

BOOK IV (i) - ARCHITECTURE

"The spirit of antiquity, - enshrined
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
In picture speaking with heroic tongue,
And with devout solemnities entwined -
Strikes to the seat of grace within the mind:
Hence forms that glide with swan-like ease along,
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
To an harmonious decency confined,
As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple, - dedicate
To mutual respect in thought and deed."

Wordsworth

The lines above are included in "A History of Architecture" by Sir Banister Fletcher, the bible of all Architects. When I think about William Wordsworth, I always remember the following lines which I learnt at school.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

How these lines come to life
What a picture these words conjure up in one's mind

~

As I have already mentioned, I knew that I wanted to be an Architect at the tender age of eleven. Unfortunately, neither my parents nor teachers really had any appreciation of what an Architect was, and in some cases found difficulty in pronouncing the word. Thinking about it now,

many folk also have great difficulty in pronouncing **Philately**, and many have no idea what it is! One really wonders when the idea of becoming an Architect first entered my head, and why. Maybe it was the brass plates on the gate-posts of the large houses in Stanmore, which I would have seen on my way to the ponds. I must say that they did intrigue me, with the engraving and the letters **ARIBA** or **FRIBA** placed after the names.

I have dealt with my education and what a slow start I was faced with due to all those factors beyond my control. I will now go back to when I left the Willesden Technical College, Junior Technical School of Building, on 27th March 1942, just 17 days before my 16th Birthday.

No time to lose before searching the newspapers for a position somewhere close to home. Hopefully I would find a firm that would appreciate the few skills I had learnt at the Tech. and also somewhere where I could advance in my chosen career. I can still remember some of those first interviews; the completely different environment from school, a new set of smells - the smells of industry and hard work - playtime was to be a thing of the past. Everything was really foreign. Being interviewed was a new experience, and then being told that they were going to appoint not you, but someone else, was a bit of a shock.

Oviously, eventually you are offered a position, and in my case, I started work as a very "Junior Draughtsman", or so I thought! The firm was ACROW Engineering, a Swiss firm, and the job was at their Head

Office, with the Principal in residence. Being wartime, the office was in a very large house at Northwood Hills, a very pleasant area with lots of trees, etc. Acrow Engineering had pioneered the metal props and connections used in Building Scaffolding.

I shall never forget the first day, as I was about to learn my first lesson out in the big world, where one was expected to be of some use to your employer, however junior. I was introduced to the Chief Draughtsman and given a Drawing Board, a large piece of timber about one inch thick called "Double Elephant" size; HUGE. I was handed a piece of tracing paper and told to affix it to the board. The normal method in those days and for many years to come was to pin the four corners of the paper to the timber drawing board with large drawing pins. So far so good. I had the drawing board, the paper and four drawing pins, and then I made my first mistake - not that I knew that. I placed the first pin in the top left hand corner, that was OK, and my second pin in the top right hand corner. The sun clouded over the lightning lit up the office - and then the 'THUNDER', "If that is all you have learnt in the last three years you have been wasting your time, but you are not going to waste ours!!"

Well that was it; the correct position for the second pin was at the BOTTOM Right hand corner, which is obvious when once you have learned it, because it stretches the paper diagonally.

My transfer out of the drawing office was immediate, and I was set to work in the main administration office, not that I did any administration. Instead I was given the task of copying all their Accounts Books. I can only reflect that my application for the job had been handwritten in my very best "Copper Plate" handwriting. They must have admired it because that was what they required and even bought a special Post Office nib for me to use.

Not only had I learnt how to put on a piece of paper to a Drawing Board; in the next three months of re-writing the Company's Books, I resolved never to write in Copper Plate again! (Except maybe in my Stamp Album.)

I think my next step was to buy myself a Drawing Board. Fortunately, the main offices and showroom of Harper and Tunstall were in Edgware, and I came home with a fine Drawing Board, ebony edged for the Tee-Square bought at the same time. I treasured and kept that Board and Tee-Square until 2000, when I gave them to my Grand daughter, Sarah Johnson. One of my first large sized drawings (30in x 40in) dated 27th November 1943, which I produced on that board is part of my present Archive. It is a design for a Youth Centre and even some 65 years later there is nothing wrong with the plan; maybe the fenestration could be updated as I note all the windows were a standard "Crittall" size window, which certainly dates the design, but nevertheless it is still a design of the 1940's.

Mother was as always to the rescue. I was obviously not going to be usefully employed in the Drawing Office, so she arranged for me to apply for a job at the de Havilland Engine & Aircraft Co. Ltd. plant and Offices at Stag Lane Edgware. My Father was also working there, on the Engine manufacturing side.

So in June 1942 I started work at de Havilland, at first in the Office of Major Halford who was at that time working on the design of **Jet Engines** (this design work was being carried out concurrently with the design being carried out by Whittle). As you can imagine it was an Engineering Drawing Office, and once again a very new experience. I had to use a "6H" pencil, and for the non-initiated this is a pencil with the lead of a hardness factor of six times. A lot different to the pencils used by Architects, which were generally in the "B" range, a very soft black lead which too went up to 6, used when doing conception plans. At working drawing stage a "2H" would be about the hardest used. As far as Architects are concerned a "6H" is more like an Engravers' "**Burín**" for use in engraving steel dies etc.

My first drawing was of a "**Thermocouple**"; I had no idea what it was, and still know even less. I also learnt that Engineering Draughtsmen are very, very precise with their draughtmanship. They finish corners where two lines meet with great precision, whereas the opposite is the norm for Architectural Draughtsmen. They take care that at the corners and at the junction where two lines meet the lines actually cross over, and do NOT stop at a neat point!

By the way, my wages were the princely sum of Nineteen Shillings and Sixpence; this was for the whole week! Of that sum my Mother received Eighteen Shillings and I was allowed to keep One Shilling and Sixpence. Fortunately, later on I was allowed (or required) to do Fire watching all through the night, for which I received the same amount as my weekly wage. Whether or not the division with Mother was the same I cannot remember, but I have no doubt it was, especially as Dad contracted TB and had to go into a Sanitarium.

I really enjoyed Fire watching. I was with other members of the Drawing Office, and unlike the hours working at the office, there was a free and easy atmosphere. We played cards, and the canteen ladies made us some great Cheese Sandwiches. The taste of that vintage cheese is something legends are made of; the cheese slices were thicker than the bread, and did they taste wonderful! It may of course have been the fact that at home we were on rations! This is almost a departure from this subject, but at the Fire watching evenings we virtually played cards all night - and for MONEY!! This really appealed to me especially. Although I didn't have a "Silver Spoon" in my mouth at birth, I do believe that there was a "Pack of Playing cards" not far away. I didn't need any extra lessons to quickly master the techniques of playing "Good Queen Bess", sometimes known as "Hearts" or "Black Lady."

Needless to say, I was quite happy to play cards all night and get paid also. It seems that I won on most occasions, although over a period it

must have evened out. Just to complete the record of Fire Watching, we 'watched' at another location. The firm had recently taken over a biscuit factory and we were there before all the biscuit equipment and supplies had been removed. Unfortunately for me, I was confronted by all these leaking tins of what looked like tallow, but was in fact the "Fat" ingredient for the biscuits. It was many years later before I was interested in eating biscuits again!

(I will not mention the name of the biscuit company, but PF comes to mind.)

Fortunately I didn't spend too much time in the Engineering section of Major Halford, and was moved to a factory further afield at the corner of the North Circular Road and the Edgware Road. I believe the premises were originally Lex's Garage. Anyway the Drawing Office was there, together with the Factory making and repairing parts of all kinds of aircraft. The factory was mainly staffed by Women. I know I should probably describe them as Ladies, but they certainly did not give me that impression. Although I was 20 years old when I left, I am afraid I was as they say "Wet under the Collar" as well as being naïve! Some of the girls? together with their snood-covered hair appeared to be like some of the rough characters from Dickens. I am doubtful whether I should repeat some of the things they said, although in this day and age (2008) anything goes. For the record, a couple of things which made my face go red and rush out of the factory were, "I would go to bed with you any time except you would probably go to sleep". Another not really

nice was a reference to the male reproductive organ! "Don't expect you know anything else to do with yours, except Pee!"

As they say, "Back to the Drawing Board". It was here that I did get the opportunity to draw up buildings and building equipment. I enjoyed my time there and it was only through the help and insistence of the Chief Building Draughtsman, Ray Best, who confirmed what my Mother had always insisted on - to get that "Piece of Paper". Ray pointed me in the right direction, got me started at the Northern Polytechnic and stressed the need to get a qualification. He said, "Never mind the money and what other boys of your age are earning, study and get that elusive qualification and you will soon catch up financially". Going into the Factory to measure up the machines, etc., was not one of the highlights; however when I helped draw up the Test Beds for the then unveiled Jet Engines, going out to our other factory at Hatfield Aerodrome was indeed a highlight. Especially so, as during one visit the first still secret Jet Engine powered plane touched down. "What no propellers!" One was so used to seeing propellers, so a plane without them was really scary!

As the junior, one of my responsibilities was to be in charge of the Stationery Cupboard, and also make sure that the supply of pencils, etc., didn't run out. One of the points which stick in my mind was the fact that before a new pencil was handed out; the old one had to be returned. Not only that but it was not replaced unless the old pencil had been worn down to less than an inch long! and could no longer be held properly!

This then was my **INDUSTRIAL** experience (plus a few more).

I left de Havilland in June 1946. The War was over and Private Architects were looking for Architectural Draughtsmen to carry out drawings for the rebuilding of war damaged houses, etc.

Before taking leave of the history of my time at de Havilland, there was one factor which does need recording. That was when I had my call-up papers for all things, the "**Coal Mines**". All able bodied men who were not engaged in the Forces, or working in an exempt job, were available to be part of Ernie Bevin's scheme to go down the Coal Mines. If you remember, my Mother had remarked (whilst I was leaning the Plastering Trade at School) that I would probably be cleaner working down a Coal Mine! The time had nearly come to prove her point! Fortunately for me I was in an exempt occupation deemed to be an essential service to the War Effort.

After the war had finished, I found that I could supplement my income by drawing up small building projects for neighbours and their friends. Obviously not big jobs which would have involved Engineers, but the plans were mainly for garages which were placed in the yard, against the side of the house. Whether I ever got paid a guinea for each project I don't know, probably Ten Shillings and Sixpence was the maximum. For the record, Architects in those days generally based their fees in Guineas (One Pound and One Shilling). There must have been a very good historical reason for that amount. Anyway, I carried on the

tradition, even in later years in New Zealand when I was doing Private jobs whilst working for the Ministry of Works and the Education Department. All "Above Board", as approval had to be applied for and given before such actions could take place! In the end, agreement was given on the basis that the more experience one had, the better would be your performance at your Full time job! always on the basis that it did not interfere with your day work.

I also learnt another lesson. Doing plans for these small additions, mainly for Builders who needed permits, was very interesting, but there were those who were not always too anxious to pay cash for your services. In one case my modest fee was paid by the means of a roll of Wilton Carpet, professed to be Cinema quality! Believe it or not, we never had a use for it in England and took it to NZ with us. It was laid for the first time many years later in 1959 in our bedroom of our first NZ House.

June 1946 to June 1947

I was appointed as a Chief Architectural Assistant to the practice of William Clark LRIBA, Architect, situated at Wigmore Street, London.

I had by now received my College of Preceptors Diploma, was made a Probationer of the RIBA and started the course at The Polytechnic School of Architecture, Surveying and Building, Regent Street, London.

It was also whilst at this office I celebrated my 21st Birthday.

During this period, I was engaged in drawing up plans and specifications for War Damaged Housing, new Housing Schemes and conversions. I also had control of four Assistants, three men and one girl. The premises were below the road and the only window opened onto a very narrow lightwell, complete with a grating up to the footpath! This office was really "the pits" and I believe that everyone who worked in those conditions suffered with poor eyesight. I hung a naked 150 watt bulb over my drawing board in order to see! During the time I spent with William Clark I received another one of "Life's Lessons". As mentioned, I had the exalted position of Chief Architectural Assistant in control of four Assistants. Well, these four assistants decided that they each deserved an increase in their salary. My own salary was probably in the region of £5 or £6, so I guess their wages were only £4 or less. Anyway they asked me to approach Mr. Clark on their behalf for an increase in their wages, which I duly did to the best of my ability. They were all elated when Mr. Clark announced that they would all get the rise that they requested. I was very pleased that I had been successful on their behalf, and I now looked forward to their continuing loyalty and plenty of work. However, there was a "downside" for me, as I received notice from Mr. Clark that whilst he had agreed to give my four Assistants an increase, he had in fact split my salary up between them! Consequently I should now look for another position elsewhere, my person being no longer required!.

As I said I had celebrated my 21st Birthday, and two members of staff had come to Stanmore to join in the celebrations. It was quite upsetting, the way things had turned out, as I had found them a very good team with great rapport.

June 1947 - October 1947

My next appointment was with Booth and Ledeboer, Architects, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, High Holborn.

The main office was in Oxford, where both David Booth and Judith Ledeboer spent the majority of their time. The Office in London was under the control of John Pinckhead, ARIBA, and I was engaged as an Architectural Assistant.

The work I carried out was basically drawing up in Layout "Working Drawings" format, based on sketch plans produced by Judith. At the time it seemed to me that she came into the London Office every other day with bundles of sketches for me to work out and draw up in finished form. I found out later that these were actually all Types of Houses for the Stevenage New Town Report. I also worked on drawing up three storey flats and houses. As you will have noticed I only stayed for five months. This was due to the fact that I was not getting any experience in writing Specifications, visiting Building Sites, Supervision or for

that matter completing the whole gambit of actually constructing anything.

At least the office was on an upper floor, with a much bigger light-well and another office block opposite, a definite improvement on the "Dungeon" under the road at my previous position. Notwithstanding my desire to leave after such a short time, in retrospect I did add to my experience and they were all very nice people.

October 1947 - October 1949

I joined the firm of Mabley, Bennett & Partners, in the position of Chief Architectural Assistant. The Partner (unnamed) was a Mr. Davis, who called himself a Surveyor, but actually spent most of his time in what he termed His Office. This was opposite our office on the other side of Weymouth Mews, not far from Portland Place, home of the RIBA and the BBC. By the way, opposite our office where Mr. Davis had his so called Office was the "Pub".

The Practice had some very influential and important Commercial clients, and some quite outstanding projects that I had the privilege to work on. I enjoyed working in this Office and I feel sure I was assisted in every way to progress in my professional career. It was there in fact that I passed my Intermediate RIBA Examination during my time with the firm in May 1949. Clients included Lilley & Skinners the Shoe people, Hazel, Watson and Viney, the Printers, etc. I was able to go to the

various Shoe Showrooms as well as to their Factory site at Ashby de la Zouch, which I found most interesting and I learnt about leather and how shoes were made. Visiting the Printing works at Aylsbury was also an experience.

Both Partners were very good Architects, and were most helpful. They set a high standard of both draughtmanship as well as design. Mr. Davis was what one would now call an Entrepreneur. Somehow I think it was his job to get the clients and entertain them! You will hear about Mr. Davies later. As well as the Industrial side of the practice, I worked on conversions of property into Flats, Laboratories, Canteens, Shops and Multi Storey Flats. I had control of two assistants, one of whom, Douglas Faulkner was also a Stamp Collector. I have mentioned my venture with him under Stamp Collecting. He actually left before me, going to the University at Durham to complete his Degree. His parents lived in Grosvenor Square, which I thought was rather posh!. The next time I saw him was in Toronto, Canada where he had his practice and he told me that he had worked on the design of their Sky Tower!!!

There was one very strange incident which happened whilst I worked there. We were on the ground floor and first floor offices and in the Basement was an (at first) unknown tenant. I often used to see various pieces of Radio equipment, etc., being delivered, but nobody appeared to be concerned at the time. Anyway as I mentioned Weymouth Mews is not far from the BBC and it turned out that the occupiers of our Basement were in fact Russian Spies!! They were collecting

information from the BBC transmitters, etc., with their clandestine operation.

However much one enjoys an office it is important to move on and get new and different experiences, so with everyone's blessing I made yet another move.

7 November 1949 - July 1951

I believe that with my next move I was given what was probably the best position and opportunity to learn about how Buildings should be planned and built and what Architecture was really all about. I was appointed Chief Architectural Assistant with George Fairweather, FRIBA, at his office at 28-30 Wigmore Street, where I received a starting salary of £8 per week. George Fairweather was in partnership with Furneaux Jordan, FRIBA, who actually spent most of his time at the Architectural Association. One of Mr. Fairweather's skills was his eye for detail and a practical approach to design details whether it was a piece of timber or other material. He contributed detailed drawings to several publications on Building Construction.

I consider that he was my Mentor for all my future professional work.

Although at that time I had only passed the Intermediate RIBA examination and made a Student RIBA, I was given control of three Assistants which included one who had already completed his

University Degree in Architecture. Fortunately I was able to provide the expertise that had been expected of me, and there was a most harmonious relationship at all times within the Office. Looking back I also realize how lucky I was, as Mr. Fairweather was also a Stamp Collector, and so after the day's work was over we had very informal discussions on Stamp Collecting.

As I have implied George Fairweather was a great Architect, one of the "Old School" but extremely fair and understanding to his staff. So much so that when commissions came into the Office to be allocated, he chose for himself all the awkward and difficult clients and the conversion jobs which needed a lot of client discussion.

This was something new to me and when I was handed a new proposed Primary School to design and construct from scratch, it was a privilege and a great opportunity.

It was in fact a great challenge, as the construction included a new construction technique using Precast Columns and Precast Beams to form the Portals to the Classrooms. The main problem was the method of joining the elements together at the eave. I was entrusted to carry out the Sketch Plans, Working Drawings and Specification, as well as the supervision! What an opportunity that really was, and I then knew that I wanted to specialize in Education Buildings for the rest of my career.

I also worked on Technical Schools, Showrooms and Offices. There was one particular job in the Office which seemed to take for ever before it was

finally resolved. It was for a Bank and the clients needed a redesign of the front Façade, changing the shape of the Windows and varying their number and spacing. Drawings would be sent to the client, they would be returned covered in revisions; this seemed to go on for weeks. At least, in the meantime, I seemed to have progressed very well on my school project.

Eventually a design for the Bank Façade was agreed on and work completed! What an exercise, and another lesson learnt. Architects are true Professionals and whatever it takes to do a job, it is done irrespective of the Fee. Most commissions are based on a sliding fee basis depending on the size, this being a Percentage of the Final cost. An Architect is not paid on a "Time basis" unless this has been agreed beforehand, but this would be the exception, not the norm. When you are on a percentage basis, the time you spend on the project has always to be the time required to provide the best solution to the problem. This is seldom understood by some people who like to think that because Architects are paid on a percentage basis they will make the job more expensive. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our main resolve is always to get the most economical solution, using materials that will last the longest, planning the use of spaces so that there is little "Waste Space" and circulation spaces are kept to a minimum.

I believe that Planning Spaces has been my forté during all my working life as an Architect. Detail is also another important part of any design, irrespective of the finer points of Architecture. In my

opinion, when inside or for that matter outside at close quarters, the eye can only see and the brain appreciate a minute part of the whole.

Through my training, when I go into any building the first things I see quite instinctively are those that are wrong!! Builders used to ask me why this was, and why didn't I see all the things that were right? A difficult question to answer, but as I tried to explain I automatically expected everything to be correct, therefore anything wrong immediately stood out!

I honestly believe that had I not worked for George Fairweather it would have been a great loss to my understanding of my chosen profession.

I will always remember the staff at this Office with great affection. The Secretary to all the Architectural staff, Elizabeth Grindley, and who had qualified, hailed from the Pottery of the same name. She was admired by everyone who met her, and in spite of her lameness, she was a tower of strength who more than pulled her weight in the Office. Geoffrey Cannon, who had been at the Polytechnic at the same time as me, but had passed his finals some two or three years before me, joined the team. Eventually, he and Eric Rheinburg had been made Partners of the Firm on the retirement of Furneaux Jordan, FRIBA, who by then was at the AA School of Architecture Full time. Later on I heard that they had both set up in Practice of their own in St. Albans. Although I tried to contact Geoffrey later when I visited England, both partners were on a project out of town. I also never again caught up with Elizabeth.

I was able to send George First Day Covers from New Zealand, and he kindly reciprocated with English First Day covers. In the November 1954, just before we left for NZ on Christmas Eve, George wrote, "I can't imagine why people want to leave this country, but it seems they do". On another occasion on the arrival of a First Day cover from NZ, he wrote, "Needless to say your thoughtful and real kindness in sending me such a handsome envelope warmed my heart no end".

You must have realized by now that I have very happy recollections of my time (just a mere 21 months) with this Office. What I didn't mention was that George was a true Scotsman, through and through, and my very friendly relationship with him was to be a very useful learning curve when I joined the Education Department in New Zealand.

As it has been said, "All good things come to an end eventually", but regardless of how you would like to carry on, to make progress you have little choice but to move on, especially when outside interests start influencing your life.

July 1951 - September 1952

It was time to get a position nearer home and to get some experience with Local Government. At this stage I also had other things on my mind, no less than getting married.

I was fortunate to be offered a position as an Architectural Assistant at our Local Authority, being the Harrow Borough Council, Engineers Department. This may appear strange being an Architect in an Engineers Department, but at the stage of Local Government, the Borough Engineer was THE Person in charge of Engineers, Architects and also the main Building task force. A most important position and in most cases, a very dominant figure both socially and within the Hierarchy.

Whilst serving my time with the Council, I was entrusted with designing, and preparing all the documentation and supervision of the construction of six "Aged Persons' Dwellings". I also carried out documentation for Flats, Bungalows, etc., including the preparation of Bills of Quantities. I had to look after four juniors. Towards the end of my stay, I was engaged once again with the maintenance of schools. This was a great opportunity to discover first hand what the Teachers thought about the amenities of their classrooms and I was soon able to write up a long list of their "Wants." Believe it or not one of their main grumbles was a lack of pin-up boards, although like everything to do with building work there is only a limited "Budget". I managed to quickly get pin-up boards supplied and fixed, which proved to be the solution to so much discontent. Whilst carrying out a survey at the

School at Stanmore, I heard over the radio that King George VI had died.
(February 1952)

It is a strange phenomenon but in every drawing office, the staff always waits for the arrival of the weekly Building Magazine or monthly Architects Journal, with the back page opened first. This was where the vacancies were listed, and it was really only just a check up to see how much was being offered for similar positions, and different locations. I can always remember looking out for vacancies at Esher in Surrey, the countryside appealed to me and I always imagined living there by a stream coming off the nearby River Thames. I even designed a house, which I imagined would suit our needs. From memory the main feature was a Solarium to attract the elusive English summer sun!

Wedding Bells were in the very near future so it was now a case of looking for a position somewhere where accommodation was provided, so applications were made to almost every Local Authority in and around London.

Interviews were attended, almost invariably with the Borough Engineer calling the shots! And then of course the long wait; nothing moves very fast in most Local Authorities Administration Division.

The Wedding Bells were rung on 13th September 1952

No news yet of a change of job, so after the wedding we were off to Guernsey, one of the English Channel Islands. Half way through our Honeymoon news came through that I had been offered a job at Thurrock-Grays Borough Council, complete with a new Council House!!!
Wow!

September 1952 - December 1954

This was to be my last position in England. However this was never my intention when I became a Grade VI Architectural Assistant at the Thurrock Urban District Council, Grays, Essex.

Whilst the thrill and excitement of moving into a new area and a new house is currently filling my mind, I shall deal with that part of our life elsewhere. I will concentrate here on recording my time at Thurrock and the events which changed our lives for ever - being our move to New Zealand on Christmas Eve 1954.

My new position was completely different from my job at Harrow, inasmuch the main work was the planning and design of completely new housing estates. This included houses for different sized families, as well as housing for retired pensioners. All had to be interspersed, complete with open spaces, roadways and footpaths not only for the streets but between them so that foot traffic was away from vehicles. Being engaged on this scale and complexity provided me with even more

"Hands On" experience. Designing, preparing Working Drawings, Specifications, Tender Documents and Supervision, including arranging "Opening Ceremonies by the Mayor, etc., were all part of a day's work. There were three assistants at lower grades than mine and one senior Architect. At that stage I had not sat my Final RIBA Exam, although work-wise I had far more practical experience than newly qualified Architects out of university. As I saw it, this was the biggest problem with Local Government; it was that "Bit of Paper" that counted which Mum had drilled in to me; nothing less and nothing more!! Actually I think this was the biggest grumble of all, and of course the same happens at Government level, where your Grade is your entrée into a better position or conversely keeps you stuck where you are.

It was whilst I was at Thurrock that I first learnt how to drive a car, my first and only lessons were with one of the assistants, Maurice Ellis, who had a small van. I must give him credit, because although I took the test at Hornchurch, where there was far more traffic than I had been used to at Grays, I passed first time!! I understand that it was quite an achievement in England. I never owned a car in England, but with my license I was able to hire one. (That too is another story)

Our Chief Architect left soon after my arrival, to take up a position at the Stevenage New Town Development, so it was left to me to run the ship for a while. Naturally I applied for the upgraded position, but without success! There is nothing worse than being overlooked for a position that you are confident that you can do. Anyway a new Chief was appointed,

Donald Crawford Lloyd from "Up North" and things went on almost as normal. I am afraid I could have done a little more to help him in his new job, but I was still thinking to myself that I should have got the job, especially as when I checked the RIBA Examination results I noticed he had only just taken the "Special" Final Exam in November/December 1952. His passing the "Special" Exam was quite significant in my opinion, as it was for ex-servicemen who were only required to do a two year course, which excluded the Design Portfolio and Thesis, etc.

Anyway things were to quickly change, because the Position of Chief Architect was again advertised and naturally both Don and I applied. Once again I was overlooked, but so was Don, much to his horror and probably at that time my glee! Notwithstanding our previous dislike of each other, with this turn of events we became great friends, and even today our families see each other, although at this moment I am afraid that Don is suffering from that dreadful condition of Alzheimers.

Earlier in my career when I worked for Mabley Bennett and Partners, Mr. Davis the Surveyor who was the "Silent" partner, contacted me. His request was true to form; he was now working on his own and wanted to practice as an Architect and wondered whether I had qualified and if so he would like me to be his "Sleeping Partner". Under the rules at that time, provided he was a member of another associated profession you were allowed to form a partnership, which then would have allowed him to practice as an Architect. Fortunately for me, although I would have

refused under any circumstance, I was able to say that I had not as yet passed my Final Exams.

However I did put Don in touch with him, and whilst I am not certain what sort of arrangement they made, I do know that Don did some work for him. I was also offered a job to design a very imposing "Georgian" House. I certainly accepted the project, firstly because it gave me a great opportunity to find out all about Georgian Architecture, and secondly I was to receive Three Shillings and Sixpence an hour for my drawings! Seeing that I had never ever had a Ten Pound note in my weekly wage packet, this extra to a newly-wed was like "Manna from Heaven". Actually it was quite an exciting time. Don and I would have to deliver the drawings to Mr. Davis in London, and this gave me an opportunity to drive Don's Ford Prefect car. We also had to go to London on business for the Council; we had to inspect some lime bricks which had been brought over from Holland as Ballast. I shall always remember the name of the ship, it was 'the Kitty'. Don teased his wife Joyce that we had been to London to meet Kitty, much to her concern, as Don was a bit of a "Ladies Man" but that too must be recorded elsewhere.

There is one episode which I cannot omit. But I must admit it is not one of my better parts in this history. It was soon after the appointment of the new Chief Architect, at the time when he was required to attend the official opening of one of our new types of Houses. The point of our later action was bought about by the fact that we, Don and I, had been involved with all the preparation of the house, and here was the new boy

on the block getting the invite, and both of us missing out! Our action or lack of it was most unprofessional, inasmuch as we didn't tell the Chief it was his job to hand over the keys. Whether it was our responsibility or not I am not quite sure, maybe it was Don's responsibility who was now my senior. Nevertheless I still feel that I should have done something.

So it was back to checking the vacancy columns once again, when suddenly I was aware that Don had applied for a job in New Zealand. The newly appointed New Zealand Ministry of Works, Government Architect, was in England looking for a team of about ten Architects to work under him on various projects throughout NZ with all travel and removal expenses paid for a three year contract.

Christmas was fast approaching, and this was becoming something of a problem, trying to please both our respective parents. So after a long discussion with Marion, it was decided that I should also apply for one of the positions. After all, it was only for three years with an increase in salary, as well as an opportunity to see the world.

I duly applied, had the interview and then the long wait. In the meantime, Don had heard that he had missed out, so it seemed doubtful that I would be offered a position. As it turned out, I was successful and accepted the offer, and sailed for NZ on Christmas Eve 1954.

The letter dated 12th October 1954, from the NZ Government Offices at 415 Strand, London, offered me the position of ARCHITECT, NZ Ministry of Works, at a commencing Annual salary of NZ£710 to a maximum of NZ£740, plus General Wage Increase of NZ£62 and 8 Shillings.

We both thought that we were Millionaires, as up to that time, I had never received a 10 Pound Note in my weekly wage packet

There was only one proviso. It was a requirement that I had passed the Professional Practice RIBA Examination before I reached NZ, otherwise my starting salary would only be NZ£680.

I had already sat the Professional Practice examination, in September, but did not receive the result that I had passed until 22nd November 1954, a month before we sailed.

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For the record, the four books which helped me most for the Professional Practice Examination were all written by H.B. Cresswell and published by Faber and Faber, 24 Russell Square, London.

**The Honeywood File**, **the Honeywood Settlement**, **Grig**, and **Grig in Retirement**. Not only did they help me then, but they have been my mentors ever since, and I have been able to follow the help and advice given to this very day. I am afraid they are all well and truly worn.

**The Honeywood File** (An adventure in building) is designed to engage aspirants to architectural practice with lively presentment of the adventures that await them (and how!).

**The Honeywood Settlement** describes the building of a house, and carries on the history to conclusion ten months later when the last defect has been remedied, the last dispute settled and the last account paid. The Architect involved is one James Spinlove, a young London architect, the client is Sir Leslie Brash, and the Builder is Grigblay.

**Grig** is the record kept by the Builder John Grigblay, based on his understanding of the building of Honeywood.

**Grig in Retirement** is a continuation of his recollections and he now enters into partnership with his son-in-law Arthur Ballard.

I can assure anyone who has access to any of the above books that they are going to have a great read, whether or not they intend to take up architecture or building. One of the peculiar things you will learn is the

fact that in those times an Architect would not present his account for professional services rendered to a Lord or Sir, unless so requested!

This appears to be the End of Book IV (i) Architecture UK.

19. 8 .2008

There are apparently at least two more books on Architecture in  
New Zealand

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