regardless of the unlively atmosphere, we had hoped that our visit had provided a respite from the despondency. Certainly I could see that Dad was committed to make Mum as comfortable as possible, and even provided her with a surrogate for Honey in the guise of a whimsical stuffed doll called "Humph."

Back in Coventry the wheels were turning to finalise the sale of No. 305 Broad Lane. It was also opportune to visit Roger, Susan, Stephen and Lindsey Moore at their Allesley Village home. Roger was certainly looking his old self despite the physical handicap caused by the burning accident. Keeping an aviary had changed from canaries and finches to pigeons, a hobby that he thoroughly enjoyed. Stephen's first year at senior school produced a good report of his studies, and Lindsey was also progressing well academically. With most of the personal effects earmarked for disposal it was time to say farewell to the house. On the day of our departure Monica locked the front door for the last time and deposited the key through the letter slot to be retrieved by the real estate agent. It was bittersweet, but we knew that the proceeds from the sale would be invested in such a way as to augment Monica's father's pensions and ensure he will be looked after in comfortable surroundings, as we knew that Appledore Lodge maintained a very high standard of long-term geriatric care and that put our minds at ease for as long as he was a resident.

Champion Road Machinery Company Ltd. is sold

Air Vice Marshall John A. Sully purchased the Dominion Road Machinery Company Ltd. in 1946. Throughout the years and under the control of three generations of the Sully family, the company flourished to become the third largest manufacturer of motor graders in the world. Surpassed only by the giant U.S. conglomerates, John Deere and Caterpillar. Furthermore, Champion Road Machinery Company Ltd. – as the company had been re-branded in 1977 – had diversified into a corporation with ancillary entities such as Champion Sales & Service, Gearco Ltd. and Business Air Services. There was also a satellite facility in South Carolina and a joint venture in Thailand. The company had come a long way and was now going to enter a new phase of ownership.

There was a danger in that Champion was tending to become staid and complacent. In the competitive world of manufacture only the strongest survive, and much depends on ‘deep pockets’ for financing and the will to evolve. In 1988, with slumping sales, it was time for a new direction and this could only be achieved with a fresh management and one having access to generous resources.

With this philosophy in mind, the Champion Group of Companies’ board of directors brokered a deal with a firm of investors called Sequoia Associates Inc., based in Menlo Park, California. Sequoia had also acquired a similar heavy equipment manufacturer, Timberjack Inc., located in nearby Woodstock, Ontario. All the members of the Sequoia investment team were well known businessmen who were conversant with buying and selling companies. The chairman of the board was Mr. William D. (“Bill”) Walsh and his name, together with those of other prominent directors, was to become well known over the years.

The official handover took place on August 1st, 1988. Bruce Sully and his eldest son, Mark, retired to private life, but Bruce’s younger son, Mike, continued to work as vice president of human resources. The newly installed president and CEO was Mr. Arthur (“Art”) Church, previously the vice president of Timberjack Inc. The rest of the Champion hierarchy remained the same, but changes were fast coming.

From the outset, the Sequoia investment team had set its sights on making Champion a ‘lean and mean’ company. It was expected that some fat would be trimmed from the workforce and the rumour mill accelerated into overdrive. Certainly management had become top-heavy so losing any surplus bodies in this category wouldn’t go amiss. However, the rank and file workers on the shop floor and in the office were getting somewhat nervous and were expecting the union to monitor the situation closely. Following an initial review, the axe started to fall on redundant job positions; starting with Bruce Sully’s nephew, John B. Sully, in the Sales Department. Even top executives were not immune, and Maurice Jenkins, vice president of corporate administration, was summarily ousted. Other veteran managers, such as Vince Young, elected to retire rather than be asked to leave.

A short while before the sale of the company, industrial relations manager Don Johnston had left for a new job, and his position was taken over by Mike O’Brien. Mike had the unfortunate task of announcing any job eliminations and processing the dismissals. It wasn’t long before the Technical Publications Department was directly affected.

One morning in September, Ray called me to his office. When I entered, Mike O'Brien was sitting there with a pile of papers on the table in front of him. It didn't look good. As was to be expected, the exit interview proceedings were courteous, to the point and delivered in a quick, no-nonsense manner. Mike told me that my job had been eliminated, but under the terms of the union collective agreement I was entitled to exercise my seniority rights. This meant that according to the official Seniority Recall/Bump Sheet form, "I intend to claim a position (bumping) by virtue of my experience at Champion, my skill, ability and efficiency and my seniority." The form had to be completed and submitted within a prescribed time period. 'Bumping' meant I could displace a less senior employee at the same or lower wage classification level provided I could satisfy the requirements of the job; at the same time given a training, familiarization and assessment period of up to ten working days. Any opportunity to 'bump' a less senior employee at my current wage classification level (Level 12) was extremely limited due to a) nature of the job and b) most of these employees had more seniority than I did. The easiest solution was to displace a less senior employee in a lower wage classification level. This was to become a distasteful experience.

In Sequoia's quest to be 'lean and mean', the workforce headcount was drastically reduced. In the space of a year or so, Technical Publications was decimated as out of thirteen employees, eight jobs were eliminated. Gord Farrish was let go at the same time as me. I was left with no choice but to exercise my 'bumping' rights and, for reasons of simplification, displaced Marco as the surviving technical writer. Marco, too, had seniority rights, but he elected to move away and eventually found other employment. I felt really bad having to force Marco out of his job, but to his credit, he didn't hold a grudge against me and philosophically resigned himself to the situation. Because I was already conversant with the job requirements, Ray told me, "There's no need for you to go through the training period." The upshot was I returned to my old desk in the downstairs front office. The resultant demotion, however, meant a decrease in salary from \$708.75 to \$661.13 a week.

Another casualty of the bloodletting at this time was Bill Metcalfe, the director of marketing and advertising services. In September he took early retirement as part of an upper management purge, and his successor was John Marshall who was the former product specialist. John became the marketing services manager and the Technical Publications Department now reported directly to him through Ray.

The year in closing

Ever since the decommissioned Avro Lancaster bomber memorial had been disassembled and sent to the Canadian Warplane Heritage (CWH) workshop at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, we were keen to know how soon it would attain airworthiness condition. After ten years or so of dedicated volunteer work, the aircraft was now intact and legal to fly. On Saturday, September 24th, 1988, we attended the CWH organised special Lancaster dedication roll-out ceremony for the general public.

The atmosphere was electric as a huge crowd of excited onlookers admired the Lancaster parked on the airport apron. The bomber's four mighty Rolls-Royce Merlin engines were then started and she taxied to the main runway before taking off into a cloudless sky. Soon the Lancaster, escorted by a Spitfire and a Hurricane, roared across the airfield with a sound that stirred the hairs on the back of my neck. Everyone stood in



No. 305 Broad Lane, Coventry, England. From the Real Estate Sale Prospectus, June, 1988.



Finchingfield, Essex. One of the Most Photographed Villages in England, July, 1988.



Dad, Mum and "Humph", Hatfield, England. Probably the Last Photo of my Mother, July, 1988.



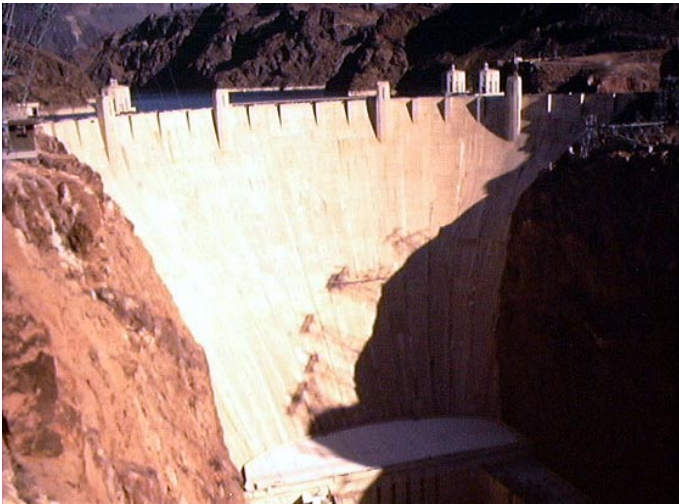
Dedication of the Lancaster Bomber, Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario, September, 1988.



Hotels and Casinos Sprout up along "The Strip" in Las Vegas, Nevada, December, 1988.



"Caesar's Palace", One of the Renowned Hotel-Casinos in Las Vegas, Nevada, December, 1988.



Hoover Dam and Powerhouse as Seen from the Nevada Side, December, 1988.



Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area near Las Vegas, Nevada, December, 1988.



Barry at 'Elephant Rock', Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada, December, 1988.



Overlooking Part of Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, December, 1988.



Barry at 'Hopi Point', Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, December, 1988.



Ruins of a Bank Building at Rhyolite Ghost Town, Nevada, December, 1988.

awe and waited patiently in anticipation of additional flypasts, including a solo flight as the bomber showed off her fine lines to the appreciative audience below. We had expected to meet our friends Nick and Liz Avery at the show, but due to heavy traffic volume they were unable to arrive in time to see the flights; although while on the road they caught glimpses of the aircraft circling above.

We were not learning too much about Mum's health condition. In fact we were unaware of the major operation she underwent until Mum wrote us a letter late in October in which she said, "... For myself I feel that I have been to 'Hell' and back" She even chided the National Health System by saying in her letter, "My Doc was quite annoyed at my short stay in hospital, he said I should have been in there for at least ten days and that the drainage tubes were removed too soon, thus giving me more unnecessary pain." During her stay in hospital, Dad had organised her convalescence at home; including temporary sleeping and toilet facilities downstairs. Mum's condition was being monitored and the healthiness of the surgery scar assessed.

During the year, my hobby businesses started picking up more orders. Most of them were résumés for individuals (invoiced to "Signature Media"), but a very interesting proposition came from the aircraft refinishing company based at Goderich Sky Harbour Airport. The company had acquired a world-class reputation for its paint quality, and customers from all over the place were queuing up for custom paint jobs. The head painter, John Edward, was a master at his work and could envisage any paint scheme, then organise the complete operation with his crew of preppers and painters. However, his mental impressions needed to be translated into drawings so that customers could see representations of the schemes for their approval.

At that time, somebody was providing John with artwork, but he wanted a better quality job and I was approached to help. This type of work was right up my alley and I was able to produce a set of artist's impressions using information provided by John. Essentially I drew a basic outline of the aircraft's silhouette and superimposed different graphic schemes using special watercolour paint pens. The technique was simple and the results infinitely better than the other renderings. As each aircraft was different, the work maintained its novelty. One project that year was for an Ontario Provincial Police JetRanger helicopter. As a result of all the freelancing activity, my businesses made a small profit.

Given the exacting nature of the previous months it was understandable that we had to find a relief valve. This came in the form of a Christmas vacation away from home where we could thoroughly enjoy ourselves and shrug off the day-to-day stresses. Our destination of choice was Las Vegas, Nevada, and the local travel agent provided information from which we chose a suitable package deal.

As the flight was leaving Toronto International Airport on Christmas Day we decided to stay overnight at a nearby hotel. The weather on Christmas Eve was particularly bad, due largely to a massive area of freezing rain. Because of the adverse weather it was better to stay away from the fast, multi-lane Hwy. 401 and drive on the lesser travelled Hwy. 7 through Guelph and Brampton. It was slow going but we took it easy; especially after we came across a crash site where a vehicle that had previously overtaken us ended up skidding on the icy road and colliding with a bridge abutment. The accommodation arrangement worked well and we took off in freezing temperatures expecting to land in warm and dry Nevada; only to be greeted with light snow showers as we disembarked on the tarmac at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport!

The group of passengers was met by the Las Vegas hotel representative and transported by minibus. We knew that our hotel wasn't one of those on the famous "Strip", but its location in a back street tended to be somewhat disappointing. However, it was budget-priced and one consolation was the remarkable steak breakfasts served in the morning. For the rest of the day, we explored parts of "The Strip" and adjusted to a culture dominated by casinos, slot machines (one-armed bandits) and flashing neon signs.

The lure to gamble or watch celebrity shows in glitzy casinos didn't appeal to us: rather it was the opportunity to visit interesting places in the area that took priority. To achieve this meant renting a car. The nearest highlight was the renowned 726 ft. (221 m) high Hoover Dam that was built to stem the flow of the Colorado River for flood control, provide water irrigation and produce hydroelectric power. Similar to the Grand Coulee Dam in the state of Washington that we visited in 1981, it was a Great Depression 'make work' project. It also created Lake Mead, the largest reservoir in the U.S.A. The dam also straddled two states – Nevada and Arizona – and delineated two time zones – Pacific and Mountain. At the Welcome Center visitors learned about the dam's history and could walk across the top of the structure to view the Colorado River gorge and the powerhouse below. Visitors could then make their way down and view the curved concrete contour from the base of the dam. There were conducted tours of the powerhouse generator room; a cavernous building where several massive hydroelectricity turbines and generators hummed in an almost clinical environment. Once again at the upper level, we were mindful of the time zone changes and hopped across the state border into Arizona just to view the lake side of the dam.

Returning into Nevada, we retraced our way along U.S. highways Nos. 93 and 95 where the imposing Hoover Dam Memorial was located at a rest stop. After passing through the centre of Las Vegas and diverting onto state road No. 159 we continued to the outskirts of the Mojave Desert and the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The area is so called for the bright crimson coloured sandstone rocks and cliffs. This untamed countryside is in direct contrast to the razzmatazz of Las Vegas and, given the rugged terrain and abundance of wildlife, the canyon is a popular venue for hikers, rock climbers and nature watchers. On a cloudless day the sight of colourful sandstone and limestone rock formations was, indeed, awe inspiring.

The next day took us to the scenic drive along state road No. 147 that skirts the north side of Lake Mead. Sandstone peaks appeared silhouetted against the azure blue sky, and soon we arrived at the entrance to the Valley of Fire State Park, an offshoot of Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Similar to Red Rock Canyon, the scenery of semi-desert, scrub bushes and deep red coloured rocky outcrops and cliffs was outstanding. Several rock formations – including the 'Elephant Rock' – had been naturally eroded into strange shapes. A well-defined walking trail directed visitors through parts of the park that had been inhabited by early aborigines. Evidence of their occupation was in the form of pictographs inscribed on some of the rock walls. Many of the hieroglyphics of sacred signs and representations of animal life resembled those we had seen at Petroglyphs Provincial Park, Ontario, the previous year.

Halfway through the vacation, we used the time to explore more of "The Strip" and downtown Las Vegas. The monolithic hotel and casino buildings – each trying to outdo one another – drew hordes of visitors. Well known names such as "Dunes"; "Sahara"; "Caesar's Palace", and "Circus Circus" were emblazoned in neon lights. Inside, the deafening sounds of slot machine jingling gongs and the occasional

payout landslide of coins, when the right combination of fruits fell in line, enveloped us. Elsewhere in the casino, muffled voices and the clicking of chips or the roulette wheel ball were the only sounds emanating from the gaming tables. Blackjack, baccarat and poker, too, were in full swing and it didn't matter where we went there was no shortage of customers. There was also the seedy side of Las Vegas, as propositions for call girls or 'escorts' were plain to be seen and even overtly published in free handouts available from sidewalk dispensing machines.

We now came to the highlight of the vacation – visiting the Grand Canyon. This was going to be an extensive trip; even having to stay one night at a different hotel. After researching the route, we made a reservation at a Best Western hotel just outside the Grand Canyon National Park boundary. Starting out in warm temperatures we took U.S. highway No. 93 east towards the Hoover Dam and across the Arizona state line/Mountain time zone. We reached Interstate highway I-40 at Kingman – one of the towns on the legendary U.S. highway No. 66 – and continued east to Williams before heading north on state road No. 64 to our hotel. The terrain had become noticeably higher with widespread snow. The temperature, too, was below freezing, so we made sure to wear sweaters under our rather inadequate jackets as we made a short exploratory trip into the park until dusk forced us to leave.

The following day promised to be clear; ideal for viewing the canyon scenery. However, a major problem took us by surprise and cost us precious time. After breakfast we went outside to the car and quickly realised that the overnight temperature had plummeted to a significant low value. Many of the cars in the parking lot, including our own, refused to start as their battery power was insufficient below the freezing mark. We were marooned until the temperature rose appreciably. There was a saving grace, however. One of the motorists was successful in starting his car, and he also had a set of 'jumper' cables. One by one, he assisted the other drivers in coaxing their cars into life. We then drove to the park's south entrance ranger station and the Park Headquarters/Visitors Center.

A path led from the Visitors Centre to the canyon rim nature trail and, as we trudged through a fresh layer of snow, we saw wildlife such as mule deer and small rodents. At the edge of the abyss we could see the full majesty of the multilayered rocks in the numerous gorges that made up the Grand Canyon. The sun was gradually creeping higher and, when the sunlight struck the sides of the canyon, residual snow began to melt as the shadows retreated. Every turn on the trail brought a new vista; some showing the winding course of the Colorado River way below. The rising sun's rays were now penetrating into the depths of the canyon and revealing horseback and hiking trails weaving through the labyrinth of eroded buttes and mesas. At Hopi Point (7,043 ft. [2147 m]), there was a clear view across the Grand Canyon National Park to the north rim over ten miles (16 km) away. Although it remained very cold, the crystal clear air provided an unobstructed view of this natural wonder.

It was now time to leave the area and retrace our route to Las Vegas. Darkness had fallen by the time we reached the Hoover Dam, but this gave us an opportunity to see the structure floodlit. Crossing the Nevada state line we also gained an hour and near Boulder City we stopped for our evening meal at a tourist attraction with boomtown false fronted buildings. Inside a restaurant was one of the ubiquitous all-you-can-eat buffets where we eagerly lined up, as the keen mountain air and strenuous hiking had worked up an appetite.

The next day was December 31st, 1988 – New Year’s Eve – and the last whole day of the vacation. Under the terms of the rental agreement, I was required to return the car with an empty fuel tank. Of course, this was impracticable as a minimal amount of fuel had to remain regardless. So with the view of using as much fuel as possible we set out on a trip to the ghost town of Rhyolite, approximately 98 miles (158 km) from Las Vegas. Rhyolite was a ‘boom and bust’ town built on the economic activities resulting from a local gold rush at the beginning of the twentieth century. Once a thriving community, it fell on hard times and eventually became deserted, and its showplace buildings gradually fell into ruin or were plundered for their materials. Nowadays the ghost town is a major tourist attraction.

We headed west on U.S. highway No. 93 through the Mojave Desert to the town of Beatty; then turned onto state road No. 374 to the townsite of Rhyolite. Only a few structures remained; including the defunct railway station. This building was preserved as an interpretive centre and its mission-style architecture gave it a solid look. Nearby was another, unusual building – a house constructed entirely from glass bottles, and named appropriately enough, ‘the bottle house.’ Further along what was previously a bustling main street, evidence of substantial buildings showed as dilapidated ruins. In particular was the principal bank building, once a multi-storeyed stone monolith, but now a shattered and windowless dereliction. A scattering of decaying, wooden shacks indicated some of the gold miners’ dwellings. Otherwise the township site was the domain of tumbleweed and scrubland; its only inhabitants being snakes, scorpions and other desert wildlife.

Given that we weren’t far from Death Valley National Monument in California there was an opportunity to explore the region. However, the low fuel level and lateness of the day denied us this side trip. I wasn’t keen on running out of fuel in Death Valley, and late in the day, to boot!! From a vantage point near Rhyolite we could scan the horizon in the general direction and just make out the arid vista of Death Valley in the shimmering heat haze mirage.

Back at the hotel we prepared to walk the short distance to the Hilton Flamingo hotel-casino for a prearranged New Year’s dinner and stage show. As with many of the Las Vegas entertainment excesses there was no shortage of alcoholic drinks; in our case some cheap champagne-style sparkling wine that came with the meal. The show wasn’t brilliant and consisted mainly of a new breed of stand-up comic. This genre of entertainment was foreign to us, and some of the bawdy routines were somewhat uncomical, even though the majority of the audience relished in the crude anecdotes. There was the usual New Year’s toast and the party lurched on way beyond midnight. We decided to leave early, ostensibly to make sure we were fit to face the rigours of the return journey home. For myself, the effects of the ‘bubbly’ made me light-headed enough to act rather foolishly on the way back – much to Monica’s displeasure. Thus we entered the year 1989.

Leaving for Las Vegas McCarran International Airport was carefully planned as I had to return the car to the rental company. It was arranged that Monica would take the minibus from the hotel with the others in the group, and for me to drive to the airport, drop off the car, then meet up later. Fortunately this scheme worked and soon we were heading home on the flight to Toronto. The drive back to Goderich was uneventful and I had to readjust to winter driving conditions. By and large the vacation was the tonic we were looking for. However, the events of the first two months of 1989 cast a significant pall over our lives.

The new year begins on a sombre note

Unknown to us, Mum's health condition had worsened. Probably the first clue that Mum wasn't her old self was that Dad had taken over writing the periodical letters from home. Still nothing untoward was revealed in his correspondence. I telephoned only to be told that Mum was back in hospital, and this situation had affected Dad so much so that he couldn't rationally hold a conversation; breaking off abruptly with an emotional goodbye.

The next bombshell was a letter from Aunt Win. Knowing that it would contain bad news, I said to Monica, "I'm not going to relish reading this." Aunt Win was well known for not mincing her words, and the letter contained much invective; essentially labelling me as "... a failure." Even chastising Monica and I for not showing interest or compassion, and especially leaving on a holiday whilst Mum was virtually at death's door. The harangue continued citing radiation treatment with its attendant loss of hair, the involvement of the MacMillan Nurses, and other references to a situation that was, to us, still very much shrouded in mystery.

Since we were unable to discover the truth we decided to visit England for a week and see for ourselves. Monica wanted to take the opportunity to make sure her father had settled down comfortably in Appledore Lodge. We were guests at Trecia and Reg's house in Ley Hill, near Chesham, Buckinghamshire, during our stay. Also, Trecia made her car available and I used it to shuttle back and forth between Ley Hill and Hatfield. By this time Mum was back at home and we could see first hand that the situation was serious. Dad was still convinced that Mum would be able to overcome the cancer and threw himself into looking after her. She lay in her makeshift bed in the lounge downstairs most of the visit, obviously weak from both the illness and aftereffects of the treatment following her mastectomy. However, we weren't to know that the cancer had spread.

During the week, Monica's father from Coventry stayed at Ley Hill for a change of scenery. He quite enjoyed the visit and spent much time with Monica, particularly playing 'Scrabble', a favourite parlour game. During our stay we recognised Monica's 50th birthday, and since this was a milestone occasion it was decided to celebrate at a nice country pub. We congregated for lunch at "The Stag" in the village of Mentmore, Buckinghamshire, a hamlet where a local lad, George Rickard, married Ruth Jennings, one of Monica's ancestors in 1910.

Our weeks visit soon came to an end, but we made a trip to see Mum on the day of our departure. She was still very weak, but kept a brave face as we said our goodbyes. Dad remained adamant that they would pull through the situation. At the airport I telephoned home to say cheerio and, in my mind, I can still hear Mum's voice at the other end. Little did I know that this was the last conversation we would have.

On the journey home, we detoured to visit Don and Claire at their house in Milton and gave them all the news. Then it was back on the road to re-acquaint ourselves with the challenges of Canadian winter driving. Not very long after we returned home there was a period of severe weather that culminated in extreme blizzard conditions.

One week later, on Monday, February 27th, 1989, Mum passed away in Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, with Dad by her side. The cause of death was disseminated breast carcinoma. She died seven days after her 65th birthday and six days before her 45th wedding anniversary.

Prior to the day Mum died, Dad had called us early in the morning and asked if we could visit yet again as Mum's condition had deteriorated. Plans were then put into effect for Monica and I to travel to England. News of her actual passing was not readily sent to me. On the day of our departure I called Dad to find out the latest situation, the phone was answered by my parents' close friend, Joe Felstead. At first Joe was mystified with my initial comments; then had to tell me the bad news, believing that I already knew of Mum's death. I then briefly spoke to Dad, who was, of course, inconsolable.

Upon arriving at Hatfield, we met Dad at the front door. He appeared dejected and I hugged him to try and help bolster his spirits. We then went indoors and he poured out his grief, describing Mum's last days in the hospital. She had been admitted into a palliative room where she was being sedated with a morphine pump. As the final time drew near, Dad told me he said to her, "Goodnight ... I said 'Goodnight' and not 'Goodbye'." He then asked the nurse in attendance to close Mum's eyes.

Dad and I visited Mum in the funeral parlour to pay our last respects and, on the day of the funeral, we were taken in a cortège to Garston Manor Crematorium. It was a beautiful day, just the sort of day Mum would have liked – sunshine and warm; indicative of when she would take Honey for a walk. The service was solemn and contained Dad's choice of verse and music as the casket made its exit through the sliding doors into the heart of the crematorium. Following the service, the mourners congregated outside in the memorial gardens to view the vast array of floral tributes.

Back in Hatfield, the house was opened to friends and family members for a luncheon and celebration of life. This was an opportunity to mix with long-lost relatives, including cousins Linda and her sister Avril; daughters of Aunt Win, who was also there. Aunt Win apologised to me for the tone of her letter as it had been written 'on the spur of the moment.' Other guests were Joe and Doris Felstead, some neighbours, and Aunt Marion, who arrived later making a theatrical entrance. She was apparently cured of the illness described to Dad when he received a call from her the previous day. She said she was feeling unwell and wouldn't be able to attend the luncheon, so would he visit to collect her food contribution. We all went in Dad's car to Aunt Marion's house in Turnham Green on the west side of London; a journey on crowded roads that seemed endless. We were met by Aunt Marion in a state of feigned anxiety and eventually acquired several containers of food to bring home.

The remainder of the trip was spent tying up loose ends and helping Dad organise the daily chores and general running of the house. We cleared out some of Mum's possessions and accumulated paperwork. A one day outing took us to Coventry to visit Monica's father in Appledore Lodge and a stop to see Roger, Susan, Stephen and Lindsey Moore at their Allesley Village home. This journey wasn't without incident. I was driving Dad's car and missed the turning from the dual-carriageway (divided highway) A45 Coventry bypass to Allesley Village, so we had to continue to the Stonebridge roundabout before we could return to the intersection. Dad was not pleased in the way I was driving his car and said so in as many words.

Leaving Dad to his own devices was tough to do, especially as during most nights we were woken by his sobbing and fits of self-denial, which meant spending some time consoling him. Having never experienced this situation before it was gratifying to be told later by a doctor that these reactions were a perfectly normal part of the grieving process and would eventually pass. At one time during our discussions, Dad mentioned to us that, “I now know what I want to do.” This admission gave us some hope that he was not going to give up on life and, although it turned out to be a red herring, it was therapeutic nevertheless.

A miscellany of spring events

Few events of any note took place in the latter part of winter and spring of 1989. However, on one rather dreary and damp day in May we drove to the neighbouring town of Clinton to see one of the quintessential Canadian public displays. This was the celebrated Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) “Musical Ride” which was being demonstrated in the local fairgrounds. We had positioned ourselves on viewing bleachers in front of the display area and waited for the ‘Mounties’ wearing their ceremonial red serge jackets, jodhpurs, riding boots and flat brimmed campaign hats to appear. Despite the inclement weather, the RCMP put on a convincing choreography of horsemanship – all to music – including drills such as the four rotating arms, precise crossover passing and, of course, the anticipated ‘charge’ at the audience with lances levelled and pennants fluttering. Afterwards, people could meet the officers and horses at close quarters where many questions about life in the RCMP were answered.

On a more springlike day in May, we made the short drive to Point Clark, a promontory which juts into Lake Huron north of Goderich. The headland features one of the early ‘Imperial’ lighthouses used for navigation on the lake. The lighthouse had recently been refurbished and the new white paint stood out against the clear blue sky.

On the workfront, the Sequoia management team was busy transforming the Champion product line and introduced a number of design improvements. With these changes, the Series III motor grader was born. Beginning with serial number 19982, the refinements included a sloped rear bonnet (hood) with new engine access doors and grab handles; redesigned radiator shroud and rear light clusters; internal air cleaner and exhaust silencer (muffler); improved hydraulics, and the introduction of “Duramide” – the first synthetic circle support bearing material in the industry. Despite the Technical Publications Department’s depleted workforce, all these modifications meant a considerable amount of work, and some projects had to be sent to outside resources.

In the continuous quest for self-improvement through education which, in turn, added to my résumé, I decided to acquire a basic Canadian school qualification known as the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (sometimes called ‘the Grade 12’). Essentially it was the graduating certificate awarded to students following their successful completion of high school studies. I had enrolled for evening classes at the Goderich and District Collegiate Institute (GDCI), or high school, in October, 1987. The Grade 12 is based on a number of ‘credits’ up to a maximum of 30. My previous English secondary education amounted to the equivalent of 26 credits. Therefore, I needed only to amass four credits to obtain the Grade 12. However, it was to take

three years of evening tuition and homework projects before I could complete the series of subjects laid down by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

The first two years was taken up with the Conversational French course. My teacher, Sandra Bilson, was perfectly bilingual and quite lenient with her ‘mature’ students’ shortcomings. Having lived in the province of Québec I was perhaps more at home than the others in the class. Still, it was a quite a grind and I finally completed the course on June 5th, 1989, with a pass mark of 90% and 2.5 credits.

Our last visit to the London Air Show was in 1981, the time when the car’s electric fan sensor failed and the engine was dangerously overheating. This year we arrived at the show intact and made our way around the impressive static display before the aerial performances started. Chief among the largest aircraft there were the C-5 Galaxy and C-130 Hercules cargo carriers. Both turboprop and turboprop powered aircraft took to the air for their flypast demonstrations, and these included the NATO electronic warfare countermeasures patrol planes Lockheed Aurora and AWACS E-3. Supersonic F-4 Phantom, F-15 Eagle and F-111 Aarvark fighters roared across the viewing area with afterburners glowing. Not to be missed on the agenda was the precision aerobatic manoeuvres of the “Snowbirds” jet Tutors.

Of the many interesting frontier forts, one we had yet to visit was Fort Niagara in Youngstown, New York. Originally a fortified trading post established at the mouth of the Niagara River by French colonists, the stronghold had a checkered history during the American War of Independence, and the War of 1812 when it fell into British hands. The entire structure – including the ramparts, watchtowers, barracks and the parade square – has been restored. Part of the administration building is now used by the U.S. Coastguards. The interior of the chapel inside the barracks contained some well preserved wooden artifacts including the altar and religious statuary.

In late June, the Port of Goderich welcomed the arrival of the Canadian Forces diving support ship, *HMCS Cormorant*. The sleek vessel was moored near the grain elevators and made open to the public as a gesture of goodwill. Officers conducted tours over parts of the ship, including the aft deck where a submersible craft was stowed, and described the voyages made in the Arctic for underwater charting.

Before we left on our annual summer vacation, two matrimonial related events took place. The first was the wedding of cousin Don Jr.’s daughter, Shannon, to Steve Duguay that took place on July 1st, (Canada Day) in the grounds of the old Halton County courthouse. We had made arrangements to stay at our friends’ home in nearby Oakville, specifically as we knew the wedding reception was to be held at the prestigious Glen Abbey Golf Club also located in Oakville. The day of the wedding was sunny and hot and the ceremony took place under a white lattice arbour at the end of a red carpet placed over the lawn. There was a certain amount of discomfort to the guests as the sun beat down on the enclosure and heat radiated off the surrounding high stone walls. Aunt Marion, wearing a large picture hat, arrived and made a great theatrical entrance. Following the nuptials, the bridal couple posed for photographs and then the guests dispersed to go to the reception. The club house dining room was suitably lit and decorated, and the usual proceedings took place to the delight of both the head table and invited guests. Shannon made a passionate speech to her new husband and then had the first dance with her father to the song, “You are the Wind beneath my Wings.”



“The Stag”, Pub Venue for Monica’s 50th Birthday, Mentmore, Buckinghamshire, England, Feb., 1989.



Floral Tributes at my Mother’s Funeral, Garston Manor Crematorium, England, February, 1989.



The Exciting ‘Charge’ of the RCMP Musical Ride, Clinton, Ontario, May, 1989.



Crowds Walk through the C-5 Galaxy Cargo Carrier, London Air Show, London, Ontario, June, 1989.



Restored Ramparts of Fort Niagara, Youngstown, New York, June, 1989.



HMCS Cormorant Moored in the Harbour, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1989.



Steve and Shannon's Wedding at the Old Halton County Courthouse, Milton, Ontario, July, 1989.



Barry and Monica's 15th Wedding Anniversary, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1989.



The Gorge and Cataract at Grand Falls, New Brunswick, July, 1989.



World's Longest Covered Bridge, Hartland, New Brunswick, July, 1989.



Sawmill at King's Landing Historical Settlement, New Brunswick, August, 1989.



Traditional Haymaking with a Horse Team and Cart at King's Landing, New Brunswick, August, 1989.

The second event was celebrating our 15th wedding anniversary. We exchanged special gifts and I presented Monica with a custom made eternity ring. The diamonds, originally set in a square cluster, were from Monica's mother's engagement ring and I had them remounted into a gold band. Monica's present to me was a gold box-chain from which suspended the mounted gold sovereign from "Uncle" George's pocket watch fob.

We visit the Canadian maritime provinces

The last time we had visited the Canadian maritime provinces was in August, 1976 and, before that, June, 1975. Having learned more about a major tourist attraction called King's Landing Historical Settlement in New Brunswick, we used it as an impetus to explore that province as well as Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.), Nova Scotia and, later in the trip, Québec City, more extensively. A three week vacation driving 'down east' was planned and all hotel reservations were made.

The first leg of the journey was eastbound on Hwy. 8 and the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401 taking us to the Ontario/Québec provincial border and eventually the South Shore Autoroute (Route 20) portion of the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) to Rivière-du-Loup. The TCH then turns southeast into New Brunswick and the city of Edmundston. Having entered the Saint John River valley, the TCH continues to Grand Falls where we had a short break to admire the huge 80 ft. (24 m) gorge and cataract. The Saint John River valley now broadens into a rolling pastoral landscape and the TCH crosses the river first at Florenceville then over a multi-span concrete viaduct just north of the town of Hartland. At Hartland is the world's longest covered bridge (1,282 ft. [391 m]), also known as the "kissin' bridge." The same as our last visit in 1976, Monica and I walked the entire length, stopped in the middle and delighted in the traditional practice that gave the bridge its nickname. The TCH then continues parallel with the river to the provincial capital of Fredericton.

One complete day was spent at the King's Landing Historical Settlement – a 'living museum' re-enacting life in early 19th century New Brunswick – and we were fortunate to have flawless weather during our visit. Upon arrival we were thrown back in time and costumed interpreters showed us the traditional crafts and everyday village life of that era. Split rail 'snake' fences segregated farm properties and penned in livestock. The simple, white painted frame house of the Joslin family was open and onsite guides demonstrated cooking on a wood burning stove. At the heart of the village was the shingle-covered sawmill where the huge overshot waterwheel powered the machines used to produce wooden planks and beams. Traditional trades such as blacksmithing were amply demonstrated, and no pioneer village would be complete without its general store, church and one-room schoolhouse; all carefully preserved. A lasting memory was watching two field labourers wearing wide brimmed straw hats using pitchforks to gather and pile lengths of cut hay onto a cart pulled by a team of placid draft horses.

The next stage of the journey was the drive to P.E.I. which meant following the TCH through Moncton and on to the New Brunswick-Nova Scotia provincial border. Here the TCH divides and the northeastern section ends at the Cape Tormentine ferry terminal. The huge Atlantic Marine ferry *MV Abgeweit* arrived as we left the terminal dock on the short voyage to Borden, P.E.I.; then it was on to our hotel in Charlottetown.

Charlottetown is the provincial capital of P.E.I. and, as it is centrally located, a good jumping off point for various parts of the island. During the four days spent on P.E.I., we travelled the length and breadth of the province following three of the designated scenic routes. The first was the Lady Slipper Scenic Drive that encompassed the island's western region. From Sherbrooke, the drive makes a tortuous route around Malpeque Bay, famous for its oysters, and follows Hwy. 12 to its terminus at North Cape where the tall lighthouse warns mariners of the reef where the Northumberland Strait and Gulf of St. Lawrence meet. The scenic drive then follows Hwy. 14 along the Northumberland Strait shoreline; passing through small communities such as Skinners Pond – associated with the Canadian entertainer, “Stompin’” Tom Connors. At West Point, we stopped for a picnic break and admired the traditional East Coast pyramid-style lighthouse painted in black and white stripes with a red lantern cupola. We then made a short walk along the unspoilt beach. Not far away in Glenwood, the wooden church with its classic steeple also made a great photographic subject. Changing to Hwy. 11, the Lady Slipper Scenic Drive skirts Egmont Bay and into the historic Acadian district with its distinctive French village names before continuing to Sherbrooke.

The north-central region of P.E.I. is well known for its connection with the island's most noted fictional character, Anne, of “Anne of Green Gables”, a story written by Lucy Maud Montgomery. Also for the fun fair (amusement park) at Cavendish and the uncrowded beaches of the P.E.I. National Park. The Blue Heron Scenic Drive led us to these attractions, and we joined the route (Hwy. 20) at Kensington. The first stop was at Indian River to wonder at St. Mary's Church with its bright white walls, red roof and intricate spire surmounting a corner tower. *En route* to Cavendish, Hwy. 20 passes through vast areas of potato growing country. We could see fields of flowering potato plants surrounding the village of French River and stretching into the distance.

Skirting New London Bay, the Blue Heron Scenic Drive (now Hwy. 6) enters Cavendish, which is located in a separate part of the P.E.I. National Park. The “Green Gables” farmhouse, once owned by cousins of Lucy Maud Montgomery, is now a museum dedicated to the life and times of the book's heroine. The museum is a prime attraction and we arrived exactly at the same time as several coaches full of tourists. The swarm of visitors lined up at the entrance to the house and we gradually made our way at a continuous pace through the various rooms. The procession was such that it wasn't practical to take photographs and so, once the throng had dissipated, we returned to the entrance and repeated the tour at our own speed and photographed the interior that was furnished as if straight from the story itself. Continuing through the Rustico Bay area, Hwy. 6 reaches Brackley Beach and access to the P.E.I. National Park. We made sure to explore a small portion of the approximately 12 miles (20 km) length of golden sand on the Gulf of St. Lawrence shoreline where there was barely another person to be seen.

We then returned to Charlottetown in readiness to attend a dramatised version of “Anne of Green Gables” at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. This cultural centre has featured the wildly successful musical on its mainstage every summer for many years.

Although the weather became less than ideal, it was still dry and, on the next day, we followed the third of the island's designated scenic routes. The Kings Byway Scenic Drive circles the eastern region of P.E.I. primarily in Kings County. The northern route follows close to the Gulf of St. Lawrence shoreline and



The Red Rock Promontory at North Cape, Western Region of Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



Abandoned House on the Northumberland Strait Coast of Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



West Point Lighthouse, now Part of an Inn, Western Region of Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



St. Mary's Church, Indian River, Western Region of Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



Green Gables Farmhouse, Cavendish, North-Central Region of Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



Fishermen's Huts at Launching Harbour, Eastern Region of Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



Province House, the Seat of Canadian Confederation, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, August, 1989.



Rue Principale (Main Street) in the Reconstructed Fortress Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



General View of Typical Reconstructed Houses in Fortress Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Costumed Villagers Meet Outside the King's Bastion, Fortress Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



The Dauphin Gate with Drawbridge and Guards, Fortress Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.

eventually reaches East Point, whose red rock promontory and lighthouse mirror that of North Cape. On the Northumberland Strait side, the Kings Byway Scenic Drive follows the indented shoreline with its many bays and picturesque fishing villages. One of these was called Launching where we stopped for a closer look at the characteristic lobster fishermen's huts and piles of traps. Two long-distance ferry boats are accommodated at this end of the island. The terminal for the service to the Magdalene Islands (Îles -de-la-Madeleine) is at Souris, and the car ferry to Nova Scotia docks at the Wood Islands terminal.

It was the Wood Islands car ferry to Nova Scotia that we were heading for on our last day in P.E.I. We did allow some time in the morning to walk around the downtown area; taking photos of Province House, the neighbouring historic streets and the Confederation Centre of the Arts. Not to be missed was a visit to "Cows", the ultimate ice cream store, which was a fascinating emporium of all things related to ice cream.

The TCH east of Charlottetown also forms part of the Kings Byway Scenic Drive. It continues to the village of Wood Islands where the continuous service ferry takes approximately one hour to cross 14 miles (22 km) of the Northumberland Strait to Caribou, Nova Scotia. Since the ferry operates on a first come first served basis, all the traffic, which includes large trucks, lines up at the terminal dock. We waited for the ferry to arrive and discharge the incoming cargo of vehicles, then proceeded to board the ship according to the precise instructions of the crew. It was remarkable to see how they manoeuvred a small car in the last available spare piece of deck space. The crossing was smooth, but the day was drawing to a close and we had still yet to reach our hotel in New Glasgow. As we docked at Caribou, we were now faced not only with failing light but also with an enveloping East Coast fog. This added to the challenge of finding our hotel in a strange place.

As we disembarked, Monica was valiantly trying to navigate our way on the TCH feeder road to the main dual carriageway (divided highway) leading to New Glasgow. Once on the freeway we were faced with a choice of three exits to the town and ended up taking the wrong one. It led us downtown and far away from our destination. Eventually we found the hotel and, in a fit of desperation for an evening meal as it was getting very late, we opted for an inferior pizza from the local Dominos Pizzeria.

Similar to P.E.I., Nova Scotia offers the mobile tourist a selection of scenic drives. The Sunrise Trail consists of several highways that follow the Northumberland Strait shoreline. The next morning, we started on the route that leads from New Glasgow to Cape George and its classic white towered lighthouse. The Sunrise Trail then skirts St. Georges Bay and joins the TCH (Hwy. 104) heading east towards the causeway at Port Hastings that connects Cape Breton Island to the mainland. Once across the causeway we took the southern route to Sydney on the Bras d'Or Lakes Scenic Drive through villages with Acadian French and old Scots Gaelic names nestled on the shore of the Bras d'Or Lake.

One of our anticipated major destinations was the Fortress of Louisbourg, which we first visited in 1975 when it was in the initial stages of reconstruction. Since then, Parks Canada had almost completed the transformation and the project became known as the Louisbourg National Historic Site of Canada. The brilliant blue sky was a good omen, as we expected to spend the entire day exploring the 18th century French fortified settlement that had a violent history as it changed hands several times between the French and English.

Our first encounter with this ‘living museum’ was the primitive wood construction and sod-covered roof of the Desroches family property outside the fortress walls – typical of fisher folk of the time. Then we walked up to the imposing cut stone Dauphin Gate with its drawbridge and uniformed sentries of the French Marine Corps. The soldiers were armed with muskets and, as we approached them, we were verbally challenged in French. I then assumed the rôle of a 18th century fish merchant and replied in halting French as to the purpose of my visit to the fortress. The play-acting must have worked as we were both allowed entry and continued into the fortress grounds.

No sooner had we entered through the Dauphin Gate when we heard the sound of a drum and marching feet. From a vantage point we saw a column of soldiers with an officer and drummer make its way to one of the fort’s redoubts overlooking the sea. A series of commands and drum beats signified a drill for loading and firing the black powder muskets. Following this demonstration we walked along the *Rue Principale* (Main Street) and admired the various reconstructed buildings. The mixed architecture of rough fieldstone foundations and wooden frames, together with characteristic steep shingled roofs and dormer windows, was authentically reproduced. In the backyards, costumed villagers toiled in the vegetable allotments and herb gardens. Later, more costumed inhabitants with their children gathered at a meeting point by the King’s Bastion or primary building. They welcomed a small band of fifes and drums that preceded a group of soldiers dressed in red uniforms and black tricorne hats, who represented an artillery squad. The gun crew followed orders to load and discharge a cannon on the fortress ramparts.

After spending a full day there, the weather changed as we were leaving and a sea fog started to roll in and over the fortress, giving an eerie appearance to the buildings’ outlines. So we were lucky to see the tourist attraction under a clear sky and, again, appreciated all the hard work put into the reconstruction project that had been a source of employment to craftsmen, builders and local people in an economically-depressed area.

The next stage of the vacation was to be spent in and around the provincial capital of Halifax. From Sydney we took the TCH (Hwy. 105) through North Sydney to St. Anns Bay with the picturesque Cape Breton Highlands National Park in the distance. Continuing through Baddeck, home of the Alexander Graham Bell Museum last visited in 1975, we again crossed the causeway at Port Hastings and onto the mainland. Instead of taking the fast route to Halifax, we sidetracked onto the Marine Drive, another of the province’s scenic roads. Marine Drive follows the Nova Scotia eastern shore region with its deeply indented Atlantic Ocean coastline and fishing villages with unusual names, such as Ecum Secum, Mushaboom and Head of Chezzetcook. At length we arrived at our hotel in the Halifax Metro area.

More glorious weather dawned the next day and it was an ideal time to take the well travelled Lighthouse Route with its tourist attractions on the rocky Atlantic coast. *En route* to the photographer/artist paradise of Peggy’s Cove, we diverted onto a dirt side road to the fishing village of Prospect. Here the community was free of tourist coaches and untouched by tacky souvenir shops. The bonus being an equally photogenic outport with its bright coloured fishing stores (warehouses), rickety stages (fish drying racks) and boats bobbing in the tickle (harbour), all perfectly mirrored in the calm water. Just around the coast was Peggy’s Cove, the stereotypical East Coast fishing village.



Prospect, a Typical East Coast Outport Located near Halifax, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Peggy's Cove, One of the Most Photographed Lighthouses in Canada, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



The Historic Properties, Repurposed Commercial Buildings in Halifax, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Decommissioned WW II Corvette, HMCS Sackville, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Typical Vernacular Architecture of Old Properties in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Barry Aboard the Wooden Schooner, "Bluenose II", Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



General View of the Reconstructed 'Habitation' at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Evangeline's Statue and Chapel Dedicated to Saint Charles, Grand Pré, Nova Scotia, August, 1989.



Hopewell Cape Rocks seen as the tide is turning, Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick, August, 1989.



Hopewell Cape Rocks and large flock of migrating Semipalmated Sandpipers, NB, August, 1989.



Victorian Houses in the Old Part of Saint John, New Brunswick, August, 1989.



Place Royale – Main Square in the Upper Town of Québec City, Québec, August, 1989.

In direct contrast to Prospect, the streets and rocky outcrops near the iconic lighthouse at Peggy's Cove were teeming with sightseers. The Atlantic Ocean waves crashed onto the shoreline and, despite the many signs warning visitors to keep away from the dangerous tidal surges and wave action, people casually clambered over the slippery rocks. After a brief photography stop we returned to Halifax.

Regardless of its hilly topography, Halifax is best explored on foot. A true maritime city, Halifax is important for its large, ice-free harbour and strategic geographic position. From a perimeter walkway, we could see the bustling dockyards, ferry terminal and ocean liner quays. Then we visited the well preserved Historic Properties – old warehouses now repurposed into trendy stores, fine dining restaurants, hotels and condominiums – followed by the decommissioned *HMCS Sackville*, a naval corvette used for convoy escort duties in the North Atlantic during the Second World War, that was open to the public as a floating museum.

Maintaining the maritime theme, the port of call on the next day was the old shipbuilding community of Lunenburg. For decades, Lunenburg was synonymous with the manufacture of large, wooden seagoing vessels. Among the schooners built there was the celebrated *Bluenose* that broke all kinds of sailing records. Its successor, *Bluenose II*, was moored at the same time we arrived and, as the boat was open for public tours, we went over her from stem to stern, admiring her fine lines and incredible workmanship. The community, too, had its own charm with interesting century old mansions and other picturesque buildings.

The Lighthouse Route was something of an extension of the Marine Drive as the scenic road connected the outports of the heavily indented south shore region; although some of the more tortuous bays and inlets could be bypassed using Hwy. 103. More Acadian French cultural influence was found in and around Yarmouth, in particular at Pubnico, a community that we visited in more detail later in 2009.

Beyond Yarmouth the scenic drive changed to the Evangeline Trail where, at Church Point (Pointe d'Église), the huge, wooden St. Mary's R.C. Church dominated the landscape. As some of the earliest history associated with Canada was rooted here, it wasn't surprising to find fortifications established in the area. At Fort Anne National Historic Site, Annapolis Royal, we learned of the 18th century British presence in the reconstructed military outpost complete with barracks, officers' quarters and strategically laid out ramparts. A side trip took us to an even earlier establishment – the French Port Royal 'Habitation.' This National Historic Site is a complete replica of Samuel de Champlain's settlement in the New World. Faithfully reproduced with wooden palisade and buildings, the site immediately threw visitors back to the 17th century and the hardships that faced the explorers when claiming the territory as *Nouvelle France*.

The Evangeline Trail now followed the length of the Annapolis Valley – famous for its apple orchards, fruit farms and vineyards – to Grand Pré. Here, history recounts the expulsion of the Acadian French from Nova Scotia in 1755 by the British colonials. Also the story of Evangeline, an Acadian girl separated from her lover during the mass deportation, and told in the verse written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. A statue stands in her honour in the immaculate grounds of the chapel dedicated to the Church of St. Charles at this National Historic Site. As the highway crosses the Avon River and skirts Minas Basin it changes to the Glooscap Trail, named after a Mi'kmaq god. The shoreline of the entire region forms part of the Bay of Fundy where some of the highest tides in the world ebb and flow; as we were to experience later in the trip.

Moncton, a city of contrasts, was our next stopover as we crossed the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick provincial border. Downtown, the century old brownstone buildings were overshadowed by the modern, lofty telecommunications tower. Apart from “Magnetic Hill”, which we had experienced in 1975, another Moncton tourist attraction is the tidal bore that travels up and down the Petitcodiac River twice a day. Having seen the impressive tidal bore on the River Severn in England, I was expecting a repetition. We waited in the evening at the viewing stage and, as darkness started to fall, a battery of flood-lights illuminated a stretch of the river. At the appropriate time, the normally placid surface of the river was disturbed by a series of large ripples as the bore made its way upstream. Not exactly a grand phenomenon; especially when compared with the Severn tidal bore, but it did satisfy our curiosity.

From Moncton, a scenic route called the Fundy Coastal Drive follows the Petitcodiac River to the Bay of Fundy. The Rocks Provincial Park, Hopewell Cape, is an ideal spot to witness the effects of the high tides. Our last visit there in 1975 coincided with low tide, which meant we could actually walk on the sea floor and look at the naturally eroded rocks that became the so called ‘flowerpot islands’ at high tide. This time, however, we arrived when the tide was flowing and watched as the water rose as much as 40 ft. (12 m) to engulf the lower part of the rocks leaving the tops to appear as vegetation covered islands.

As we were looking at the incoming tide, we noticed on a nearby beach what appeared to be large pebbles. On closer inspection the ‘pebbles’ started to move as the water advanced in their direction. Then, to our complete amazement, most of the ‘pebbles’ literally took flight. It was a huge flock of migrating semi-palmated sandpipers. We then continued along the rest of the scenic route to the city of Saint John.

Saint John is built on hilly land where the Saint John River empties into the Bay of Fundy. On the waterfront of the Saint John Harbour there are reminders of centuries-old associations with the sea, and Market Wharf – now a trendy tourist area – is lined with stately Victorian brick warehouses. Our visit coincided with a cultural festival where marquees and mainstages had been assembled for various performances. At one venue of this free concert, the public was entertained by a troupe of Ukrainian dancers in full national costume. As we admired the excellent state of preservation of the Victorian clapboard and brick mansions, many of which were built on streets with extreme inclines, a chilly sea fog rolled in from the bay and enveloped us. This was a typical maritime weather event, but one that made it difficult to navigate back to the hotel in a strange city.

We had now come to the extent of our explorations in the Canadian maritime provinces and so set our sights on the journey home. The quickest way from Saint John was connecting with the TCH and following the River Valley Scenic Drive to Edmundston and the New Brunswick-Québec provincial border. Then continuing to Rivière-du-Loup and the South Shore Autoroute (Route 20) to our hotel in Lévis, a town located directly opposite Québec City. We then spent two days visiting Québec City, using the Lévis-Québec ferry to cross the St. Lawrence River, where we enjoyed walking around both the Upper and Lower Towns with their characteristic stone houses and religious institutions. Chief among the sights were the Château Frontenac hotel; Place Royale; Rue Petit Champlain, and the Québec provincial parliament building or *Assemblée Nationale*. The last leg of the journey was westbound on Route 20, the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 8 to Goderich.

Fall activities and a trip to England

October started the autumn season and gradually the fall colours began to appear. One of the scenic areas within walking distance from home was the old Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) track corridor. Now that the CPR had ceased operation on its Guelph to Goderich line, the single track remained silent and allowed free passage to hiking enthusiasts. Gradually the rails and sleepers (ties) were being removed (lifted) providing a forlorn look to the once busy railway. Also being torn down were the numerous bridges over rivers and highways. However, due to public pressure some were spared. The most important was the 1907 steel viaduct spanning the Maitland (Menesetung) River, where the structure was left intact and placed under the stewardship of a special interest group (Menesetung Bridge Association Inc.) that was supported through voluntary donations and labour. After the rails were lifted from the bridge, a rehabilitation programme went ahead to make the bridge pedestrian friendly and to provide direct access to the old CPR track corridor: to be known as the Tiger Dunlop Trail.

After just over a year, Champion's new owners were steering the company on its new course and adding improvements to the product. One of the major changes made was to the range of All-Wheel-Drive (AWD) motor graders. The second generation version – known as the 4+2 System, Phase II – incorporated new features to its independent hydraulic system and the front axle welded assembly. One of my biggest jobs at this time was writing and desktop publishing a new Service Guide for the AWD Phase II machines, and this was available in October.

I was continuing with my part-time evening classes to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The course of study now concentrated on six modules of Personal Life Management, designed to prepare teenaged high school students for real life situations. Each module consisted of a few weeks study in the GDCI High School classroom and completion of assignments at home. I received good guidance from my teacher, Lynn Edward, during the duration of all six courses; the first one dealing with the subject of Aging. This course module was completed on November 21st, 1989, with a pass mark of 99% and 0.25 credit. I continued studying the remaining modules until the end of May, 1990.

Since Mum passed away in February, we were constantly in touch with my father both by letter and the occasional phone call. He was quite responsive despite the times when he lapsed into depression due to the natural grieving process. We encouraged him to find companionship and, eventually, he made the effort to get out into the community. There was a relatively active senior citizens' social network in Hatfield and, at volunteer-run organisations, events such as tea dances took place. Dad started to attend them and gradually make acquaintances with like-minded people. Dad was always the romantic and so showed interest in the ladies at these events. One of them he singled out as being sympathetic to his widower situation and started a friendship. Her name was Kay Denman. As time went by, the friendship blossomed, but Dad was faced with a dilemma as Kay was a married woman! It transpired that Kay's matrimonial relationship with her husband was unsteady largely due, it would appear, to domestic harassment and alleged violence. Since Dad welcomed her companionship, he considered the way out of both their circumstances was for Kay to leave her husband and be taken under his wing – in fact, living together at 109 Birchwood Avenue.

In November we planned a short visit to England primarily as a morale booster for both our fathers and to attend to any unfinished business. The first few days were spent in Hatfield where we met Kay, who by now had settled down comfortably with Dad. The rejuvenated domestic scene was also enlivened with the presence of Kay's pet dog, a Yorkshire Terrier named "Misty." Dad, of course, was like a new man as he now had permanent female companionship, even though the situation was far from ideal given Kay's marital status. We were made aware of legal steps being taken to annul the marriage; although these were still in the initial stages. Kay, herself, appeared to be relaxed, well dressed and a little absent-minded, but Dad doted on her and, in a way, put our minds at ease.

The trip to Coventry to visit Monica's father also went well, and we were pleased that he had fully assimilated himself to his new surroundings. The quality of care at Appledore Lodge was very good, with nutritious meals and a pleasant, warm environment where the residents could enjoy a stroll in the garden or activities in the sun room. By and large, we returned home knowing that both fathers were back on an even keel. However, shortly after our return, another bombshell was to fall and throw our lives topsy-turvy.

Labour unrest

The two-year IAM&AW collective agreement that covered hourly paid shop floor workers and unionised office employees had expired on July 31st, 1989. Negotiations for a new contract were put into effect but, by early November, they had arrived at an impasse. On November 8th, 1989, while I was away in England, 97% of the Local Lodge 1863 union membership rejected the company's offer and voted for strike action. The company retaliated by announcing that if the final offer wasn't accepted, all unionised employees would be locked out of their workplaces. Negotiations continued for a short while.

On November 21st, 1989, a mass meeting at the Saltford Valley Hall was arranged and, during a snowy and freezing cold evening, I drove to attend what was both an information session and critical vote. Don Bate, the union's district representative, described the company's final offer. Although the union had agreed to 50 out of 78 changes to the contract language, there were three main contentious issues that the company would not budge on. They were: completely eliminating the annual cost of living allowance (COLA); a proposed two year wage freeze, and a 3% wage increase in the third year of a three-year contract. Other demands made by the company that were considered unacceptable during negotiations were: lower shift premiums; dental plan/major medical contributions to be partly paid for by employees; job classification changes; curtailed seniority rights, and reduced annual vacation entitlements. Following a question and answer period, a secret ballot vote was taken and the results were – shop floor, 85%, and office, 62% – in favour of rejecting the company's final offer. It was plain to see that the company would lock the doors, and the union executive mobilised a picketing roster.

Regardless that I knew I would be locked out of work, I was faced with a more immediate problem – one of my own doing. The mass meeting attracted the majority of 550 unionised employees, most of whom arrived in the late afternoon, and their cars occupied the entire parking lot as well as all available spaces in the side streets. By the time I arrived, I was limited to a parking spot on the nearby Bissett's Hill gravel



Monica Stands on the Old CPR Bridge Spanning the Maitland River, Goderich, Ontario, October, 1989.



Dad and Kay at 109 Birchwood Avenue, Hatfield, England, November, 1989.

LABOR DISPUTE

Champion locks out workers

Fears mount that the plant will close, putting 550 people out of work and wrenching the economic heart out of Goderich.

By Richard Hoffman
The London Free Press

GODERICH — Bud Sheardown buddled with a handful of workers outside the Champion Road Machinery plant here, chilled by a bitter wind and the fear that his job could vanish.

Sheardown and about 500 workers at the firm known for its heavy road equipment were locked out Wednesday after workers rejected the company's offer on Tuesday.

It's the first labor dispute in Champion's 103-year history, a story that ripped through the town like a snap snow squall off Lake Huron.

But while a company official described it simply as "a labor dispute," union spokesmen say Champion is threatening to shut down and take its operations to the United States — a move that could devastate this town of 7,400.

BIGGEST EMPLOYER: Champion is the town's largest single employer. Donair, Inc.'s salt mine is second with about 250 workers. Company officials at Champion refuse to comment on talk of a move.

But Sheardown, 63, who was born and raised in Goderich, said "you take this company out of here and it's going to hurt this town bad."

FINAL OFFER: In a terse, four-line statement handed out by his secretary, Sully stated the company's "final offer (is) on the table."

See **CHAMPION** page B2 ▶

44 There are quite a few guys with long service here, and we're too old to look for new jobs. 33

— Bill Helebo
a 39-year worker

44 Nobody wanted a strike, but they backed us into a corner. 33

— Don Goddard
a 30-year worker

ON PAGE B2

Read highlights of the rejected contract offer to nearly 600 workers in the shop and office divisions at Champion Road Machinery Ltd. in Goderich.

Read a profile of the company, including a comment from its former owner.

Champion Lockout Headlines on the Front Page of the London Free Press, Ontario, November, 1989.



Locked out Union Members Demonstrate their Right as Pickets, Goderich, Ontario, November, 1989.

LABOR

Family feeling fades away during Champion lockout

Workers at the Goderich road machinery plant are expected to vote Wednesday for a settlement, but they're not happy.

By Don Murray
The London Free Press

GODERICH — The first labor dispute in the 103-year history of Champion Road Machinery Ltd. may come to an end Wednesday, but the sense that something has been lost for good will not.

What is missing among the 550 workers, especially the long-term ones, is the sense of loyalty and respect they once held for the town's largest employer.

It began draining away soon after the Sully family sold out to Sequoia Associates of Menlo Park, Calif., last year. The locked out workers shivering around picket-line wood fires on the weekend now figure the well is dry.

ACCEPTANCE EXPECTED: Jim Kingsley, a 24-year employee, expects the workers will accept the company's final offer at the Wednesday vote, but the Champion "family" is not sure.

"It's such a money game now," he said. "We felt the Sullys were content to run the company as a partnership with the workers and the town, and make a decent profit. These guys seem to want more and more."

Kingsley said the long years without a labor dispute — "then this" — tell the story.

Vic Hey wonders what it will be like when the gates are unlocked and the employees return to work. He started at the company in 1944, the year before the Sullys bought it. "It was a family place," he said with the emphasis on "was."

Wednesday's vote comes after three days of talks with a provincial mediator and the company is calling it the final contract offer.

The union, Local 1863 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, is not making a recommendation; the membership on the offer.

Company officials refused comment on it weekend.

See **CHAMPION** page B2 |

Union Members Prepare to Vote on the Company's Final Offer, Goderich, Ontario, November, 1989.



Barry in the Technical Publications Department Office, Goderich, Ontario, December, 1989.

road. The significant incline of the road necessitated me to apply the hand brake (emergency brake) as well as engaging reverse gear of the manual transmission. During the few hours I was at the meeting the hand brake mechanism froze in place, and I was unaware of the condition until I started to leave. The rear wheels were locked solid and would not turn! I tried to rock the car backwards and forwards, but with limited success. I decided I would just have to use brute force and hope that any amount of traction would eventually free the brake linings from the drums. So I attempted to drive the car home with the rear wheels dragging along the asphalt. It wasn't until I entered the town limits that the rear wheels freed themselves, but at a cost. In the light of the following day, both rear tires showed a worn flat spot in the treads. Although not too detrimental, and eventually they blended in due to normal wear, the incident taught me a lesson.

As expected, at the end of the afternoon shift (11.30 p.m. Tuesday, November 21, 1989), the factory gates were shut and locked. Only nonunion staff – roughly 120 employees – were allowed to cross the picket lines and, with company facilities at four locations, picket posts sprung up at strategic points such as entrances. I received a phone call at home from George Moffat, a shop floor worker, who was also a picket captain, and he informed me that I was part of his team. George outlined the picketing roster which consisted of an eight-hour stint at various times over a five-day period. During the length of the dispute, locked-out union members were entitled to a strike pay of \$100.00 per week. All this was reminiscent of my last picket duties – outside the gates of Rolls-Royce IMD, Ansty, England, in July, 1970, when the work stoppage occurred in the summer months. This time, however, we were exposed to winter weather conditions, and only a fire barrel (45 gallon oil drum) at each post supplied any comfort in subfreezing temperatures.

As the days went by, picketing activities were better organized. Wood to burn in the fire barrels miraculously appeared; usually donated scraps of lumber and broken pallets, but all gratefully received. Later, there was a quantum leap in comfort as some union members who owned small caravans (house trailers) made them available at a few of the posts. These were particularly welcome as I distinctly remember one evening stint outside the Distribution building in Huckins Street was made in 1.5 deg.F (minus 17 deg.C) temperatures, and that didn't include the wind chill factor! The trailers, albeit unheated, at least offered shelter from the wind and somewhere to sit or even lie down depending on the size and facilities of the vehicle.

Of course, the printed media made much of the incident, with reportage not only in the local Goderich Signal-Star, but also in the huge circulation of the London Free Press. Screaming headlines trumpeted the effects the dispute was having on the small town's economy, where merchants were feeling the impact of business dropping off due to the loss of unionised Champion workers' disposable income. However, not all businesses shared the same opinion, and the pickets were delighted when the coffee shop "Donuts and More" contributed 'day-old' baked goods to them for refreshment. There was additional media scaremongering following the rumour of the company leaving Goderich altogether if it was "... forced to do so."

A week later, the ongoing lockout was taking its toll on worker morale. The pessimistic attitude on the picket lines indicated that if the situation wasn't quickly resolved, work would not resume until after the Christmas holiday. In any case, some employees said they would not be returning to a workplace vastly different to the one before the work stoppage. On December 1st, 1989, CEO Art Church sent a letter to all employees explaining the current situation and the company's expectation for an amicable resolution. The

union indicated that it was prepared to return to the bargaining table and arrangements were put into place for both sides to meet with the provincial mediator.

However, an ugly incident happened that almost derailed the mediation process. The company decided to truck away about fifteen partially completed machines from a holding yard. Several nonunion employees, including the vice president of engineering, engineering manager and product support manager, started to move the machines and load them onto waiting flatbed trailers. They had been successful for a few machines before being caught in the act by union members. As the word spread, the locked-out workers swarmed to the holding yard to prevent any more machines being loaded. The town's municipal police force then arrived to reinforce the company's private security guards and tried to keep the workers at bay. Another machine, driven by Rowen Baker, the product support manager, was escorted out of the holding yard gate. As union members surrounded the slowly moving machine, one man was struck by a front tire and knocked to the ground. This made the crowd really angry and heckled Baker who had left the cab to check on the situation. He replied, "You don't think I get any pleasure out of this, do you?" Then returning to the cab, he reversed the machine back into the yard. The injured worker complained of back pains and was transferred by ambulance to the hospital for a medical check.

Fortunately the incident didn't affect the mediation process which entered into a three-day *in camera* session. At the beginning of the third week of the lockout, the union members' morale was at an all-time low when another mass meeting was called for Wednesday, December 13, 1989. This was a call to vote on the company's final offer as discussed between both sides and the provincial mediator. The situation was explained to an overflowing Salford Valley Hall. Members were to vote according to their conscience and without any recommendation by the union executive. The results of the secret ballot vote were: 336 in favour of and 147 not in favour of accepting the company's terms for a three-year contract.

There were the usual disgruntled comments that the parent union hadn't backed Local Lodge 1863 enough and that the threat of moving the factory was sufficient to sway the vote. However, this was very real as it was heavily rumoured that the Sequoia board of directors had empowered Art Church to relocate the company. With a new collective agreement in place, we returned to our jobs and looked forward to a Christmas with relatively fresh optimism. However, after a 22-day lockout, many workers never forgot the sacrifice and continued resenting being 'sold down the river.'

Looking back at the lockout, despite being deprived of a regular income and benefits there were some amusing incidents when on picket duty. One I can vividly recall. We were on the late shift and taking shelter from the wintery weather in a trailer outside the main factory rear gate on Regent Street. My colleagues were Barry Pitblado and Larry McNeil. As we were idly chatting, the door suddenly flew open and in staggered Brenda Fellows and Ruth-Ann Jones, both worse for wear having imbibed in more than a few alcoholic beverages. This was the first time I had encountered these women out of work and in an inebriated state. It was amusing to watch them as Brenda started to remove her outerwear and we prompted her to continue stripping. I think she would have continued to peel her layers, but Ruth-Ann held her back and said, "C'mon Brenda, you piss tank. Let's leave these guys." To which Brenda climbed back into her discarded clothes and they both disappeared into the raging snowstorm outside.

Year end and a new decade begins

My 44th birthday occurred at the beginning of the lockout period, but as it was on a Saturday there were no picket duty interruptions, and Monica and I celebrated at home with a classic beef fondue. The extra free time afforded by temporary unemployment was put to good use with my hobby business activities. During the year, most of the work had been small assignments such as personal résumés, but adding to the workload were newsletters, corporate logos and aircraft paint scheme renderings. This meant that a substantial profit was recorded for 1989.

The new decade started with little fanfare and the first half of 1990 was something of a string of low key events. My part-time evening classes to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma continued and the second module dealt with fundamental aspects of Civil Law. I completed the course of instruction on January 30th, 1990, with a pass mark of 96% and 0.25 credit. The remaining four modules kept me busy both in the GDCI High School classroom and at home. Fortunately, my Apple Macintosh personal computer helped in the creation of various documents and presentations. Dates of module completion and pass marks were as follows: March 6th, 1990 – Well Being, 98% and 0.25 credit; May 8th, 1990 – Entrepreneurship, 100% and 0.25 credit; May 8th, 1990 – Nutrition, 100% and 0.25 credit, and May 29th, 1990 – Resources Management, 100% and 0.25 credit. With all the courses now completed, I was advised on June 21st, 1990, by Linda McKenzie, the GDCI night school principal, that I would be presented with my Ontario Secondary School Diploma (Grade 12) at the graduation ceremony to take place in the coming autumn.

As life returned to normal at the office, more changes were in store for the Technical Publications Department. In due course Fred Helmuth, Kathy Krisak, Don Larder and Mark Russell were permanently laid off (Murray Hill had previously moved to General Engineering as a draftsman). With little seniority, both Fred and Kathy were unable to move to other positions in the company and were obliged to leave. Don ended up in General Engineering working with Gord Kemp and Mark displaced Dave MacAdam as junior printer. Ray Frydrych's department had now dwindled from twelve to five personnel, with outside contract help from John Dicks. Furthermore, in May, 1990, Champion hired Jason P. ("Jay") Roszell as the new vice president of sales and marketing. John Marshall, the marketing services manager, now reported directly to him, which meant the Technical Publications Department fell under Jay's jurisdiction.

On Saturday, June 16th, 1990, we attended the Hamilton Air Show at Mount Hope Airport. Similar to two years previous it was a cloudless day, ideal for the show's special ceremony. The Canadian Warplane Heritage (CWH) Lancaster was, of course, front and centre, but the star of the show was the guest appearance of Dame Vera Lynn, "The Forces Sweetheart", who sang her famous wartime songs to an appreciative audience. There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd – and this was before the vintage aircraft flypasts. As we were listening to Vera's iconic renditions, several warbirds had taken off and started to circle around. In the middle of one song, Vera suddenly broke off singing and said, "I can hear them." Immediately, the roar of eight Rolls-Royce Merlin engines shattered the silence that had fallen and the CWH Lancaster, Mosquito, Spitfire and Hurricane made a low-level flypast directly behind and above the rostrum where Vera was performing. An incredible experience! Wild applause erupted and the aircraft returned for more flypasts; including the "missing man" manoeuvre. Then individual aircraft made solo demonstrations as, once again,

the rumble of the Merlin engines dominated the sky. Complementing the aerial show was an impressive static display of various vintage aircraft that allowed visitors close access and have their photos taken.

A summer trip to England

July meant that, once again, I was obliged to take the company summer shutdown for my annual three weeks vacation. We decided to visit England and make sure our respective fathers were as well as possible and to see old friends. Since our last trip in November we had been kept up to date through correspondence. This was important where my father was concerned because Kay's marriage annulment procedure was still ongoing. From the official files, the *decree nisi* was issued on May 22nd, 1990, supported by an *affidavit* from a local GP (general practitioner - family doctor). Following the stipulated six week waiting period, the *decree absolute* application was submitted. The *decree absolute* was issued on July 3rd, 1990, thus allowing Dad and Kay to marry on July 21st, 1990. In the meantime, Dad had finally retired from the workforce and left the Mann Egerton dealership in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, to enter private life.

After arriving in England we rented a car and drove to the home of Monica's cousin, Trecia, and her husband, Reg, in Ley Hill, near Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Monica's father was already there so that made the reunion nice and welcoming. It was planned to visit Monica's aunt Betty in Wincanton, Somerset, and tour around parts of the English Southwest. Our first stop *en route* before arriving at Wincanton was to look around the prehistoric site at Stonehenge, Wiltshire. After locating Betty's house on a relatively new housing estate in Wincanton, we settled in for a couple days and enjoyed her hospitality. The weather was excellent for touring around the countryside and we stopped at charming villages, such as Somerton and Dowlish Wake with their old stone buildings.

It was almost time for Dad and Kay's wedding and, on the day, we went to the registry office in Hatfield and witnessed the nuptials, together with a complement of Kay's relatives that included her two sisters. There was a small reception and I took some photographs in the back garden at 109 Birchwood Avenue. Dad looked resplendent in a well-cut light grey suit and Kay wore a blue two-piece outfit. They were given a hearty sendoff and we continued to Coventry for a few days. There we reunited with old friends, including Roger, Susan, Stephen and Lindsey Moore at their Allesley Village home. Roger's art services business was doing well with commissions, prints and framing, and the children were still excelling at school.

Another visit that we felt obliged to make was to Monica's friend, Jean Smallman, near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. Since our last meeting in June, 1985, Jean and Barrie's marriage had broken down and they had separated. Barrie had moved out and left Jean, who then downsized from their extensive middle class house into more modest accommodation for herself and her daughter, Claire.

Towards the end of the vacation, we returned to Hatfield and included a trip to the RAF Museum at Hendon. This impressive collection of RAF memorabilia included several vintage aircraft as static displays, and I believe even had a section devoted to the Martin-Baker ejection seat, so Dad had something of a presence in the exhibition. After leaving Hatfield we continued to Ley Hill and stayed with Trecia and Reg.

One day we went to the Bekonscot Model Village in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Trecia and Reg, together with Hannah and Lisa, small children of their second son, Keith, and his wife, Stephanie, went along with us. It was an enjoyable but extremely hot day as the children and grownups wandered around the huge model site. Featured were miniature railways that crisscrossed the country scenes of farms with live-stock and a windmill, villages, small communities and even a pond with a substantial bridge. When we returned to Ley Hill, Reg filled a small paddling pool and Hannah and Lisa had a whale of a time splashing around. Trecia's father and Monica's uncle, Tom Haggerty, also came to visit, so it was quite a family affair.

My job is eliminated – again

All too long the three week vacation ended and we returned home. The situation at work hadn't stabilized and further redundancies became necessary. The junior printer, Mark Russell, was deemed surplus and permanently laid off. On August 17th, 1990, Mike O'Brien, the industrial relations manager, visited Ray's office. Ray then called me in and beckoned me to sit down. He said, "Not good news, I'm afraid, Barry." The scene was a repetition of September, 1988, when my previous job was eliminated. The pile of papers on the desk in front of Mike said it all and the customary courteous, but straightforward exit interview was delivered. As before, it was explained that I could exercise my seniority rights under the terms of the union collective agreement. The official Seniority Recall/Bump Sheet form was made available and had to be completed and submitted within a prescribed time period. Again, I could displace a less senior employee at the same or lower wage classification level provided I could satisfy the requirements of the job; at the same time given a training, familiarization and assessment period of up to ten working days. Following all the bloodletting I was limited to displacing a less senior employee in a lower wage classification level. By August 22nd, 1990, I had made my decision and advised employee relations that I intended to 'bump' Greg Humphries, a draftsman in the General Engineering Department.

My decision was based on limited experience using the AutoCAD software (a fundamental familiarity learned when attending an in-house course organised two years before). I felt confident enough and, with the ten days training, considered I had a fighting chance. However, this perception was short-lived.

Some deadlines in my current work had to be satisfied and so my tenure was extended to October 10th, 1990: my 'bump' procedure starting the following day. On the morning of October 11th, 1990, I reported to the General Engineering Department and located Greg Humphries' workstation. Assuming that I would be using this equipment I sat down behind the desk. A bad move as it turned out, as a special workstation had been set up elsewhere in the department. By sitting down in Greg's chair it appeared to others that I had arrogantly usurped him before the 'bumping' period had even started. Not an auspicious beginning!

Knowing that I would be 'under the microscope' during this period, I decided to keep a daily log of the activities. At the initial meeting, the vice president of engineering, Tom Powell, and two project managers, James McLarty and Ed McGugan, explained the job expectations and outlined the training procedure. There were five phases and I was given a series of exercises to test my proficiency with the AutoCAD software. At the end of the week both the engineers and I were not too impressed with the seemingly lack of progress.



Vera Lynn Sings Nostalgic Songs at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario, June, 1990.



Lancaster, Mosquito, Spitfire and Hurricane Fly Past at the Hamilton Air Show, Ontario, June, 1990.



Dad at the Mann Egerton Dealership in St. Albans, England. He Finally Retired in the Summer of 1990.



Dowlish Wake, a Typical Village in the County of Somerset, England, July, 1990.



Dad, Kay and Kay's Two Sisters at Dad and Kay's Wedding, Hatfield, England, July, 1990.



Monica Visits with Claire and Jean Smallman near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, England, July, 1990.

The third day of the training session was more positive as I completed all the preliminary exercises, but as the week progressed, advanced AutoCAD work was demanded and the critiquing became more stringent. I dropped behind in the schedule and my standards were being documented. This led to the training programme being modified and that didn't go down well with management. Also I was reminded that the company was looking for the efficiencies expected of a seasoned, trained draftsman or college graduate – unattainable goals given the training session time restrictions. The week ended with a closed door meeting between Tom Powell and James McLarty.

With only three more days of training and practice remaining I was basically left to my own devices. Various interruptions impinged on my progress, but later I was shown other aspects of engineering documentation work that involved the use of the AS400 mainframe computer database software. Together with tuition pertaining to manufacturing practices and problem solving on the shop floor, the penultimate day was the only one in the whole session that delivered any significant amount of training.

On the last day, final touches were made to the exercise drawings and related documents. An afternoon meeting was arranged and a decision/justification made of the 'bump'. Attending were Tom Powell, James McLarty, union office chairman Ken Crawford and myself. The outcome was that I was unsuccessful as I could not satisfy the company's expectations of the job requirements. This decision was justified by observation and practical exercises that demonstrated I was unable to show sufficient expertise and knowledge using AutoCAD or of manufacturing processes. No further verbal explanations were forthcoming, but a complete written progress report was available for scrutiny.

The company had irrevocably denied me the 'bump', but it wasn't the end of the affair. On October 25, 1990, as a matter of principle, the office union committee elected to submit an official grievance form at Step No. 1 indicating that the denied 'bump' was unjustified. Straight away the company signed off a rebuttal and, one week later following another meeting with Tom Powell, the form was returned to the union who initiated Step No. 2 of the grievance procedure.

In the meantime I had written my own personal observations and listed nine points of view. Some of them dealt with the company's attitude and others with management doing union work. Some technicalities were also cited, and I described a compromise that the company could implement and satisfy all parties. Whether these observations influenced the office union committee, or not, but some good did come out of it at a later date.

I had another string to my bow, however, and that was to exercise a second 'bump' according to the provisions of the collective agreement. In this situation the candidate had to perform the work without being given any training. The person I had targeted was Elaine O'Donnell, who was one of the company's customer service coordinators in the Parts Department.

As my final day at work was two days after the company denied me the first 'bump', employee relations was obliged to find a work area so I could remain in employment on a temporary basis until the second 'bump' was completed. The Technology Training Centre building's mezzanine floor was being used as a

general storage area and was in a state of disarray. Many of the filing cabinets and other records came from the now defunct Champion factory in Columbia, South Carolina. My job was to tidy the storage area; including sweeping the floor and other janitorial duties.

The second ‘bump’ was scheduled for November 1st, 1990, and I reported to Mike O’Brien’s office in the morning. We went to the Distribution building in Huckins Street where the Parts Department was located and met the parts manager, Rick Fisher, who had once been a spare parts compiler in my old office. Rick explained the main functions of the customer service coordinator’s job. This involved, among other things, generating documents used for shipping parts from the warehouse to forwarding agents. It was understood that I would receive no training, although some basic advice could be sought if a situation became critical. After touring the work area I was assigned several tasks including filing, sending telexes and originating documents used for U.S. export.

The day progressed with some degree of satisfaction but, without any training, the bills of lading were significantly challenging. Additional unfamiliar paperwork posed its own set of problems and, even though some of the documentation was completed, it was clear that Rick was concerned that their non-finalization was affecting the daily parts shipment deadlines. Through mutual agreement, Rick asked Elaine O’Donnell to complete the paperwork and release the parts from the warehouse to the company truck.

Rick and I had an extensive end-of-day discussion in which it was recognized that the job entailed more than I could handle without prior experience or training. Consequently, his evaluation would be based on his observations that my performance didn’t match the company’s expectations.

This, of course, was the end of the road. I had run out of aces. The company required me to work in the storage area on my last day, then report to human resources to collect the Record of Employment needed when applying for unemployment insurance benefits (the ‘dole’ [‘pogie’]). On Monday, November 5th, 1990, I joined the ranks of the unemployed – the first time in my working life. However, there were some saving graces. Certain health and insurance benefits continued for two months; the company pension was calculated *pro rata*, and any outstanding vacation pay similarly treated. Last, but not least, and one of the more important clauses of the union collective agreement, was my eligibility to be on the job recall list for three years.

One good news story happened during the upheaval of the layoff situation. I received notification that the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (Grade 12) graduation ceremony would take place at the GDCI High School auditorium. I was among the mature students who waited in the wings until the main presentation was over. Then we were individually called onto the stage to accept our diploma and engraved plaque from the GDCI principal, Mr. Bruce Shaw. This was an honourable moment and the diploma hangs proudly on the wall together with my other academic certificates. As an additional recognition of the achievement, I decided to replace my gold signet ring – a 21st birthday present from my parents – with an official GDCI school ring. The metal for the new ring was recycled from my old signet ring and some surplus dental gold. Together with its signature cut blue gemstone, the school ring is also adorned with the school name and the year of graduation for all to see.

Despite the gloomy situation, unemployment *per se* was less of a concern than I expected. There was the cushion of the three years job recall rights, and anything could happen even in the foreseeable future. Another possibility was promoting my hobby business and, indeed, an increase in activity did come my way with a lucrative contract from Arva Crane in London, Ontario. I wondered how long the Technical Publications Department would continue given that Ray's empire had dwindled to three employees. He and Lynn were actually on a 'sticky wicket' as their newborn son, Sam Daniel, had arrived on October 2, 1990, and that meant an extra mouth to feed in the Frydrych household. Even Gerry's wife, Alison, was soon to become pregnant. The department's workload hadn't diminished, even though I had been informed that the product had stabilised to the extent that fewer publication changes were necessary; thus justifying the elimination of the technical writer's job. The company had implemented workarounds using Product Support personnel and other nonunion labour. This information was noted by the union office committee for future reference.

I was now 44 years of age and, for the second time in three years, I had arrived at a crossroads with the same decision – *Career or Community*. In the meantime I was obliged to serve the mandatory two weeks period after 'signing on' unemployment insurance (UI) before any benefit payments were issued, and religiously complete and return the official claimant's report form. This set the pattern for the duration of UI benefit payments. How Monica and I survived the predicament is divulged in the next chapter (Chapter 11).