

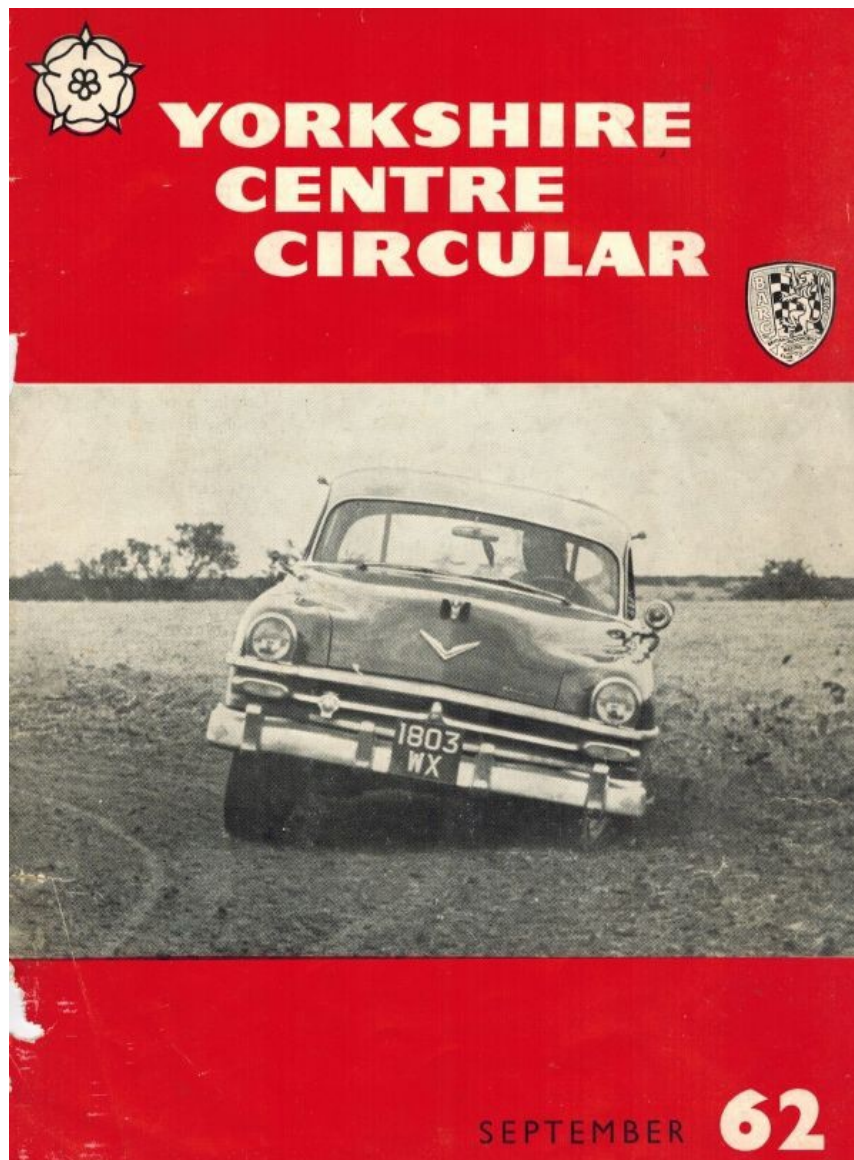
# My whole life has been an adventure!!



**I**n summer 1959 we took the boat to England. Poor mom spent most her time in the cabin, seasick. Also for some reason she was having an issue with her back some days she did not get outa bed. But Kathy and I ran around the ship pretty much as we wanted. There were movies for the kids and activities and just goofing off. We arrived in England and the base dad was assigned was still being built. Only the operations building and some barracks for the soldiers was completed. So we started off living a the Grand Hotel in downtown Harrogate, in Yorkshire county in the the Northern part of England. Candy was too small to run around with us, but Kathy and I had fun. We got to know the elevator operator, back then they had those. We could go outside a bit but not much for kids to do in the downtown area. Mom was having trouble with her back and was rarely out of the room.

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When we packed to move to England we shipped an old Chrysler to England. The deal was if you shipped something over, then you could ship something back, tax free. The first thing dad did when we arrived was go and buy a 1959 Austin Healey Sprite. This was dads commute car until the mid 80's when he retired. TJ has the Sprite in Reno, Nevada right now and had it restored. More about the Sprite later.



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We only stayed a couple weeks and then moved to the Green Park Motel. This place was great, right next to the city park that had a nice concrete pond that you could put model sailboats on and watch them cross the pond and then you would retrieve them. The park had a 9 hole golf course and you could rent two clubs and buy some balls and go play. We were never very good, but at 8 & 11 how good could we be. We ate most our meals in the Motel Dining room, we had an assigned table and we got to know some of the British people on the tables by us and it was really fun. Mom would manage most days to come to the dining room but still a lot of trouble with her back. Most of the British we met in dining room were on vacation from somewhere and only staying a few days, so we got to meet a lot of them. We stayed most the summer. Our waitress was very proper and she would be dishing something onto your plate and then ask "Sufficient" and I would say yes or Ok. She would spoon on another helping and ask "Sufficient"? I was a little slow on the uptake but finally learned to say "Sufficient" sometimes before she actually gave me any. We did not order dinner, it was just served as what was there each meal. I also learned to eat with fork in left hand and knife in the right hand.

Candy was about 2 1/2 and dad had a lot of fun teaching her nursery rhymes for her to recite to the British people in the dining room. The main one I remember is: 30 days have

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September, April, June and No Wonder, all the rest have peanut butter, except Grandma and she rides a bicycle. Of course then the British people would look at her and trying to understand, was there we an issue with translation or ??? But finally would laugh and it got to be that anywhere we were, and she had a chance, she would recite one. Of course the funniest part was that she had no idea that it was not right. I don't know how old she was until she realized those were not the right words. I know there were a couple others, but just cannot think what they were. Dad got a big kick out of teaching her these things and then prodding her to perform.

After leaving the Motel, we rented a duplex in Harrogate and it was school time so we were enrolled in a British School. The school required uniforms, the girls with skirts and the boys with cotton shorts, year round. Not sure how I know this but if you misbehaved the head master had a switch and he would switch your bare legs once or twice for punishment. I guess maybe personal experience. Dad bought us a used piano and Kathy and I started taking lessons. We had lessons for 3 years. The piano we brought back to the USA and occasionally Kathy or I would play something if mom requested. I memorized moms favorite, Black Hawk Waltz and was able for year to just sit down and play it. Then people would ask me to play something else and opps I did not know anything else. When we moved from California, my

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older brother was leaving California to move to Houston, Tommy got the piano because he thought they would teach their girls to play. When I moved to Garland in 2006, they wanted it out of their dining room, so I brought it to my house and I had it until 2104 when I sold my house. I had checked the piano even though old was not really worth anything. They say that back in the 50's every piano maker in Europe would buy a generic inside of piano and then make a cabinet and the majority of them were just local makers not anyone famous. So I was happy to get \$200 for it and they had to pick it up to move it. It was a nice upright piano. Also while in the duplex dad bought us a TV. But it was put away during the school year. Only brought out for the summer.

For some reason dad decided we would move to a house. It seems to me it was Blackstone street, but I might be confused with the fact the Blackstone's lived across from us. My folks became good friends with them and they had a pretty 20's something daughter named Sandra. They had a black minor bird that talked and when Sandra came into the room the bird would wolf whistle and she would say "Pretty Sandra". It was always so funny, never heard the bird ever say anything else. We went to the British school the whole school year 1959-1960 and it was a fun experience. My one English buddy school was Collin Greenwood. His dad was running a betting store. I guess we would call him a bookie. But it was legal, everyone bet on everything there. Collin's older

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brother was Terry as well, or actually Terence, but everyone called him Terry. Collin and I made leather wallets. I had mine for years. I wrote a few letters to Collin after coming back to the states and heard from him a few times but lost track of him even before I graduated in Tomales High School. The neighbors, the Blackstone's had Yorkshire Terriers and talked mom and dad into buying one. Nicky was his name and he was not a real small one but fun. Later we bought a female and mom started breeding and raising them for sale. Mom sold dogs to all her friends and family as they became available. We had Nicky and Tina both up until 1971 as we were leaving California. Tina died of old age and Nicky had gotten out of yard again and hit on the street.

In summer of 1960 base housing had one circle completed. The circle had 4 plex's on each side with parking and then a center road for going straight thru. I think there were 4 on each side. We had the end one in the middle of circle, so another on one side of us and two more to the left of us. A lot of the soldiers in dad's unit were young lieutenants and wives with young kids or babies. Now Kathy was 11 and I was 9 and we were very sought after baby sitters. We got a quarter an hour. Our good friends Danny and Marvel, had a new baby Scotty and we frequently took care of him in their 4 plex while they went to Officers Club for the night. They were in the 4 plex next to us. I think they eventually moved next door to us. I know that mom and dad

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decided to take a tour of Europe one summer in the Sprite with the car club dad belonged too for racing. They were gone a 7-10 days I guess. Us kids just stayed in our 4 plex apartment alone and we would go next door to Danny;s for meals, but we slept in our own beds and no adults in our apartment. Could you go to jail for that today??

Mom and dad had a great trip, dad was on a race track for the Hollands Queens birthday race and we have pictures of his sprite on the track. They had friends with them and dad tells a story about loosing their hotel. Dad and mom had just gotten to the hotel and their friends had too. They had had a long drive to get there and were hungry and wanted to go out to dinner but of course they were all in little cars. So they got a taxi and asked where was a good place to eat. They had a good dinner and then went out to get a taxi back and they looked at each other to ask where is our hotel?? No one knew and could not remember the name, since they had basically been following their tour guides car across country to get there. The wife of the other couple with dad was French fortunately and after explaining to the taxi driver the issue, they decided to go drive out on the autobahn and then take the exit they thought they remembered and start looking for a hotel with theirs car in front of it.... Found it!!

Dad had a lot of fun with the car club, he did races in farmer's fields, in the dirt, doing timed runs and competing a couple

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weekends a month. He met a British racer, Richey that also had a sprite. Richey had spare engines for both. On Friday afternoon Richey would come on base with his Sprite and the racing engines and in the base hobby shop, they would switch engines in both cars in one evening and then race the next day and then come back and switch engines back. Nice thing about the sprites is that the engine and transmission come out together by just removing two bolts on each motor mount and the two bolts holding the transmission in the tunnel. Then it all comes out as one. Very simple for the older cars. We would take the Chrysler and go watch and one time they talked dad into running the Chrysler around the dirt track in the farmers field. We have a great picture of it on the cover of the British racing magazine.

So as I was getting older and had a little cash from babysitting, so I got a bicycle. Then I found a job with the post newspaper, delivering the daily bulletin around the housing circle. By then there were two circles. They also had finished the schools, so we went to the school on base in fall of 1960. Most classes had 3 grades in each room with one teacher. My teacher was Miss Massachusetts, and I was a favorite of hers. I could tell her I put my assignment on her desk, but she must have lost it and she would give me a grade anyway. I was always fine with getting C's. I did not have time to study for A's.



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Of course all the kids knew one another and we had some great school parties. One Halloween party I got together with one of the twin girls in my housing circle. Everyone kinda knew what costumes everyone was wearing, so she and I traded costumes and played at being quiet when we arrived and no one could figure out who we were. We had a movie theater by the school and there were matinee movies for the kids every Saturday morning for a quarter. I usually had a girlfriend I would take to the movies, big spender I was. I spent a lot of time with my sister Kathy and got to know her girlfriends, so that kept me in a steady supply.

More about Nicky our Yorkshire Terrier. We would play with him and then we thought it was funny to turn him into a lion. We would hold him up and encourage him to bark and try to bite. It got to be that Kathy would hold him and make him protect her, and I would not like it and would be mean and Nicky would go crazy trying to bite me. Of course this eventually got us in trouble. Kathy had gone to the post office and being attractive teenage girl on a base of soldiers, one young soldier came up to talk to her and she was holding Nicky. He reached out to pet Nicky's head and Nicky made mince meat out of his fingers. He pulled back and was almost crying while Kathy was apologizing. She made sure to warn people to not touch her or Nicky after that if she was holding him. Another time during the Christmas

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season, mom and dad had gone to the Officers club for a party. We thought we were helping by refilling Nickys bowl with milk. Not long after we found him stumbling on stairs trying to go up to bed with Kathy. He could hardly walk!!! We took all the cushions off the couch and made him a padded cell so he would not hurt himself. When mom and dad got home they wanted to know what happened to their spiked eggnog?? Guess we know now... For being a small dog Nicky had a big ego. We spent a lot of time trying to un-teach Nicky these behaviors, but it was not easy. When we were back in California years later, he would get out of the yard and run around uptown Tomales. One time we found him and he had attached a bigger dog. When we found him, he was hanging on to the cheek of a German Sheppard that was trying to eat him and Nicky was trying to eat the big dog too.... He was chewed up and bit and mom bandaged him up and then cut one of her nylons up to use as a tube cover to put over his whole body so he did not pull the bandages off.

I did have some buddies and we played games like throwing the tennis ball over the top of the 4 plex. Not that this always worked real well, I recall paying for a window or two. We also liked to play Mumbley-peg. But we did not usually put a stick in the ground to throw to. We just knelled in front of each other and threw between the other persons knees, don't flinch!! We never had any serious injuries. Wearing long pants usually prevented

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any actual bleeding. But of course as Candy got older she wanted to always play with her older brother. Not what I liked to do when I had buddies to play with. But she insisted on playing Mumbley-peg with us one day. We told her no, that she would flinch and get hurt. No she said she was a big girl and would not. And of course she was wearing a dress. So you can see how this might go. I tried to explain to mom it was not my fault, she insisted on playing and she flinched and it was just a little blood, the pocket knife bounced off her knee. But Candy ran into the house crying and pointing at the little bit of blood.

Dad was a big fan of hunting and joined the British hunting club. He bought an old Mainlicker Shounaur 30-06 rifle and took it apart and gave it several good coats of varnish that he baked on several times in moms oven. He used that rifle for all his hunting his whole life. I think Billy, my brother in law has it now. Dad felt that we should learn to shoot as well and he bout a 22 pellet rifle. You would bend open the barrel and place a 22 pellet in it and snap it shut and it was ready to fire. In the back yard we started using a plastic lemon we would toss in the grass and then try to shoot it. We played this in the back yard a lot. When the base had built a shotgun and skeet range, we used to go out there to shoot as well. They started buying metal pigeons instead of the clay pigeons. Then we would go retrieve them and they would get reused to save money. Dad had taken one of those and had it

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hung on the back wire fence behind house and we would shoot at it and it would ding when we hit it. We never thought much of the fact that beyond the wire fence was the main road coming into the base. Well it was just a pellet gun, how much could that hurt??

I am not sure why, maybe because dad got promoted, but we moved to a pretty nice duplex, not in the housing circle. Dad was a CWO, Chief Warrant Officer. This meant he was not a commissioned officer like the others. He had been Enlisted rank and then promoted to CWO. This gave us rights to be in NCO Clubs or Officer Clubs. This was good because most events in the Officers clubs were for adults. Most events in the NCO clubs were for kids and NCO's. There were always a bigger and better and more events at NCO clubs since so many more Enlisted Soldiers than Officers. We took full advantage of this on every base. Anyway this new duplax was nicer, more sq ft and it was closer to the PX, school and theater. Kathy and I took advantage of that and got get be around to shop and be more independent.

My job ended delivering the Daily Bulletin, they just put the bulletin out for people to pickup at PX and Commissary as those places were finally finished. But then I found that the Commissary would allow us older kids to bag groceries for tips. This was a great job. Though it was supposed to be complimentary, the moms were great tippers and instead of

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spare change, usually it was a dollar or so. This was a great source of income until the soldiers found out how much we were making, so they took over the bagging of groceries when not doing their military job. We were not happy to get pushed out.

Mom and dad met a lot of English families and I remember one family lived in Leeds, not too far from us and some afternoons on weekends, we would visit and it was so fun. They had a small movie theater in their attic. So we would watch movies or home slides that did might bring over to share. Mrs Hotsgon was our piano teacher and we took lessons all 4 years we were in England. She actually came to California one year on vacation to visit us. in the late 60's. We took trips into Scotland to try to find some McPherson plaid for mom to make the girls dresses and dad a tie. It is hard to find the right plaid. Most Scottish names have an "A" in them somewhere. Like "MacPherson" or "MacPhearson" or "McPhearson". Not having any "A"s is a rare name. Dad tells the story that when England and Scotland were first sending people to the new world, most were crooks or outcasts. So the Scottish people took al the "A"s out of the names so they would know them if every they returned. When I did my DNA tests and worked in the Ancestry website, I did not find we had much Scottish in us, mostly European, Germany and such. In finding connections and names of ancestors, I found names sometimes with and without the "A" in it so it might

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have been like many, when coming into the USA their names not written correctly. I traced back to the early 1800's for my family both mom and dad.

In our travels around the countryside, we always took the sprite. We had a small seat that rested on the tunnel and Candy sat there. Behind the seats, dad had cut out part of the metal back to just before where the top attached. This gave Kathy and i a place to sit with our backs against the side of car and our feet across towards the other. So we toured England with 5 people in a two seater Sprite. It was funny usually only mom drove the Chrysler and you have to remember that meant the steering wheel was on the wrong side of the car. Well i was on the sprite too because dad bought it to bring home. But being small it was easier to see oncoming traffic. But in the Chrysler, mom virtually drove with her side of car in the ditch and always with one of us riding shotgun and watching for anything coming down the road. If a truck/lorry was coming she would virtually stop and be off side of the road. It was not very often she would drive off the base. It was funny too, on base I think we drove American style.

I know, I keep getting off the track of living in England. I must say it was a very rewarding and educational time for me. I saw the "Sound Of Music" for the first time as a stage show the family went to in London. I don't recall if we toured London or saw the changing of the guard back then. But I have many times

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since returning to London. One of my favorite stops if I get across the pond. Eating “Fish & Chips” was a big thing for us too. After returning to Northern California, almost anytime we went to San Francisco, we would pull off at Sausalito, California at the HR Salt Fish and Chips place. They tried to be so authentic that they had the wrapping paper designed like newspaper. In England, most fast food was wrapped in day old newspaper, well at least all the Fish and Chips were.

Before leaving England, dad had to sell the Chrysler, he had shipped it over so that he could ship the sprite home free of duty and taxes. So one weekend he goes to the PX and buys a case of spray paint. Then in our carport, he proceeds to sand any rust and then give the Chrysler a spray paint job. He sold it to a GI on base that loved it because he could load up a bunch of friends and get around the base or anywhere. It was reported to still being sold, or handed down from GI o GI even into the mid 70's.

Our return was much faster than getting there. We flew into JFK and mom did not like flying much better than cruising but it was only a few hours, not days...

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When we got to Tomales, California and our household goods showed up in a moving van, they opened the back doors of the van and the sprite was there sitting at about a 45 degree angle in the back of the shipping van.