

Chapter 38

Days out and Holidays

Doreen and I enjoyed eating out on simple meals. Our favourites in Bradford were Jacksons and Pratts. It was at Pratts that we got to know Elizabeth Dawson, our gardener's mother which of course lead to us employing Paul. Later on, due to circumstances, we went to Asa Nicholson's at Denholme Gate.

We went on several days out with the Veterans. One I remember with regret was to Blackpool in about 1983. I needed a toilet and found one in the bus park. It was the dirtiest and smelliest place I have ever been in. The seats on the parade faced inwards instead of towards the sea. This combined with the garish shops and smell of fish and chips really put me off. The trouble was that I made it an unhappy day for Doreen which wasn't fair and is something I regret. We had lunch in Lewis' overlooking the sea where I strung out the meal for about two hours. Doreen didn't complain but I knew that she felt miserable. We always made a joke of it afterwards and, needless to say, we never went to Blackpool again. It wasn't fair of me and I really don't know what got into me that day. We enjoyed all the other days out to Morecambe, Windermere, Skegness and Southport to name a few.

Throughout the years, we had holidays at Filey which became our second home. We also started holidaying with Saga. The first time was to Canterbury University with Betty and George. This was good but the University is at the top of St. Edmund's Hill. The second year we went to Southsea College where the accommodation was disappointing. One year we went to Dundee University with Betty and George and then back to Canterbury again, this time staying at Christ's College. We went there at least three times, staying 14 days each time. Betty and George only stayed a week at each place as a result of which, we palled up with other people. Knowing Canterbury as I do, I was able to show them places they would not otherwise have found. They were happy holidays and all the travelling was by train and well organised.

Our local Darby and Joan (D&J) Club also arranged holidays. The first we went on was a very good one to Torquay. The hotel was on top of the hill with about 200 steps to reach the bottom. We overcame that problem by finding a hotel by the sea which served meals; this meant that we could stay down in that area all day climbing back up to our hotel for the evening meal. One day we decided to play bowls; firstly our shoes were not flat enough so we had to play in bare feet; secondly we each had four bowls each but not one matched; all were different weights and sizes which made it very difficult to remember which was whose on the count up. Later, on a trip to Paignton, we were interviewed by a Council Representative to whom we reported the curious bowls. On our return to Thornton, the Torbay Council rang us about it.

Then came our holiday with the D&J at Fawltly Towers in Skegness. On our arrival, there was only a 16-year-old girl to greet us. The manager was asleep in one of the guest bedrooms, drunk. Really the hotel was ideal for us having a large ballroom, bars etc. but the organisation was terrible. There was only one key to each room with no master. I shut the door one night after taking out a film in our room and found out that the only way in was via the window. At breakfast we had to serve ourselves and at times the chef didn't get up in time. At dinner the young waitress would stand at the kitchen door and yell out at the top of her voice: "Who wants soup?" Nothing was really clean, a chair fell to bits when someone sat on it and the razor points didn't work. It was so bad that we enjoyed overcoming the difficulties. I have some good slides showing quite a good part of that holiday. Another D&J holiday, to a different hotel in Skegness was not quite as bad but was on similar lines. They ran Bingo one night and I won two left handed gardening gloves! At the same place, the fish and chips were delivered from the local fish and chip shop! As a result of this, the Mellors and us found a very good Bed and Breakfast establishment. This was excellent and we went there for three years running for a fortnight each time. We couldn't go after that because John Mellor fell ill and later died. When we went to Skegness we would call in on John and Maria who lived at Cherry Willingham, just outside Lincoln. We also had a very good holiday at Cherry Willingham with John and his family when the children were quite young; we went to Sutton-on-Sea, where I, as usual, acted the idiot. We made a sand castle with a moat into which I put some pebbles which I called the slaves. One of the lads wanted to go to the toilet so I told him to pee on the slaves which produced much laughter. The last holiday which we had at Skegness was OK. It was run by the Thornton Methodists.



1983
4 St Peter's Avenue
Cherry Willingham

Their holidays were always good. One went to Newquay so we were able to call in at "Redcap" where John and Maria had moved in 1984. Over the years we went to Oban, Bannockburn, Pitlochry, Cymbran, Woolacombe and Bournemouth (twice). These were all coach holidays and a good time was had by all. We went to Newquay by train at least twice. On one occasion, whilst there, I passed out at breakfast. Calls

were made to the ambulance and talk of heart attacks prevailed. Whilst all that was going on, I came to and finished my breakfast - it was too good to miss. They took me to hospital and I passed out again, however they couldn't find anything wrong with me so eventually they put me in a wheelchair and John pushed me out. The trouble was that the door would not open so I got out of the wheelchair and opened the door to let John through. Everyone fell about laughing! Typical me I suppose. I felt under the weather for a couple of days but was fit enough to play John at golf on Thursday. Very kindly, Paul Kennedy, Maria's brother, volunteered to bring back our luggage so that all I had to carry was my putter! I never found out what was wrong but the doctor did eventually change my blood pressure pills. The old ones had side effects but whether they had anything to do with it, I am not sure.



Redcap in 2001

The preceding words do not really illustrate the happiness that Doreen and I shared over these years. What amazes me is how quickly it all went and how much I have missed out but I have tried to give some idea of the lighter side of our life together. Why did it have to go so fast? This was a sentiment echoed in a song which George Burns took to Number 1 "I wish I were 18 again".