

Assorted Memories
Of
An Unconventional Life
By
Guy Mackenzie

Chapter One: 1946 and All That, 1946-1948

Chapter Two: Calgary House, Isle of Mull, 1949-1964 & 1965-1976 (coming soon)

Chapter Three: Sunningdale School, 1955-1959

Chapter Four: Stowe School & Applegarth, 1960-1964 (coming soon)

Chapter Five: Schools Out and the Road to London, 1964

Chapter Six: London at Last, 1965

Chapter Seven: Southampton Calling, 1965-1966

Chapter Eight: London Again, 1966-1971

Chapter Nine: All Change! 1972

Chapter Ten: High Wycombe, 1972-1978 (coming soon)

Chapter Eleven: Stateside Calling, 1979-1981

1946 and all that... (1946-1948)

My name is James William Guy Mackenzie and I was born at Rubislaw Nursing Home, Aberdeen on 6th October 1946. I became the 5th Baronet of Glenmuick in 1993. However my original birth certificate stated that I was James William Guy Robertson-McIsaac!

My father was Eric Dighton Mackenzie who had inherited Glenmuick Estate following the death of his brother, Victor, the 3rd Baronet, in 1944. My mother was Elizabeth Katherine Mary Robertson-McIsaac (nee Innes of Balvenie) who, after separating from her husband Robertson-McIsaac, rented a cottage on Glenmuick Estate from my father.

And it wasn't until after the marriage of my parents on 15th November 1948 that my birth name was correctly reregistered as James William Guy Mackenzie. By which time, Glenmuick Estate had been sold, my father faced a legal and financial challenge for "enticement" from my mother's ex-husband (hard to comprehend today!) and my parents had moved to Calgary Castle (which we always called Calgary House) on the Isle of Mull. Why did my father sell Glenmuick Estate? Partly for financial reasons, including death duties, but also because the "neighbours" at Balmoral didn't wish to be so closely associated with another scandal... this one involving my birth!



First Photo of Guy with his mother, Elizabeth (who was then Robertson-McIsaac)



Studying the programme at the Ballater Games yesterday are (left to right) Miss Margaret Logan, Lucy Countess of Errol, and Mrs. R. McIsaac, with Master Guy McIsaac.

Mackenzie of Glenmuick

My Great Grandfather, James Thompson Mackenzie (JTM), was born in 1818 and, as he stated in his 1881 letter to his son, Allan, at the age of “under” 14 ([see page 24 of the main Mackenzie of Glenmuick document](#)) left Scotland as a midshipman and ended up in India where he made a fortune before returning briefly in his early 20s. He then went back to India before finally leaving in his early 30s having considerably increased his fortune. Following his return, he set up in business in London and, apart from homes in England, he bought the Estates at Kintail (in about 1868 as he believed that we are descended from the Barons of Kintail) and also Glenmuick near Ballater, Aberdeenshire, (in about 1869) which adjoins the Royal Estate at Balmoral ([see pages 35-37 of the main Mackenzie of Glenmuick document](#)).



James Thompson Mackenzie

In 1890, just 5 months before his death, JTM was created 1st Baronet of Glenmuick (see [pages 73-74](#) & [pages 77-81](#) of the main Mackenzie of Glenmuick document which gives more detail and also explains why our family could, at one time, have been owners of Sandringham!).

However shortly before his death JTM disinherited his eldest son, Allan Russell Mackenzie (my Grandfather) who became the 2nd Baronet following JTM's death (see [page 89 of the main Mackenzie of Glenmuick document](#)). There followed a lengthy and very costly legal dispute which resulted in my Grandfather managing to hold onto Glenmuick Estate. Following his death in 1906, the Estate passed to his second son, Victor, as his eldest son, Allan James Reginald “Jim” had died in South Africa in 1903.

Victor died unmarried in 1944 and so the title then passed to the son of his brother (Allan Keith “Sloper” who had died at the Somme in 1916), Alexander George Anthony (“Tony”) became the 4th Baronet and, following his death on 5th January 1993, that I became the 5th Baronet of Glenmuick (see [page 141](#) “details of Guy's succession”). But it was my father, not Tony, who inherited Glenmuick Estate on Victor's death in 1944.

I never lived in the “big house” (The House of Glenmuick), and my home, for the first two years of my life, was the cottage on the Estate that my mother rented from my father!

Today, our family have a close association with Glenmuick thanks to Alistair Cassie and the local residents of Ballater who still remember the Mackenzies of Glenmuick with affection (see:- <http://mackenziememorial.weebly.com/>).

Sunningdale School (1955-1959)

In January 1955 I went off to school. In my case it was to Sunningdale prep school in Berkshire, England, which was a 36-hour journey away from Mull. Now, as everyone who knows me knows, I hate getting up early and this trip necessitated me getting up at 7.15 (early for me!) to catch the boat (the M.V. Lochinvar) to Oban and then the sleeper train to London. And, on the following day, the train from London to Sunningdale, eventually arriving at school in the late afternoon just in time for tea!

In those days, the Lochinvar, made one return trip every day from Mull to Oban and it had a capacity of just 4 cars per trip – provided each car safely negotiated the 2 wire netting baskets and then was craned onto the boat or alternatively, as occasionally happened, the car would end up in the sea!

We caught the boat at Salen, then to Lochaline (on the mainland) then the Lochinvar's next stop was Craignure

where it was met by a small motorboat before continuing on to Oban where we finally arrived some 3 hours after embarking at Salen. Of course we always admired Duart Castle (home of the Cheifs of the Clan Macleans) after leaving Craignure and then marvelled at the Lady Rock (which was submerged at high tide) where one of the chiefs had left his wife at low tide hoping never to see her again... (but she did survive much to his surprise when she appeared at his celebratory dinner that same evening!).

Following that, it was a long wait in Oban for the sleeper train and this often necessitated a change of trains at Crianlarach to catch the through train from Fort William to Kings Cross or Euston which arrived about 7.30am. Of course, for the first time, my parents accompanied me, but after that, I was put on the train at Oban or Crianlarach (my father would tip the sleeper car attendant to look after me), and I was met in London then taken to and put on the train to School. Amazing to think, in this day and age, I usually travelled 2nd class which meant sharing the sleeping car with second make traveller (who I'd of course, never met) or even 3rd class which meant sharing the sleeping car with 3 others and sometimes mixed sexes too! But, in those far-off days (thankfully!), nothing untoward ever happened. Would it be the same today – I wonder? Not that this would be acceptable today!

When I first arrived at Sunningdale, it seemed that I'd never seen so many boys in one place! The school was a large (possibly) late Victorian building set in large grounds with its own chapel and swimming pool as well as playing fields.

It had about 80 pupils which was probably about as many as there were on the whole of Mull! Was it a culture shock for a child from a remote island? Yes absolutely! And, of course, I hated saying goodbye to my parents. I also missed my home and the sound of the sea. And I must admit for the first few nights I cried myself to sleep.

But I soon realised that the other boys of my age were friendly and understanding also that



the school itself had a welcoming atmosphere. Very soon I made friends who would remain as friends throughout my time there.

The Masters (and one Mistress!) i.e. the teaching staff!

- The headmaster was Mr. Sheepshanks (who we referred to as “Sheepy” – well, everyone had nickname... mine was “Mull”!). As I recall, Sheepy always wore a green checked suit and brown suede shoes. He was short, slightly effeminate and spoke with a lisp (not his fault, I know!) and my mother always contended that he didn’t like my father because he was the opposite – tall and with a military bearing. But the school was well run and although Sheepy was quite strict we always felt that he was fair despite having a strong right arm when wielding the cane (ouch!!)! And he had a very attractive wife who was always pleasant to us boys and she had a friendly smile.
- The next in line was Mr. Burrows (“Budgie”) who I always got on well with and who was in charge of football which I grew to love, partly thanks to his encouragement and coaching, eventually being awarded my “colours” in 1958 (which was very exciting and always a complete surprise – after a match with another school, the captain of football would come into the school dining room during supper and place a cap on the head of the boy receiving this honour saying, in my case, “well played Mackenzie” and the whole school would applaud! Something I’ll never forget).
- Then there was Mr. Squarey (no nickname needed) who was in charge of cricket and a real enthusiast too! Whenever one walked past him (and he always seemed to carry an umbrella), we would say “Good morning/afternoon sir” and his reply would be something like “always keep a straight bat” or “through the covers” followed by the appropriate cricket shot played with his umbrella! I must have paid attention to this coaching as I ended up as Captain of the 2nd Eleven! OK not the highest accolade, I know!
- There was also Mr. Dawson (who in due course bought the school in partnership with his brother. His son, Tom, now owns and runs the school). I remember Mr. Dawson (“Dawsey”) having a brand new MG TF which was black with a soft top which we boys much admired – as did Dawsey! One day a hole appeared in the soft top, obviously burned with the aid of the sun through a magnifying glass! Understandably Dawsey was furious and although no one owned up to doing it – I always had the distinct impression that he blamed me! But I can now confirm, once



and for all, over 60 years later, that it really wasn't me – honest! But the unsolved mystery remains...

- The one female teacher, Miss Paterson (“Patey”), I recall as being rather stern and, no, I never did well with French – several years later failing my French O Level 5 times! Is that a record, I wonder?
- The only member of staff I didn't like was the Matron, Pauline, who seemed to be one of the most unsympathetic people I've ever met! I recall the excruciating pain of having a splinter of wood down a finger nail and when I asked her to get it out, her reply was – it's too far in you'll just have to let it work itself out.....Arrrr.

My Friends:

My best friends were:

- Charles Fairey – grandson of the aviation pioneer, Richard Fairey (the Fairy Swordfish, Fairey Gannet and, of course, the Fairey Delta II which famously achieved a world speed record of 1,132 mph in 1956! Really exciting, not only for us boys, but the whole school!).
- Jeremy Sykes – the second son of Sir Richard Sykes, of Sledmere Hall, Yorkshire. I went to stay there a couple of times and always admired the fact that Jeremy's father had 6 cars and one was a '58 Cadillac convertible with huge fins! (For years afterwards I lusted after one and finally managed to buy a slightly later model for \$500 in the States in 1980 which I imported into the UK and kept for over 10 years and, although it only did 10 mpg, I still regret selling it!).
- Not forgetting, Reggie Sheffield ("Sleepy") now better known today as the Father of Samantha Cameron, wife of our ex-Prime Minister, David Cameron!

The other boys included:

- Prince Michael of Kent who was much older than me and who seemed quite grand and aloof.
- Carey Harrison, younger son of the famous actor, Rex Harrison (My Fair Lady, etc.). I thought his then wife, actress and star of the film "Genevieve", Kay Kendall (who tragically died of leukemia aged just 33) the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen and I remember being very upset when the sad news of her death.
- Also Douglas Hogg (now Viscount Hailsham), who I found rather studious and reserved, and years later became infamous for "charging the public purse" £2,000 for cleaning the most on his estate in the Parliamentary Expenses scandal of 2010! Silly man (I've been longing to say that!)

Going out:

One of the things to look forward to was being "taken out" by parents or relatives for the day on occasional weekends. I especially remember going out with Charles Fairey's father who was married to a very beautiful lady called Atalanta and lived in a fabulous Thames-side home. We always went for lunch at the Hinds Head in Bray and, for the first time in my life, I ate smoked salmon sandwiches (which I still really enjoy but a real treat in those post war days!) and, to drink, a non-alcoholic Pimms! The new would go back to his home and occasionally Charles and I (when we were older) would be allowed to take out his father's very smart Thames launch (with a sloping rear) on the river on our own! I do recall powering through a speed limited section of the Thames and being shouted at by others as we sped past them! Great fun!

I also remember with affection my Uncle "Twitch" (Thomas Innes, my mother's younger brother, who sadly died in a car accident in his 30s) taking me out and loading me up with packets of sweets which I smuggled back into school – which was against the rules as we were only allowed 2 a day and 3 on a Saturday!

Regarding school work itself (the main reason I was there) I really can remember very little! I did quite well in Latin (really useful in this day and age!) but not much else. This was demonstrated by the fact that I got “middle fourth” in my Common Entrance exams for Eton – which was effectively (and actually!) a failure grade. Most of the boys at Sunningdale went on to Eton and certainly I had hoped to do so but, having failed, my parents had to find an alternative school which would accept me. And that school turned out, unfortunately, to be Stowe which, at that time, had a “bad reputation” which even my friends knew about! They were concerned for me and, although we promised to keep in contact, I never saw any of them ever again... Sunningdale was a wonderful happy school but it didn't prepare me for what was to come, nor should it have done...

Schools Out and the road to London 1964...

I left school in summer 1964 with no qualifications despite having had one year at an expensive college, having failed Maths and French o level 5 times, with no idea of what sort of career I wanted... other than a desire to earn some money.

Rather than going home to the Isle of Mull, I moved in with my elderly cousins, Ethel and Madge Logan who had a cottage near Buckingham and had so very kindly and generously provided me with a "home from home" while I was at Stowe.

So almost immediately I was off to the Labour Exchange in Buckingham where I got my first job on a farm near Buckingham for a period of 4 weeks to help with the harvest. I had to live in as the working days were long and I was on the princely sum of about 3/6 (18p.) an hour. Of course there was no room in the farmhouse (or maybe they didn't want me there—more of that to come!) so I was put in a modern cottage nearby which had no furniture other than a bed and a chair... no no TV in those days!

It was really hard work and my fellow worker, who basically I got on well with—most of the time, liked to let me know how tough he was compared to me. He was appropriately known as "Digger". On my very first day, the farm owner asked me if I could drive a tractor and I immediately said yes (as I'd just passed my driving test (on Mull!) although I'd never driven one! So he asked me to drive one of his down to a field to maybe try me out. However and not realizing that putting ones foot on the brakes was not the way to stop a tractor, I came charging up to the field, slammed my foot on the brakes and, of course, the tractor went sailing through the field gate (a new one too!)... not a very auspicious start!

My life over these weeks seemed to follow a similar pattern, getting tractors stuck more than once in the silage pit etc... but Digger and I did have a few fun evenings (and one or two arguments where he threatened to beat me up but didn't as I told him I'd learnt Karate at school—I hadn't) at the local pub where for the first and only time in my life I managed to drink 6 pints of beer (Bitter). Digger did slightly resent me as, due to the long hours I had to put in, did result in me earning slightly more than his 10gns (£10.50p) pw fixed wage.

One memorable (?) time I can recall was coming into the farmhouse unexpectedly one afternoon and hear unusual sounds coming from upstairs... sort of moanings and a yelp or two! Then the farmer's wife and her brother in law came down the stairs doing up their clothes but didn't to see me in the kitchen! She demanded to know what was I doing there and I mumbled something and was ordered back to work! As I walked out I heard them discussing whether I'd heard anything... I never said anything, apart from discussing the incident with Digger, the farmer's wife did seem to be a bit more friendly (could she have been wondering if I'd rat on her?- I didn't of course!) with me from then on!

When my four weeks was up, the farmer did half heartedly offer me a few more weeks but it was an offer I was happy to turn down as, apart from anything else, my hands were

in ribbons from lifting bales of hay as I never wore gloves simply because I wanted to appear tough in front of Digger!

In any case, my parents had arranged for me to go to France for 3 weeks to work on the Vendage (grape harvest) in the hope that I might learn some French! And my school friend, Martin “Thumbs” Bellamy (whose mother felt the same for him) was lined up to join me.

So Thumbs and I before having about a week’s holiday in Mull, decided to have a look round the Soho music shops to kit ourselves out so we could one day hit the road as musicians! I bought a second hand Broadway drum kit for £18 and Martin bought a 10 Watt Bird Amp and a Futurama 3 guitar (also second hand combined price £25) because they were the cheapest we could find! Plus, of course, a Chuck Berry songbook!

However, sadly our best attempts at Johnny B. Goode and Whole Lotta Shakin’ in Mull and later at his home in Gloucestershire were met with at best “amused apathy” simply nobody, including us, could recognize them!

And then, after our brief holiday in Mull, we were off on our adventure...

I don’t think anything really prepared us for our time near Dijon as life in the French countryside (long before the EEU) was primitive to say the least! In fact in the whole village there were only 2 flushing loos and when we arrived after many hours of travel, Martin asked “ou est le sale de bains?” (where is the bathroom?), everyone fell about laughing as there were no bathrooms in the village and a bath was... stand in the yard in your swimmies and get someone to hose you down!

We were in the biggest house in the village along with around 10 other students of different nationalities and along with everyone else we shared a one hole in the ground in the yard... needless to say with the summer heat, it absolutely stank! However our house did have one of the two flushing loos but only the women in our household were allowed to use it!

As far as learning French, it was a good experience as almost no one, apart from Thumbs and an English girl who was running away from a broken relationship (and was rather off-hand with us as she to prefer fraternizing with the locals), spoke anything other than French.

All went well for a few days, lunches were long and really quite good (even if some of the meat had a peculiar flavour and texture!) with copious amounts of red wine.

However and sadly, as it left a deep impression on me (and, as a result, I never returned to France for nearly 40 years), we witnessed the most incredible cruelty to a small defenceless animal which resulted in the English girl going into hysterics and more she cried the more the others mocked her! Of course and despite her previous coolness to us, Thumbs and I sprang to her defence (we’d had to fight just to survive at Stowe—so fighting, even against overwhelming odds, was second nature to us), rolled up our sleeves and threatened to take on everyone! If the farmer hadn’t intervened, this story might never have proceeded further, but he did! He made all the others apologise and promise not to do anything like that again. An uneasy truce was called and an international incident was averted.

Later, after copious amounts of red wine that evening and something a little stronger too, the matter was put behind us, and life in the vines carried on. However, and maybe having seen me as something of a Knight in Shining Armour, a close friendship between the English girl and me commenced. However, one day, the farmer caught us canoodling (no, no we didn't go that far!) in the vines and sacked me on the spot! I immediately called my loyal friend, Thumbs, and said I've been sacked and we're both leaving! We went back to the farmhouse and started getting our things packed but, while we were doing this (and probably because at this critical time, part of his workforce were leaving, he called us back as I recall him saying "mal a tete" and tapping his head which we understood to be an apology (maybe he was jealous of me?) which we accepted and returned to work. We both then returned to England, filthy and smelly (!) vowing never to return.

As a postscript, I did meet the girl again in London, where she lived, but sadly the magic which we'd created in the vines had gone...

By now, my parents were becoming concerned about me getting a career, especially as I'd just failed my army test, much to my Father's disappointment (despite the fact that I'd have to work my way up through the ranks due to my lack of A levels—he retired as a full Colonel), as I have "flat feet".

I then returned to my Cousins house near Buckingham and went back to the Labour Exchange, I immediately got a job in Richardson's paint factory in Buckingham as a "filler in" doing the job of anyone who didn't turn up for work. I actually enjoyed the job and even got myself a room at a pub in the town—as I had no transport.

I had several mates at the factory including Mick who was especially noticeable as he had the words "Cut Here" tattooed across his throat! He looked tough and probably was but we got on well and along with a couple of others used to go pubbing on pay day evening. The pub rules, where I was staying, were that, we lock the doors at 10.30 and you have to be in by then. Of course one night I came back late, the doors were locked, so up the drainpipe I climbed, over a flat roof and up another and eventually got into my bedroom without anyone waking up. The next morning when I appeared for breakfast, I was met with stony glares and prolonged silence and the landlord demanded to know how I'd got in when he'd deliberately locked me out! Needless to say, he evicted me on the spot! So I went back to my cousin's house and an early bus ride to work. Actually this didn't last long as a lunchtime drinking session with my mates and a late return to work resulted in me being sacked on the spot (well, given "my cards") as I was perceived to be the ringleader—no one else got the sack! Not Fair!! Boo...

By this time, Mick had a new girlfriend who made it obvious that she didn't like me... maybe she thought I was a bad influence on him? But one excursion we did make together was to a tattooist who I watched covering over Mick's throat tattoo with a butterfly—maybe he really was tough as he never flinched!

I then got a job concreting the bases of electricity pylons, in November/December which was miserable and very cold and the Polish workers referred to me as "the boy". I remember us drinking tea from an empty tin and them complaining that I couldn't work

fast enough---we were on piece work and earning £25 p.w.—a huge amount in those days!
So once again, I got the sack but I had saved nearly £100 in those 4 weeks!

London at Last 1965...

Just before I left Buckingham, I had an interview for a proper job as a trainee building supervisor with Limmer & Trinidad Lake Asphalt Co. Hooray, I got the job at the amazing salary of £9 p.w. (overpaid, I hear you say!) and started work at their Island Row depot which was at the wrong end of Commercial Road, East London.

The company arranged digs for me which turned out to be a house of bedsits just off Manor house, North London. Fortunately for me, one of my fellow trainees was living there and he even had a car—a minivan and for £1 per week he agreed to take me back and forth each day. On reflection, this was almost the worst place I've ever lived as it was gloomy and poorly maintained but, worst of all in the six months I lived there, I only remember meeting one other resident... all the others seemed to like to be anonymous as when I either came in or walked out of my room, doors seemed to close! But it was cheap, just £2.10/- (£2.50) per week! My parents knowing my financial situation insisted on giving me an allowance of £10 per month which I did my best to refuse and never tried never to use---simply because I was determined to make it on my own. But I did use a small part of it to buy a winter coat! But on the one occasion when my mother visited London I wouldn't let her come and see my room—it certainly was depressing! Much later I found out that the block was owned by the Krays...

However my one real enjoyment, there was no television in my room (and in fact I didn't own a TV till the very late 1960s) was going to Finsbury Park and watching the Wrestling whenever I could afford the entrance fee, was it 5/-? It was fantastic entertainment and I enjoyed it so much that one evening I went and asked one of the doormen if I could have a word with Dale Martin, the promoter because I wondered if I could become a pro wrestler! He explained that the promoter wasn't there that night but asked me if I had any experience of fighting---of course my answer was yes, but I didn't tell him that my skills were learnt at one of the top Public Schools as a means to survive! Of course I missed the next week's show but, the following week, he saw me and told me that the promoter had been there the previous week and asked to meet me! I suppose, in hindsight, I wouldn't have lasted long with the likes of Mick McManus, Giant Haystacks and Adrian Street...

I quite enjoyed my work at Island Row, the other staff were both friendly and helpful but also used to take me out on roofing jobs to learn the business so I could become a Supervisor. I do recall having an argument with one elderly lady about who did most to win the War... Churchill or the men on the front line but apart from that and the unfortunate situation of being blamed for letting a lorry crash into the Flooring Manager's car, the day before he went on holiday with it, all went really well.

Although one memorable time was when one of the Contracts Managers found himself with a crossed line (well, the telephone system was like that then!) with some girls who worked in a hair salon nearby. He called me over and suggested that I talk to them—which I did! They then invited me to come to the salon and meet them—which I also did! After some chat they showed me the first Real porno pictures I'd ever seen and asked me if I liked them! Of course as a young and somewhat naive 18 year old I didn't know what

to say... so, after some thought, I said I didn't! Quite clearly this wasn't the answer they hoped for (I'd never experienced a 2 some in those far off days, let alone a 3 some!) and I was ushered out of the salon quite soon afterwards. Perhaps, once again, if things had worked out as the girls had intended (?), I would now have a story to tell! Heigh Ho...

Of course, all the trainees from all over the UK occasionally were brought to the Fulham depot for intense training. At one of these sessions, there was the most annoying fellow trainee who kept interrupting the trainer and seemed to know more than he did! His name? Martin Kennedy-Bell who later became, and still is, one of my best and most loyal friends.

Anyway and back to my job, after my 6 month initial training had completed, I was told that I needed an extra 3 months training (maybe the crashed car didn't help?) and was transferred to the Southampton Depot just outside Southampton but I did get a salary increase to £10 p.w.—a rise of over 10% so I was able to tell my parents that the allowance they had insisted on, was no longer needed!

Southampton Calling 1965...

I arrived at Limmer and Trinidad's depot at Chandlers Ford, met some of the staff there and was taken to the Company "digs" which was a terraced house in Cranberry Avenue, Southampton. However what no one had warned me (did the Company realize, I wonder?) that this was, at that time, right in the middle of Southampton's red light district! The Street Offences act was in its infancy, so there was no shortage of "talent" (perhaps not always an accurate description!) on display—but, certainly something of an eye opener for a shy lad from a sheltered background...

I enjoyed my first few months with the Company and it was a beautiful part of the Country too. Also as my father knew the Rosthchild family from his racing days, I was invited to their beautiful Estate and they were charming and hospitable! But although they offered to come and collect me and take me back, I always insisted on getting the bus... When they rang me, they had to ring the office as there was no phone in Cranberry Avenue—this did cause some raised eyebrows in the office that a junior like me, on £10 p.w. could know a family like that!

While in Southampton, I sold the Velocette 350cc motorcycle I had bought in London & ridden down on for the sum of £2.50 (it had cost me £15) and the next day the buyer came and asked for his money back---I refused! But I then bought a BSA 500cc Shooting Star for £28 which I absolutely and, yes, I did wear my leathers and visit the ton-up caff! Great fun too! I also recall riding up to Martin's home in near Cirencester in Gloucestershire in the pouring rain! By the time I got there none of my lights were working (well it was a British bike!) but thankfully the electrics had dried out overnight so I was able to return safely. I also remember taking one of my fellow trainees on the pillion to Bournemouth (it was sunny that day!). Of course, being a British bike, its stopping power was not very good and when a small sports car stopped suddenly in front of me, I went into its backend and we both ended up sitting (?) in the road. When we had all dusted ourselves down and found that nothing was damaged including the sports car or ourselves, we continued on our journey. Was it my imagination or did my passenger seem more nervous after that? No it wasn't, as when we arrived he said that he'd never go on the back of my bike again! He never even thanked me for the lift and he even got the bus back to Southampton!

However and prior to leaving the next year, I sold it for £58—so my early vehicle dealing wasn't entirely unprofitable. (Prices for these bikes today? The Velo maybe £2.5K and the Beezer maybe £4K—who would have known it then!).

After a few months, I did get promoted to a Junior Supervisor on the felt roofing division at a salary of £12 p.w and I also got a Company car, a Vauxhall Viva! Some months after getting it, I got a bit over enthusiastic going round a corner and ended up sitting on the inside of the roof—the car had flipped over and there were no seat belts in those days! I wasn't hurt at all but the car was a write-off (the company weren't very happy and warned me that another write-off would result in my career getting similar treatment!).

However more annoyingly for me was that I needed it for a new "date" I had lined up that weekend---in those far off days a car wasn't just for transport...

But I basically enjoyed the job and got on well with the tradesmen who worked for the company mainly on “piece rate” and some made a lot of money! I remember having a discussion with one who was complaining about his wages and so I said, have a look at my wage slip! He did and said “that’s not bad for a weekly wage”. I did however have to point out that that was my calendar monthly wage. He couldn’t believe it as he was earning over 3 times as much as me! Even at that time I was starting to wonder how long it would take and how high I would have to get in the Company to actually start making some real money!

I may have got on with the tradesmen well but after a few weeks another trainee moved into the digs. He was a fellow Scot (but with a Scottish accent!) and from day one, he and I just didn’t get on! We kept chipping away at each other till the day came that we had no option but to fight (well, the clans always fought each other when there were no English to fight—just to keep in practice!) We walked down to an area of waste land nearby and battle commenced! We fought the good fight for a while then, almost in unison, we decided enough was enough and called it a day and shook hands! (I always considered that if there was a winner on that day, it was me) When we returned to our digs somewhat bruised and bloodied we both said that we’d had an accident (I’m not sure that anyone believed us!) but, from that moment on, we became firm friends and remained as such till we both went our separate ways.

However finding myself with evenings to spare and not being used to watching TV (yes the digs did have one but what we watched was down to a majority decision) I decided to put an advert in the local paper which stated drummer seeks group or musician to form one. As a result I met Bill and Bob (both of whom I kept in touch with until Bob’s untimely death a few years ago—later both his daughter and granddaughter have made contact with me via my website and Social Media) and joined their band, The Blue Stars (and, yes, they really did name themselves after the then well known chain of garages!). Also, fortunately for me, Bob was not only a brilliant guitarist, bass player and singer but drummer too! And I really didn’t have much of a clue about drumming then! Did he teach me all I know? Well not quite, but he did give me a good start! And I’m eternally grateful to him for helping set me on course for what my most important lifetime hobby —music (see the [Guitar Collection website](#))!



We did some gigs too, starting off at the Railway Inn, Eastleigh in 1965 at the sum of £6! But, in 1966, we played possibly the biggest venue I've ever played at, The Southampton Guildhall on a 60s package show! Since then and with the help of Social Media, I've actually made contact with other musicians on that same bill (see the [Background page on the Guitar Collection website](#))!

However after about 15 months in Southampton, the Company decided that I should be transferred to Newcastle (but without my Company car!) and this double whammy was a step too far for me so I decided to get a job back in London and became a trainee Lloyds Insurance broker in late 1966. Surely there was a better financial future for me both in London and in The City!

London Again, 1966 on...

My life in London started with me living in Fulham SW6 as my Southampton Limmer & Trinidad manager's wife's parents (still with me?) had a house and a small flatlet which they let out there. Of course I had to get to the City everyday by underground from Parsons Green to Monument as Bland Welch (my new employers) were based in Fenchurch Street. My memories of the underground were of the overcrowding in rush hour, the intense heat in summer and always having wet legs till my trousers dried when it rained.

But, some of my insurance policies today are still with Companies which evolved from that job...

But I can honestly say that the next 2 years of working life were the most boring and miserable that I've ever experienced but I had to learn the business of Insurance and I just kept dreaming of getting into Lloyds and the untold riches that would result once I understood insurance!

Well, it was a dream, but Lloyds did turn out to be pivotal in my career and, surprisingly, in my life too.

Why was it boring? Well, insurance is boring! Why was it miserable? Well, you try working in a huge open plan office which had windows down one side only and who sat under the windows? In those days before computers, it was the typists and they always dressed in the thinnest of clothes and were always, seemingly, cold! Whilst the men, sat on the inside and had to always wear suits! In summer it was unbearably hot and whenever I tried to open the windows, the typists would close them saying they were cold! It got to the stage that several of them refused to speak to me (well I guess they were bored too—endless typing must be boring!) this really got to me for a while especially as they went out of their way to be friendly to others—glaring at me as they did so! However over a period of time, I devised a strategy to deal with this—be extra friendly and pretend that I didn't care! This did throw them off course and gradually when they believed that their persecution (of me this time) had no effect, they got back to speaking to me... but with no real enthusiasm it has to be said!

But it wasn't all bad especially as Martin Kennedy-Bell, (who'd followed me to Southampton, but lived elsewhere as, by then, Limmer & Trinidad had decided that the red light district wasn't the place for their trainees!) had now gone into Insurance too but, for him, it was with "The Pru" (The Prudential), and he was based at their huge headquarters in the City. I used to see him for lunch (well he was "courting" then!) the Pru had a fantastic subsidized canteen and he used to say to me "Come and have lunch, they'll never know you don't work for the Pru"... and they never did!

After about six months in Fulham, Martin Bellamy moved up to London and we got a flat in SW7 (our underground station was Gloucester Road)... great postcode, shame about the flat! A "run down" one bedroom flat, and we had to have someone else share it with us so we could afford the rent. I drew the short (or was it the long) straw and slept in the living room (well at least I could "entertain" on my own!) and they shared the bedroom.

It wasn't the happiest time in my life as I got in with a very wealthy set, drank too much, got into debt and but found my first real girlfriend who, as it turned out, preferred the company of a young, good looking South African man. Devastating for me at the time but part of life's rich pattern. Last thing I heard was the distant sound of wedding bells in South Africa. I hope they've had a happy life!

Life wasn't all bad or sad, as I was invited two years running to the Caledonian Ball and although I'm no dancer, I love the sound of Scottish music and the Bagpipes, and... I got my picture in Tatler magazine too!

However and after one major drinking session, I had a serious car accident and wrote off my much cherished Minivan which was only insured for third party risks (which I'd bought for £134) and nearly myself. My two fellow travellers got off more lightly but I was unconscious for 4 hours and my sight was at risk for several weeks—well you don't go headfirst through the windscreen of a vehicle into a stationary lorry and come out unscathed! Sometime later, my kind mother generously sold some jewelry and bought me a second hand Triumph Herald. I didn't refuse the offer of financial help this time. Thank you Mother!



This did, however, become a turning point in my life for several reasons. I was "off sick" for several weeks and on full pay too which helped get me out of debt and it gave me a chance to reassess my lifestyle and start to turn things around. Whilst in hospital, neither of my fellow travellers in the van bothered to come and see me although Martin Bellamy, as I remember, came every day—so much for transitory friendship! But I never got into debt again (even to buy a car) except for investment purposes.

After a period at my cousins house (sadly, they had both recently died), I was looked after by their kindly housekeeper, Mrs. Marshall, I then went up to Mull. On my return, Bland Welch must have taken pity on me and my battered face still full of bits of windscreen (The hospital Doctors had helpfully said "you'll have to let them work their own way out") and promoted me to the position of Junior Broker in Lloyds at the vast salary of £1,000 p.a.! My duties were as what was known as a "scratchboy" (i.e. I got minor amendments to insurance policies ("scratched") by minor underwriters) and also to queue on behalf of the senior brokers waiting to see the "lead" underwriters. Sometimes the queues lasted for days so I had plenty of time to chat to fellow brokers and junior underwriters.

Lloyds was then was a melting pot of people and ideas with everyone (and it was men only then!!), seemingly, looking for an opportunity! Whatever you wanted or wanted to know, you just had to find the right person and that's how I got into Swipe! What was Swipe? It was a domestic cleaning fluid sold direct by an ingenious Multi Level marketing technique (how much ended up with the consumer is open to debate!) which has since been made illegal! I worked hard in my spare time for about 6 months, didn't make much money (who did, I wonder-apart from the people at the top!?), but it helped me to realize that I had an ability to sell. And from then on I've always had to have a second business or hobby in my spare time—although I put my drumming on hold, for now anyway.

One person who was looking for an opportunity was one of my bosses, Ray, who was a music impresario, talent spotter and manager. His most successful protégé was Mark Winter (“Venus in Blue Jeans” etc.) who I recently interviewed for my YouTube channel (Mark is still performing today – here's an interview by Guy with Mark: https://youtu.be/9tWa7_Kjii8) and we discussed Ray who was a really helpful and friendly person but (in those times when being gay was still almost illegal) much mocked (his walk, his hand gestures, his flick of the hair) by one of his fellows (I can still see that person now!) and, embarrassingly for us Junior Brokers, right in front of us too! How times change and for the better too!

Another example was when my father found some Mackenzie odds and ends which he was going to throw away, but decided to send them to me offering to split anything I got 50/50 with him. He thought they weren't worth anything so, having asked around, I was directed to the one dealer in London specializing in such items. I sold them for £55— doesn't seem a lot today, but my share was about a week and a half's net wages so I was, of course, delighted but more pleased that I'd done something for my father who was simply astounded and mentioned it to me several times!

Of course with people looking for an opportunity there is always a dark side too! Let me explain: I had an ex-Etonian friend called William (the name has been changed to protect the guilty!) whose father was one of the top people in Lloyds. For about a year we were level pegging and, I thought, good friends but he got his promotion (which was before I did!) and seemed on the way to the very top!

Having achieved this elevation and obviously feeling very important, he decided to ignore me and pretend he didn't know me—of course I was still a Junior! Annoying! For a long time I never thought much more about it, but several years later, I saw William's picture and name splashed across the front pages of every newspaper! He had just been captured by Interpol as he was the frontman for a major international drugs ring! I could

hardly believe it and so wrote to his father c/o Lloyds for confirmation. His father wrote a long letter back saying how disappointed he was but blamed his ex-wife, for William's fall from grace (if that's what one calls serving time in Wormwood Scrubbs!)

About the time I got into Swipe, I met Julie (her name had been changed to protect, in her case, the innocent) and we became a couple and remained so for several years. She helped develop my appreciation of the arts and culture —especially the West End plays

(for example, “There's a Girl In my Soup”) and Shakespeare. I loved “Macbeth” and always will remember a magical production of “Midsummer Nights Dream” in the Regents Park open air theatre and still try to see this wonderful play every year. But I hated the ballet and opera and still do—for me once was more than enough!! On the rare occasions when I could afford to take Julie out for dinner (?), it was to either “The Stock Pot”, just off Knightsbridge which cost just over £1 for a freshly made Spaghetti Bolognese and a glass of wine, or The Bistro Vino at South Kensington where a pate starter, followed by steak, chips and peas plus a glass of wine cost about 35/- or, my favourite, The Trencherman, which was owned by actor Terence Stamp, which offered a huge main course for 2 plus a carafe of wine for just £3.

We also went once to the 555 café in Battersea Park road made famous by Princess Margaret and her husband, the former Anthony Armstrong Jones. Inexpensive maybe, but somehow it didn't do it for us!

I'm getting ahead of myself now, but the first time that I started to believe that property was my future, was when Martin KB and I had decided to buy a large house together and rent out rooms. We actually found one in Munster Road, Fulham with 6 bedrooms for £6,500—so 4 bedsits and one each for us—but no lender would advance more than 2 and a half times one salary (not two!) and neither of us could raise the difference so our ambitions, at this time, were thwarted.

This all happened at about the time that Julie's mother organized a 3 month trip for her in the States and presented it to Julie as a “fait accompli”. Before she left and realizing my disappointment over the house in Munster Road, Julie said that she'd buy one for me when she got back little understanding my personal ambitions and desire that, if I was going to make it, I'd make it on my own! Maybe it was that when we were apart I realized her outlook and ambitions didn't match mine or perhaps it was her political affiliation, but when she got back, I'd moved on. Although the dye had been cast, Julie remained in my thoughts for a long time afterwards. Perhaps her mother got her wish? I'll never know.

But I've digressed and now return to life just before Swipe...

After about a year, Martin Bellamy and I could no longer bear to live in the squalor of the flat we'd rented and went our separate ways. After 2 false starts, including moving into a rundown house in Chelsea, (owned by a young film director and his wife who were friends of Andre Previn and film star Mia Farrow but I seemed to be the only one of the five of us who minded that the only shower in the house didn't work-there was no bath!), I moved into a large bedsit on the top floor of a mansion block flat in Drayton Gardens. It had a lovely west view over the rooftops, I even had my first TV, luxury indeed! I was happy there and stayed there until I bought my own flat.

Back in Lloyds in the days after Swipe, I too was looking for a new opportunity and it came in a surprising way! Queuing to see an underwriter in Lloyds, the broker next to me said he had a Vauxhall Cresta (yes one of the really big ones with American styling) that was worth £50 but would cost £75 to repair and didn't know what to do with it! Of course like any young person, I used to follow car prices and knew it had a value so I said I'd

take it off his hands (for nothing!) which he agreed to provided that I came and collected it—which I did. I immediately advertised it in the Evening Standard, for £55, had a number of replies and sold it for £50. Well, it's hard to believe now, but in those far off days there was actually a shortage of cars to buy and the waiting list for a new one was often about 3 months! How times change!

And so my part time car dealing days started. My next car, which I bought this time from another queuing broker in Lloyds, was a left hand drive Mk II Sunbeam Alpine which I bought for £50 and drove down to a car dealer I knew of in Fulham and sold it for £75! So then it was onwards and upwards but the best deal I did was on a battered, but almost new, MGB (which I'd told about by the lads in the garage opposite) which was owned by Robin Day's (who was then a major TV interviewer) wife. So I went to see her and agreed a deal at £340 and I still have the paperwork! A few weeks later when her new car arrived, she contacted me by letter, but asked for another £20 for the hard top and £7.50 for the tax! I stuck to my guns and only agreed to pay for the unexpired car tax!

Two days later I sold it for £380 to a friend of a friend and charged extra for the tax! But not all of my deals were so easy, for example the back street garage which I sometimes used (they always liked to tell of their friendship with one of the ex enforcers of the Krays—maybe to ensure that I paid my bills!) for inexpensive repairs had a American Estate for sale at £240 which was a fair retail price, a Ford Fairlane as I recall. A few days later they phoned me and said they'd accept £180 provided I paid them immediately which I did! However although they let me have the log book, they kept coming up with excuses as to why I couldn't have the car, despite having paid them the money!

So I contacted Martin KB and asked him if he'd come with me to see them to try and get the car. In those days Martin could look sinister without trying... he wore tinted glasses, a very smart 3 piece pin striped suit, didn't smile very often and always had one hand in the upper pocket of his waistcoat! Quite clearly when we turned up at the garage, the 2 partners thought I had brought a gangster with me (with a "shooter" in his waistcoat pocket!) and nervously asked me, looking at Martin, what the problem was? When I said I'd come for the car they couldn't wait to give it to me! Problem solved! Thanks Martin! People might ask today what did you do about road tax and insurance? No problem, as in those days, you just wrote "tax in post" on your windscreen and my car insurance covered me for driving other cars—I never registered any in my name! Life was, in some ways, much simpler then before computers! Maybe I was just lucky too!

But by now Martin KB and I had moved on to selling Unit Trusts which was a difficult sell but, we were surprised to discover years later that the exaggerated pay-outs predicted, actually weren't far off the mark—if one cashed in at the right time!

Thanks to the sale of cars in my spare time I had built up the deposit for a flat and, hearing from one of my contacts in Lloyds, that an "out of town" estate agents were selling ex Council flats in Central London below their real value, I contacted them immediately. The first flat I saw was in a 2 bedroom flat in Asburnham Mansions, SW10 and the price? £5,150 which I could afford despite using up nearly all my savings! Only problem was that I had also used up my car trading working capital on the deposit and fees

for my flat. And as Unit Trust sales were slowing down, I started selling typing courses, 2 or 3 evenings a week, to “leads” supplied by the Typing sales company. They were easy to sell as the customer paid £4 deposit (which was my sales commission), signed up and then was lent a typewriter for the duration of the course but how many typewriters were repatriated, I’ll never know as I’d long gone by then! But I moved into my flat in 1971 and, knowing that I could sell it locally for more than the amount I’d paid, started looking around to see what I could afford. Well, I could get 2 conversion flats in Parsons Green for about £7,000 then—one I could buy outright and the other would have to be on mortgage. However my property ambitions would have to wait several years because events, which I’d never anticipated, suddenly overtook me and very soon my life changed forever, but that’s another story...

All Change! 1972

Yes the year 1972 brought bigger changes than I could ever have imagined!

In 1971, I had bought my first property in Chelsea (well, in the “Worlds End” of SW10 anyway!), but, although I had no money, I owned a battered sports car and was, in a way, almost “a man about town”! Seemingly just a few months later in 1972, I was a married man with a child on the way driving an elderly 4 door saloon car! Here’s how it happened.

I’d met Paulene through a friend at Lloyds (yes Lloyds again!) and, within a short space of time we married in February at Chelsea Registry Office. Our reception was held at my cousin, Gilbert’s (Lord Kilmarnock) beautiful Grosvenor Estates owned Belgravia home which had a ballroom in the back of the house. And my best man was Martin Kennedy-Bell. Also, in attendance, was my friend, Martin “Thumbs” Bellamy.

In those early days Paulene, under the strict and determined supervision of her mother, was a respected graphic artist, who supplemented her income with freelance design work in the evenings which she undertook in her mother’s home near Park Royal (where she lived until our marriage), then about 15 minutes drive away from my flat.

Amanda was born on the 19th May and, of course, our lives changed forever. In June, about 6 weeks before his death, my father, looking very frail, made the trip to London and was delighted to meet his grandchild. I have always been happy to know that he met her as I knew how much it meant to him.!

During the year, with Paulene’s mother’s help the flat was redecorated plus, Paulene’s flair for design (and thus a glimpse of “what might have been!”) transformed the living room into a space that all our visitors remarked upon despite the second-hand furniture, given to me by the caretaker of the flats where I previously lived. Paulene’s mother also taught me to lay carpets which stood me in good stead when I first started, “on a shoestring”, several years later, the property portfolio which Sally and I now own.

This was also the year that I moved out of London having allowed myself to be cajoled (maybe the mouse infestation helped too!) into buying an ultra modern detached house in High Wycombe built by the Dashwood Estate, which was financed by the profit made on the flat which I sold for £11,750! Also, now having the responsibility of a wife and child, the time had come for a new career and, the obvious option was as a salesman. Consequently I got a job as a trainee sales representative with the Unilever Company, Clynol purveyors of ladies hairdressers’ supplies, who just happened to also be based in High Wycombe. But I was still trading in old “bangers” to supplement my income!

After a rocky start, I was given my own territory and with 18 months had become the most successful salesman (of about 60) in the company. As a result of this achievement coupled with some “badgering” from me, I managed to get myself included in the Unilever management trainee scheme and became, the first non-University educated, ex-sales rep. ever to achieve this! But that and the future (of which glimpses can be found here: www.theguitarcollection.org.uk/background) is another story...

Stateside Calling, 1979-1981

For several years, my marriage to Paulene had been “on the rocks” and as this is now in the past and she has been happily with Mike for 40 years, I’ll merely say that we were quite simply on different trajectories. I loved my daughter, Amanda, very much and still do (!) and despite the unexpected arrival of my dear Iona in December 1978 (who is now well on her way to becoming a very successful Mackenzie due to her career as a freelance TV Executive – “I’m a Celebrity...”, “Love Island”, etc.), a trip to the New York Hairdressing Show in March 1979 helped convince me that my future lay in a separation from Paulene. Although and as my divorce papers will show, I would have happily taken full responsibility for Amanda and Iona, this simply wasn’t an option that would have had legal backing back then.

For many years I’d harboured a desire to live in the States as this seemed the land of opportunity far away from the political crises that had dogged the UK since the early 70s. So in September, and having said goodbye to the Dutch company I’d worked for since 1977 and armed with letters of introduction to 2 different American Companies, I left the UK – but desperately sad to be so far away from my girls.

Long story short, I appeared to be the person which the Company in California (the other was in Florida) was looking for, someone to start up a new division of their company (marketing ready-made hair replacements, associated products and a magic lotion which supposedly regrew hair!) throughout the whole USA by establishing dealers in each state. They took me on and I was immediately made Vice President (although I preferred to be known as “International Sales Manager” – well, the Company was called Crown Royale International!) at the (even then) not very generous salary of \$600 per month + 10% commission on sales, but with a car supplied and air fares reimbursed. So, having put together a marketing package and following the Company launch to invited guests, I collected my car and set off on the journey back to Connecticut, where I was then living some 3,000 miles away, with the aim of establishing dealers “en route”.

All went well, and in the main, the dealers were, with a couple of exceptions, a pleasant, receptive but bland bunch (apart from one in Kansas, Missouri who I’ll refer to as George because I can’t recall his name) who were understandably, more worried about their (very high) profit margins than the product itself or for that matter, what it looked like! Quite honestly the custom-made hair replacement products which many currently sold, not only looked like builders’ hard hats with hair stuck on top but, actually successfully served that purpose when one got attacked with a crowbar a few years previously! And this was a part of the Company’s sales pitch!

But George was a real character and my first sightings of him were in a series of huge posters all along the freeway into the city. I met him and his delightful wife and we had dinner together to discuss business – following which he invited me to come with him to his favourite gay sauna (as his poor wife looked pleadingly at me, hoping I could talk him out of this excursion – but no!) I, of course refused his offer, it simply wasn’t for me, but I couldn’t stop him going! He was very obviously disappointed but we still remained friends although very little business was concluded. And what business was done wasn’t paid for as was the case, as I learned later, of the posters on the freeway, his bodyguard (with loaded handgun),

or the stretch limo he used! How did he manage it, I wonder?? Luckily we were down only a few hundred \$\$! Some must have been owed a lot more...

That first road trip was simply amazing and one which I'll never forget. Initially driving on the old Route 66 replacement, I really did visit San Bernadino, Barstow, Kingman, Flagstaff, New Mexico, Amarillo and Oklahoma City as per the Route 66 song but backwards! (On YouTube is [the last recording of Route 66 by the Guy Mackenzie Trio](#) in 2016 which mentions all these places!).

The whole trip took nearly a month and I drove almost 6,500 miles in my "compact" 6 cylinder Chevrolet Citation not daring to exceed the blanket 55mph speed limit – after all there were State Police on the ground as well as "bears in the air" (police in helicopters)!

Some experiences I especially remember were:

- Driving through the eastern desert of S. California, I recall seeing a naked man running parallel to the road, but some distance away, with no evidence of any habitation, or vehicle anywhere near! Not even a road junction! Very odd!
- I especially also remember the helpful and friendly truckers who, seeing a little car which looked a bit lost (well trying to use a map in a new country while driving is not easy – even at 55mph!) would call me up on their CB radios (I had one too)... "breaker, breaker 19 the little Chevvy with the California plates, are you lost good buddy?". Then, after helping me on my way, would give a few friendly toots on their air horns as they thundered past me, their 16 wheels higher than the roof of my car!
- Of course I had to detour to Las Vegas. Even then, when one could drive through the whole strip in a matter of minutes, I simply hated it. It seemed to me to just be gambling, prostitution and some overpriced & flashy venues with expensive entertainment. Each to his (or her) own I suppose! And now it's a hundred times more so... get me out of there!
- I also made a detour to the Grand Canyon arriving very late and in the dark. I couldn't immediately find a motel so I bedded down in a lay-by as near as I could to where I thought I'd see it. When I woke up, I simply couldn't believe my eyes! I was right on the edge and the sun was rising over this 1 mile deep chasm. The colours were staggering! What an amazing sight and one I'll never forget!
- One later sales trip saw me in Omaha, Nebraska with the temperature 20 below F! My motel room had ice creeping round the door frame and the temperature inside just reaching 60F... and I had a plane to catch which had been delayed due to snow and ice! I couldn't help remembering Buddy Holly leaving Des Moines, Nebraska some years previously in similar conditions, never to return alive...

Life on the road...

Can be quite lonely and not ideal for a personal relationship especially in such a huge and diverse country as the USA. So once one has concluded the business meeting, books into a motel and has eaten "surf n turf" or some such delicacy, what to do? Watch boring TV (unless the ShanNaNa show was on which I loved and still watch on YouTube) next best thing is to find a bar and if that bar happened to be a "singles bar" so much the better! Just

a few memories from those days and if you are of a delicate disposition, miss the rest of this paragraph! Maybe these sort of experiences are commonplace today but they certainly weren't 40 years ago!

- Fresno, Ca. went into the nearest bar and walked up to order a drink. There was a group of about 5 girls obviously on a night out, and one said to me something like "I've been waiting for you all evening to take me home". So, playing along with this, my reply was in the similar vein "really sorry I'm late, are you ready to go now?" To which she replied "yes, let's go" adding "are you for real?" To which I replied "Yes, for sure but I just have to pay for my drink" Which I did but, I didn't have time to drink it! As we walked out to her nearby apartment, I could see her friends looking on in stunned amazement at their friend's "technique"... Needless to say, a night of passion ensued which left me somewhat jaded for my business meeting the next day...
- The bar I went into in Amarillo had an attractive female manager who said to me as I walked in "voulez vous coucher avec moi ce soir" (if you don't speak French, you'll have to look this one up but it was part of a famous song at that time!) My reply was "oui merci". So I chatted to her for the remainder of the evening until closing time and then we went back to her apartment which adjoined the bar. After a rather "exhausting" hour or so, I reached out to the table beside the bed for the glass of water that was left there but, in my semi-conscious state, only got hold of something cold with what felt like a handle at the end! It was a loaded handgun! I said why do you keep this beside your bed? Her cool reply was... "well it's there in case someone breaks in and I always shoot first"! I spent a few nervous hours until I left as soon as I could...
- This time, I recall the bar was in somewhere like Boston and it was dead! So I asked one of the male drinkers where the nearest good singles bar was. He said you're in luck, there is a bar which has a ladies' night tonight with male strippers (very unusual at that time) and when they leave and men are allowed in, they'll be fighting over you! So I joined a small throng of men waiting to be allowed in when the initial entertainment had finished. As I walked in and looked round, a sea of faces looked in our direction but one blonde attractive woman on the other side of the room seemed to be signalling to me more than any other. Of course I wasn't certain if it was to me or not. But a few moments later she came over and said didn't you see me waving at you? I said I did but wasn't sure it was me but she replied of course it was you. We left soon after but she was reluctant to come to my motel room as, I might be murderer – despite my "English accent!" And as she was married, our initial venue that night was my car! So after some driving around, we managed to find a relatively quiet side street and parked up. Well, things were getting very "steamy" when a car drew up behind us with blue lights flashing and within moments there was a banging on our car windows and powerful torches were shining in our faces or, more likely, the body parts on display! Of course it was the police and they wanted to know why we weren't in a motel room. In my best English Public School accent I said, (as my companion was in a panic in case her husband found out), "I'm awfully

sorry officer, things just got out of hand (and things had!!)” His reply was, where are you from, so I said “England” (easier than explaining Scotland!) “Do you do this in your country?” Of course I was full of apologies and said “No”. He then said “I could have booked you, but I won’t just don’t let me catch you again”. With his “have a good day” wishes ringing in our ears, we breathed a sigh of relief and after some discussion continued in my motel room – from where, a couple of hours or so later, she returned to hubby for, no doubt, a repeat performance!

- My final story doesn’t involve a bar at all but recalls the couple of days I found myself stuck in dreary downtown Louisville. Having got bored of the endless country music on the radio and TV channels full of preachers threatening fire and brimstone on the ungodly, I wandered into town and finding a rundown cinema showing XXX rated films, I paid my entrance fee and went in. The films were as rundown as the cinema, which was almost empty. So I sat down in a quiet spot somewhere in the middle of the auditorium. Quite soon I became aware that a huge woman of Amazonian stature had come to sit beside me! I turned to look at her and was startled to see, in the gloom, that she had pulled up her skirt & was massaging what looked like her personal rain forest which had been underneath! Her chat up line was “Have you c**e?” I can’t remember my reply but very soon I found out that she wasn’t a “working girl” (who I could have got rid of with something like... “sorry I’ve got no money darling”) but an agency nurse who’d just come off her shift! So I made my excuses and left but, when I looked back, she looked well on her way to achieving with someone else what she hadn’t managed with me! The doorman raised his eyes to me as I left but didn’t offer me a refund!

Meanwhile, having set up a network of dealers for Crown Royale International throughout the USA and buoyed by this success, I decided to raise the matter of my meagre salary with my boss. He, obviously in a blind panic, immediately offered to double my salary to \$1,200 per month and double my commission to 20% of all company sales! Obviously, and even to me, this was a ridiculously high offer but, nevertheless, I accepted! However some 8 months later he phoned me to say that I was making more than he or the Company was and also that I was moving the Company forward faster than they could cope with so would I take a reduction. My answer was an emphatic “No” and so buoyed with a “pay-off” I happily agreed to move on. Frankly I’d had enough of the States, I’d been everywhere I’d wanted to go, seen everywhere I’d wanted to see (including the top of the “Twin Towers”, the Empire State Building and been up the Statue of Liberty), and I missed the way of life back in the UK but, most of all, I missed my daughters – who I loved very much.

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Of course, what my boss didn't know, was that my friend and past business colleague, Keith Forshaw who owned the Trend Group of Companies in Brighton, had already approached me to go into business with him marketing a range of small security products to the retail trade to help combat the crime wave that was fast becoming a major problem in the UK. The timing was just right and I accepted his offer and couldn't wait to return to the UK.

Of course my story of the next few years will follow but, with the (financial) war chest bolstered by several property deals (including 3 building plots I bought in Florida on a bankrupt development site for just \$2,850 & selling each for a profit, plus an "option" I'd bought a piece of land, subsequently persuaded the local planning committee to grant planning permission on, sold later for substantial profit!) I had built up Stateside, and between 1981-86 moving into 4 properties in the UK requiring renovation & upgrading each of them (working in the evenings and weekends) – then selling them all for a profit, I was back "on my feet again" after losing virtually everything (ending up with assets of £3,000 and debts of £7,000 in 1980!) following my "full and final divorce" from Paulene in 1980.

To be continued...

