

Things had returned to something like normal for Sid and Aggie. They went to Church every Sunday. They had become great friends with Rev Knowles and really appreciated his non-judgemental style of preaching. His popularity was borne out by his ever-growing flock. Like Bob Morrison more than fifty years earlier, he appealed to young intellectuals, and a fairly large proportion of the congregation were university students.

They made a point of catching up with old friends, however, many had passed away. They maintained contact with the Morrison and Roberts Children and especially Maggie Johns, who as Maggie Walters had been flower-girl at his (Sid) and Jeans second wedding. They also kept in contact with Aggie's family and friends.

Of course they continued to be deluged with visits from assorted children, grand-children, church friends, old sporting teammates and former workmates.

Occasionally, and always on Sid's and Aggie's birthdays, the family would gather at a restaurant or, weather permitting, have a picnic in a park where the youngsters could run wild. They, Sid and Aggie, still attended movies but seldom went out at night unless driven by a family member.

Nevertheless, they enjoyed good health, with a few aches and pains, and retained full mental acuity. Life was still pretty good

With trepidation Sid knocked on the Big Bosses door. "Enter" said a voice from within. "Hello Sid. Sit down. We need to discuss your future. Your time with us is officially coming to an end. However, we have been impressed with your performance here and we would like you to stay on for another twelve months. We have spoken to Colonel Black and Mr Sweetapple, and they have agreed but only if you are happy about it. You will not lose any seniority if you do stay on. I am sure we can get the Education Department to allow Jean to stay on for another year."

Sid was flabbergasted. "I am a bit in two minds. I would like to go home but I have really enjoyed my time in England. Can I discuss it with Jean and give you my answer in a day or two."

"Of course," replied Sir James.

That night Sid hurried home to discuss this proposal with Jean. She was of like mind to Sid. "I get a bit homesick but there are still things I would like to do here, especially with netball becoming so popular. Let's stay on. I am sure we will have more visitors from home."

The next day Sid reported to Sir James. "Jean and I have discussed the matter, and we would like to stay on for another year. Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity."

"That's great Sid" said Sir James with a big smile on his face. "However, we will expose you to new experiences that will help you on your career path. Some of these will be quite challenging. To celebrate your decision, I and a few others would like to take you to lunch. Is there anyone you would like to bring"

"I would like to invite Tim Bottomley-Brown if that is OK. He has been a great help in making life in London a fantastic experience."

“We know Tim very well. Of course he can come. We will certainly invite his father as well.”

So, it was a couple of days later that Sir James and several executives, together with Tim, Sir Gerry and of course Sid, met for lunch at the Marylebone Cricket Club. Sir James was surprised when Sid mentioned that he was also a member of the MCC but in his case it referred to the Melbourne Cricket Club. This MCC had reciprocal membership with the English MCC meaning that Sid could sit in the members stand at Lords.

It was a great meal, far better than the Parliamentary dining room. Despite the huge differences in the bank hierarchy, it was a huge success. The two young men, Sid and Tim, were put at their ease by the friendly attitudes of the bosses and, of course, Sir Gerald was very protective of his son and his friend.

No expense was spared but Sid and Tim felt a bit guilty at not getting back to work. Fine wines were on offer, including some Australians, and Sid daringly had a glass of “Hill of Grace”,

“With a smile on his face Sir James whispered to Sid “don’t think this is going to happen again.” Sid didn’t care. As far as he was concerned this was a once in a lifetime experience.

Jean was right about one thing. There were plenty of visitors. Perhaps the most surprising was the whole Morrison family. Rev. Bob had agreed to swapping pulpits for twelve months with an English minister and was ensconced in a lovely old Victorian parsonage. Bob and Janet were in good health, the twins Jack and Jill were studying singing and were as mischievous as ever while little Sophie, still a toddler, was keeping Janet on her toes. Much to the twins’ disgust she wasn’t called Humpty Dumpty. Uncle Sid and Auntie Jean thought she, Sophie, was simply gorgeous. The twins often stayed with Sid and Jean but occasionally stayed with Elspeth who accompanied them on the piano. Elspeth thought that individually they were good singers but as a duet she thought that they were really brilliant. At home Sophie joined them but the trio was not yet a great success.

Bert and Ruth turned up. Whilst perhaps not yet an item they were very good friends and had decided to play in some tennis tournaments around Europe. They played singles and mixed doubles but as Open Tennis was not yet approved they received no prize money. They won some minor tournaments and qualified for Wimbledon Mixed Doubles and made it to the third round. Despite being a very liberal mother, Liz returned to England to chaperone Ruth and took the opportunity to play in some veterans’ tournaments that she sometimes won.

Jean’s netball venture continued to expand. Schools all over London were now playing and Jean had set up a school for umpires and many mothers now knew the finer points of the rules. This had led to a dramatic improvement in the standard of the competitions.

Sid was still the star of the cricket team and was one of the best batsmen in the competition and true to Sir James’ warning was being given far more onerous projects occasionally requiring him to spend some time away from Jean. It was these times that made them realise how much they really loved each other.