

Chapter 11

Unemployment and reinstatement

Survival mode

The dramatic turn of events now thrust Monica and I into survival mode. After serving the mandatory two weeks waiting period I was eligible to receive the Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefit cheque, which was a percentage of my normal weekly salary of \$677.80. I had ‘signed on’ straight away and my UI claim started on November 18th, 1990. However, it wasn’t exactly the type of present that I had expected on my 45th birthday in one week hence.

Living in a small town had the advantage that government offices were close at hand. At that time, UI was handled by Employment and Immigration Canada located in the federal building on East Street – within easy walking distance from home. During the period when receiving the UI benefit, all claimants were required to visit the office on a regular basis and conduct a job search. This activity, together with earnings from casual work, had to be reported. Which meant I was obliged to divulge any freelance work remuneration. In my application for UI, I had mentioned that I operated a part-time business, so Employment and Immigration Canada sent me a questionnaire to complete before my claim could be further processed.

A week before my claim started, I was approached by Ken Crawford, the union office chairman, who said that he had heard that one of the local estate agents (realtors) needed some part-time help. Would I be interested in setting up a computer system at their office? Probably because Ken thought I was fully computer literate he considered I had the skills to do this job. I considered the opportunity and looked into what was involved.

The company was called Red Carpet Alexander Realty Ltd. The Red Carpet franchise was owned by Bert Alexander and his son, John. Bert was previously part owner of Alexander & Chapman, the property management company that administered the Picton Street apartment building we moved into in February, 1976. The company’s office was located in the Suncoast Mall and the only other employee was Patricia (“Pat”) Armstrong. Pat was overworked with her daily tasks and nobody had any computer knowledge to set up the new system. Much of the software was beyond my comprehension, but I put in steady days trying to organize the programme and submitted regular invoices. On top of that, I had work from Sky Harbour Aircraft Refinishing Ltd., a couple of promotional items, a newsletter for the London-Sarnia Section of SAE, and even had some Champion proofreading work that I could invoice through my hobby businesses.

Christmas, 1990, was somewhat scaled back, but not too much and, even as a laid-off employee, I was able to acquire a Champion donated turkey. So we weathered the Festive Season and wondered what 1991 had in store.

A glimmer of hope

Knowing that there could be the possibility of returning to Champion, I enrolled on a course arranged by the Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology. This was a distance learning course in Technical Drafting where students were assigned projects to complete at home and then submit at regular intervals for evaluation. At worst it was a refresher course in basic drafting techniques, but I also hoped the completion certificate would hold some weight where qualifications were concerned.

As it was a practical course I was obliged to equip myself with a drafting machine. Fortunately, I knew of a surplus machine at Champion and was able to borrow it. I then adapted my desk at home and installed the drafting machine. All the regular equipment such as set squares and other instruments were readily available. The course also required a reference book, “Fundamentals of Technical Drawing”, by Norman Sterling. I was now ready to progress through the exercises and enjoy the results of traditional hand-rendered drafting – just as I was taught by Mr. Harry Godsall in senior school. I started the course on January 10th, 1991, and it ran for 72 hours of study to be completed on April 11th, 1991.

Behind the scenes, the office union committee had entered into formal discussions with the company to try and resolve my outstanding grievance – now at Step No. 2. Some personnel changes had happened in the General Engineering Department, including Win Grau having left for pastures anew. Tom Powell was persuaded that a junior ranking draftsman could fill the gap, and so a memorandum of settlement was drawn up to recall me under the terms of the collective agreement and be given a fair trial period of up to thirty (30) working days. There were several clauses to honour during this period which, if successful, meant I remained in this capacity; that it would not be precedent setting, and the grievance would be withdrawn. If unsuccessful I would be placed back on layoff. The memorandum was duly signed off and the trial period started on February 11th, 1991. On that date I was released from collecting the UI benefit and returned to Champion earning a weekly salary of \$584.63.

The General Engineering Department was located in the Maitland Road offices. This simplified commuting as I now no longer needed to drive across town to the Technology Training Centre building. Even though I had to start working one-half hour earlier, it was an easy walk through the back streets from the apartment. I was allocated a workstation and settled in with my new co-workers, Dave Sowerby, a senior draftsman and Susan (“Sue”) Huff, the department’s general clerk. Our supervisor was James McLarty, one of the project managers.

Initially I was given simple assignments to get the feel of the job and working environment. Most of the time I was left to my own devices, but naturally needed the occasional guidance from Dave and James. As the new kid on the block I was scrutinised and the 30 working day trial period was no picnic. On March 22nd, 1991, I was formerly accepted and continued working on small projects, now at an increased salary of \$589.13 per week.

The General Engineering Department had a culture of its own. Unionised employees were encouraged to ‘dress down’; no jackets or neckties, etc. Visits to the shop floor meant wearing overalls (coveralls) and

safety boots, as well as other safety equipment (hearing and sight protection), so blue jeans were quite acceptable as everyday wear. Nonunion staff usually wore smart casual or even actual business attire. Also important to this culture was the ‘pecking order’. Seniority in the unionised ranks was considered paramount; even the length of service determined one’s standing in the hierarchy. Obviously I was at the bottom of the totem pole and was ‘reminded’ as such on occasion. The senior drafting team included product/tool designers who positioned themselves as the *crème de la crème*, followed by the intermediate and junior rankers. From the top down we had: Bruce Collins, Clarence Taylor, Jim Kimberley, Dave Sowerby, Lox Adams, Phil Abbott, Tom Profit, Dave Vandersleen, Murray Hill and myself. Management personnel had its own peculiarities, and professional rivalry could surface once in a while. Among the engineers and technologists were: Dale Dignan, Bruce Garner, Jim Jerry, Dave Kenyon, Paul Lukachko, Olli Matikainen, Ed McGugan, James McLarty, Murray Ross, Pallipuram (“Venki”) Venkiteswaran and Dayle Wickie.

Meanwhile I continued with my home study of the Conestoga College course and submitted my assignments at the prescribed intervals. In general, the course evaluator returned the assignments with favourable comments. On April 11th, 1991, I was awarded a successful completion certificate from the college. This was followed by a testimonial letter from the course evaluator, Mr. Bernard J. Mara, providing full credit of my drafting abilities and proof of my passing ‘A’ grade with an excellent distinction. These documents were made available to Tom Powell, vice president of engineering, and my company personnel records.

I enter a new profession

When I was at senior school, my father wanted me to think seriously about a career in draughting (drafting), or possibly an apprenticeship in the R.A.F. Certainly the draughting side appealed to me more than a military ‘boot camp’ situation. An engineering streak seemed to run through the male Page progeny as great-grandfather Sidney Richard Page’s profession is described as Draughtsman on his son’s wedding certificate. On the same certificate, grandfather Sydney Stephen Page’s profession is listed as Electrical Engineer. Even my father, who had not shown any real promise in technical drawing at school, seemed to have inherited the same flair as he enjoyed tinkering (see Chapter 1, *Life returns to normal*). After Dad’s wartime demobilisation, he found work as a labourer on construction sites and, as a steelfixer, he had to learn about building techniques. This meant evening courses to understand the stresses and strains associated with reinforced concrete design, and the tuition incorporated exercises in technical drawing. Later, when Dad was a wholesale service representative at Henley Motors, he would often pass the deHavilland Aircraft Company’s drawing office in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, where rows of drafting machines could be seen through the picture windows. This motivated him to keep on encouraging me to follow the draughting career path. He even bought me an assortment of set squares, protractor and precision drawing compasses – all of which I used on the Conestoga College course.

So I entered the drafting profession in an unusual way. My assignments sometimes gave me the opportunity to help design simple parts and assemblies. For example, to win a particular order it was necessary to deviate from the standard machine configuration. In one instance, the customer required a speedometer and gear indicator added to the instrumentation. I was assigned to design the speedometer sensor box and gauge bracket installations. Preliminary investigations suggested that the simplest method was to design a bracket

and attach the speedometer sensor box to it. The sensor pick-up had to be at right angles to the rim of the parking brake disc. After making a few measurements I roughed out a bracket design using the AutoCAD software. Next was to create a prototype part. Two skilled machinists, John Strawbridge and John Moerbeek, fashioned the prototype and it was trial fitted. Adjustments were made and a simpler design using fewer parts, including the elimination of the speedometer sensor box, was considered. Eventually a production part was made and accepted. The gauge bracket installation was more challenging and required the project manager's help. However, it was an interesting exercise where AutoCAD was concerned.

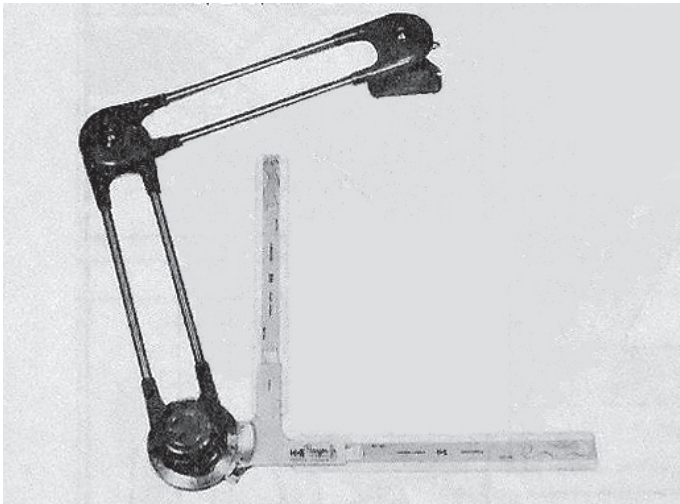
Hard on the heels of that job was another custom design. This time, additional safety features to the special machines ordered for the Japanese market. To avoid personal injury, tire guards were incorporated, and I roughed out a welded assembly installation drawing. Such a design represented a significant expense and so it had to work from the beginning. As far as I can remember, only one change in design was needed following prototyping before the parts were sourced and the welded assemblies made.

Before the company annual shutdown period, Champion was visited by the Sequoia Associates Inc. board of directors. The top brass seemed to be impressed with the employees' attitude and continuous improvements to the product. Internally, David Bethune had been hired as the vice president of finance and CFO, and Dave Million appointed as the vice president of operations.

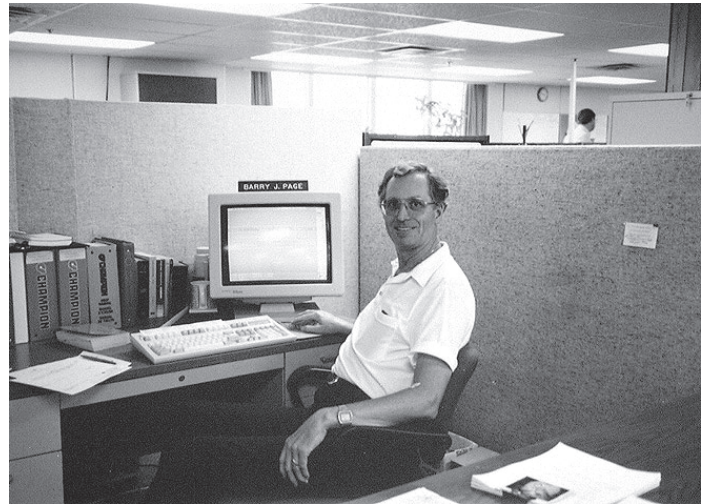
Québec City vacation

It had been two years since our last visit to Québec City and we decided to spend some more time there, together with further explorations in the immediate area. Île d'Orléans was earmarked as one of the new destinations. We set out on the usual initial step driving eastbound on Hwy. 8 and the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401 taking us to the Ontario/Québec provincial border. After passing through Montréal, we took the North Shore Autoroute (Route 40) to Trois Rivières and, as we crossed the St. Maurice River into Cap-de-la-Madeleine, we diverted onto Route 138; also known as the *Chemin du Roy (Roi)* – “The King's Road” – which is the slow, scenic road between Québec City and Montréal. It was opened in 1734 and many of the communities along the way date from this time. Notable stops were at Ste.-Anne-de-la-Pérade to look at the magnificent twin towered church and nearby old stone almshouses; a house with ornate shingle work on the gables in Grondines, and the stone *Moulin de la Chevrotière* (water mill) and *Le Vieux Presbytère* (old presbytery or priest's house – a historic monument) in Deschambault.

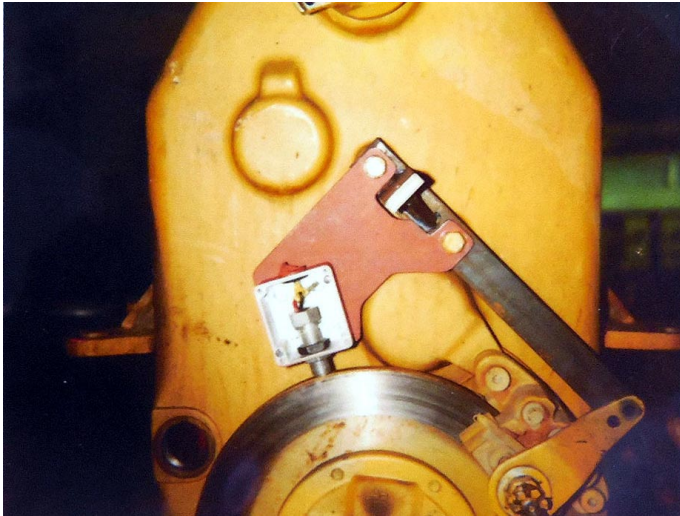
We were staying at the downtown Holiday Inn, so the hotel was within easy access to the historic part of Québec City. Unfortunately it was also near the central bus terminal where many of the city's homeless and undesirables frequented. We were often accosted by panhandlers when walking to Porte Saint-Jean, one of the principal gates of the old walled city. The next two days were spent freewheeling through the Upper and Lower Towns and absorbing the city's ambience under virtually cloudless skies. Photographic subjects abounded, such as the Dauphin Redoubt and streetscapes of the undulating roads of Côte de la Fabrique, Place Royale and the Quartier du Petit Champlain. Every evening we indulged in *québécois* fare at several restaurants; particularly “*Le Vendôme*” and “*Le Lapin Sauté*”, which were to become firm favourites on future visits to the city.



Drafting Machine Used for the Conestoga College Home Study Course, Goderich, Ont., January, 1991.



Barry at his Engineering Department Workstation, Goderich, Ontario, May, 1991.



Prototype Speedometer Sensor Box Installation per Barry's Design, Goderich, Ontario, May, 1991.



Prototype Tire Guard Installation for the Japanese Motor Graders per Barry's Design, July, 1991.



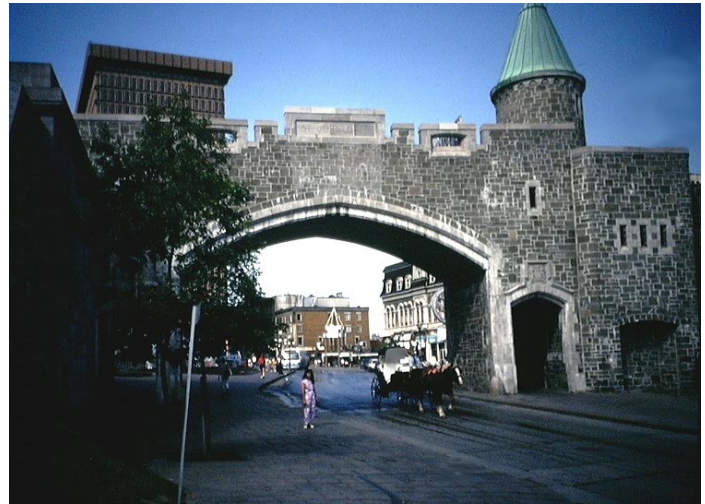
"Le Vieux Presbytère" – the Old Presbytery (Priest's House), Deschambault, Québec, July, 1991.



Parish Church, Ste.-Famille, Île d'Orléans, Québec, July, 1991.



“Chute Montmorency” – Waterfall at Montmorency, Québec, July, 1991.



Porte Saint-Jean, One of the Principal Gates of the Old Walled Québec City, Québec, July, 1991.



Grande Allée, One of the Principal Boulevards in Québec City, Québec, July, 1991.



“Assemblée Nationale” – Provincial Parliament Building, Québec City, Québec, July, 1991.



Changing the Guard on the Parade Ground of the Citadelle, Québec City, Québec, July, 1991.



Cityscape of Québec City from the Ramparts of the Citadelle, Québec City, Québec, July, 1991.

As mentioned earlier, we had anticipated exploring Île d'Orléans. This large island is located east of Québec City at a point where the St. Lawrence River narrows. Before 1935, the island could only be reached by watercraft; then a road bridge was built to connect Île d'Orléans with the North Shore at Montmorency. The recommended drive is to access Route 368 and cross the mile-long (1.6 km) bridge, then follow the highway in an anticlockwise (counter-clockwise) direction to circumnavigate the island back to the bridge.

After a spectacular crossing of the Chenal de l'Île d'Orléans, we stopped at Beaulieu (Ste.-Pétronille) – the western point of the island – and viewed the St. Lawrence River and Québec City downtown skyline. Due to its virtually unspoilt 1700s surroundings, the whole island is designated as an *arrondissement historique*. However, wealthy Québécois maintain large, modern properties and well-equipped marinas there, as could be seen in the village of Saint-Laurent. The perfect day emphasised the natural beauty of the island and we admired the many centuries-old long, narrow *habitant* farms that still produced fruits and vegetables from the rich soil. Passing through the small community of Saint-Jean we continued to the eastern point of the island. A lookout at Saint-François allowed us to see the entire width of the St. Lawrence River, as well as the basilica of Ste.-Anne-de-Beaupré on the North Shore and the Laurentians as a backdrop. Of all the magnificent parish churches on the island, the most outstanding was that at Ste.-Famille with its three bell towers, the silver spires of which glistened in the sunshine. Saint-Pierre was the last village to pass through before retracing our journey across the bridge to Montmorency.

The highlight attraction at Montmorency is the 274 ft. (83.5 m) scenic *Chute Montmorency* or waterfall. The cataract was in full flow and, as it is 100 ft. (30 m) higher, was perhaps more spectacular than the Niagara equivalent. In the winter, the spray builds up into an ice cone called the 'sugar loaf.'

The following day was another perfect one for sightseeing on foot. One of the principal boulevards leading to the old walled city is Grande Allée. This wide thoroughfare is lined on both sides with taverns and eating places where gaily coloured umbrellas and awnings decorate the terraces and sidewalk cafés. At the Porte Saint-Louis end of Grande Allée is the imposing Québec provincial parliament building or *Assemblée Nationale*. Outside the front entrance is an ornate fountain depicting historical and cultural figures. At that time, visitors could view the building on guided tours. We waited for an English interpreted tour and followed the guide through sumptuous rooms to the National Assembly Chamber. Along the way we saw the entrance to the dining room, which is at the end of a short solarium (*verrière*). In the gift shop at the end of the tour, we noticed a full-colour photographic poster of the *verrière* and stately door to the restaurant. It occurred to us that the poster would be ideal for framing and hanging on our end wall in the apartment, so we bought it.

The next highlight was attending one of the main tourist attractions – the Changing of the Guard ceremony – held daily in the summer on the parade ground of the Québec Citadelle. Soldiers of the Royal 22nd Regiment (the Van Doos – an English corruption of the French *vingt-deux* or twenty-two) in full ceremonial uniform marched behind the regimental band. There were the usual inspections and orders barked out as the new guard replaced the old guard; followed by the ranks of men marching past the commanding officers, regimental colours and mascot (a white goat).

The clouds gathered on our last day in Québec City, but we continued to explore on foot and, in the evening, we indulged in another delicious dinner *à la québécois* in the “*Café de Paris*” restaurant on Rue Saint-Louis. It was then time to return home westbound on Route 20, then the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 8 to Goderich.

Summer events and a trip to “The Golden State”

The week away from work was a nice respite, although we were still partial to the odd day out if the fancy took us. One such excursion in August was to the Lake Erie community of Port Stanley, south of the cities of London and St. Thomas, Ontario. This lakefront town boasts a fine sandy beach, summer cottages and a thriving artistic centre with a theatre and large collection of studio/shops. Also, a popular tourist attraction is the Port Stanley Terminal Rail (formerly the London & Port Stanley Railway), which consists of old diesel locomotives and several vintage passenger carriages (cars). A journey on the short stretch of track from Port Stanley to the hamlet of Union and return is a nice nostalgic ride through the Elgin County countryside.

Once again the Port of Goderich was graced with the arrival of a Canadian Forces naval frigate. This time the ‘goodwill’ visit was paid by *HMCS Terra Nova*. The ship, looking spick-and-span on a glorious cloudless day, hove to near the grain handling terminal and opened its decks to the public as well as acting as a recruitment centre.

Activity at work continued with small design work and one-off special applications. I was tasked with investigating an alternative installation for an engine-driven tire pump. The lengthy research work was summarized in a short report to James McLarty, together with marked up general assembly drawings (GAs). I’m not sure of the outcome and the project may have been abandoned. The report used my technical writing experience but, in order to keep up to date with drafting techniques, I took advance AutoCAD lessons organized by the Naylor-McLeod Group Ltd./HITAC and successfully completed the course.

On reflection as part of developments that would happen to my employment at Champion in 1992, after the 1991 annual shutdown, the Marketing Department moved from the top floor of the Distribution building in Huckins Street to Maitland Road. The vacated top floor of the Distribution building was remodelled as an extension to the sales/service training facility. The Parts Department remained on the bottom floor and expanded to include Parts Merchandising. The Technical Publications Department, still under Jay Roszell’s jurisdiction, remained at the Technology Training Centre building, but that situation would change later.

With a remaining two weeks vacation entitlement left for 1991, we embarked on an ambitious tour of parts of California – “The Golden State.” It was going to be a circular journey starting and ending at San Francisco. This was the first time we had flown from Detroit International Airport. So made plans to stay overnight at a suburban hotel to justify parking our car there for two weeks; then took the shuttle minibus to the airport. The arrangement worked well and soon we were flying across the continental U.S.A., landing at San Francisco with a few hours to spare because of the time zone difference. After collecting the rental car, our first stop was to admire the famed San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge.

We were very fortunate to view the bridge on a glorious, cloudless day – devoid of the thick fog that often shrouds the entrance to San Francisco Bay. With time on our hands before the first overnight stop, we parked at the visitors' lot and walked the entire length of the bridge and back, gazing up at the twin towers and suspension cables. Views from the bridge featured Alcatraz Island with its infamous jail buildings and the San Francisco city skyline. Similar to Sydney Harbour in Australia, recreational boating was a popular pastime and the waters of the bay were speckled with colourful sails.

Following U.S. highway No. 101 we headed north in search of the Sonoma and Napa Valleys. These valleys are in the heart of the Californian wine growing country, and vineyards could be seen all over the place. Although there are several dominating commercial wineries such as Gallo and Mondavi, some of the vineyards are owned by smaller enterprises known as 'boutique wineries.' High up on one side of the Napa Valley we visited the Robert Sinsky Winery for a tour of the small facility. At the end we bought a bottle of one of their select wines and it tasted exceptional, verifying to us that the boutique wineries' products were superior to those of the larger companies.

From Napa we made our way to Interstate highway I-80 and headed east through the cultivated lowlands to Sacramento. Changing to U.S. highway No. 50, the road started to climb through the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and the 20 mile (32 km) scenic stretch of the Eldorado National Forest until we arrived at South Lake Tahoe, a community on the shores of Lake Tahoe that is associated with the 1960 Winter Olympics at nearby Olympic (Squaw) Valley.

It was at South Lake Tahoe that I suffered severe pain when I wrenched my back getting out of the car. We had to find a drug store to buy some muscle spasm relief ointment and gradually the pain subsided. This cut into our time on the road, but we were able to cover the required distance – mostly through mountainous terrain – to our next stopover. This journey, which obliged us to cross into the neighbouring state of Nevada, followed U.S. highway No. 395 through the Toiyabe National Forest. This was part of a 110 mile (177 km) scenic drive where, under a cloudless sky, colourful autumn foliage contrasted with the evergreens. We crossed back into California and turned onto state road No. 108 to plunge into the heart of the Sierra Nevadas and wind our way through to the Sonora Pass (9,624 ft. [2933 m]). Again, spectacular scenery was laid out below us, and continued to be awesome with views of verdant valleys at every turn in the road. At Tuttletown we joined state road No. 49 and headed south to Mariposa – our jumping off point for the following day's adventure in Yosemite National Park. *En route* we stopped at Coulterville specifically to photograph the Hotel Jeffery, a three-storey building that was a throwback to 1920s California.

Yosemite National Park is one of the premiere wilderness attractions in the U.S.A. We had scheduled a whole day to explore the park and we were not disappointed. State road No. 140 from Mariposa takes visitors to the park boundary and the Wawona Tunnel. When exiting the tunnel, the entire Yosemite Valley is seen as a panorama. Early morning mist gathers in the deep, V-shaped valley of the Merced River and the sheer cliff faces of El Capitan and Half Dome stand stark against the sky. The scenic Southside Drive takes visitors to Yosemite Village and the interpretive centre. On the way is a lookout for the best view of El Capitan (7,569 ft. [2307 m]), a favourite rock climbing venue. We parked at the village and toured the interpretive centre then followed a network of trails on the valley floor. All around us were towering peaks,

cascading waterfalls and giant evergreens. As the day progressed, the mist dissipated and the true magnificence of the valley unfolded when the sun broke through. The other prominent mountain in the park, Half Dome (8,842 ft. [2695 m]), is shaped as the name suggests, and the vertical rock face is unmistakable. The return journey on the Northside Drive bypasses the Wawona Tunnel, but skirts the Upper and Lower Yosemite Falls (total height of 1,750 ft. [533 m]) and the base of El Capitan. Strategically placed lookouts provide opportunity for photographers to view and capture different vistas of the valley.

From Mariposa, we took state road No. 140 to Merced then changed onto state road No. 99 south to Fresno. The next destination was Kings Canyon National Park and Sequoia National Park, home of the giant Californian redwood trees. State road No. 180 led us to the Big Stump Entrance Station of Kings Canyon National Park. The road then became state road No. 198, or Generals Highway, a 48 mile (77 km) scenic route through the Sierra Nevadas and redwood forests. At Lost Grove in the Sequoia National Park, towering Californian redwood trees dominated the landscape and dwarfed cars on the highway. The trees with their distinctive red bark and dark green foliage can grow more than 300 ft. [92 m] high and have a trunk diameter of up to 35 ft. [11 m]. Standing against these monstrous trunks is awesome.

There were several sharp bends in the highway as it descended through the Sierra Nevadas. At one point there was an overlook that commanded a fabulous view of the surrounding foothills. I stopped the car to retrieve my camera gear from the boot (trunk) and, as I was changing lenses, Monica saw movement in the nearby bushes. Suddenly, a black bear came out of the undergrowth then disappeared into the forest. However, I was too preoccupied to notice this incident. Further down the road, a line up of cars indicated some sort of excitement. It was another black bear and the motorists had stopped to photograph it. I did take one picture, but the bear was well disguised in the undergrowth.

Some of the most attractive places to visit in California are the old Spanish missions. They are steeped in history and religion, and are architectural gems. From the Sequoia National Park we travelled cross-country towards the coast on state roads Nos. 198, 41 and 46 to Paso Robles then north on U.S. highway No. 101 to San Miguel. The Mission San Miguel Archangel is a National Historic Site and a perfect example of the pueblo style mission that we imagine. It was established to complement two other missions; San Antonio and San Luis Obispo de Tolosa. The main building with a low pitched, red tiled roof was attached to an arched colonnade that overlooked a plaza featuring the trademark fountain. Frescos adorned the interior of the main building, and nearby was the unmistakable stone structure of the mission's belfry.

From San Miguel, U.S. highway No. 101 meets state road No. 1 at San Luis Obispo. The mission there is larger but well preserved. Architecture of a different style could be seen in the Art Deco façade of the Fremont cinema. Watching a high school parade, complete with twirling majorettes, was a nice diversion.

The next phase was on state road No. 1 following the Pacific Ocean coastline north. A short break in Morro Bay rewarded us with a great view of Morro Rock from the promenade. This great hump of an island partially disappeared as the sea fog enveloped it. We also observed sea otters practicing the ability to float on their backs and prise open shellfish, their main delicacy. Further up the coast was our two night stopover at Cambria which was within striking distance of the next main destination – Hurst Castle at San Simeon.



The Golden Gate Bridge Spanning the Entrance to San Francisco Bay, California, October, 1991.



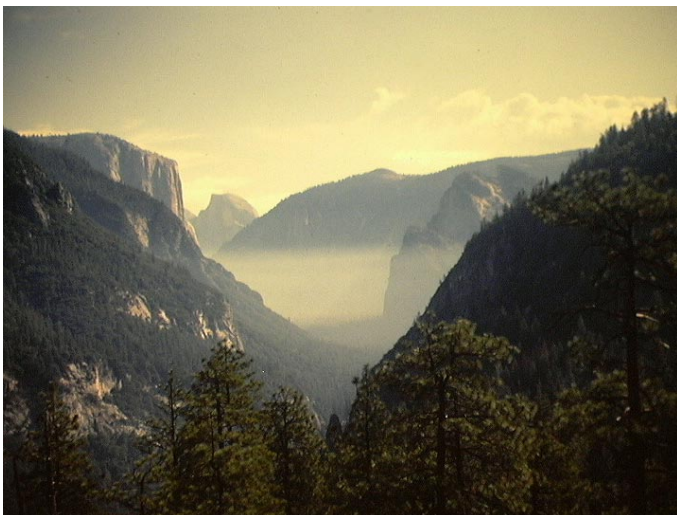
The Robert Sinsky Boutique Winery Nestled in the Napa Valley, California, October, 1991.



A View of the Sierra Nevada Mountains from the Sonora Pass, California, October, 1991.



The Old Hotel Jeffrey Appears Frozen in Time, Coulterville, California, October, 1991.



The Morning Vista of Yosemite National Park as Seen from the Wawona Tunnel, California, October, 1991.



The Yosemite Valley with El Capitan and Half-Dome, California, October, 1991.



Barry and Giant Redwood Trees in Sequoia National Park, California, October, 1991.



Courtyard and Main Buildings of the Mission San Miguel Archangel, California, October, 1991.



The Neptune Pool and Roman Temple, Hurst Castle, San Simeon, California, October, 1991.



The Baronial Hall or Refectory, Hurst Castle, San Simeon, California, October, 1991.



Pacific Ocean Sea Fog Looking North at Big Sur, California, October, 1991.



The Lone Cypress Tree, 17 Mile Drive, Monterey, California, October, 1991.

William Randolph Hurst was a newspaper publisher and magnate. His wealthy, larger than life personality extended to his luxurious place of residence. Hurst Castle, or what Hurst simply called, “The Ranch”, is a sumptuous palace built (1919 - 1947) in the Mediterranean Revival architectural style overlooking the Pacific Ocean at San Simeon. It is now classified as a National and State Historic Monument, and is a major tourist attraction.

On a cloudless day, we entered the estate up a wide flight of steps and followed one of several different guided tours. There was a vast amount of classical Greek, Roman and Oriental statuary that graced the landscaped grounds. The outdoor swimming pool, known as The Neptune Pool, was overlooked by the columns and pediment of an ancient Roman temple. Inside the main building, called the *Casa Grande* and flanked by two high towers, no expense had been spared and the baronial hall (Refectory) was filled with priceless antiques and *objets d’art*. A monstrous wooden dining table, set with expensive silverware, was dwarfed by the high walls covered in large tapestries. Candelabra and a host of flags hung from the cathedral ceiling, and at one end of the room was a huge marble fireplace. Similarly in the Assembly Room, the dominating fireplace was surrounded with rich furniture, statues and tapestries all under an ornate wood panelled ceiling. Private rooms, such as the South Doges Bedroom, exuded wealth in the form of lavish furniture and other trappings.

The film, “Citizen Kane”, starring Orson Welles, is based on the life and times of William Randolph Hurst. Even Charles Foster Kane’s mansion, “Xanadu”, is loosely based on Hurst Castle. At the end of the film, treasures – many of them still unpacked after being transported – were discovered in the mansion’s basement storage room. Typical of these tycoons, both real and imaginary.

The coastal state road No. 1 is marked as a scenic highway on the map. It may well be, but sea fog banks that often roll in cover much of the coastline and it was difficult to view anything offshore. Near Cambria was the sea lion rock, but there were few inhabitants that day. Further up the coast, the surf was calmer and cormorants were seen flying around in profusion. The road then gained altitude following the Santa Lucia Range to Big Sur, a well known beauty spot. Here the sea fog was at its thickest and we could see it enveloping the entire sea and coastline. As we continued towards our next stopover at Monterey, the highway turned inland to Carmel. Nearby was the well preserved Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo with its landmark campanile, adobe outbuildings, courtyard and fountain. Inside the church, the ornate altar and finely carved reredos were particularly awesome. By direct contrast, living quarters for the religious order were simple and functional.

When we checked into the Monterey motel, we were asked by the clerk if we had come to visit the Monterey Peninsula and, in particular, the acclaimed “17 Mile Drive.” When we said we weren’t aware of these attractions, the clerk insisted that we make the effort to go there. Apparently this scenic drive was a “must-do” and consisted of a looped road through some of the most expensive real estate in the U.S.A. Visitors paid a toll for the privilege of driving along a stretch of road punctuated with several premiere golf and country clubs, millionaires’ estates and unspoilt marine views. Certainly the area oozed wealth, and we took our time coasting along in the bright evening sunshine admiring the ocean breakers and the Drive’s renowned ‘lone cypress’ as we passed the Pebble Beach Golf Course – home to many PGA competitions.

San Francisco is a city built on several hills, but still easy to navigate on foot or public transportation. Since we had no further need of the rental car, we disposed of it at the airport and travelled by taxi to a city hotel where we would stay for the next four days. The city has many tourist attractions and is well known for its system of cable cars that travel on selected streets. One of the first museums to visit was the Cable Car Museum. The facility explained the history and engineering behind the legendary little cable cars. Also it was the hub of motive power for the cables themselves. Huge electric driven winding drums and pulleys kept the cables taut and constantly moving, which allowed the cars' gripper mechanism to engage with the source of continuous propulsion. We then took a ride on a cable car to the internationally acclaimed destination of Pier 45 in the Fisherman's Wharf District.

Fisherman's Wharf was the terminus for the Hyde Street cable car and it was interesting to see how the trolleys were moved by hand on small turntables for the return journey. We strolled along the waterfront looking at the many boutiques, food concessions and vendors' stalls. In the background was the hilly silhouette of the city, and a three masted brigantine was moored in the harbour. Not far away was Ghiradelli Square, an upscale shopping and dining mall repurposed from the old Ghiradelli Chocolate Company factory, and The Cannery, a shopping and dining neighbourhood transformed from the old Del Monte Cannery. Further along The Embarcadero was Pier 39 with its waterfront condominiums and marinas.

One of the quirky attractions in San Francisco is a block of Lombard Street on Russian Hill that consists of a series of hairpin bends. We walked down the pavement (sidewalk) watching the antics of cars travelling up and down. Lombard Street then led us to Telegraph Hill and the landmark Coit Tower overlooking San Francisco Bay. From Pioneer Park surrounding the tower there was a panoramic view of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge leading to the suburbs of Berkeley and Oakland. We returned to the downtown streets; again enjoying the novelty of riding on the cable cars by standing on the running boards, hanging onto the vertical pole hand-holds and leaning out. Visualising, too, the wild car chase scene in the film, "Bullitt."

San Francisco has the oldest and largest Chinatown in North America. Similar to its Canadian counterparts in Vancouver and Toronto, the vernacular architecture incorporates Oriental influences and the narrow streets are dominated by signs written in Chinese characters. Many of the food markets could've been taken directly from any indigenous Chinese community; the wares being openly displayed on rickety stands and stalls. More evidence of the local culture was the gathering of Chinese men at public *mah jongg* games.

The Civic Centre contains important administration and cultural structures such as the Federal Building; State Building; Library; Opera House; Symphony Hall, and City Hall located in a park-like setting. During the late evening, the ornamental fountains there also attract destitute and homeless people who actually bathe in them! We were forewarned about this by the hotel staff, so it wasn't a problem.

Before we returned home, we visited one of the more important buildings in the chain of seven Californian missions. It was the Mission San Francisco de Asís (Saint Francis of Assisi) or Mission Dolores, which gives the city its name. The original adobe brick building is the oldest surviving structure in the Mission District and is located alongside the new Greek Revival basilica; the soaring towers of which were damaged in an earthquake. The mission chapel interior is richly panelled in wood and has an impressive reredos.



Marina at Pier 39 in the Fisherman's Wharf District, San Francisco, California, October, 1991.



Lombard Street with the Coit Tower in the Distance, San Francisco, California, October, 1991.



A Cable Car Descends Nob Hill as Passengers Hang on, San Francisco, California, October, 1991.



Telegraph Hill. A Typical Residential Neighbourhood in San Francisco, California, October, 1991.



Food Market Stands in the Chinatown District of San Francisco, California, October, 1991.



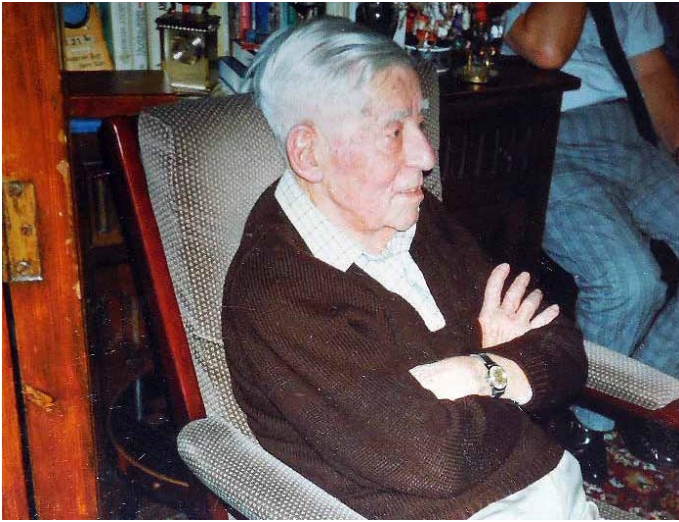
Original Adobe Mission Dolores and New Basilica, San Francisco, California, October, 1991.



Dad and Kay's New Home at 51, The Paddocks, Potton, Bedfordshire, Autumn, 1991.



Cousin Don Jr., Monica and Barry at Don's House in London, Ontario, October, 1991.



Monica's Father Meets with Visitors in the Lounge of Appledore Lodge, Coventry, England, Autumn, 1991.



Barry on the Veranda of the Royal Palms Hotel, Bermuda, March, 1992.



Clock Tower Building, Royal Naval Dockyard, Sandys Parish, Bermuda, March, 1992.



The 'Bird Cage' and Front Street Buildings with their Sunshade Canopies, Bermuda, March, 1992.

Since 1982, the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) London Division had changed to the London-Sarnia Group, the London-Sarnia Division and, in 1990, the London-Sarnia Section. During 1991 under the chairmanship of Doug Hutchinson, the SAE London-Sarnia Section had been busy with various tours and presentations. I was involved creating the organization's newsletter which, with Monica's help, was mailed out on a regular basis. It also helped finance my hobby business, the receipts of which for 1991 were very healthy.

And so the remainder of the year 1991 slipped quietly by. Sometime between June and November, Dad and Kay settled into a new home. They had looked extensively for somewhere away from Hatfield with its memories and concentrated on a part of Bedfordshire that Dad knew during his days working on territory in the motor trade. When we last visited England in July, 1990, we did some exploratory trips to various communities such as Biggleswade, so the desire to move went back that far. However, they then found a choice property in the village of Potton, between Sandy and Biggleswade; eventually selling 109, Birchwood Avenue and moving into an end of terrace house at No. 51, The Paddocks.

Sometime in October, we visited my cousin, Don, Jr., and his family at their house in London, Ontario. This was one of the periodical reunions during the year with my nearest living relative. Monica made a short trip to England to visit her father and cousin. Mr. Papworth was still residing comfortably in Appledore Lodge. My 46th birthday came and went and suddenly I was feeling older: perhaps a precursor to mid-life crisis. Certainly another crisis was to raise its ugly head as we headed into the new year.

The axe falls again

Following the Christmas and New Year's break, work continued as usual with some interesting projects and prototype models, particularly for the customised special applications. I also had a new supervisor, Bruce Garner. Evidently the General Engineering management was looking ahead to the number of product changes, including the impact of special options. The forecast was such that manpower reduction was a distinct possibility given that only a few design changes were needed and they could be easily handled by both the project managers and senior draughtsmen product/tool designers.

In February, 1992, Don Larder and myself were summoned to the office of the vice president of engineering. Tom Powell was there with Mike O'Brien and the usual mound of exit interview paperwork. Tom announced that we were made redundant and that we could exercise our seniority rights under the terms of the union collective agreement. I thought, "Here we go again". "Looks like it's back on UI benefits and await a recall opportunity". There was a grace period before being let go in order to finish outstanding work.

The grace period happened to be 'a saving grace'. During the time I had been laid off from the Technical Publications Department, the workload there had increased and, despite help from Product Support personnel and other nonunion labour, Ray, Gerry and Lynn couldn't cope with the extra volume. Ray found out that I was made redundant and decided to capitalise on my knowledge, particularly of the AS400 mainframe computer database software, to assist Gerry as a spare parts compiler. A 'behind the scenes' agreement must have been made and I was recalled to Technical Publications on February 25th, 1992.

The situation was something of a ‘sticky wicket’, a temporary measure and in no way an assurance of continued full-time employment. However, the workload was such that I could be guaranteed a number of weeks ‘on the job’; although it was unpredictable how long that would last. My weekly salary remained the same as the junior draftsman (\$589.13) and not that of the spare parts compiler’s higher classification, but I didn’t argue the toss at the time as beggars couldn’t be choosers. Time for that kind of bargaining later. So I settled back into the Technology Training Centre building and shared space in the original cafeteria with Gerry, who was still elated over the birth of his and Alison’s first child, Michaela Dawn, on July 23rd, 1991.

One bright spot, however, was being presented with my 15-year service pin on January 28th, 1992, by the president and CEO of Champion, Art Church. A little after the fact as my fifteenth anniversary was on October 4th, 1991, but at least it was recognised.

Spring break in Bermuda

Whether or not I was employed, we were determined to take some time off in the spring. Generally, Canadians seeking the sun in ‘the islands’ after a harsh winter concentrate on destinations in the Caribbean. The over-commercialisation and overcrowding at the resorts and sunspots didn’t appeal to us, and so we set our sights on another island – Bermuda. We were of the opinion that the more placid and colonial atmosphere better suited our fancy. Therefore, plans were made to fly to Bermuda and stay in a small boutique hotel in the capital city of Hamilton.

The flight and hotel package was all we needed as we intended to explore the island independently. This was eventually done using public transportation: because there are no rented cars on the island – only mopeds and scooters – and the different modes of transit, such as buses, taxis and ferries are very efficient.

The flight on March 21st, 1992, was nonstop from Toronto International Airport to Bermuda International Airport. As we approached Bermuda, the airline captain advised us that the landing could be very turbulent. A severe storm had just blown through the area and remnants of the gale-force winds were still affecting the flight path. As we were circling the island, it was obvious that there was considerable wind damage and, in fact, we learned later that a tornado had touched down in one area. The pilot’s skill brought about a safe landing, but it was a dodgy situation given the strong, adverse winds and wet, slick runway. After clearing Bermuda Customs and Immigration, our party made its way through the wind and rain to the bus terminal. An assigned minibus took us to various hotels in Hamilton, and we soon settled down in our room at the Royal Palms Hotel, Rosemont Avenue.

The hotel was run by a family team and we were made very welcome in traditional colonial style with cups of tea and light refreshments. The room, too, smacked of ‘a little bit of Olde England’ and harked back to the influence of British colonial rule. We learned that fresh water was a precious commodity on the island. This was because the limestone bedrock is porous and any rainwater seeps away and doesn’t accumulate in aquifers. The remedy for the islanders was to design houses with special roofs that channel any rainwater through pipes to an underground cistern. The captured water is then used for domestic consumption. Hence the curious ‘stepped’, white roofs are part of the vernacular architecture of Bermuda.

The Bermuda archipelago is divided into a number of parishes. The capital, Hamilton, is located in Pembroke Parish, and Hamilton or Crow Lane Harbour is the focus of all maritime activity. Among the moorings is the terminal where the ferryboats arrive and depart. The Royal Palms Hotel was just a five or six minute walk from the ferry terminal and about a ten minute walk to the main bus station. On the first full day on the island we decided to visit one of the main tourist attractions, which was the restored Royal Navy Dockyard. The Dockyard is situated on Ireland Island North in Sandys Parish and is accessible by both bus (Route 7) and ferry (Blue Route). It was bright and sunny and we made a circular trip by travelling by bus to the Dockyard and returning to Hamilton on the ferry.

In the days when “Britannia Ruled the Waves”, Bermuda was a strategic maritime station in the North Atlantic, and a large naval base was established for outfitting and repairing ships of the Royal Navy. After passing between two solid stone pillars, visitors view an impressive collection of limestone buildings that were formerly stores, barracks and officers’ quarters. They have now been repurposed into a maritime museum, shopping mall and several artist studios. The extensive museum exhibits artifacts dealing with the naval history of the island. The facility is still a port of call and moored alongside the storehouse building with its twin signature clock towers was a three-masted brigantine (square-rigged) from Venezuela. Ocean-going tugs and private sailing yachts added to the watercraft there.

Hamilton City grew from the harbourfront; hence the main street is called Front Street. This commercial heart acts as a magnet for the many tourists looking for quality shops and restaurants. One novel attraction is the traffic control policeman in Front Street at the end of Queen Street. The ubiquitous ‘Bobby’, dressed in tropical gear and standard policeman’s helmet, stands in a small pavillion (locally called the ‘Bird’s Cage’) and directs the traffic flow using hand signals. Of course, the island continues the old U.K. holdover of vehicles driving on the left-hand side, and any traffic lights and signposts are of English design.

Our walk from the hotel to downtown took us along Richmond Road where there were many fine houses. On a sunny day with occasional white puffy clouds, we strolled along Front Street under the canopies that gave pedestrians protection against the tropical sun. The pastel coloured buildings provided a feeling of tranquillity and we noted some of the bars and restaurants that would need further investigation.

We were making our way to Fort Hamilton, the island’s historic stronghold. Tourism is a lucrative business in Bermuda and visitors are encouraged to appreciate the local history and diverse culture. The island archipelago became a British Crown Colony, but since 1968 Bermuda has been self-governing. At Fort Hamilton we met a tourism representative and was asked to follow a group into the manicured grounds. We were then entertained by a small ensemble of pipes and drums, followed by a demonstration of Highland dancing. After eating some light refreshments we continued walking and exploring Hamilton City.

There are a number of imposing government and religious buildings in the city. The first one we came across was the Sessions Building or Bermudian Parliament. This huge Italianate designed structure crowned the top of a hill, and the corner clock tower could be seen for miles. The next major edifice was the Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral whose Gothic features echoed those of similar churches found in English towns. However it did look somewhat out of place being surrounded by palm trees.

As we continued to walk along the main roads, Monica started to feel stomach cramps. We were far from the hotel and eventually the need for Monica to visit the toilet was becoming urgent. I could see a large building ahead which turned out to be the City Hall. Fortunately there were public washrooms in the foyer (lobby) and Monica was saved from further trouble. The City Hall, itself, was an imposing structure with white stuccoed walls, a huge clock tower and colonnaded façade. The rest of the day was spent relaxing and anticipating an evening meal in one of the restaurants noted along the way. Of these, “M R Onions” on Par-La-Ville Road became a favourite and was visited more than once. Another was “Rum Runners Restaurant and Pub” located right on Front Street. The best tables were on the balcony overlooking Front Street and Hamilton Harbour, and basic pub grub such as ‘bangers and mash’ went down well with a pint of Guinness.

The next day introduced us to other features and cultures of Bermuda. Again, the tourism organisation came to the fore as we learned of a demonstration that featured the legendary “Gombey” dancers. Similar to the “Goombay” dancers of Bahama, this type of entertainment stems from African and indigenous Caribbean native dance routines. The “Gombey” also refers to a specific type of drum used for the unique rhythm accompanying the gyrations of the costumed performers which, in this case, took place inside a small auditorium. The musicians arrived and started beating a staccato. Then several dancers entered, each wearing the characteristic peacock feather headdress, mask and vividly coloured robes and trousers covered in tassels and other ornaments. A carefully orchestrated sequence of whirling, leaping and acrobatic stunts made for an amazing sight.

Historically, Bermuda was developed by the Virginia Company of merchant adventurers/colonists and one of the mainstay trading items was rum. Several prominent families, such as the Goslings and Trimminghams, held enormous influence as well as amassing huge fortunes. Evidence of their patronage was seen in many aspects of Bermudian life, and their flagship stores features prominently on Front Street.

Before Hamilton City was given its current status, the Town of St. George on St. George’s Island was the capital. St. George’s Island is located on the northeast of the archipelago and is accessible by both bus and ferry. Halfway through the vacation, we elected to spend a day in the Town of St. George and joined a group of tourists that had congregated near its centre, King Square. We were summoned by the sound of the town crier’s bell. This colourful character, dressed in 17th century garb, voiced a proclamation and herded the crowd into King Square. The square was preserved to its appearance centuries ago, and included such standard fixtures as the pillory – a novel item that tourists could try out for joke photographs. The guided tour continued with a walk through the largely deserted cobblestone streets and the town crier reeling off facts about the community’s history. In the early days of colonisation, legal punishment could be harsh, especially under Puritanical laws. Any religious deviation, such as witchcraft, was dealt with public ridicule and a session in the “witch’s stool” attached to the end of a pivoted plank. A mock trial was staged for the benefit of the tourists and a ‘witch’ condemned to be secured in the stool. Everyone entered the spirit of the event as the poor unfortunate was dunked in the harbour. The tour then took us to the historic State House (Bermuda’s first parliament) and, the Old Rectory – a fine Bermudian bungalow with a short flight of steps to the front door and flanked with stone walls, affectionately known as the “welcoming arms.” Close by was St. Peter’s Church. A white stuccoed building with small rose window and clock tower, it is the oldest Anglican and continuously occupied Protestant church in the Western hemisphere.



The Sessions Building for the Bermudian Parliament, Hamilton, Bermuda, March, 1992.



Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral, City of Hamilton, Bermuda, March, 1992.



Performance by the Colourful Gombey Dancers, Hamilton, Bermuda, March, 1992.



The State House in the Community of St. George, St. George's Island, Bermuda, March, 1992.



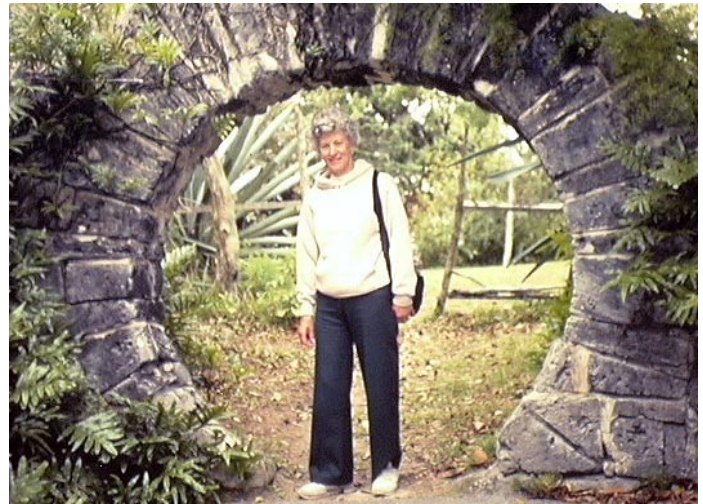
Streetscape View from the State House, St. George, St. George's Island, Bermuda, March, 1992.



St. Peter's Church in the Community of St. George, St. George's Island, Bermuda, March, 1992.



National Trust Property, Somerset Village, Sandys Parish, Bermuda, March, 1992.



Monica and the Moongate, Somerset Village, Sandys Parish, Bermuda, March, 1992.



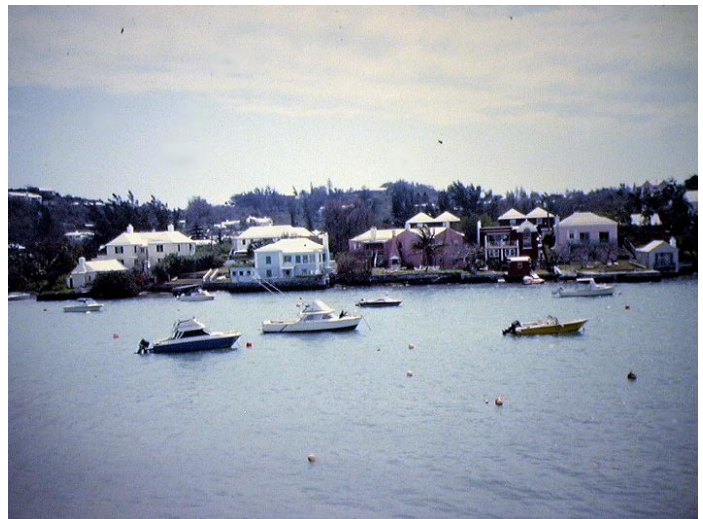
The Rocky Shore of Cavello Bay, Somerset Island, Sandys Parish, Bermuda, March, 1992.



The Pink Sand of Horseshoe Bay, Southampton Parish, Bermuda, March, 1992



"Rum Runners" Restaurant on Front Street with its Sunshade Canopy, Hamilton, Bermuda, March, 1992.



Looking Across Hamilton Harbour to Chelston's Pastel Coloured Houses, Bermuda, March, 1992.

Bermuda's coastline is indented with many bays and coves. With a frequent bus service throughout the archipelago, we were able to travel to chosen destinations, such as Somerset Village, and investigate the local bays on foot. Somerset Village in Sandys Parish is the stop for Mangrove Bay with its wide expanse of soft, white sand. Walking through the village, we noticed a house with an unusual entrance. The "welcoming arms" led to the second storey, and a second flight of stairs to a landing the width of the house. There was also a National Trust property that preserved the domestic architecture, and further along a circular "moon gate" made from native limestone. The folklore is that to pass through a moon gate is to invoke good luck. Cavello Bay on Somerset Island is altogether different with rocky outcrops and a complete lack of sand.

A short bus ride took us to Southampton Parish. A number of high-end hotels occupied this prime real estate, and Horseshoe Bay, with its fine pink sand, was a magnet for beachcombers. Horseshoe Bay's eroded limestone formations and sea stacks with booming surf are also picturesque. However, it was disconcerting walking along the beach as a strong wind blasted the sand particles against us and grazed any exposed skin.

The remainder of the stay in Bermuda took us to other parts of the Main Island. We came across indigenous flora and fauna, such as glorious passion flowers and multicoloured chameleons. The "Sea Princess" cruise ship came into port – the first of the season. Compared with later cruise ships, she was small with only three passenger decks. Soon it was time to leave this vestige of British colonialism, fly back to Toronto and return to Huron County where the spring was just beginning.

Settling back at work it was business as usual in the Technology Training Centre building. Gerry and I were visited on occasion by John Dicks, our previous chief technical illustrator, now freelancer, who had a retainer with Champion to work on certain assignments offsite. Since the purge of Technical Publication personnel, the office union committee had been agitating to rescind this arrangement and bring back a full time illustrator. The situation continued to fester for years without a resolution. Another spontaneous visitor was Jack McDonald. "Grader" Jack, as he was affectionately known, was the leading designer back in the old Sully Champion days. Long retired, Jack, who was a lonely bachelor, used to drift into the office and factory to look at the product and chat with acquaintances. He was quite harmless, but tended to be a distraction. One time when he invaded our room, Ray had to diplomatically ask Jack to leave and preferably not to return. One other incident that comes to mind during our tenure in the old cafeteria was the time we arrived in the morning and detected a vile odour in the room. I said to Gerry, "That's the smell of death." After looking around we found the decaying corpse of a mouse. It was quickly removed and dumped outside.

Towards the end of April, 1992, Monica visited England for a week to stay with her cousin and see her father. From Ley Hill she was taken to Coventry and boarded at Hersall Lodge, not far away from Mr. Papworth's retirement home. She also met and visited old friends Roger, Susan, Stephen and Lindsey Moore at their Allesley Village home. Roger's art business was doing well with several commissions and framing jobs. The children were excelling at school with Stephen just about to take his G.C.S.E. examinations. Lindsey, at fourteen years, sported her first hair perm and was admired by all. Monica also took time to visit downtown Coventry and look at the remodelled city centre. The statue of Lady Godiva had been moved from the middle of Broadgate island to a site underneath some hideous "tents" adjacent to Cathedral Lanes.

Spring turned into summer and there was a lot of activity in town, both commercial and recreational. The harbour was visited by the ocean-going freighter, *MV Fir*, that took on board a cargo of alfalfa pellets. Uptown on The Square, classic car enthusiasts held a “show and shine” exhibition. Among the many mint condition models on display there were a Duesenberg and a boat-tail Auburn.

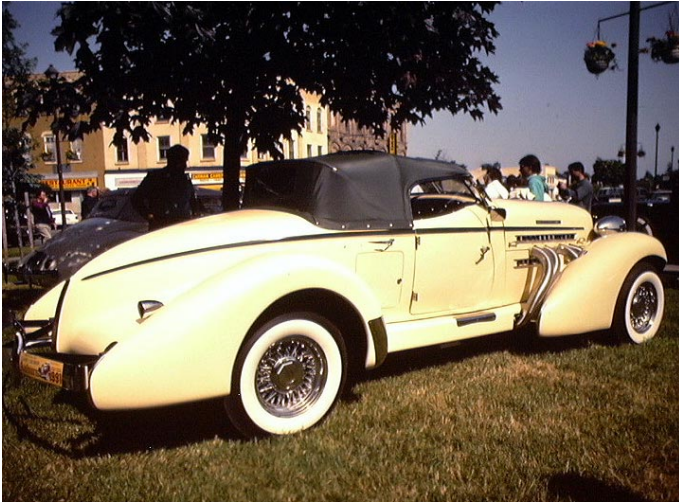
For the company annual shutdown period we decided not to be too ambitious. This was primarily due to my employment situation which once again had become precarious. My reinstatement in February hadn't guaranteed permanency, and in April I was rescheduled for layoff; my last day of work being June 19th, 1992. Following in-house negotiations, I was granted an extension to July 30th, 1992, and this respite was further extended to September 25th, 1992.

However, we did make a short trip based on a recommendation given by Mr. Claus Breede, the curator of the Huron County Museum. The destination was a pioneer ‘living museum’ called Connor Prairie in Indiana, U.S.A. The museum preserves the William Conner home, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and recreates part of life in Indiana in the 19th century on the White River. Also along with several reconstructed residences, the site has its own blacksmith forge, pottery, the “Golden Eagle” inn, doctor’s office, and a one-room schoolhouse.

After reaching the museum, we were astounded to find the costumed interpreters re-enacting their roles as if frozen in time. That is, the site represented the Indiana frontier of 1836, and the residents did not discuss any events or inventions that came about after that year. Indeed, visitors were encouraged to play-act typical characters of the period. For example, I was asked by a resident sporting a crinoline dress and sun bonnet how I arrived in the community. I had to feign being brought there by stage coach. Sometimes, if visitors accidentally lapsed into the modern world, the guides would register incomprehension and even chide us a little.

One of the first reconstructed buildings on the self-guided tour was the “Golden Eagle” inn. In contrast to some of the rustic log cabins on site, the tavern was a well made timber frame building. Some of the houses were open and the usual interiors that we are familiar with were described by the ‘residents.’ In one, ‘Mrs. Whittaker’, complete with corn broom, explained the day in the life of pioneers at that time. The doctor’s house was a sprawling complex with its own farmyard and animals. We noticed a tradesperson enter a square-timbered log cabin nestled under some huge shade trees. Intrigued, we followed into what was the pottery where the artisan gave us a demonstration of his foot-powered potter’s wheel. The one-room schoolhouse and the widower’s residence were of typical log cabin design.

We broke our return journey home by staying overnight in Dayton, Ohio. The reason was to visit the National Museum of the United States Air Force galleries at the Wright-Patterson air force base, which is the largest such facility in the U.S.A. It was a hot, sunny July day, but the galleries, crammed with examples of USAF aircraft and other hardware – some from the Wright Brothers era – were cool. However, the air base is a highly secured area and photography was not allowed. In fact, my camera and all equipment were temporarily confiscated for the duration of the museum tour. Therefore, no photographic record exists of the visit. The journey home was simply driving north on Interstate highways I-75 and I-94 to Port Huron/Sarnia.



Boat-tail Auburn Exhibit at the Classic Car Show on Courthouse Square, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1992.



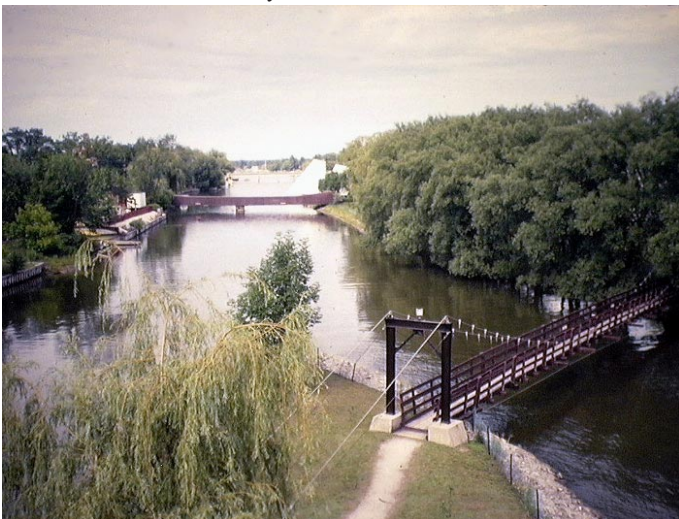
The "Golden Eagle" Inn Reconstructed Building at Conner Prairie, Fishers, Indiana, July, 1992.



The Potter at Work in the Pottery at Connor Prairie, Fishers, Indiana, July, 1992.



The Widower's House Reconstructed Building at Conner Prairie, Fishers, Indiana, July, 1992.



The Suspension Footbridge Leading to Nancy Island Historic Site, Wasaga Beach, Ontario, July, 1992.



The "Algowest" Leaving the Harbour with a Cargo of Grain, Goderich, Ontario, September, 1992.

A week later we made a day trip to the Georgian Bay resort community of Wasaga Beach. The attraction there was the Museum of the Upper Lakes, a facility built on an island that features the recovered hull of the schooner *Nancy*. The *Nancy* was requisitioned by the Royal Navy during the War of 1812, but was sunk in a battle against U.S. naval forces in the Nottawasaga River. The museum records the career of the *Nancy* and Upper Lakes shipping in general, and includes many artifacts. The facility is reached by pathways and a suspension footbridge. We also took time to explore part of the extensive Wasaga Beach; said to be the longest and safest freshwater beach in the world.

Continuing with the nautical theme, Goderich Harbour hosted one of the largest Great lakes freighters, the *Algowest*, which took on a cargo of grain. Later the brigantines *Pathfinder* and *Playfair* paid a visit.

Turning point

In the latter part of the year, my employment situation still looked shaky. The temporary position was again reviewed and further extended to November 27th, 1992. In between time another physical move was considered and Technical Publications was shuffled to the Maitland Road office building. Space was made available as a set of individual offices had been demolished to make way for an open-plan floorspace occupied primarily by the Product Support Department. I welcomed this move as, once again, commuting consisted of walking to and from home. Changes were also happening in the company's management. Scott Hall was hired as the new vice president of finance and CFO, and Paul Perras started as the new manufacturing manager. Due to some misdemeanour, Tom Powell was demoted from chief engineer to project engineer and Art Church, CEO, temporarily assumed Tom's old responsibilities.

A turning point happened out of the blue. In December, 1992, additional personnel layoffs were in the offing; one being Murray Hill in General Engineering. Murray could easily 'bump' me as the spare parts compiler since he had done the job before and had greater seniority. However, there was a significant personality conflict between Ray and Murray – in the past, the two men were at constant loggerheads. Around 1990, Murray had transferred from Technical Publications to General Engineering; his parting words being, "I have never been so glad to leave a department." At the time this suited Ray, but when I told him that I was now vulnerable to the 'bump', Ray looked at me and immediately said, "Then we'll have to resurrect the technical writer's position." This, of course, was music to my ears.

The technical writer's position was posted for ten working days. This followed the collective bargaining rules to allow other unionised employees to apply for the job. I applied and after the time period had elapsed (there were no other applications and Murray couldn't satisfy the requirements or qualifications), I was offered the job. Now I was assured full-time work in my proper capacity, with an attendant weekly salary increase from \$589.13 to \$712.50.

Thus 1992 closed on a high note. Freelancing activity was showing promise, and a new StyleWriter inkjet printer produced improved final copy for the newsletters and résumés constantly in demand. SAE meetings and other events featured prominently as now the local organization had been elevated from the London-Sarnia Section to the expanded Southwestern Ontario Section; a significant coup.

Champion expands its product line-up

Now that Champion was operating smoothly and profitably, its new owners decided to expand the product line-up. In searching for a likely companion machine in the roadmaking industry, Sequoia Associates Inc. bought the assets of a company called BNR. The product involved was a range of self-propelled road rollers marketed under the trade name, SuperPac. The deal was completed in January, 1993, and the way was open to re-brand the machines under the Champion name. Mike Sully, who was vice president of employee relations, was given a lateral promotion and moved to become the president of SuperPac. This was Mike's last position and as soon as his work contract expired he left the Champion organization. There were no plans to bring SuperPac manufacturing and assembly from its current location in Cambridge to Goderich and all marketing and product support activity was continued by SuperPac personnel. However, the BNR SuperPac technical publications had to be converted to the Champion format and that helped to solidify my job.

A further acquisition was made when Sequoia Associates Inc. took over the Bud Lee Company in Charlotte, North Carolina. Bud Lee manufactured a range of small (compact) road graders. The company was headed by Mr. Gary Abernathy, who controlled the daily order intake, purchasing and manufacturing activities. Gary worked under Dave Million, Champion's business development manager – a new position specially created as Dave had recently returned from sick leave. Again this was all good news as these products needed to be re-branded as Champion and the Bud Lee technical publications transformed into the house style. Ray made an exploratory trip to the factory in Charlotte, North Carolina. When he returned, he described the plant as being "... a blacksmith's shop." Actually Ray made a few more business trips as he discovered the Charlotte Motor Speedway there as an entertainment diversion, and also he could meet up with his old pal, Adrian Gardiner, from nearby South Carolina.

In April, 1993, Art Church hired Dave Ross as the new vice president of engineering. Dave, who was a graduate engineer at Champion from 1980 to 1983, had climbed the corporate ladder in other companies. His extrovert personality meant the "new broom was sweeping clean", and several organization changes were given priority. One was a departmental realignment, and both Technical Publications and Product Support came under Dave's jurisdiction.

Travel time – England and the U.S.A.

It was time for a periodic trip to England. Monica had made a couple of independent journeys to see her father and cousin, but I hadn't visited Dad and Kay since their wedding in July, 1990. Following the usual trans-Atlantic flight and car rental, we made our way to Dad and Kay's house in Potton, Bedfordshire. It was our first visit there and the route challenged our navigation skills. Not only that, but as we left the Greater London area, I noticed that the fuel gauge was showing a low level, and not the full tank as it should have indicated. This meant finding a filling station soon. Fortunately, we were driving on the A1 (Great North Road) and I knew of a garage in Hatfield where we stopped and refuelled. Knowing that when returning the vehicle to the car rental company we would have to argue our case for a refund, I kept a receipt as proof of date, time and amount of fuel purchased.

Potton was going to be the base of operations for a few days as we intended to explore a bit of the Bedfordshire countryside. The weather cooperated and we made day trips to neighbouring villages such as Sutton, Gamlingay and Waresley. At Waresley we stopped at the local pub called The Duncombe Arms and noted the full-course evening meal. As the village wasn't too far away from Potton, we returned for dinner. Of course, many of the villages contained some well-preserved historic properties. There were Tudor black beamed 'cruck' houses with intricate bargeboards, and the interesting Mediaeval two arched stone packhorse bridge in Sutton. Another destination was the village of Ashwell in Hertfordshire where we had afternoon tea. Unfortunately, due to a mix-up with the bill, we ended up paying twice.

It had been nearly three years since Dad and Kay's wedding and we noticed some minor friction between the two; although Dad was constantly appeasing Kay's shortcomings. He mentioned to me in private that Kay was like "... the girl with the curl on her forid [forehead]. When she was good, she was very, very good. But when she was bad, she was horrid." Regretfully, a few cracks in the relationship were beginning to appear.

For reasons unknown we decided to punctuate our visit between Potton and Coventry with a trip to the birthplace of the English Industrial Revolution – in and around the communities of Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale, Shropshire. Getting there meant driving on the Motorways. The M1, M6 and M54 routes took us to Telford; then the ring road around this 'new town' to a minor road and Ironbridge. We stayed at the "Robin Hood Inn", a local pub/hotel and discovered that there were many places of interest; not just the venerable 'iron bridge' itself.

The fledgling iron and steel industry was born in this area due to the efforts of individuals such as Abraham Darby. Large furnaces, fired by the copious amount of coal mined nearby, produced the huge amounts of cast and wrought iron used for structures – the 'iron bridge' being a classic example. Although no longer used for wheeled traffic, the pedestrianized bridge spans the River Severn and is a tribute to architects working in the new medium. Later, steel production using the newly invented Bessemer converter further enhanced the area's metalworking reputation.

There was a collection of museums in the area and we accessed some of them using a special 'passport.' Industrial Revolution artifacts abounded in the Museum of the River, a Gothic-style brick building used by the early railways. At the Museum of Iron, Abraham Darby's famous prototype blast furnace was preserved, as well as two monstrous steam engines, 'David' and 'Sampson.' In Coalbrookdale, another industry had sprung up. Cast iron fireplaces were coming into vogue and to relieve the bland metalwork, glazed tiles were incorporated as a decorative feature. The tiles came in many shapes, designs and colours. Fireplace manufacturers added the tiles as part of the assembly process as could be seen in the Coalport China Museum that was dominated by the traditional bottle-shaped kiln.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the trip was a visit to Blists Hill, a 'living museum' epitomising a late-Victorian community in the "Black Country." This amalgam of houses, shops, pubs, financial institutions, small factories and a coal mine pithead was a throwback in time. Costumed guides and craftspeople helped visitors understand the way of life of that era; including demonstrations and the appearance of the



Dad, Kay and Barry Outside "The Duncombe Arms" Pub, Waresley, Bedfordshire, England, May, 1993.



The Old Rectory Half-timbered House and Village Church, Sutton, Bedfordshire, England, May, 1993.



The 'Iron Bridge' and River Severn at Ironbridge, Shropshire, England, May, 1993.



The Gothic-style Museum of the River, Ironbridge, Shropshire, England, May, 1993.



Streetscape at Blists Hill with Houses, Shops and Pub, Ironbridge, Shropshire, England, May, 1993.



The Tinsmith in his Workshop at Blists Hill, Ironbridge, Shropshire, England, May, 1993.

brewer's dray pulled by a huge draught horse. Adding even more authenticity was the volunteers' unique singsong "Black Country" accent.

After our visit to Ironbridge, we retraced some of our way back on the M54 and M6 Motorways to Coventry for the remainder of the vacation. May 12th, 1993, was a special day – Mr. Papworth's 90th birthday. Monica organized a family celebration and decided to arrange a lunchtime meal at The Windmill Hill Inn near Allesley Village just outside of Coventry. On the day, we collected Monica's father from Appledore Lodge and made sure he was comfortable being transported in a wheelchair. The inn wasn't far away and we met the other guests in a private room. Those who arrived were: Monica's cousins Trecia and Derek with their spouses, Reg and Cheryl; Derek's mother, Aunt Betty and her best friend Audrey, and Monica's childhood friend, Jo. The occasion went well and following the meal we returned to the retirement home for a presentation. As a surprise, Trecia had made a special birthday cake. It was in the shape of a "Scrabble" game board, as "Scrabble" was one of Mr. Papworth's favourite amusements.

The rest of the holiday was spent in and around Coventry; visiting Monica's father every day and also our good friends Roger and Susan Moore, together with their children Stephen and Lindsey at their home in Allesley Village. Roger was busy with framing jobs for his art business as well as helping to renovate the village hall plus organizing fund raising events. Stephen was working part-time at an environmental company; an experience that would definitely stand him in good stead. Also he was into the first of two years study for his G.C.S.E. 'A' level examinations. Lindsey scored well in her 'mock' G.C.S.E. 'O' level examinations and also was being very enterprising by making several newspaper rounds.

A part from Gerry and Alison Fernandes' birth of their son, Simon Gerard on May 10th, 1993, not a great deal of news happened between our trip to England and the summer vacation during the company annual shutdown period. We had chosen an arbitrary destination – Lancaster County in Pennsylvania – together with other nearby places of interest. Chief of these being Atlantic City, Gettysburg and a flying visit to the SAE headquarters at Warrendale near Pittsburgh.

The logical sequence was to drive to Atlantic City, then return home through Pennsylvania stopping at the other attractions *en route*. We took the most direct route to Atlantic City; entering the U.S.A. at the Sarnia/Port Huron border crossing and on Interstate highways I-94 and I-75 through Michigan to Toledo, Ohio. Regardless of the road tolls, it was expedient to travel on the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) and its extension, the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76). East of Pittsburgh and through the Allegheny Mountains, the Turnpike traversed some very scenic countryside. Continuing past Harrisburg, the Turnpike skirted Philadelphia and, by some judicious navigating we eventually found the Atlantic City Expressway. The journey had taken a few days and it was dusk by the time we were heading towards Atlantic City.

A small adventure then began. We had booked into the Holiday Inn Express hotel but, in the gathering gloom, the building wasn't obvious from the limited access, divided highway. As time and distance went by we were becoming concerned as to the hotel's whereabouts. Darkness had fully descended and I resolved to leave the highway at the next intersection and make enquiries. The nearest convenient place that looked inhabited was a filling station. I stopped and approached an individual on the forecourt. He looked alarmed

at me coming out of the shadows and may had thought I was a potential robber. Sensing this I allayed his fears and asked for directions to the hotel. Fortunately we hadn't driven too far out of our way and I was pointed in the right direction. As it turned out, the hotel was somewhat substandard, being the Holiday Inn budget chain, and even the complimentary buffet breakfast was rather meagre. We had to supplement the offering with another breakfast at a nearby fast-food outlet.

The first full day was spent exploring the string of islands on the Atlantic coastline leading to the community of Cape May. The town prides itself as being "America's Oldest Seaside Resort" and is a favourite French Canadian tourist destination. Large Victorian houses in the Cape May Historic District are characterized by excessive and colourful 'gingerbread' ornamentation. The style is called Stick architecture. Another tourist attraction is the Washington Street Mall: a pedestrian area of gift shops and restaurants housed in old wooden buildings that gave the area a colonial feeling. Cape May is also well known for birding activities.

We had anticipated spending the entire next day in Atlantic City. It was mid-July and as the day progressed, the temperature began to rise. Even with the offshore breeze it was a relief to enter any air conditioned building. We drove to the downtown area and found a parking lot. After we had parked, the attendant came over to us and asked me to surrender the car's ignition key: "... just in case we have to shuffle vehicles around the lot." I was perplexed by this, and Monica became indignant with the attendant's demanding attitude. Neither of us thought this was a good idea and elected to leave. The attendant just shrugged his shoulders in a throwaway gesture. As it turned out the move was for the better as I found a parking area attached to one of the many casinos and it was considered free as long as you patronised the establishment.

Most of the action is centred on and around the famous Atlantic City Boardwalk. This structure separated the buildings from the beaches and sea. It was punctuated by four amusement piers and drew visitors to the principal casinos and hotels. As well as the modern, gleaming towers, surviving 1920s façades also flanked the Boardwalk. We roamed around the gaming rooms watching the antics of the patrons as they systematically pulled on the slot machine (one armed bandit) handles. The jingling gongs, and the occasional payout landslide of coins when the right combination of fruits fell in line, were all-pervasive. Strolling along the Boardwalk, we people-watched and noted the signs "Bally's Grand"; "Caesars"; "Showboat", and "Trump Taj Mahal" plastered on the sides of the hotel/casino monoliths.

There were various ways of generating revenue for the municipality and its stakeholders. Apart from the casino profits and hotel taxes, miscellaneous charges were made; including an entrance fee for all those who wished to use the beaches and their facilities. We thought this was taking things too far and refused to patronise the sandy stretches. Although we did find one beach far away from the main action, and an upturned boat became the backdrop for a souvenir photo. We also saw that behind the hotel/casino gleaming façades there were areas of abject poverty; indicating the common wealth was not evenly distributed within the city.

We left Atlantic City and retraced our steps to Philadelphia, taking Interstate highway I-76 to King of Prussia then U.S. highway No. 202 west to U.S. highway No. 30 and state road No. 340. Along this scenic route to Lancaster, visitors stop at the town of Intercourse, attracted by its suggestive name. We were now in the arable countryside settled by German immigrants known as the Penn-

sylvania Dutch (from Deutsch). Other persecuted religious sects such as the Mennonites and Amish followed. Descendants of these pioneers continue to farm in the area where they use traditional methods such as horse-drawn implements. Their lifestyle forbids electrical power so warmth and cooking is provided by wood burning stoves, and oil lamps are used for lighting. Near Lancaster, the Mercer's Mills covered bridge is one of the few remaining examples of this type of structure left in North America.

Lancaster, itself, is an attractive community with a small town feeling. However, we decided to visit the 'living museum' of nearby Landis Valley, a reconstructed pioneer settlement interpreting the Pennsylvania German culture and heritage within the timeframe of 1740 to 1940. Because the time period represented by the museum spanned two hundred years, as well as the usual log cabins more substantial buildings made of brick were to be seen onsite. Costumed guides demonstrated traditional skills; among those being the making of Battenburg lace. Tradespeople such as the village blacksmith were also on hand to explain and show examples of their work. The Landis family homestead, one-room schoolhouse and the local tavern were all well preserved structures. A glorious, sunny day made for a particularly enjoyable excursion.

Part of the following day was spent exploring downtown Lancaster. The tree lined streets and 19th century buildings, such as the old townhouses in Lime Street, were very attractive. The highlight, however, was the Central Market. This Romanesque Revival style building is the oldest continuously operating farmers market in the U.S.A.; its tall, red brick tower with terra cotta embellishments being a significant landmark. Inside, the hustle and bustle of market activity was a lively atmosphere as local Mennonite and Amish farmers plied their produce.

The warm, sunny day enticed us further afield and we decided to drive around Lancaster County to admire the countryside. The journey was a simple loop following the local roads and generally drifting through the rolling farmland. We were used to the Amish settlements north of Goderich, and these farms were very similar. At the hamlet of Mascot, the main building was a three-storey grist mill made from local stone. Nearby was a wooden barn and painted on one of the end gables were traditional "hex marks." These symbols were supposed to ward off evil spirits and we had never seen them before. A fast running river that flows through the community is used to power the grist mill. It also flows over a weir. We stopped to watch some Amish girls paddling in the shallows downstream of the weir to cross the river at that point. The cool water was probably welcomed in the heat of the afternoon. Typical of the area were the numerous horse-drawn buggies, either on the road or parked in the farmyards. The farms, themselves, were large with many outbuildings usually painted white. Crops in the fields consisted mainly of corn (maize), other cereals, root vegetables and hay – all tended by straw-hatted farmhands with horse-drawn implements. In the evening the farm houses glowed in the setting sun and the horses and mules grazed contentedly in the pastures.

The penultimate destination of the vacation was Gettysburg with its National Military Park. Scene of the decisive conflict in the American Civil War (War between the States), this hallowed area attracts visitors from far and wide. We allocated three days to absorb the park and all the museums and monuments; together with the promise of a trip on the steam railway that carries passengers through the famed battlefield. As the weather forecast looked good, we made our way from Lancaster along U.S. highway No. 30 through York to our hotel in downtown Gettysburg.



Mr. Papworth's 90th Birthday. Family and Guests at the Windmill Hill Inn, Allesley, England, May, 1993.



At Home with Stephen, Lindsey, Roger and Susan Moore, Allesley Village, England, May, 1993.



Dr. Hunt's Victorian House, Cape May Historic District, Cape May, New Jersey, July, 1993.



Barry Poses Next to an Upturned Fishing Boat on the Beach, Atlantic City, New Jersey, July, 1993.



Old and New Stand Next to Each Other Alongside the Boardwalk, Atlantic City, New Jersey, July, 1993.



The Boardwalk, Caesars Casino and the Ocean One Pier, Atlantic City, New Jersey, July, 1993.



Prominent Merchant's House in the Landis Valley Museum, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



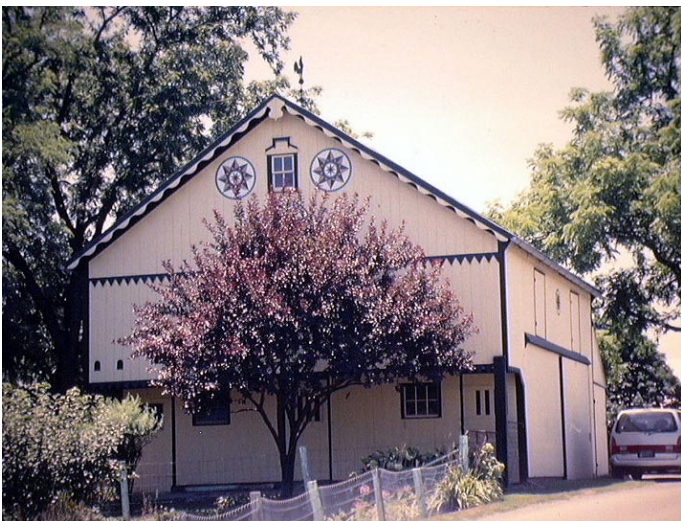
Costumed Guide Making Battenburg Lace, Landis Valley Museum, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



19th Century Townhouses in Tree Lined Lime Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



The Stone Built Grist Mill, Mascot, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



Barn Showing the Traditional "Hex Marks" to Ward off Evil Spirits, Mascot, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



A Typical Amish Farm with Horse-drawn Buggies in the Yard, Mascot, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.

Our tour on foot took us first to the Museum and Visitor Center where we could absorb some of the details of the battle and decide on a suitable route to follow. There was an interpretive film and the Cyclo-rama – a huge circumferential painting depicting the final stages of the battle. The extensive museum contained memorabilia of Civil War conflicts and dioramas explaining the causes and outcome of the war. We then made our way to the Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address Memorial. This impressive stone monument incorporated two bronze plaques on either side of a bronze bust of Abraham Lincoln. The plaques contained the text of Lincoln’s celebrated “Gettysburg Address” and a letter of invitation to the president. We then circum-navigated the battlefield and saw what kind of terrain the soldiers had to fight on. Certainly there was little room for error, and the principal generals: George Mead for the Union forces and Robert E. Lee for the Confederate army, needed to be shrewd tacticians.

The battle wavered back and forth over three days with engagements at Little Round Top; The Wheatfield; Devil’s Den; The Peach Orchard, and Culp’s Hill. Perhaps the largest and bloodiest was fought at Seminary Ridge where “Picket’s Charge” almost bought the Confederates victory. At the “High Water Mark”, however, the Union forces succeeded in halting the Confederates’ advance and this effectively finished the battle.

It took us two days to see the many memorials that littered the National Military Park. Cannons and other field pieces added to the authenticity of the battleground. Monuments to some of the state regiments were lavish stone mausoleums, and the generals on horseback made impressive bronze statuary.

On our third and final day of the visit to Gettysburg, we took a novel trip of the battlefield. This was an excursion on the Gettysburg Railroad – a special steam train with several passenger cars. The coal-burning locomotive gathered speed as it travelled through the National Military Park. Each time we passed a notable spot, a recorded narrative was broadcasted over the public address system in each car. We stopped at a siding and the locomotive was turned around, then attached to the cars to make its return journey.

There was one further stop on our journey home and that was at the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) headquarters in Warrendale just north of Pittsburgh. From Gettysburg we drove on U.S. highway No. 30 to Chambersburg and continued to the intersection with the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76). At Warrendale we stayed overnight and the next day visited the SAE headquarters where we met my contact, Brian Taylor. After a short tour of the facility where we met other key people and I was presented with a small gift (a hand made Christmas tree ornament), we retraced our journey on the I-76 and the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) to Toledo; then on Interstate highways I-75 and I-94 through Michigan, entering Canada at the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing.

One day in September, Ray called me over to his desk and asked, “Would you like to go to Charlotte?” I replied, “Yes, please.” Evidently Dave Ross had suggested that somebody from Technical Publications should visit the North Carolina factory on a regular basis and work with the folks there to bring their manuals in line with the standard Champion format. Although information exchange using telephone and fax machine was practical – this being in the days before the World Wide Web and e-mail capabilities – being onsite had many advantages.

I was to meet the personnel there and understand the manufacturing process. Travelling was arranged through “Marlin Travel”, the approved agent in town, and I would be met by Dave Million and stay at a local hotel for one week. Most of my flights originated from Detroit International Airport, although I did experiment later with departures from London and Hamilton. A chauffeur service was available from my home to the airport and *vice versa*. Jeff Norgate arrived and took me to Detroit where I boarded a U.S. Airways flight to Atlanta, Georgia, and the short-haul connection to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. September in North Carolina is still very hot and humid, so air conditioned cars and buildings are most welcome retreats. Dave met and took me to the Fairfield Inn hotel, then we proceeded to the factory on Mount Holly Road on the outskirts of the city.

Ray’s earlier description of the plant being “... a blacksmith’s shop” was not far from the truth. When compared with the Goderich factory, this plant was primitive both in terms of working efficiency and manufacturing equipment. Impressions of my visits to Champion’s facility in West Columbia, South Carolina, were re-ignited. First, I was introduced to the front office staff: Gary Abernathy, who I had seen before when he visited Goderich; Pam Abernathy, Gary’s wife and daughter of Bud Lee, and Trisha Shaw. Gary, who had inherited the business from his father-in-law, was the mastermind and knew everything there was to know about the machines. Both Pam and Trisha were reception/administration support staff dealing with personnel issues and parts ordering/general mail duties. Together with Dave Million, they were all located in a small office building just inside the entrance gate.

The design centre and secondary office was housed in a trailer behind the office building. The drafting team consisted of: Jeff McKee, Bryan Abernathy and two students. Jeff was a graduate engineer and Bryan was Gary and Pam’s son. Also in the trailer were Lanny, the purchasing agent, and Leonard deFoggi, a parts and manufacturing scheduler. I was found some surplus space in the trailer and equipped with a desk, chair and computer terminal.

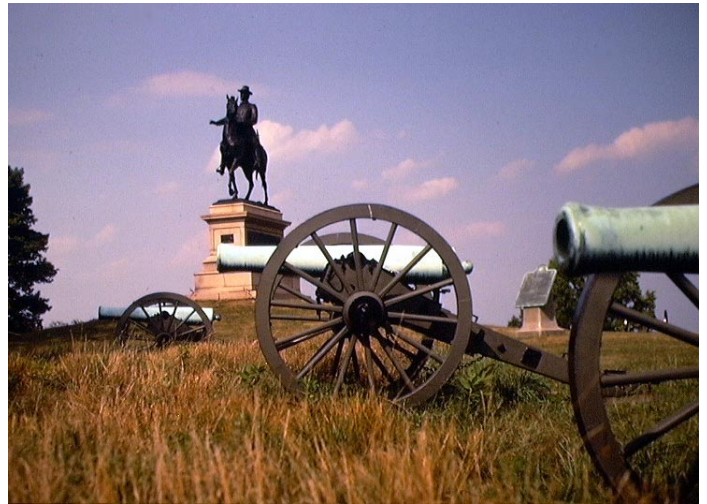
Most of the folks were down-to-earth people and their relaxed demeanour was typical of the Southern States. More immediate, though, was adjusting to the local dialect and drawl which in North Carolina is quite pronounced. So, when the handyman, Calvin, conversed with me as he was threading my computer cable through a hole in the trailer floor, I had to guess at most of his words.

Then I was given a tour of the factory. The building was something of a piecemeal construction. Safety concerns didn’t appear to be a priority as acetylene cutters, disc grinders and arc welders showered all and sundry with a miscellany of sparks throughout the build stations and shop floor. Any and all interruptions were welcomed by the workers, and a visiting new face brought about a work stoppage if only through curiosity.. I met many of the men including: Allen Harris, Roy Bebee and the foreman, Randy. I was shown the manufacturing process from the subassemblies to the final, painted product. All hand made using basic tools and brute force. Considering the low-tech methods, the end product turned out to be a quality one.

At the end of the day, I was invited to Dave Million’s hotel room for a beer or two. Also visiting Charlotte was Champion’s new financial controller, Bill Chwedchuk, hired in May. Following a few insipid American beers, Dave suggested we all go out for dinner. He knew of a good restaurant and so we all piled



Lincoln Gettysburg Address Memorial, National Military Park, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



General Hancock Memorial, National Military Park Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



The "High Water Mark" Monument, National Military Park, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



Barry Alongside the Gettysburg Railroad Locomotive and Cars, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July, 1993.



Employees Gather around a Brand New Model C70A Compact Motor Grader, Charlotte, North Carolina, September, 1993.

into his car for a drive across the city. This gave me an opportunity to view the downtown area and get my bearings. Also it was the first time I ate in the “Outback Steakhouse”, a chain of restaurants that soon became favourites for Monica and I.

Back at the hotel I was confronted with an unforeseen problem. My room was overlooking Interstate highway I-85 that carried a vast amount of truck traffic day and night. Furthermore, the hotel windows were only single-glazed and so my night’s sleep was not the best due to the constant noise of passing trucks. Even the air conditioner background hum failed to drown it out. I don’t recall if the situation was remedied, but later hotel reservations stipulated a room not overlooking the highway.

The rest of the week was spent familiarising myself with the company’s proprietary software called “Job Costing”. Leonard DeFoggi was the superuser and his task was to teach me how to use the computer programme. It worked similarly to Champion’s AS400 mainframe but on a PC. Other information gathered dealt with operation and service procedures.

Of course, there was time to relax and become better known. One of these times was at lunch. Jeff and I got on really well together and he wanted to introduce me to the cultural phenomenon known as Southern Hospitality. So, he, Bryan and Leonard took me to the local “Hooters” fast food restaurant. This was something brand new to me, and once experienced drew me back again and again. “Hooters” is a chain of eating places that employs scantily-clad waitresses; usually college girls with a larger than normal bosom. As can be imagined, the restaurant was popular with male customers, ranging from husky construction workers to suited professionals. Of course, the girls enjoyed the ogling and generally were good sports and efficient waitresses. They certainly earned good tips. The food, itself, was standard fare in terms of chicken wings and chips (French fries), but it was also licenced so a cool beer helped mask the run-of-the-mill menu items. This was an opportunity to try different American ales, such as Michelob, Coors, and Budweiser.

Another pleasant surprise happened one evening when Gary Abernathy took me to a well known neighbourhood eating place called the “Riverside Restaurant.” The speciality there was the seafood buffet – a huge selection of fish, shellfish, deep fried vegetables, and an endless variety of desserts: all you could eat for one price. I was amazed to see Trisha working there; apparently a second job (she was a single parent). After piling up the food, guests sat at wooden booths and generally intermixed as many of them were regulars. Even though I could claim expenses, Gary insisted on paying for me. I soon discovered that Gary was a very generous person.

Before I returned to Canada, Dave Million organised a photo session and delegated me as the ‘official’ photographer. I took several pictures of the workforce standing by a new Champion C70A motor grader. With a promise to revisit, I left Charlotte on the reverse flight plan via Atlanta to Detroit. Jeff Norgate collected me and as we returned to Goderich, I had plenty to talk about *en route*.

This was the first of many business trips to Charlotte, North Carolina. In fact, at one point the frequency was one visit every month. Ray, too, still made trips of his own; although at this time his main preoccupation was coordinating the building of his new house in Saltford Heights; some of it

even on company time. By this time I was earning a weekly salary of \$719.63. Freelancing was also lucrative with steady work on newsletters and corporate stationery design, plus odd résumés and minor design concepts. The steady business warranted an upgrade in personal computing equipment. Printing had already been improved with the inkjet StyleWriter replacing the dot matrix ImageWriter II. Now, it was time to retire the venerable Apple Macintosh Plus and commission a new Apple Macintosh IIVX computer bought in July, 1993. This was a definite quantum leap as the IIVX had a colour monitor and increased memory. Later, I sold both the Mac Plus and ImageWriter II to a business associate. However, in future years it would appear that hanging on to that antique PC would have had its merits. SAE activities also needed to be promoted, planned and administered, and another term as section chair added to the responsibilities.

Sad and encouraging news from England

On November 26th, 1993, a day after my 48th birthday, we received the sad news that Monica's father had passed away at the retirement home. We arranged a quick trip for Monica to attend the funeral, but were aware that Monica's cousin, Trecia, who had power of attorney to Mr. Papworth's estate, had made all the arrangements with the funeral directors. So when Monica arrived in England, most of the formalities were in place for the funeral service at Canley Crematorium, Coventry. Following the service, a celebration of life luncheon was served at the Allesley Hotel, and Monica was pleased to see our friends Roger and Susan Moore in the crowd. They had seen the obituary in the local newspaper and came to pay their last respects. Afterwards, Monica, with Trecia and Reg, spent a few days at her cousins' cottage in Wales, then on the return journey to Ley Hill, Bucks., made a detour and visited Monica's aunt Betty in Wincanton, Somerset. Monica had used a minibus service to and from Toronto International Airport. The return trip was anything but straightforward as there were detours along the route for various reasons and, because Goderich was at the end of the route, it was very late in the day before an extremely exhausted Monica arrived home.

Some encouraging news from Roger and Susan Moore at the end of the year informed us that Stephen had passed his driving test. He had also thrown himself into searching for a university place and was exploring a number of possibilities. Lindsey's favourable school report and outstanding assessment surprised both parents, who no doubt were bursting with pride.

1994 – a year of 20th anniversaries

This was the year we celebrated our 20th anniversaries, both engagement and wedding. In February we decided to repeat a London show tour that also included accommodation. The flight and land transportation went according to plan until we arrived at the hotel in Bloomsbury where we were obliged to wait for our room to be cleaned; not a welcome start after the exigencies of an overnight flight.

The following week, however, was filled with a multitude of sightseeing excursions, both on and off the regular tourist beat. Unfortunately, no record exists of the shows that we saw, but certainly we found a few West End restaurants that catered to our engagement anniversary celebrations. The hotel was centrally located so walking to well known landmarks was practical. The weather was mixed with both weak sun-

shine and threatening skies. Many of the old places I knew had changed significantly. Covent Garden, once the bustling vegetable, fruit and flower market, was now a busy cultural centre – complete with bistros, boutiques and buskers – the Victorian structure having been completely refurbished. However, other staple tourist attractions appeared unchanged, and Trafalgar Square was the same then as it was when I was a young lad with outstretched hands feeding the resident pigeons. Steps had been taken to clean the stone buildings surrounding the square and they stood out in the weak sunlight. Not far away just off Horse Guards Parade was the War Command Headquarters (now known as the Churchill War Rooms); a collection of offices in a deep underground bunker. During the Second World War, the War Cabinet met there to make important decisions. The complex was fully self-contained with provisions for overnight accommodation if necessary. The Map Room and direct telephone communication between London and Washington D.C. were preserved exactly as in 1945 for visitors to see. After the claustrophobic tour it was a relief to resurface and stroll around Parliament Square, looking up at Big Ben with a cloudless sky behind. At the Museum of London near St. Paul’s Cathedral there were such diverse exhibits as the Lord Mayor of London’s gilded state coach and the recreated interior of a 1950s Woolworths store.

The next day was misty, but we made the effort to resume our walking tour around central London. Towards the East End is Tower Bridge and since it had been renovated, visitors were allowed to ascend to the walkways that connected the two towers and overlooked the River Thames. This was fulfilling something of a boyhood ambition as previously the general public could not gain access to view the city from the walkways. To complete the tour, visitors saw the original steam engine in the bridge’s engine house.

To make it easier moving around if longer distances were involved, we bought a three-day pass that gave us unlimited travel privileges on the London Underground. One excursion took us on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) to the Isle of Dogs, the heartland of the original London Docks. This area has been completely redeveloped and huge corporate buildings, such as Canary Wharf, dominated the old rundown Millwall and Cubitt Town neighbourhoods. At the end of the line, we found the pedestrian tunnel under the Thames and walked to Woolwich on the South Bank. Here in dry dock is the celebrated “Cutty Sark” tea clipper which we viewed before returning to the DLR.

Despite it being a damp day, we continued exploring London’s main attractions on foot and using the Underground pass. At Buckingham Palace we saw the ceremonial Changing of the Guard, the soldiers wearing their long, grey greatcoats. Then, deep in the City of London, we had lunch in one of the city’s oldest pubs, “Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese”, just off Fleet Street. In the evening we made arrangements to visit my old friend Mike Stewart at his house in River Street. Here we met his Japanese wife, Hiromi, for the first time. Hiromi made us very welcome and treated us to a traditional Japanese meal of *sushi*. Later, and for old time’s sake, Mike and I went to a local pub, The Shakespeare’s Head, and shared a couple of pints.

The holiday was intentionally extended and the second week was spent visiting and tidying up some loose ends. We rented a car from a downtown London depot and arranged to return it at Heathrow Airport. After leaving London, we stayed a few days with Dad and Kay in Potton; then headed for Coventry, staying two nights at the Travelodge near Dunchurch. In the Coventry area, we went to the Canley Crematorium to verify the Book of Remembrance entry for Monica’s mother and arranged for her father’s entry. At a garden



Exterior of the Renovated Covent Garden Market Building, London, England, February, 1994.



Trafalgar Square with Refurbished Public Buildings, London, England, February, 1994.



Tower Bridge – One of the Bridges that Cross the River Thames, London, England, February, 1994.



Barry Poses on One of the Two Pedestrian Walkways of Tower Bridge, London, England, February, 1994.



View of the River Thames Looking East from Tower Bridge, London, England, February, 1994.



Monica Beneath the “Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese” Pub Sign, London, England, February, 1994.



Typical Cottages Made from Cotswold Stone at Little Barrington, England, March, 1994.



A Row of Cottages in the Village of Bibury, England, March, 1994.



1994 Model Ford Mustang Coupé. The non-GT Mustang was Powered by a 3.8 litre V-6 Sequential Multi-port Electronic Fuel-injected Engine Coupled to a Manual Five-speed Overdrive Transaxle and Rear Wheel Drive. The Colour was Described as Laser Red Tinted Clearcoat Metallic, and the Optional Extra Features Included Air Conditioning and an FM Radio with Cassette Tape Player. The Instrumentation Panel was Fully Equipped. Photograph Taken Outside the 1907 CPR Station, Goderich, Ontario, in July, 1994.

centre in nearby Baginton we bought a small rhododendron bush, which was presented to the staff at Appledore Lodge for them to plant in memory of Monica's father. In Coventry we went to Pargetter's, the funeral directors, and completed some outstanding financial paperwork.

As a thank-you gesture to Monica's cousin, Trecia, and her husband, Reg, for all the work and organising of Mr. Papworth's funeral and the administration of his estate, we considered treating them to a short stay in the Oxfordshire/Gloucestershire Cotswold Country. After travelling down the old Fosse Way, we met them at the Inn for all Seasons, a pretty little hotel near the village of Burford. There we stayed and radiated out to various Cotswold beauty spots. Nearby were the hamlets of Great Barrington and Little Barrington with their characteristic golden Cotswold stone architecture. In Northleach, there was the fascinating Keith Harding's World of Mechanical Music museum: the Viennese café pianoforte being a prize exhibit there. Another picturesque village was Bibury with its classic Norman church. As a souvenir of the holiday, Monica bought a sweatshirt decorated with a hedgehog appliqué; having admired a similar one that Trecia wore. We said our farewells at the hotel and drove to Heathrow Airport to drop off the rental car. After flying back to Toronto, we continued our journey home to a snowy Goderich.

University course

In an effort to improve my professional standing and acquire formal Canadian university level recognition, I enrolled in a technical writing correspondence course. The course was organised by The University of Western Ontario based in London, Ontario. Although not a lengthy part-time course, the four assignments and final examination were strictly supervised and assessed by a professor. The first hurdle to enrol, however, was to satisfy the university faculty that my basic schooling in England, plus successful graduation with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, were *bona fide* qualifications. The process began in March, 1993, and it was only after much correspondence with the university staff that I could register as a mature student (#5603402 A) in readiness for the following fall/winter Continuing Education session.

After paying for the course, I visited the university campus book store to buy the required reference textbooks. These expenses didn't bother me as Champion's training department had an education assistance plan policy that would – subject to approval – reimburse applicants for tuition fees and the cost of supporting material. I submitted the reimbursement form to Ray for his signature, but he held back, wanting to wait until the course was finished and to review my final mark.

The course began and regular submissions of the four assignments occurred during the first three months of 1994. Fortunately, my personal computer was a godsend where the printed assignments were concerned and the professor's feedback comments were favourable. Also, as the assignments leading up to a final report became more demanding, different software, such as MacWrite and MacDraft came into their own. The final report submission contained photographs and a design drawing packaged in a presentation folder.

After the final examination, I had to wait for the university's grade report. When it arrived, I received an overall mark of 86% (Grade 'A'), but this failed to convince Ray that Champion should foot the bill and I resigned myself to the self satisfaction that I had achieved a passing grade at university standard level.