

Chapter 34

The Miracle

Betty, my wife and mother of our two sons died in hospital on July 2nd, 1963, one day before our 25th Wedding Anniversary. I hadn't realised how ill she was until three days before she died. I was devastated. Some years before, she had lost her Engagement Ring



The New Inn Winchelsea

on the beach at Hunstanton so, when she went into the hospital, I bought her a replacement. As she lay dying, Michael and I kissed her and I slipped the ring on her finger. Then she was gone. She was taken into the Sacred Heart Church at Thornton and a small service was said. The following day a Requiem Mass was said followed by the burial at Thornton Cemetery. After the funeral John, Michael and I went to

Winchelsea where my Aunt Triss and Uncle Jack lived. We booked into a hotel where we tried to come to terms with our loss. On returning I went back to work, John back to his Station and Michael back to school. Michael and I went back to Winchelsea for our Summer holiday but had to come back after two or three days; I just couldn't hack it. Life went on but only just.

One day, towards the end of August, I walked into the office of a friend of mine and asked him if I could sit down and talk as I felt that I wasn't coping. Harry Hamilton was a caring sort of chap and after a while he told me that he and his wife were having a trip out, on the following Saturday, to the Spa Hotel at Ripon where they planned to have afternoon tea. He also told me that he was taking his lady clerk, Doreen, with him and asked whether I would like to join them. I said yes and what a momentous decision that turned out to be.



***2 Elm Cottages, Winchelsea
Home of Aunt Triss & Uncle Jack***

When I got to the hotel, they were already sitting at a table overlooking a huge area of lawn planted with beds of roses in full bloom. Lovely. They had broken the news to Doreen about half way to Ripon. A bit of a shock to her, but, as usual, she, with them, greeted me with that smile. After tea Harry suggested that we walk on the lawn. As we left the Conservatory where we had tea and stopped on the lawn, I took Doreen's hand and we walked across the grass to what turned out to be our future. At that moment the cloak of despair, which had been weighing me down, dropped away. That was the miracle and we never looked back.



***Doreen with Harry & Emily Hamilton
at the Spa Hotel - Ripon.
Our first meeting***