

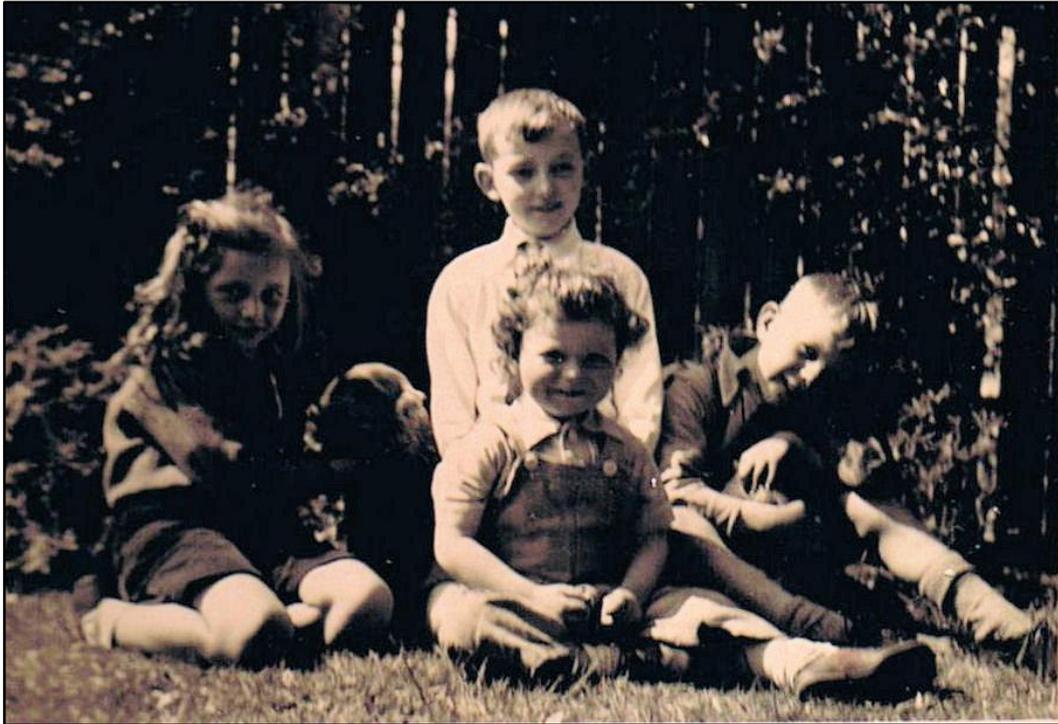
I have known Nev, as we always knew him, since we moved to Newton-le-Willows in 1942. He was living in Laurel Bank with his Mum and Dad, his sister, Barbara and his Mum's sister, Auntie Maggie Maudsley. Other members of the Maudsley family lived nearby in Mercer Street. They were keen bellringers. Although on the High Street, Laurel Bank had a drive to the garage at the side and a large garden at the back.



In this picture Laurel Bank is the left-hand half. The right-hand half was Mrs Rathbone's School, which Nev attended.

Most of our days as young boys was spent playing in either his or our gardens. The picture below shows us in our simple tree house with me, Julia Frost and a young boy whose parents were visiting on the seat and Nev further up the tree.





Another photo taken on the same occasion with Nev at the back in the middle.

Being little boys, we got up to all sorts of mischief. One such was reserved for the Mothers Union which held monthly meetings in the Vicarage which were attended by 50 or 60 ladies. There was a long drive up to our house with wrought iron gates at the bottom. As we came from the High Street, immediately inside the gates was a high wooden fence. Nev and I would spend the morning preparing for the meeting and as the ladies approached, from our hiding place behind the fence, we would lob small apples, or snowballs or any other seasonal missiles that came to hand. Being young we were naïve enough to think the women wouldn't know who was responsible.



The photo shows the top of the drive to the vicarage.

Nev was a member of the Church Choir and also the Church Youth Club. The Youth Club put on a pantomime each year in St Peter's School, taking over the Hall in which a stage was erected and the three classrooms which were for the audience. Before becoming members, the younger children would take on various parts. The photo below shows Nev as one of the rats in January 1948's production of Dick Whittington.



Nev is in the middle and tallest of the rats and I am next but one on his left.

We both enjoyed riding our bicycles and I remember one particular occasion when we decided to cycle to Morecombe where we would stay with his Aunt. In those days the 52 mile journey was a major undertaking considering our bikes were built for less strenuous exercise with only three Sturmey Archer gears.



This lever was on the handlebars and, in order to change gear, you had to stop peddling which meant you lost speed.

This was before any of the motorways had been built, but also there was far less traffic on the roads.

I seem to remember Nev's Aunt was quite a stern character and perhaps not used to teenage boys.

When we progressed to motorised transport Nev had a Reliant Regal and I had a Bond Mini, both three wheeled vehicles.



Nev's was similar to this picture, but it was black.

The Reliant had a 750-cc engine with a gate crash gear box ie there was no synchromesh and to change gear you had to get the engine revs just right or there would be a horrible grating sound.

Nev only had a motorcycle licence and so to be able to drive on the open road a plate was inserted into

the gear box preventing him from putting the vehicle into reverse gear. So, if he wanted to go backwards, we had to push. I only had a car licence, but I used to drive it hoping I wouldn't be stopped. If that had happened, I planned to say that the car had a reverse gear, it was just that I couldn't get at it. Fortunately, neither of us was ever stopped by the police.

The mention of the police reminded me of another occasion when Nev, Heaton Goff, Barry Wilkinson and I were in Heaton's 1934 Austin 7 travelling to Warrington.



As it was open topped those in the back had their legs over the side and we were having a loud sing song as we went along.

Unfortunately, the car broke down and we had to pull into the side. The police arrived soon after saying that four youths had been reported behaving in an unruly manner. We all looked duly abashed, surprised and innocent. It was most fortunate that we had broken down and were off the road because the press

would have had a field day had we been prosecuted because Heaton's mum was the local solicitor, Barry was a police cadet, Nev's dad was manager of the local Calico Works and my dad was the local vicar!

In February 1957 Nev, with a friend called Brian Ashcroft, went to see Bill Haley and the Comets at the Odeon in Manchester and I remember him telling me that on the way home on the East Lancashire Road, which is a succession of roundabouts, they went round each roundabout three times in their euphoria after the show.

Nev and I plus several other members of the Youth club had a regular routine on a Sunday evening. We all went to Evensong at St Peter's Church, sitting at the back of the side aisle, from there we went to Bulls Head, usually for half a pint and then on to the vicarage to watch Sunday Night at the London Palladium. Television was still very much a novelty in the 1950s, albeit a tiny black and white screen!

Brian Ashcroft, whose father had a shop, and who had plenty of money, came with Neville and I on our first visit to the YMCA hotel in Torquay. Brian took us on that holiday in his Dad's Ford Consul. In the days before the motorways the journey took anything up to 12 hours.

On our next visit to Summer Nev and I went 1937 Fiat Topolino. We way there and had a most However, on the way back Tarporley, still 30 miles telephoned my Mum and and pick us up. When she and I fast asleep in the



Torquay the following in my newly acquired had no problems on the enjoyable holiday. we broke down at from home. I she agreed to come arrived, she found Nev car.

I had much trouble with battery connection and

the Fiat. It had a loose was difficult to start.

When at last, I found a buyer Nev came with me to deliver the car in order to bring me back home. When we arrived, we left the engine running afraid that if we switched it off, we wouldn't be able to restart it. Nev had parked his car in a neighbouring road and when the transaction was completed, £65, if I remember correctly, we set off for his vehicle. As soon as we were round the corner we sprinted for his car before they could discover any problem. Although I have 'L' plates on the car in the picture I was allowed to drive alone because in 1956 the Suez Canal Crisis caused there to be a severe shortage of petrol which was later rationed, with every vehicle obtaining coupons depending on the size of the engine. Driving tests were suspended and learner drivers could drive unaccompanied. This lasted for 18 months and so it became necessary to pass a test or go back to being accompanied by a qualified driver. Panic to pass the test ensued!

In the Spring of 1959, we moved from Newton to Callington in Cornwall.

Nev came to visit us several times, one time on his 250cc BSA motorcycle. I



remember that machine well because it had a very distinctive deep throaty sounding exhaust so you could always here him coming. He came one time on a beautiful sunny day and by the time he arrived he had a horizontally striped face caused by his goggles.

Nev loved the beach and was an extremely good swimmer. Heaton Goff spent the Summer as a lifeguard on Millendreath Beach near Looe and we spent many happy hours on that beach which was much less crowded than the nearby Looe beach.



This picture shows Nev by the side of the River Lynher near Callington on one of his visits to the area.

We both changed our jobs, Nev joining the merchant navy with the Elder Dempster Line sailing from Liverpool to West Africa. I remember him bringing home some lovely carved wooden furniture and for our wedding he gave us a wicker garden furniture set of four chairs and a matching table that he had bought on one of his visits to Africa.

Nev was of an age when he should have been called up for National Service, but I don't know why he wasn't called to serve, because although I was 6 months younger than Nev I would have been called up if I hadn't decided to go to college to train to be a teacher. My National Service was deferred for two years so that I could attend college, and by the time I qualified as a teacher all compulsory National Service had been ended.

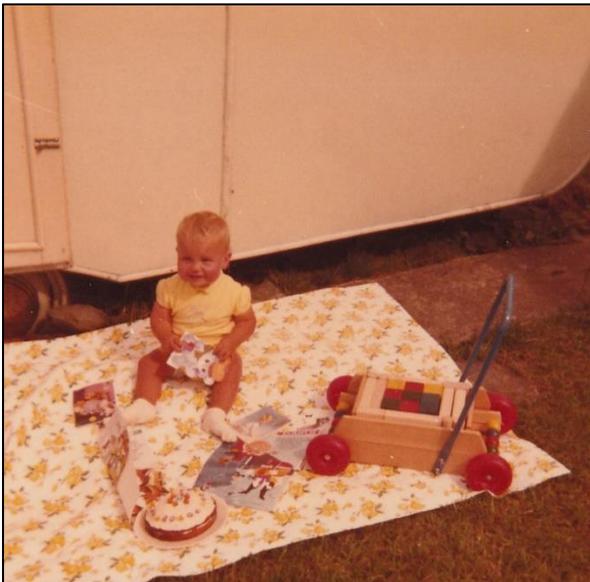
Nev kindly agreed to be my best man when Jeanette and I were married on the 28th March 1964.



When Nev and Sheelagh were married I was please to return the compliment.



Nev kindly offered us the use of the family caravan in the Lake District and we spent the week of Steven's first birthday, August 1971. I am pretty sure that the caravan had been built by Nev's dad and it was ideal for us. The pictures show Steve sitting outside the caravan surrounded by cards, presents and cake, and one having a bath in the washing up bowl. At least it saved on water!



On the ways home from the caravan we called on Nev and Sheelagh in Appleton.

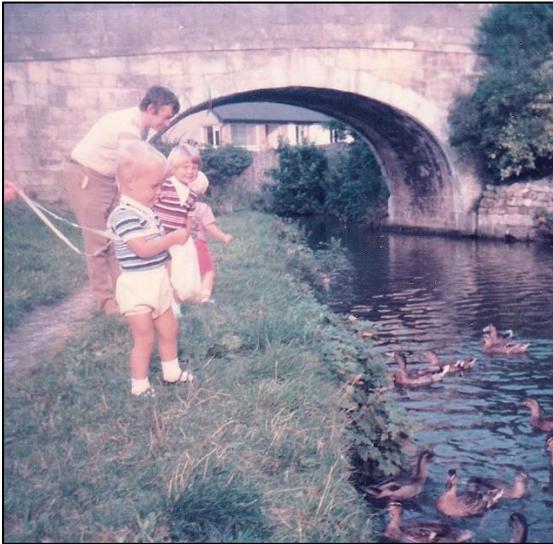


Sheelagh and Nev with Steven in their garden and with Christopher at his Baptism.

Nev, being an excellent swimmer, loved being on the beach. Here he is in the water on Charmouth beach with Steve in the Summer of 1972 watched closely by our dog Mik.



My parents had retired to a bungalow in Bolton-le-Sands and if Mum knew we were planning a visit Granny used to save up all the crusts of bread because our boys enjoyed feeding the wild ducks in the nearby canal. While we were staying their Nev, Sheelagh and Christopher paid us a visit and joined us at the canal. Unfortunately, Nev and Christopher are furthest from the camera in one shot and only in the distance in the other. Tony was on a leading reign because Granny was terrified that he might fall in the canal. They had a bag of crusts each, but Tony's always seemed to last longer than Steve's. I think it must have been the Summer of 1974.



In April 1975 the two families spent a happy week together in a house near Dunoon in Scotland.



We stayed at Glenbranter House. During the second world war the house and surrounding estate had been a prisoner of war camp for Italian prisoners of war. The photo on the right shows Nev, Sheelagh with Christopher in front of her, Jeanette with Steven in front of her and Tony standing in the famous pine tree avenue in Benmore Botanical Gardens in Strath Eachaig at the foot of Beinn Mhor from which, I presume, it derives its name.

The first photo on the next page is on the Tighnabruaich Pier with Sheelagh, Steven, Tony, Jeanette, and I'm holding Christopher. The second shot is on the Gourrock to Dunoon Ferry, this time with Christopher on Jeanette's knee. I presume Tony must have been helping Nev take the photo.



The next photos are ones taken on some of Sheelagh and Nev's visits to Dorset.



Charmouth Beach



The photo above is of us sharing a pub lunch with my Dad. The next group of photos are of our boys weddings. Taken in order there is Steve and Emma, Tony and Liz, Peter and Zoe and Christopher and Agnes.



I picked this one above specially because it shows his lighthearted side. He enjoyed having fun, but could be serious when the situation required it. The big picture shows one of the tables at the reception. Each table was provided with a small 'one off' cameras.

Tony and Liz.



Several guests met for a meal in the evening before the wedding. Nev is centre of the second photo, next to the bride.



Here Nev is sharing a joke with my Dad at the wedding reception, after Dad had officiated at the wedding.

Peter and Zoe



Nev and Sheelagh watching the register being signed and below with Peter and Zoe and their nephews and niece at the reception.

Peter and Agnes.



I have had a mixture of emotions while compiling this tribute to my dear friend Nev. It has brought back many happy memories for me, but also made me realise how much our friendship meant to me during those nearly 80 years. He was a wonderful man, very talented in many ways, but very unassuming and never one to push forward his own achievements, which were many. I'm sure he will be remembered by all who knew him with great affection and I'm proud to count myself one of them.

The life story, because that in part is what it is, is far from complete. I know little of his work and time at Daresbury. In a way he achieved what his dad wanted for him when he sent him to work in the small engineering works in Stockton Heath. He might not have been the boss at Daresbury, but he was obviously very highly thought of and respected there, and many were eager to come to him for advice and direction. I have given little about his family life which I'm sure must contain many fascinating events and adventures

I hope I have managed to get my facts and dates correct, but if not please accept my apologies because so many of the events happened so long ago. I also hope there are not too many spelling and grammatical errors.

Perhaps someone would like to complete his life story and fill much of his later life or if anyone would like to send me recollections, reminiscences, photos etc I'd be happy add them to this.

