ROWLAND

A Heart of Sunshine

BY

CAROLINE WHITEHEAD

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DEDICATION

To Christine, Kali and Austin. Michael, Bob and Carrie.
Forever my love, Nana.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This story may never have been written but for the encouragement of my long-standing friend, John Flynn, London, England, who prompted me to write a follow-up to *Surviving the Shadows*. John is shown in the photos below.

Grateful thanks to my friend, Odette Meurer, who diligently proofread the manuscript, guiding me along the way to get it right.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Author Caroline Whitehead meets her long-lost elder brother, Rowland Marshall, for the first time in 1991 when he is 72 years old. Rowland had heard about Caroline's existence when he was thirteen, but had been denied any details. He'd searched for her in vain for almost sixty years.

Clearly they have a lot of personal and family history to catch up on – characters, events and settings that portray an era and culture that few today could imagine.

Caroline tells Rowland of being raised as an orphan by nuns, how she was forced into war work in 1942, and of her struggle to exist on low wages and wartime rations. Her thwarted political ambitions, emigration to Canada, raising a family, and always searching for her roots….

Caroline reveals to her brother the existence of three other siblings – William, Kathleen and Elizabeth – about whom he was totally unaware. She tells him of their early lives in orphanages and how they managed to survive without the support of parents.

Rowland wonders why Grandmother and Mother had not mentioned these siblings on the one occasion they'd mentioned Caroline. Were there mysterious circumstances surrounding the children and why were details of their whereabouts kept so secret?

Rowland's boyhood vision of living with his sister Caroline becomes a reality when the two of them decide to share a home together in Canada. This realized dream continued for the next sixteen years.

Quickly discovering a quirky, humorous side to her brother's

character, Caroline also becomes aware of identical telepathic senses that allowed two siblings who had been complete strangers to understand each other in their later years, sharing laughter, fun and sorrow. The strong vibes between them from the day they met were remarkable; they begged not to differ.

CAROLINE ELIZABETH ASHBY – HER HUSBANDS AND CHILDREN

MARRIAGES/DIVORCES BIGAMOUS MARRIAGE	CHILDREN
Antonio Capolongo m. January 1910 no divorce located	Marie Capolongo b. September 1911
Edward Rutley Pocock Marshall m. October 1915 divorce - Decree Absolute January 1926	Rowland Charles Marshall b. January 1919 * William Henry "Marshall" b. February 1924 [Later discovered to be son of John Brandon.] Caroline Elizabeth Marshall b. September 1925 ** Betsy [known as Elizabeth] "Marshall" b. March 1927
John Brandon bigamous marriage December 1919 no divorce located	Kathleen Brandon b. July 1921 * William Henry listed above b. February 1924
Percy E. Martin m. February 1928	** Betsy [Elizabeth] listed above b. March 1927 [Note: birthdate of 1927 occurred 14 months following parent's divorce. We believe her real father was Percy Martin.] plus 3 sons living

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FIRST MEETING

We first met at Victoria International Airport in July 1991. As the arrival doors slid open so passengers could enter the luggage area, I spotted him quickly. Despite never having seen him in person before, I recognized his face from photographs he'd sent.

He was a 72-year-old man of medium height, slimly built and well-dressed. As he approached where I was standing, we looked at one another, then hugged and hugged as though never wanting to let go. His smile lit up his face from ear to ear; I felt as though I were being offered the heavens.

After collecting his luggage, we found my car in the parking area and from the airport I drove along Lockside Drive, to show him the scenic beauty of the mountains and ocean. I pointed out to him that the snow-capped mountain in the distance was Mount Baker in Washington State. With the sun shining on its glaciered peak, it dazzled the eye.

Still in awe of my visitor, with whom I would spend the next three months, I was at a loss for words. Sensing my inability to converse, he commented kindly on the scenery and said it was breathtaking, to which I nodded in agreement.

Fifteen minutes later, we arrived at my rancher-style house and

Above: Meeting Rowland for the very first time, at the Victoria airport.

Below: Showing Rowland the town of Sidney, near my house. Much later we would live together in an apartment in this seaside town.

parked the car in the garage. After showing him into the guest bedroom, I went into the kitchen to make tea. I knew he would be tired after his long journey from Manchester, England, so suggested that before he unpack perhaps a cup of tea might refresh him, and also a short rest would enable him to get his bearings. Ever smiling, he was more than happy to take this advice.

Meanwhile, I decided to prepare an early dinner and thought that after the meal my guest might like to enjoy a walk to Robert's Bay, a stone's throw away from the house. Robert's Bay is the oldest migratory bird sanctuary on the Pacific Coast. It is the wintering ground for bufflehead – a small hearty sea duck that dives underwater to eat from the mudflats of the bay. When the tide is out one can walk the length and breadth of the shoreline often seeing seals, eagles and other wildlife. It is a protected area and one to be treasured.

As we walked slowly toward the Bay I realized how fortunate I was in that this total stranger would be able to tell me something about a mother whose history was only partially revealed to me in 1989, after searching over fifty years.

Listening to a conversation between Grandmother and Mother when visiting Grandmother at Downham, Kent in 1932, my new companion had overheard Grandmother say, 'You've brought Rowland home, now why don't you bring Caroline?' When he questioned Grandmother about this person and asked, 'Who is she?' his question fell on deaf ears and all Grandmother was prepared to tell him was that she was his sister and being well looked after. And no more.

This, however, did not satisfy the boy's urge to know his sister. Yet Grandmother was not prepared to divulge her whereabouts to him, for some secretive reason. There was little the young boy could do. Upon returning home from visiting Grandmother, he put the same question of his sister's whereabouts to his mother. Her first response was he had no business listening to grown-ups conversation and that, secondly, the matter was closed forever.

As we sat on a log facing out to sea, enjoying the mountain and

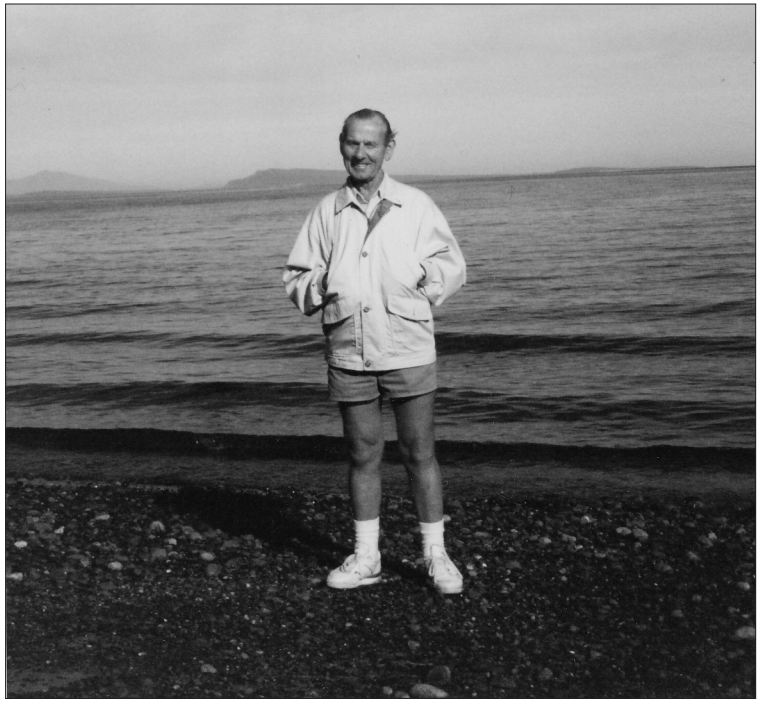
ocean view, the reality was slowly sinking in – this 'stranger' really was my long-lost elder brother, Rowland. But for the insistence of a genealogy researcher living at Whitstable, Kent, whom I hired to look into my family's history, we might never have met. While searching the indexes at St. Catherine's House in London, the researcher came across the birth record of a brother I never knew existed.

Once we made contact with each other in 1990, our letters traveled back and forth across many miles of ocean. I conveyed to him how desperate I was for every scrap of information he had on our mother, good or bad. In reply, my brother spoke with deep emotion of the short life he had with her.

At three years of age this vulnerable boy was put away in a convent in Sussex, England, and educated thanks to an unknown benefactor. He was told he was an orphan. When he reached the age of thirteen, his mother summoned him to her current home; her fourth husband wanted Rowland to work as an errand boy for the local grocery store and contribute to the family income. The relationship with the husband was always strained, and Rowland had greater ambitions so at the first opportunity, he enrolled in sea-training school where he would become a radio operator. Finishing his studies and passing exams with flying colours, he joined the Merchant Navy in 1936.

During World War II when his ship the *Waimarama* was blown to pieces in 1942 while trying to break the siege of Malta, he suffered third degree burns on his hands and face. Appearing before a panel of Naval doctors he was told that due to the seriousness of his injuries, he was no longer fit to serve his country. Receiving the news that his career in the Merchant Navy was abruptly ended at only twenty-three years of age, left him shocked in disbelief. He would now be expected to live on a disability pension of three pounds sterling a week from the British government, perhaps for the rest of his life.

At that time he was engaged to a young girl living in the Birkenhead area of northern England. How he would give her the news that he could



Taking a walk at beautiful Robert's Bay.

no longer work, gave him a feeling of foreboding. To be put on the scrap heap at twenty-three years of age was neither desirable nor something he wanted to face, but the reality was brutal and there appeared to be no turning back. When his fiancée became aware that his injuries were so severe he would no longer be able to work, and his service in the Merchant Navy was over, she retorted, 'I'm not marrying an invalid; the engagement is off.'

It was bad enough suffering with extensive war injuries, only to be slapped in the face by a fiancée who no longer wished to have anything more to do with him. She had neither sympathy or concern for him.

Undaunted, and with the help of his doctor who advised him to keep putting his hands in warm, saline water and exercise them with a soft ball, over months of persevering he was delighted to see his hands

had healed remarkably well and regained much of their strength. Upon further medical examination by the Naval doctors, he was declared fit enough to resume his duties at sea. Needless to say, he wasted little time signing on another ship, eager to be back on the oceans, and seeing old friends, despite the wartime dangers.

Completing a stint of duty on the trans-Atlantic convoys, and due for shore leave, he and a couple of his companions went to a local dance and it was here he met the love of his life, Gladys. After a short period of courting, they decided to marry. The year was 1944.

After the war, my brother Rowland continued service in the Merchant Navy and finally left to join the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in Liverpool, as a Marine Supervisor. He stayed with the company for many years before being forced to retire at fifty-four years of age, due to a war injury on his back.

Through his retirement years he and his wife travelled the globe, going from one country to the other, enjoying life to the full. It was always Rowland's philosophy to "live for the day" and he kept to that philosophy, knowing how close he came to death when his ship exploded, to the day he died.

Their idyllic life together, sadly, came to a halt when Gladys became ill while they were spending time together in their holiday trailer in North Wales. The diagnosis was cancer. It came as a dreadful blow to my brother when she passed away August 1990. He had spent forty-six happy years with her, When this occurred, he couldn't begin to think what life would be without his loved one, and felt his world dissipate slowly around him.

Still sitting on a log and enjoying the tranquility of each other's company at Robert's Bay, Rowland continued to chat, in a low tone, about our mother and his wife.

'Gladys knew I had a sister,' he said, 'but thought with the movement of people during World War II, that there wasn't the slightest chance we would ever meet.'

On board the MV Coho *ferry to Port Angeles across the Strait of Georgia from Victoria.*

Living in a fog of memories after the death of his wife, nothing could console Rowland's loss of a loved one. I was almost in tears when I heard him speak of Gladys's lingering death but said little, and continued to listen to his thoughts and watch his sorrowful expression. I wished I had been there to share his grieving.

In the following months, hardly knowing the time of day, or caring, he floundered in his daily life, wondering how it would all end, as his wish to live rapidly depleted. He could not see how life would go on without his Gladys.

Suffering with so much heartache he couldn't bear to live in the house they shared together, he put the property up for sale and went to live with his daughter and her family, a few miles away. Two or three

Outside the famous Empress Hotel
in downtown Victoria, October 1991.

times a week he made every effort to drag his feet back to the house to ensure the temperature inside was kept at a reasonable heat so it did not get damp, and to pick up his mail.

In December 1990, four months after the death of Gladys, he dropped by his house to collect the mail and picked up a brown envelope marked "The Salvation Army", London. Holding the envelope in his hand, he

was curious why this organization would want to write to him. Upon opening the letter he was stunned to read, 'You will perhaps be aware of the work of The Salvation Army in the realm of family relationships, and especially in circumstances where for some reason there has been loss of contact. Your sister Caroline wishes to get in touch with you. Please 'phone our office on Monday, for more information.'

Hardly able to contain himself over the week-end, Rowland felt Monday morning could not come fast enough. When he rang The Salvation Army office and heard confirmation that I was looking for him he said, 'My emotions spilled over, I couldn't speak as the words stuck in my mouth and tears streamed down my face.'

Looking at him, I could imagine the scene as it played out over the telephone. One minute he was in the depth of despair and having to face daily realities, the next minute he was in a state of euphoria with news his long-lost sister was looking for him. The timing of this event could not have been more perfect. It was nothing short of a miracle.

I knew the feelings my brother experienced when he telephoned The Salvation Army office in London, because when David Wright, a family researcher, gave me the news he had found an elder brother I was overwhelmed to the point of disbelief, and couldn't wait for the day when I would meet him.

For months Rowland had been on heavy depressant medication to try to help him get over the loss of his wife but when he received news of my whereabouts, all the pills went down the toilet; he no longer needed them. Life for us would begin anew, and his boyhood dream, a reality. Desperately, I wanted to help him in any way possible to overcome his loss, but knew it was early days and the healing process would take time, if ever.

Throughout our three-month visit together we continued to enjoy the mountains and oceans on our evening walks on the beach where we would sit on a log, often in bare feet, talk and talk, like there was no ending.

I was forever saying to him, 'Have you noticed, we have toes and nails alike,' when our shoes were off. Then we would laugh and laugh, leaving me in uncontrollable fits!

One evening at the beach, chatting endlessly, I told him I emigrated to Canada in 1956 but the drastic change in winter and summer climate in Ontario where I lived, was so extreme I couldn't bear it, so we returned to England in 1959. My daughter, born in 1955, was ten months old when we arrived. When she reached the age of two, I left her in the care of a friend so I could take an office job at Gilbey's Distilleries near Mimico, Ontario. Throughout this period my husband was employed as an engineer at Coleman's in Etobicoke. I viewed Canada in the 1950s as a 'raw' country and backward in many ways compared to England. The laws were archaic, influenced by the early Presbyterians who frowned upon alcohol. If an adult desired to obtain liquor one was required to buy a two-dollar license before making any purchases in a liquor store, and be over the required age. Women were not allowed in the men's bars or saloons, and floors were covered in sawdust – a scene rather like one in a cowboy movie, including swing doors to go in and out of the saloon.

In Ontario, however, food was much cheaper and one could buy from Loblaws supermarket three chickens in a bag for ninety-nine cents. To grocery shop for a week, the shopper would expect to come out of the store with three large bags of food for the price of twenty dollars. Rents were cheaper, and jobs plentiful, albeit with low salaries.

Re-emigrating to Canada 1967, I discovered a whole new world before me, with strong development springing up everywhere. New plazas, housing, and a variety of supermarkets appeared. Sawdust in bars was a thing of the past, and so was the two-dollar license to obtain liquor. Canada was booming with a good economy. Life was great! My husband was employed at Hewlett-Packard as a facilitator until he retired in 1986. After studying accounting in 1969 I joined a Mississauga company as an office manager until retiring in 1987 – at which point we moved to Sidney, BC.

As we continued our walking and talking, we spoke feverishly about our mother, whom I decided there and then I did not like for the way she treated her children. Without question, I would have challenged her on the reason for abandoning us, if ever the opportunity arose to meet her. Rowland, always the understanding and compassionate man, with a heart of sunshine, would say to me, 'Don't judge her too harshly. We don't know what her circumstances were like in the 1920s.'

I wasn't altogether sure about this philosophy of his, as history proved over the years that many mothers throughout the Victorian era had many children but somehow managed to keep them at home, despite living under appalling poverty conditions. Grandmother Ashby had eight children whom she nurtured and cared for, until they were old enough to look after themselves. 'Why, then,' I thought, 'didn't my mother follow her own mother's exemplary behaviour, in the good Christian way she had been brought up?'

Our visits to Victoria, the Gulf Islands and many other scenic places were a delight for me to share with him. Every day was fun and laughter, which brought us closer together. Chatting for hours on endless subjects I never knew boredom or tiredness, as sometimes happens when you are forced to listen to a person who takes centre stage and goes on and on, without giving the listener a chance to respond.

While lazily relaxing on different beaches we explored each other's minds and thoughts of how life should be lived, and found a remarkable commonality in the simple things we liked and enjoyed. I discovered my brother had a talent for putting words into verse, and he never failed to surprise me with his intelligence on various matters, including his worldly travels. He could mimic different dialogues with such gusto, describing the people from whose tongue these words came, and have me rolling around in fits of laughter. I liked his African lingo best!

He spoke often of his life as a young man and related many stories of his experiences in the Merchant Navy during the war, which I found fascinating. The more I heard him speak of them, the more I coaxed him

into writing a book, if only to put the record straight regarding historical events during the Second World War. He told me that some of the history written wasn't quite what happened to ships and men lost at sea, but to downplay the people's concerns, government press releases were written in a light manner.

All too soon my brother's visit was over and it was time for him to return to England. I drove him to the airport to catch his flight to Vancouver, then on to Manchester. Before leaving, we promised to stay in close touch and agreed to each write our own stories of how we had fared in life without parents.

I told him I'd jog my memory as far back to the age of seventeen and relate my experiences of events and ambitions in my early life. 'Good,' he responded, 'I'm sure it will make interesting reading.'

The hope that these writings would one day become a reality and make life more meaningful, made me conscious of the fact I could be overstepping the upper-class boundary mark; nevertheless, I pushed on, with one goal in mind.

Although I knew we would keep the promises made on both sides, my heart saddened at the thought that he was going back to his daughter and son and their families, and there could possibly be a glitch on the horizon that would stop him from returning. As I watched his plane take off from Victoria International airport, a trickle of a tear ran down my face. Three months of soul-searching and finding how close we had bonded, sharing the same interests, I knew I would miss him. I didn't want him to leave, and felt part of my life had gone with him.

Once Rowland's and my excitement had calmed down on both sides of the Atlantic, we became aware of our families' suspicions regarding our relationship. My family wanted proof and more proof of Rowland's bona fide identity before they would accept him. We did not anticipate this nightmare.

THE OWL BARN

I was seventeen years old and like many young people of my age, found myself working at Vickers-Armstrong aircraft factory in Weybridge, Surrey, doing my bit to help the war effort, which was mandatory under *The 1940 War Act*.

This *Act* also enforced conditions on every household in the country to make use of spare accommodation and take in lodgers. There was no choice whether an owner wished this or not; the *Act* prevailed, and if there was a hint of a house having spare rooms these were immediately seized upon by the authorities, who made the owner take in as many factory workers as possible.

Some of the girls were fortunate to live with parents, while most of us were forced to accept whatever digs were allocated, providing minimum food and heat. The camaraderie between the girls was tight-knit and whatever food they had, which was little enough due to rationing, they shared with their co-workers.

I not only shared a room with a girl named Lily who came from Ireland and worked at the aircraft factory, but we also had to share the same bed! One bathroom for five people in the house meant lining up, to get in. Emergencies of any kind did not qualify you, however, to jump the queue.

Days at the factory were long. You were out of bed by 5 a.m. and with a bit of luck managed to down toast, if bread was available, then charge out of the house to be on the bus by 7 a.m. where the bus put us down at the factory in Weybridge, in time for working the 8 a.m. shift. We would finish our afternoon shift at 5:30 p.m, arriving home an hour later, depending on traffic and weather conditions. Sometimes, when an urgent job needed to be done, we were asked to do overtime. This resulted in extreme fatigue by the end of the working day as we had been up in the early hours of the morning, with little to eat.

The winter months of the 1940s were particularly harsh and daytime temperatures barely rose above freezing point, so we were bitterly cold most of the day. With rationing enforced, to secure an extra bag of coal for keeping fires burning in the home was impossible. Each household received a quota of fuel, which did not last long. When overnight temperatures dropped to zero, we awakened in our bedroom to find moisture on the inside of our windows and outside frames glistened with hard frost or snow. To get out of a warm bed in the early hours, wash and dress for work, took a great deal of determination. When we left the house and had to walk on icy roads to the bus stop, extra care was necessary to avoid slipping and breaking one's bones.

I remember feeling terribly cold going to and from work and more so, on the buses, which ran with no heat. This coldness was probably attributed to the fact that we had little food in our stomachs, plus our lodgings were freezing, and we had to wash in cold water.

Our working week began on Monday and finished on Saturdays at twelve-thirty. There was no such thing then as a forty-hour work week. This was war, and every hour of production counted. Most of my wages, roughly thirty shillings a week, or if lucky enough to earn more by going out full on the production line, or doing overtime, were taken up with board and lodgings and bus fares.

Because of water rationing and soap being available in limited quantities, the lodgers were allowed one bath a week; lingerie and other clothing were washed also once a week, if a slither of soap was available.

In this situation, most householders waited until the following month before being able to purchase more soap, with allowable government coupons, while still being conscious that using more than the entitled water, was taboo.

The war held up hygienic rules, and many of us wondered when a sudsy bath would ever be made available, to indulge in the luxury of total cleanliness.

Despite working the long days and weeks, many of the girls would take the opportunity of watching the bulletin board in the factory for information on dances and other social events that were held for them at the Canadian Army camp located at St. George's Hill in Weybridge, Surrey, a short distance from the aircraft factory.

The history of Weybridge is interesting because of its connection to royalty as far back as the sixteenth century. Weybridge was once a small hamlet. Real growth started in the 1500s when Henry VIII built Oatlands Palace for his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. Oatlands Palace was eventually demolished in 1649 at the end of the Civil War and all that remains of the palace today is a single gate in the form of a brick archway. Some of the palace bricks were used for lining some of the locks built when the Wey Navigation was being constructed in 1651.

On the St. George's Hill private estate in Weybridge, Beatles John Lennon and Ringo Starr are known to have lived there, also other famous names are Anthony Trollope, the satirist, Edward Lear, poet and writer, and other well-known artists. St. George's Hill was listed as the most expensive place to live in England and Wales. Houses cost an average of two to three million pounds sterling but obviously with today's market value, the price would be much higher.

The Canadian Army camp was housed on one of these large estates throughout the duration of the war. How the girls found the energy to attend these functions at the camp I'll never know, but we did, and with great gusto, thinking how sad it was for Canadian soldiers to be so far from home and no doubt lacking in female company – and nevertheless enjoying the time we spent with them.

Once the number of girls had listed their names on the factory's bulletin board, a jeep was organized to pick them up at a strategic spot in the town of Walton-on-Thames, not far from Weybridge. This orderly system of picking up young girls not only protected them from revealing where they lived, but also prevented the soldiers from being compromised.

Some of the girls were fortunate to be the owner of a pair of silk stockings, perhaps obtained due to a favour given to a Canadian soldier. I knew of one girl who wore gloves when she rolled her stockings carefully on and rolled them back down when she took them off. As the stockings were held at thigh level with a suspender belt on which hung metal clips, care was taken during the on-off procedure so that the clips did not snag the stockings. It was well-known among the workers that this girl's prized possession was kept in a jam jar with a tightly screwed top. For obvious reason, no one would dare pinch them.

The rest of us had to be content with using a liquid, brownish make-up, which was smoothed onto the legs, and smelled quite horribly. On the back of the legs a pencil line ran from the heel and high up to the thigh, giving the impression one was wearing stockings. If a girl was unable to get a straight pencil line on her legs, one of us would give her a helping hand. However when it rained, it was a blotched disaster, as the liquid joined forces with the raindrops that ran down the legs, taking the pencil line swiftly along with it.

Sometimes, when a girl found pieces of cardboard she asked the foreman of her department if she could be allowed to take it home. Going into and out of the aircraft factory the policeman on duty at the front gate checked all personnel, and if you carried anything it was thoroughly examined before he allowed you to enter or leave. Footwear was not the only shortage during the war and the very idea of being able to buy a pair of sandals was unheard of. To overcome this problem, with available cardboard in hand, I placed it on a flat surface upon which one foot, and then the other, was outlined on it, with a pencil. Using sharp scissors I cut the cardboard, showing a left or right foot, and with the

aid of a borrowed tool, punched holes along each side. With rope or any other pieces of leftover fabric, I then criss-crossed the material into each hole, leaving enough length to tie a knot above the calf, below the knee. Once finished, the cardboard sandals looked like those worn by Romans soldiers, centuries ago.

Proudly showing the finished product to my sister Kathleen who was working temporarily at the factory at the time, rather than praising my effort, she remarked: 'Wearing cardboard sandals will give you flat feet.' To which I responded, 'Maybe.'

The cardboard sandals were serviceable during warm weather but when it rained, they became swishy and soggy. As I walked the appreciable distance to my lodgings the cardboard soles fell apart, bit by bit, causing the wet cardboard to fall away in pieces. By the time I reached my lodgings, toes and feet were bare, wet and cold, with rope or fabric hanging from my legs. I never attempted to make a second pair of cardboard sandals.

The camp caterers provided food for the dances and the amount placed on the tables had us continually gasping at the variety and portions being offered. I remember the dessert plates, the likes of which I had never seen and, believe me, would ever see again for a long, long time. Most of the girls tucked into the food as though it could disappear in a flash and ate to their heart's content. The generosity of the camp in not only entertaining us but provided a banquet at every function held, we were only too eager to accept.

There was, however, one incident at one of the camp dances when some wily character was intent on playing a trick on the girls. My feeling is that some of the soldiers knew what would happen and refrained from drinking the coffee, which was laced with Epsom salt. Unknown to some of the girls who were out to have a good time, they ate and filled their cups with coffee, only to find some minutes later there was a dreadful need to get to the toilet. By the end of the dance, stomachs were being held by the girls, who then threw caution to the wind, took off their bloomers, washed, and hung them out to dry on the branches of the trees

outside the camp. It must have been a sight! This was one occasion I did not attend the camp's dance and after hearing what went on, was thankful I didn't go. When inquiries of the incident were made by the Camp Commander whose face was red with fury, silence prevailed, and no one had the faintest idea the identity of the culprit.

At this time in my life, along with several co-workers, I joined The Owl Barn, which was a youth club open in the evenings and week-ends. It was here we would gather mostly on the week-ends and play ping pong, also sit and chat while drinking tea round a large table in the main room. There was a small library, if one chose to sit quietly and read. Being a book-worm from my early days this is where I would head, before joining the crowd to catch up with the latest war news.

It was a great place to gather and be able to share one's concerns, knowing many of us were in the same boat, trying to make life more bearable throughout a disruptive war and make ends meet. Clothing and food rations were in limited supply and government coupons determined if and what you could buy, if you could afford the shillings. Many of us would barter for these items with coupons of any kind, thereby saving what little money we had. It worked well for most of us. Typical exchange might be, one shilling plus one coupon, for a second-hand dress or pair of shoes. If that was the extent of one's choice, that was it! We took what was available without making contentious issues and were glad of any addition to wardrobe, or stomach.

When a co-worker offered me a navy blue crepe dress for the price of two shillings and sixpence, plus one clothing coupon, I was delighted. The dress, of simple design, had long sleeves and a frilled-lace collar. The skirt hung just below the knee-line. I had one thought in mind – wearing it on occasions I went dancing at the Canadian Army camp or to the Playhouse in Walton-on-Thames, where dances took place Friday and Saturday nights. At each following event, however, the dress was beginning to look noticeably different from its original style. For example, the lace collar was removed and kept to make a much-needed purse in which to hold lipstick, of sorts, and a handkerchief.

Make-up being scarce throughout the war years, the girls would share what they had with co-workers. When lipsticks were reduced to a stub they were removed from the lipstick holder and each girl pooled her stubs which were put in a small pot to melt it down, with colours ranging from pink, red and orange. When this process was completed, the result showed the hot liquid with streaks of lightning colours. Before it solidified, one girl would meter out the warm liquid into each girl's lipstick holder. Surprisingly, once it set, the melted lipstick stayed on the lips as good as one bought in a cosmetic store. The colour, however, raised a few eyebrows, with a questioning look! Perhaps an unhygienic way of making lipstick, but it worked for those on war rations.

This method of replenishing unavailable supplies also applied to soap and in order to obtain something that remotely looked like a bar of soap, the girls would gather any slithers left over from either home or at the factory, if these were found discarded in the washrooms, and melted down in the same way as the lipsticks. When the bits of soap dissolved to a liquid it was then poured into a small narrow, one inch deep, four by two inches wide metal tin and once it set, one of the girls with a knife, would cut a square off for each girl. Armed with this luxury, we agreed to keep our secret and not divulge it to anyone. Had we known where to get wax to make candles, to help one read in semi-darkness, due to the blackouts, we would have gone full steam ahead, but apart from the churches using them, none were to be seen in the shops.

To give my only dress more style, with the lace collar removed, bit by bit the sleeves were taken off to the shoulders, and the hem shortened above the knees. The neckline, by this time, had plunged to a noticeable cleavage. The final assault on the dress was when I washed it in cold water only to discover to my horror, upon lifting it out of the sink, the fabric disintegrated in my hands and bits of it clung to my fingers. I should not have been surprised by this calamity which proved a point that nothing lasts for ever, but it left me speechless!

Our club house was a typical-looking barn but without lofts, where barn owls usually nest, with large gardens surrounding it. We had no

idea of the name of our benefactor, perhaps a wealthy landowner or millionaire, who donated the building for a youth club. In the warmer days, we would make tea in the kitchen and sit drinking it in the garden. Over the months, familiarizing themselves with other members, many youths, boys and girls, would finally "open up" and discuss their dreams and ambitions for when the war was over. We would sit round the large table exchanging ideas and while some were of a personal nature, none of the members were judgemental in any way, neither would they dream of influencing you with dogmatic views.

Some time later, I was asked to become a youth club leader and was delighted to be chosen. Perhaps this came about because of my caring disposition and forever trying to help those less fortunate than myself. Being a people's person I was eager to help another fellow worker in time of need, despite having little or no money to offer.

At week-ends, club funds permitting, we would hire a rowing boat and for the fun of it, try to make our way up toward the weir on the Wey River. The boat carrying three or four of us was difficult to keep on course because as we neared the weir, the boat would suddenly swirl round due to the rushing water. Although we tried getting as close to the weir as possible we realized the danger of capsizing the boat and risking the lives of occupants. Being young and foolish we did not want to be outdone by unsuccessful attempts; however, providence warned that rowing the boat closer to the weir could prove fatal. Eventually common sense prevailed and no one drowned.

Often a group of us girls would go swimming in the river to relax, and enjoy the freedom of wailing sirens. One day, as we stepped out of the river to put on dry clothes, we discovered to our horror they were not there. Standing freezing in the cold, we muttered a few choice words and suddenly heard laughter coming from the nearby bushes. As we approached the area we found not only spectators staring at four girls soaked to the skin, but our towels and clothes hanging adrift on tree branches. Needless to say, we didn't waste time drying off and getting into our clothes, with sharp remarks to the mischievous culprits.

My experience as a Barn Owl youth club leader probably prompted the urge in me to want to become a Welfare Officer. I knew, however, this dream could never be fulfilled due to the fact I was lacking in education and any remote chance of finally getting a university degree was out of the question. Despite this, I had visions of the path I would follow once the war was over, and life became a normality. I was determined, somehow, to learn, listen, and keep educating myself in the hope that one day I would achieve my dream of success in political leadership.

MARRIAGE

In 1944, at nineteen years of age, I weighed slightly over eighty pounds and was rather skinny.

It was during a Saturday night's dance held at Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, in the 'High Spot,' which was nicknamed the "half-a-crown-hop", as this is what it cost to gain admittance, that a friend introduced me to a handsome blond in his mid-twenties. Clarence 'Larry' Whitehead was nearly six feet tall, and had been born in Glamorganshire, South Wales. He was a mechanical engineer, and employed throughout the war on essential war work.

We started to court each other and, within three months, decided to become engaged. Feeling extremely excited with this turn of event in my life, Larry took me into Guildford, Surrey, by train, where we selected an engagement ring of opal and diamonds at one of the local jewellery shops. The pride of wearing it on my third finger left me enthralled.

Throughout this period, although we both worked long hours in war factories, whatever time we had off at week-ends, we made the best of: either rowing on the River Thames, dancing, going to see a film at our local cinema, or meeting friends for a drink in one of the pubs. We were two young happy people seemingly without a care in the world.

After six months of courting, we decided to get married. Being under

the legal age and with no known parents from whom I could obtain permission to marry, I was required to appear before the local magistrate at Chertsey Assizes in Surrey. Standing before the magistrate I hardly dared to breathe, but much to my surprise the ordeal went smoother than I had anticipated. The magistrate asked me several questions and appeared satisfied with my answers, while nodding his head. Consent to marry was duly granted. I left the courtroom, feeling elated, and could hardly wait to give my fiancé the exciting news.

The wedding date was set for the afternoon of July 29. I was dressed in a long, white gown borrowed from a co-worker named Eileen, who was also one of my bridesmaids, together with my eldest sister Kathleen. The ceremony took place in the Catholic church at Walton-on-Thames. The service began at two o'clock and finished at exactly ten minutes past the hour. Lighted candles, mass or holy communion was forbidden due to the groom being non-Catholic.

We had not long married when the British Army decided they needed him more than me, for a two to three years stint of duty.

Life for me moved on, always with hopes of a political future.

A CHARMER

In 1945 the Second World War was now over and factory workers were gradually making future plans despite food, clothing and gas still rationed, with the proverbial government coupons necessary to make these purchases. Many of the girls quit their jobs or gave up their uniforms. But they had nothing to do in the postwar era save factory work which was given to them because of their experience and training. Many women in the late 1950s were still employed in industry as welders and sheet metal workers. The rest no doubt married ex-servicemen and lived with parents because of the housing shortages.

Although it was crucial to be employed in order to support myself, I left Vickers and enrolled in a commercial college to train as a secretary. I was determined to succeed in my studies and hopeful that my goal to be involved in politics would become a reality. My thoughts were, first things first, achieve the extra curriculum, and go from there. After passing my exams I applied for a position in the Personnel Department of a Dental Company, located at Walton-on-Thames. This was the only factory in the district, employing most of the local inhabitants and looked upon as a good place to work.

In order to get a position at the Dental Company, one was required to undergo a finger dexterity test. Seated before my interviewer, in a small

room, he placed before me a chart on which showed numerous puzzles. I was required a certain time to get all pieces of the puzzle in place. Nervous of this test, yes, but with mind on matter, I diligently put all the pieces together. Having finished within the allotted time, I handed the chart back to the interviewer who watched me throughout the process, then congratulated me saying, 'You've pass the test, with the highest score since the test was implemented.' I was delighted to receive such praise.

I discovered that my husband Larry had, at one time, also been employed by the Dental Company. When the sirens warned of an enemy air attack he was required to do roof duty, which left one vulnerable when incendiary bombs were falling all over the area.

The work at the Dental Company was interesting as each girl, four of us in Personnel, were given the task of following-up union complaints, housing, wages and canteen problems. Weekly, each girl would take up a different section of Personnel and report back our findings to the person in charge of the department. The company was noted for having strong union connections, representing all workers, and if a complaint was made this was negotiated between Management and the Shop Steward.

It was during this period in 1946 when a young, ash blonde came to work in the Personnel department. In her early twenties, tall and slim, she mesmerized the rest of us with her expensive clothing, jewellery and make-up. Her eyelashes were thick and long and I never knew if they were real or false as I couldn't get close enough to her to study them. She came from a well-to-do family and her father, Robson-Brown, was a member of parliament for the district of Weybridge, Surrey. Knowing her background, it was our impression that Jean, as she was known, could never be short of money, being a politician's daughter. Dumbfounded to the point of disbelief, we thought she was the one person ever to be in need of anything, but Jean surprised us all, using her charismatic charm, to sell illicit food and clothing coupons for two shillings and sixpence each, to anyone wishing to buy. How she came into possession of this endless supply of coupons, we could only guess.

'Surely,' we thought, 'she can't be that short of money.'

But, with pure diplomacy, any questions put to Jean, she responded with a dazzling smile.

Jean didn't stay at the Dental Company more than three months and one particular Friday, after work, disappeared without a word to the girls. Rumour went around that she had recently become engaged to a wealthy young man, so we assumed either this was her reason for leaving or, perhaps, she'd become bored with office work.

The winter of 1947 was extremely harsh, and many shops and factories in the area closed due to lack of fuel, and severe road conditions. The Dental Company was not able to provide workers with their jobs for at least a week. A girl named Fitz (perhaps short for Fitzmorris) and myself were fortunate to be kept on in the office throughout this period, specifically to assist those workers coming into Personnel to fill out the necessary forms, to claim unemployment benefit. Throughout the week I walked to work, gingerly stepping over ice and snow, and although wearing old woollies, scarves and gloves, was freezing with cold, between home and office. The nicest part of braving the elements was that I still received my wages at the end of the week.

In March 1949, clothes rationing ended in Great Britain.

Arthur Kenneth Perkins, an Industrial Psychologist, to whom we reported, was in charge of Personnel. He was a highly intelligent man who, despite his disfigurement, oozed charm. When speaking about him we used his initials, AKP, but showed every respect by addressing him as Mr. Perkins, when in his presence. Apparently, when a young lad of thirteen, AKP was doing chemical tests in his father's laboratory where they lived at Hove, Sussex, and while he was experimenting with different chemicals an explosion occurred that almost took his life. His face, hands and body were badly scarred. Seeing the extent of the scars on his hands and face, one can only imagine the pain and time it took for his injuries to heal. The burns, no doubt, must have been horrific!

When dealing with complaints in the factory, located across the road from the administration offices, we would find Boller, the man in

charge of the Burr Department, in a panic. Hundreds of girls working the machines to produce burrs for use in dental treatment, for one reason or the other, would decide to down tools at the slightest whim and stop production, thereby reducing the monthly projected quota.

By the time the shop steward, who was the Union Convenor, and a Personnel girl arrived on the scene, the threatened strike action had simmered down. On one occasion, the reason to down tools was because there wasn't sufficient cheese put in the bread rolls.

When I returned to the office, I thought some people are never satisfied with what they are given, despite government rationing, and expecting full cuisine service. Mr. Murray, our Canteen Manager, was a marvel at stretching the supplies of food and went to extra length to ensure the meals cooked for staff and workers were nutritious and at an affordable price, even to the point of baking the bread rolls himself, which were delicious.

When listening to AKP one did not notice his disfigurement, only for the man he was; intelligent, charming and a delight to catch every word uttered from his mouth. He would meet with his staff Monday evenings in his office, on the upper floor of the building, with advice and encouragement on how to deal with various complaints at the factory level. The girls and I certainly learned a great deal from him. This advice, in later life, would enable us to analyze problems and make positive decisions.

If he became aware of any staff's frustration, over some minor incident, he would take that person to one side and smooth away the anger by saying, 'Think, within a day or two you will wonder why you ever got so anxious.' Of course, he was always right, and we respected his decision and advice, which he gave generously.

At week-ends he often hired a mini-van and took the staff to London for a match of tennis. Often, when strawberries were in season, we would be invited to his home where he and his wife lived at Shepperton, Surrey, and grew not only strawberries but other fruits and vegetables in their garden. Many times the girls would be given large, ripe peaches, perched

on the top of each desk. We had no idea where these came from and of course didn't ask, but once we devoured the fruit and juice ran all over our mouths, any thought of wartime measures went clean out of our heads. AKP was not only a compassionate, caring man, but a remarkable man in many ways. When his staff had personal problems he would listen to them and offer advice. When speaking with him, somehow, it made the problem seem so unimportant.

No doubt, due to pressure of work, we were told one day that AKP now had an assistant. This caused a complete transformation in the Personnel Department, with rigid procedures strictly applied to all staff member. Our new boss insisted we address him as Mr. Peers. No one liked Mr. Peers, who was an ex-Army Sergeant and wanted to do the same bullying with his staff as he probably did with the soldiers in his regiment. The girls were up in arms with his new rules and realized what we enjoyed in the past with "our charmer," would no longer be the case with our new boss.

Mr. Peers was a tall, scrawny, thin man with light brown hair and long pointed nose. He didn't seem to want to trust anyone, and demanded attention when spoken to. Keeping rigidly to rules, we were not allowed to divert from working hours and daily tasks. It was a rude awakening to the girls who had been allowed freedom of speech, enjoyed Monday evening meetings, and spent week-end time with "our charmer", to find we were now working under a severe man, who never cracked a smile.

On occasion, when personal hygiene was desperate, I would volunteer to help out a girl by going to the local chemist for sanitary pads. We had taken it for granted that when this need occurred we had only to mention it to another staff member, to let someone know we would be out of the office for a short time, and where we were going.

The day I "flew out and flew in," I was stopped by Mr. Peers who told me to go into his office, where he proceeded to give me a severe dressing down, and said this practice of doing business outside office hours was not permitted. Asking me the reason why I left, I put the package of sanitary pads on his desk. Glaring at them, disdainfully, for several

seconds, he looked at me and in a gruff voice commanded, 'Go back to your desk, and take those with you.'

The girls were within ear-shot of his shouting and decided to appeal to AKP Mr. Peers's decision not to allow staff to leave the office without his permission, despite the urgency of a visit to the chemist shop.

When "our charmer" heard of the incident we were all told to see him, including Mr. Peers, in his office. In his usual quiet manner AKP explained the situation to our new boss and said the girls had the right to request permission to leave and that this request must be granted. After the meeting we felt some satisfaction had been achieved and despite our dislike of working under Peers, "our charmer" would always be there for us.

When I left the company several years later, I knew I would miss the girls and AKP. Somehow, the rapport we developed was unlike any other I had experienced. It made working-life pure joy.

A POLITICAL DREAM

From the day I became a Youth Club leader, I knew I wanted to be a politician. The only time I can ever remember being involved in British politics was when a young man knocked on my front door and asked if I would help him in his campaign to win a seat in the local by-election. I knew of him, but we had never met. His family name was well- known in the tiny Kent village where I lived, and also in the House of Lords in London.

An eloquent speaker, uninterested in his appearance, this young man looked as though he didn't have two pennies to rub together, but as a candidate for this riding was confident he would get a majority vote and win in the forthcoming by-election, securing his life in politics and eventually find his seat in the House of Lords.

The House of Lords is not only a legislative chamber, but also the nation's highest court of appeal, and the Lord Chancellor outranks all other judges. When the lords are in session the Lord Chancellor sits below the throne upon a puffy, four-sided, crimson-covered ottoman. It is known as the Woolsack because it is stuffed with wool, in tribute to the wool industry, one of Britain's important export.

It wasn't until I emigrated from England to Canada, for the second time in 1967, that I took an active role in politics. I found trying to get

between the cracks of British politics was not easy when I lived there. You needed to be in the upper echelon of English society, with an old established name, and have a financially strong background. Without these, you could never succeed.

At the end of Canada's Centennial Year in 1967, Prime Minister Lester Pearson announced his intention to step down and Pierre Trudeau entered the race for Liberal leadership. At the April 1968 Liberal leadership convention, Trudeau was elected leader of the Party on the fourth ballot, defeating some promising, long-serving Liberals including Paul Martin Sr., Robert Winters and Paul Hellyer.

Trudeau was sworn in as Liberal Leader and Prime Minister two weeks later on April 20.

In 1970, Quebec nationalists and FLQ (Front de libération du Québec) members had underground cell groups and wanted to create an "insurrection" (open resistance to established authority). On October 5, they kidnapped James Cross, British trade commissioner in Montreal, and held him as hostage. Quebec provincial cabinet minister Pierre Laporte, also kidnapped by the FLQ, was later found murdered in the trunk of a car.

Trudeau did not waste time in assessing the seriousness of the FLQ cells and although he enforced the *War Measures Act* to deal with militant terrorist faction rising up against the government, he was criticized for having invoked the *Act*. Although Quebec was not at war, Trudeau took these steps at the request of the Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, and the government of Quebec, to stop the general threats and demands made by the FLQ. There were, however, many vocal critics of the Government's action, including NDP leader Tommy Douglas, who stated, 'The government is using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut.' While the *War Measures Act* was in force, 500 people were detained; 467 were freed before being accused. In the end, fewer than 20 people were convicted.

The federal minister of justice in 1970, John Turner, justified the use of *War Measures* as a means of reversing an "erosion of public will" in

Quebec. Premier Robert Bourassa similarly conceded that it was intended to rally support to the authorities rather than to confront an "apprehended insurrection."

Cross was freed on December 4, after his kidnappers had flown to Cuba. On December 28, with the help of author Jacques Ferron, Laporte's kidnappers gave themselves up to the armed forces. How ironical, years later, to learn the FLQ had sent a message to its cell group holding Pierre Laporte, that their target had been accomplished. This message, received all too late, gave instructions about ransom for a hostage who had been murdered already.

After settling down in a house in Mississauga, Ontario, I kept pace with government politics at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. Although I arrived in Canada but a few months and was keeping up with daily news on public concerns, there was one issue regarding health that prompted me to write to the Hon. William Davis, then Premier of Ontario.

In his reply the Premier stated he was surprised and pleased that a comparatively newcomer to Canada would take an interest in government policies so soon after arriving, and that the issue I raised in my letter would be taken into consideration.

After writing to the Premier I began receiving literature in the mail of upcoming federal and provincial elections and the names of those candidates running for office, mainly in my area, Mississauga East Riding. Firmly convinced I was on track to achieve my ambition of becoming a politician, I put my name forward to help in many election campaigns. I fervently hoped this would give me enough experience finally for being selected as a possible candidate in a future election.

When elections were held in the Mississauga East Riding, I was anxious to volunteer and do any work handed out to me, to help the candidate running. Often working well into the evening at the campaign office, I was typing and doing stencil work in readiness for distribution of literature to voters the next day. On these occasions I did not get home

much before midnight as it was important to have the literature available in time for volunteers to put on door handles, for voters to see first thing in the morning before they left for work, with enticement to choose our candidate.

On week-ends, within miles of the campaign office, volunteers would either be dropped off at a certain point or walk to where we were to hand out or drop off leaflets in a selected area. Our zones were carefully mapped out by the campaign manager. Having picked up my instructions for the area in which I was to canvass, I stopped at a road where there were high-rise apartments. This was my territory and the purpose of being there was to ensure that every piece of political literature I carried was dropped off at every tenant's door by a certain given time, then report back to the campaign office for further instructions.

Caught one day by the manager of a large block, I was seen sharply off the premises with the threat, 'Get off, you bugger, don't come back!' I was a little shaken, but determined not to be afraid of giving out literature to tenants in other apartments within my zone. I was equally determined to get the job done, regardless.

This learning experience I later related to the candidate's campaign manager who chuckled aloud, from the way I was describing the abusive language used on his volunteers. 'I'll bring up the matter at the next campaign meeting,' he said, as though to console me, which was not necessary. From then on it was decided to send volunteers out in pairs, for safety reasons.

Being a scrutineer at various levels of elections is a learning experience. The rules are tight. When voters enter the polling station one becomes aware of a distinct atmosphere that any sign of eye level toward the elector is construed as trying to sway the vote in favour of your candidate. This is definitely not the case. Most scrutineers are fully aware of the election rules and comply with all regulations, some of which might appear archaic; however, the purpose of being there in the first place is to ensure every candidate receives his or her fair count of the votes.

Over the years when appearing at the polling station as a scrutineer, I often felt we were not quite in the same category as the polling clerks or returning officer, but to complete an election campaign without scrutineers would give rise, perhaps, to questions relating to the count not being properly conducted. There is always a certain amount of tenseness at the polling station when the voting boxes are emptied, everyone seemingly hopeful their candidate will win. Scrutineers play an important part in the electoral system and are there to ensure every count is heard and correctly recorded, included those considered "spoiled."

I continued working on campaigns, volunteering to be a polling clerk, canvasser and scrutineer, even to policing the door where voters entered the polling station. The public, in general, do not fully comprehend the importance of a scrutineer who works tirelessly on election day, prior to the polling stations being opened to them. Regardless of whom one scrutineers for, it is of the utmost importance that all ballots be counted accurately, which is the full responsibility of the returning officer. Those working the ballot booths are not permitted to wear badges of any candidate's party, for obvious reasons; this applies also to scrutineers.

Prior to the ballots being counted, I listed the names of all candidates running on a sheet of paper and when his or her name was called, recorded it on my list. Having finalized the last ballot count I would telephone the campaign manager with the numbers, who put them on the office notice board. With this fast system of counting, as the ballots were called, it wasn't difficult to determine the winner even before the final ballot count was known to either polling clerk or scrutineer.

There was always an air of excitement working in any campaign office, that caused the adrenaline to flow. I loved the activity of being involved with people who knew exactly where they were going; the meetings prior to an election being called, the political gatherings, candidates' meetings, which I never missed, and when all the excitement died down to be able to enjoy parties given by the successful winner, the bouquets of flowers, but most of all the "thank you" cards which every candidate, successful or not, would send to volunteers. The rapport at this

time, in the 1960s and 1970s, was exhilarating, and between candidates and volunteers, the working relationship was second to none.

In 1976 I was asked by the Mississauga East Progressive Conservative Association if I would take the position as secretary, on a voluntary basis. However, before the Association could vote me in, I needed to become a Canadian Citizen. Eager to acquire this honour, I appeared before a Judge at the Brampton office in Ontario and swore allegiance to Queen and Country. The ceremony took less than fifteen minutes. After paying the required fee I was handed my Canadian Citizen certificate by the judge, who congratulated me.

At this time when applying for citizenship, it wasn't necessary to undertake a written test requiring knowledge of Canadian history, the name of the current Prime Minister and Premiers of the Provinces. Today the system is much more complex and the cost to process an application is higher than it was in the 1970s. Many new immigrants living in Canada find it difficult when speaking poor English, and perplexing to complete and write the test.

Returning home after receiving my Canadian Citizenship Certificate, it was not my intention to pop the champagne cork but to realize how far I had come in the short time I emigrated to Canada and that the precious document I now held would enable me to accept the position offered as secretary to the Mississauga East PC Association.

One year later, after the Annual General Meeting of the Mississauga North Federal Progressive Conservative Riding, I was asked by one of the board members if I would take on the treasurer's position, while doing my full-time job, which I gladly accepted. This voluntary work is done on a one-year basis, when new executives are then elected to the Board.

I was totally taken aback, one day, when the same board member telephoned me with the news there was a by-election being held in my municipal district, Ward 3, and the candidacy was "up for grabs." He said, 'What do you think, would you be interested in sitting on local Council?'

My fast response was – 'definitely!' I had no qualms in pushing

toward this direction, knowing one foot in the door enabled me to seek other seats later either at the Provincial or Federal level.

I'd had many conversations about certain local issues with the woman councillor who represented Ward 3 and hoped to regain her seat, and found she'd always been negative to my response. She didn't appear interested in what local taxpayers had to say and shrugged off giving advice, or help of any kind, in what I thought was a blasé manner.

With the news that Ward 3 was "up for grabs" and being urged to "go for it," there wasn't any question in my mind I could win this seat. I had the money lined up for a campaign and had the support of many key politicians. However, when putting my plans in action to my husband, the one person whom I thought would give me his undivided support, I got essentially a smack in the mouth, a negative response!

Disappointment knew no bounds. I struggled inwardly for days as to the course of action I needed to take but came to the realization that, without the support of my husband, I would be banging my head against a brick wall. It was totally unacceptable to me that my youthful dream abruptly ended without being given a logical reason why.

I wanted to run away. "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." Many attribute the quote to William Shakespeare but it actually comes from a play called "The Mourning Bride" written in 1697 by William Congreve.

The incumbent in Ward 3 was well-connected in the district and wealthy, so on election day she must have been shocked to the core to learn she was ousted by the voters who yanked the seat from under her. This spoke volumes to me about how voters needed a voice at council level and that the person representing them must listen to their concerns. The swift action taken at this by-election left me with the thought how quickly governments can change, candidates being replaced at the whim of the voters.

Although the municipal seat in Ward 3 had been won by another candidate I continued with voluntary work at all levels of government, when elections were called.

Being defeated by my husband, without even a chance to face the voters, did not mean I would not keep the momentum going, of continuing in political campaigns. In fact, the urge to participate became stronger to work for those already holding seats at the Legislature in Queen's Park, Ontario, and who campaigned to be re-elected.

When I first met Bud Gregory in the early 1970s, he was M.P.P. (Member of the Provincial Parliament) for Mississauga East. One of the nicest, caring politicians you could wish to meet, he had a smile for everyone, and was dedicated to the task of helping his constituents.

In 1985 when he became Solicitor General, he wrote to me, 'May I take this opportunity to extend my personal gratitude for your many efforts during my recent election campaign. Campaigns depend so greatly on the support of many volunteers, like yourself, and in so many different capacities. Your dedication and hard work on my behalf is very much recognized and appreciated. My successful re-election truly reflects the strong and valued support I had in Mississauga East. I look forward once again to being your representative at Queen's Park and further welcome any opportunity to assist where possible.'

In a card thanking me, he said, 'It was such a delight working with you, I almost hated to see the campaign end.'

Prior to moving from Ontario to British Columbia in 1987 I acquainted myself with the knowledge that Victoria, the capital of B.C, would be reasonably close to Sidney where I planned to live. Because of a larger population and the size of Vancouver I thought the government buildings would be there rather than in Victoria, which surprised me.

In 1987, the Socred party was in power under the leadership of Premier Bill Vander Zalm. One day I walked into his secretary's office and while speaking with her, suddenly the door of the Premier's office opened and out he walked chatting to another person. I don't know which of us was more surprised when the two of us came face to face, knowing I had not made an appointment to see him. Today, to think it remotely possible one could get even close to the secretary's office without an

appointment, is out of the question. No doubt due to terrorists' activities worldwide, the commissioners on duty at the entrance are extra vigilant and screen all visitors prior to entering the building, so one never gets past the front door without approval, let alone near the Premier's office.

At this opportune time I asked the Premier if he would look into a concern I had with a specific issue. Listening quietly to me, with a charismatic smile on his face, he assured me he would consider the matter and advise me accordingly. I thanked him for the opportunity of being able to speak with him, and left the office with a good feeling.

A few days later when receiving his letter, I felt that the little time spent with him had been worthwhile. It made me conscious of the fact that unless the general public speak out on issues of concern, governments will carry on blindly making decisions without taking into consideration public opinion.

After meeting the Premier I began to take an interest in the Question Period held at the Legislature during the afternoon on certain week days. These sessions were interesting up to a point but when the Socreds lost and the NDP took power, there wasn't a great deal of political clout with which to listen. When the Liberals took over 2001, and I left the legislature building after one session, I couldn't grasp why so much rhetoric and time was wasted on simple issues that could not be resolved there and then.

At one Question Period that Rowland and I attended, the new budget was being presented to the house by the Finance Minister. Eager to get the numbers right, so to speak, from the horse's mouth, I began hastily scribbling notes in shorthand, when I felt a surprised tap on my shoulders by one of the commissionaires. Looking up at him, he tut-tutted under his breath and wagging a finger at me indicated, this is a no, no! I was even more surprised that he did not ask for my note pad so tucked it into my purse, and pretended to look all innocent.

Whispering to Rowland, 'Why are the general public not allowed to take notes, but the media sitting in the gallery to the right of them, can?'

Was it assumed the public would get it all wrong and give newspapers false information?

During one session in February 2005 Rowland and I were listening to questions by Joy McPhail, then NDP Leader of the Opposition, who was rudely shouted down by opposition members, bent on stopping her from speaking. But, like a real trooper, she was determined to be heard and have her say. I was delighted to have the opportunity of hearing this slim, red-head politician who showed the strength of a Trojan to her fellow members by ignoring their shouting, amid much bench-slapping.

As I continued writing to governments at all levels on certain issues, I was conscious of the fact that to get anything done takes months, if not years. A constant merry-go-round inasmuch that once a policy is in place, governments seldom reverse that policy, despite public pressure to the contrary. The rhetoric response of most politicians who perhaps neither have the time or care to give you a direct answer to a direct question, leaves one wondering why you bothered writing to them in the first place, because what concerns you, is not necessarily of importance to them.

A well-known psychologist in England once said to me, "Lack of communication leaves one groping down dark tunnels." I was impressed with these meaningful words and wondered why our politicians do not communicate with the public, as they should, and stop passing the buck!

Sadly, since television and computers are now the voice of communication in our living rooms, we have not only lost the art of conversation but many families have become dysfunctional due to this, which has resulted in many unsolved social problems.

When relating my political dream to my late brother, Rowland, he looked at me thoughtfully and said, 'If I had been with you, you would have had my full support and, without a doubt, succeeded.' I firmly believed him.

A WISH GRANTED

Throughout Rowland's three months stay with me in 1991, he conveyed a wish to emigrate to Canada. Since losing his wife, Gladys, he believed he could not settle back in England.

His words to me were: 'There's nothing there for me.'

This truly saddened me to hear what he had just said, which came as a surprise, knowing he had family, but it gave me the impression he did not want children's noise, although I realized he loved them dearly. Clearly the message I received, was that he wanted a peaceful life.

To choose Canada as a place to emigrate, delighted me, knowing he had travelled the world when in the Merchant Navy and a friend in New Zealand had begged him to "jump ship" and stay there, when on one of his voyages. His refusal to do this, as he told his hostess at the time, was because he needed to find his sister.

It was at some point in 1991 that we were fortunate to meet Lynn Hunter, then MP for Saanich Gulf-Islands from 1988 to 1993, at Tulista Park. I had known her for some time and while we were on the opposite side of politics, I admired her for the way she had things done. To me, she was a people's person – and, as I was to learn when meeting her, a good listener. I introduced Rowland to her, and she asked him where he was from.

Rowland replied, 'Birkenhead, England.'

After discussing the events of the day, and sunny weather, I then broached the subject of how I would go about getting Rowland emigrated to Canada. I explained to Lynn how Rowland had recently lost his wife and that neither one of us, brother and sister, had ever contacted each other until 1990. From the expression on her face I knew we had touched a nerve, because her questions to us came at a fast pace.

We told her everything she wanted to hear, how we first made contact, and met. After listening, she handed me a business card and told us to take along every piece of publicity that was printed in the April 1991 issue of *The Best Magazine,* printed in England, about our story, with the heading, 'At last, after 50 years, we've found our brother'. The letter from the Salvation Army in London, and the article in the *Wirral Globe*, Birkenhead, newspaper with the heading 'Oh, brother!' 'What a surprise!'

The *Wirral Globe* printed an article with the opening: 'A wife's dying promise that the future would not be lonely has come miraculously true for Wirral widower Rowland Marshall and his family. Just two days before she died of cancer, his wife Gladys told him that "someone out there" would soon bring him great joy.'

'Depressed and anxious after her death, Mr. Marshall could not believe her message of hope – until a few days before Christmas, he received a letter from the Salvation Army telling him that his sister Caroline in Canada was trying to make contact.'

The name on the business card, given by Lynn Hunter, was Alan Froese, Immigration Counsellor, Victoria. After thanking her, we said we would let her know the results of our meeting with Immigration and what progress had been made toward Rowland emigrating to Canada.

We wasted little time in visiting the Immigration office in Victoria and handed the card, given to us by Lynn Hunter, to a girl at the front desk, who passed the card on to Mr. Alan Froese. After speaking with him a few minutes, he referred us to Mr. Ross A. Byers, a counsellor.

As we sat before him nervously stating our case why Rowland

wished to emigrate, the counsellor listened attentively to our story while studying the article in the English magazine, which printed a full page of how my brother and I first met.

While Rowland spoke softly about the recent loss of his wife, then finding a sister in the same year, I noticed a tear run down his face. I touched his hand to reassure him, saying, 'It's all right, really.'

Whispering about his dying wife and that she had now gone from him, finally finding his sister whom he had known about since the age of thirteen, caused him to choke back the tears. I was close to tears myself when hearing him speak of Gladys and knew he was floundering in all directions, wondering which way to go. For a moment, it appeared that every spark of life went out of him.

After checking both our birth certificates, the letter from the Salvation Army in London and newspaper clipping from the *Wirral Globe,* and again reading the article in *The Best Magazine*, the counsellor asked many questions; was I willing to accept full responsibility with a five-year undertaking that Rowland would not be a burden on our government? I was more than happy to consent to this agreement.

When the question of finance was brought up, we assured the counsellor this would not be a problem for either one of us.

While we waited in anticipation for further questions from him, he looked at us and said the story we unfolded was so incredible he would put our case forward to his superior. He also went on to say that Canada was compassionate in helping families stay together. I was happy to hear this and thought there was every possibility Rowland's wish to emigrate to Canada would be granted. Meanwhile, the counsellor handed me a "Sponsor's Family Tree" form and asked that I complete it as soon as possible, have it witnessed, and returned to his office.

On October 16, 1991 I completed the Undertaking of Assistance form which I enclosed with my letter to the Immigration office in Victoria, specifying my acceptance to be fully responsible for the welfare of my brother.

I also emphasized that due to our age factor, time is of the essence, and it is important that whatever years we have left to be able to spend them together, preferably in Canada, as I was already a Canadian citizen.

In my letter dated November 4, 1991 to Alan Froese, expressing my thanks for the courtesy extended to Rowland and myself when we visited his office on October 29, I also extended appreciation to Ross A. Byers for his patience, time and understanding concerning my brother's request to stay in Canada.

There is no doubt that our government unbends its rule for a good cause, as was the case of my brother wishing to remain in Canada. Although Rowland made a request to Canada House in London, to emigrate, his response, for some reason, was left unanswered. Because of our unusual family circumstances Immigration Canada in Victoria were not only compassionate, but willing to assist in every possible way in processing my brother's application for entry into Canada. To this day, I am extremely grateful to them.

By December 1991, Rowland had been granted a Visitor's Permit, which enabled him to remain in Canada. In January of the following year he was required to undergo a medical examination, prior to emigrating to Canada. The medical documents were to arrive in Ottawa by the due date, January 31, 1992. We wasted no time mailing them.

Having complied with Immigrations' instructions to complete the medical documents, Rowland returned to England to finalize some personal business. In July 1992, he officially landed at Victoria airport. I couldn't wait to pick him up. There was much we had to talk about and how he would fit in with my life in British Columbia.

We loved the Robert's Bay area, to watch the wildlife, and generally chat about all and sundry. I discovered he was very much a swallow and loved the sun and warmth.

I knew my brother wanted to become a Canadian citizen but there was a period of time that was required to elapse, before this would be allowed. In 2004 he completed the application and on June 21, 2005, received Notice to Appear – to take the Oath of Citizenship.

On July 1, 2005, Canada Day, Rowland became a Canadian citizen. The ceremony was held at the Mary Winspear centre in Sidney, where he received congratulations and was presented with a certificate. We had much to rejoice. There was no turning back. His wish to emigrate and gain citizenship had been granted. It would be a new life for us both.

MOTHER'S GRAVE

In March 1994, Rowland and I were back in England, specifically to dig up more details on the history of our mother's past, as well as visit her grave at Margate, Kent. We were also anxious to see how Elizabeth, our sister, was getting on since she returned to the U.K.

Arriving at Heathrow, after an overnight flight from Vancouver, we took a taxi from the airport to Kent, and arranged to stay with old friends for a few days. The area in which they lived was within miles of where I was brought up as a child but my friends were not to know that, as I had never discussed my upbringing with them. What is more, they never asked.

When Rowland made contact and visited me here in Canada for three months, I poured out my heart to him about my early childhood in an orphanage and gave him some details on how the children were treated. He was all agog to see the place but I explained that the building had been demolished in the late 1970s, as well as the adjacent Holy Innocents Church, where the children and local parishioners attended religious services.

On the day we scheduled a visit we caught the bus from the bottom of the road where our friends lived, and got off at a stop near the hospital, on Sevenoaks Road. Opposite the hospital, where the orphanage once

stood, we found in its place the development of a large sprawled-out housing estate. Any notion that an orphanage built in 1894 and once ruling the lives of hundreds of children, was gone, with its past long vanished in the history books.

Showing Rowland where injured Canadian soldiers were treated during World War One at Orpington Hospital, I told him of one Canadian whom I knew well and frequently visited with his family in Scarborough, Ontario, whose leg was amputated at this hospital. "Pop" as he was known and I became good friends and we often chatted about the "men in blue." When they went into the village, local people recognized the soldiers by the colour of their uniform clothing.

Orpington during my childhood was a close-knit community where Sundays were kept strictly for morning services held at local churches, after which families united for Sunday dinners, perhaps later attending an evening service. The strict laws of the Sabbath were kept to preserve a religious day of rest, and to hear the sound of an outside lawn mower or to raise a sewing or knitting needle, was deemed sacrilegious.

We slowly crossed over Sevenoaks Road and walked gingerly up the long driveway looking this way and that to try and get our bearings, but whichever way we went I could not recognize the area I had known as a child. At the top of the driveway we took a right-hand turn and I spotted what was once the playground, and the old school house. Although the playground had been reduced to half its size since I played netball there as a young girl, it was still used by the local school children for exercise and sport.

The school house, now classified as a Primary Elementary school for the education of local Catholic children, looked the same as I remembered it, except that instead of nuns pupils are now taught by qualified teachers.

Walking through the newly-developed housing estate was like going into a maze of passageways, as they intertwined to such a degree that each house overshadowed the other, with minimum space in between, looking identical to one another. Each avenue appeared to go into another,

causing confusion, as to where the entrance began and where it finished, with the result we were going round in circles.

Almost at a desperation state of being utterly lost we noticed a man passing by, who looked like a gardener. Explaining to him the predicament in which we found ourselves, he guided us out of the avenues. Laughing, he said, 'It's a bit of a mess trying to get in and out of the estate, but don't worry, you're not the only ones with the problem.' And he added, 'No doubt, they'll be many more to come.'

I asked him what happened to the little cemetery, near the playing fields, where I played field hockey and got walloped more than once on the ankles from the best team, determined to win. He told us the cemetery had been removed for the housing development and all the bodies were re-buried to a site in the garden in front of the new, ultra-modern church which opened in 1981. I thought this rather sad as I knew some of the children and adults who had been buried there years ago, including one six-year-old little girl named Monica who caught scarlet fever and died.

Happy to give us further information, the gardener told us that as part of the deal between the Southwark Diocese and the developers, an agreement was reached between the two parties to build a convent house for the five remaining elderly sisters, all of whom are Irish. The location of the convent is on Bishop Butt Close.

In 1877 Bishop John Butt founded The Southwark Diocesan Education Council and Rescue Society for the protection of poor and neglected children from South London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex. In 1891 a 60-acre site at Orpington was put up for public auction but did not reach its reserve figure. Bishop Butt was attracted by the opportunity, and the following day the Society purchased the land. This land was ultimately sold by the Society to developers in the 1980s, for the building of a large housing estate. No doubt, the Society received a handsome profit from the developers for the sale of this property, as well as acquiring a new house for the five sisters.

As Bishop of Southwark, John Butt was involved in the Catholic Canadian Emigration Society, founded in the early 1880s. This body