

You loved your last book...but what
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

An Ever Rolling Stream

Written by Don Snuggs

Published by Matador

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

AN EVER ROLLING STREAM

FROM THE CONVENTIONAL TO THE
UNCONVENTIONAL IN LIFE
(AND MEDICINE)

DON SNUGGS



Copyright © 2015 Don Snuggs

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form or by any means, with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.

Matador
9 Priory Business Park
Kibworth Beauchamp
Leicestershire LE8 0RX, UK
Tel: (+44) 116 279 2299
Fax: (+44) 116 279 2277
Email: books@troubador.co.uk
Web: www.troubador.co.uk/matador

ISBN 978-1784622-718

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset in Aldine by Troubador Publishing Ltd
Printed and bound in the UK by TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall



Matador is an imprint of Troubador Publishing Ltd



ALSO BY THE SAME AUTHOR

To Travel Hopefully

Twenty-two years in the RAF medical branch

Reuben the Fisherman

A tale of Roman occupied Palestine

Lydia's Dream

A Roman Lady who saw history made

CONTENTS

PART ONE	1
My Parents	3
Childhood Memories	8
Life at Westbury Infant School	12
The New World of the Grammar School	26
Life Gets Serious	38
The Real World	41
Getting to Grips with the Job	47
Postscript to Part One	53
 PART TWO	 57
Prologue	59
New Beginnings	61
Under New Leadership	67
Waking Up	78
A Student Again	84
Traditional Chinese Medicine	89
Interlude	96
Building a Practice	101
The Learning Curve Steepens	114
Life Gets Serious	125
Thinking Outside the Box	130
Getting the Message Across	138
Helping the Lost!	148
Getting to Grips with Routine	156
Day to Day Problems	174
The Door Closes But Another Opens	179
Postscript	190

To the memory of my parents

PART ONE



Time like an ever-rolling stream
bears all its sons away,
they fly forgotten as a dream
dies at the opening day.

Isaac Watts 1748

MY PARENTS

“What the policeman!” my father would explode when confronted with some inexplicable situation. This was the nearest that he, a very moral man, would ever come to using an expletive, and I have never before or since heard that phrase from any other person but himself, although in old age I occasionally use it myself, much to the amusement of my dear wife! It probably reflects in some measure the esteem in which that body of public servants were held at that time, compared with the attitude of the general public and media today. But from my father, never was a profanity allowed to cross his lips. His culture was always one in which good manners and exemplary behavior were the order of the day, and respect for his betters, irrespective of any situation in which he found himself.

He was a product of his time. The eldest son of a big family, he was born in 1903. His father, a general dealer and a pillar of the local Strict Baptist chapel whose outward sign of piety, in a rather stratified society, was that of shabby gentility and absolute respectability. His business was in a small Bedfordshire village, which had changed little over the years in size or attitudes. Suits were worn on a Sunday, and for Sunday only, observations of the Sabbath were rigidly implemented and the uniform for this was the suit, usually with a bowler hat. There was within the clan, as it were, a sense that ‘we are not like the others, we stand apart’, unless of course there was a good deal to be done, and at that point they joined the club!

Grandfather was a very conservative man; his whole life was guided by his principles and by prayer. I recall only one major thing about him other than his bushy moustache, very common in those days, and that was his total mistrust of doctors, and that after a period of severe abdominal pain he was diagnosed with cancer of the bowel and was told that unless he was operated on immediately he would die; he replied to the senior

surgeon, “Not before my time young man.”

At the top of the heap in the village, of course, was the squire; he was a churchman, he had to be. The Church of England in those days was the ‘Tory party at prayer’ and although the squire stood above the rest, he was viewed with suspicion by the working and labouring classes. However, it was to this august man that everyone went in times of trouble, and indeed we are told voted as he suggested they should at elections, thus keeping in with this rather anachronistic relict of the Middle Ages was a wise move.

The middle classes were beginning to emerge from this hierarchical arrangement: the doctor who was now better educated than his forbears over the centuries, free from mysticism and witchcraft, and although he could rarely prescribe anything better than a white or red medicine, wrapped in a cream coloured paper and sealed with red sealing wax, he was recognised as a wise man who attempted to smooth the path of the sick on their downhill journey; the parson who was now influenced by the Oxford movement, and did his best to bring to the old miserable services of the church a bit of colour and awe to his rambling sermons; the solicitor, who with the rise of a more compassionate society of would-be benefactors in the later part of Victoria’s reign, could to some extent understand the political and social turmoil which came with the end of the old queen’s reign, and the changes in society that would soon follow, culminating in the dreadful bloodletting of the First World War, with all its misery and pain.

My father died when I was fifteen in 1947. I therefore had little knowledge of him as anything other than an authoritarian figure, but he was thought of by all as a very good man, and my memories of him were unlike those of somebody who would know his parents into old age. Thus my memories are those of a teenager; but I have gradually changed the opinion I had of him then, with my experiences of life and all the many changes that come with the developments in society. I now view his memory with some degree of sympathy for the many artificial restrictions placed upon him that his background deemed necessary in those far off times, although by and large, they, and people of his ilk, rested content within those same restrictive practices.

He was educated in the village school, had a good knowledge of mathematics which served him well, he was a natural mechanic, wrote with

a well rounded hand, as most people of his generation had to, left school at fourteen, was apprenticed to a watchmaker, and towards the end of his comparatively short life, became a scientific instrument maker, at which trade he excelled. So he was very much a product of his upbringing with all its taboos and restrictions. He was not so far as I can recall a very demonstrative man, he was I believe a very just man, and inculcated in myself and my two brothers a great sense of justice, but he was not particularly aware of all that was happening in life, being a member of his church in which he held the post of deacon, which he felt separated him somewhat from those who held no faith at all. 'You don't want to have anything to do with that sort of thing' was often his advice, I'm sure he would have been appalled to think however that he consciously avoided contacts with others who did not share his beliefs and faith; it was a subconscious act brought about by his narrow upbringing as much as anything, and the times in which he lived, with limited communications apart from a battery radio of low range, and a newspaper which like any other even now gives the reader a slant on the news that is biased in favour of some faction. But it did not preclude him from having ambition for me and my two brothers, that we should get a job in an office. To him as a blue-collar worker, as it was known in those days, working in an office was the epitome of success, having little idea that there was a pecking order even in that!

He was hard working; he not only had a job in a shop in the town (he'd moved to Letchworth Garden City when he and Mother married in 1927), he had a small bench in the 'living room' as it was known, shielded from prying eyes by a wallpaper-covered screen which had a motif of blue flowers. The pattern always intrigued me as a child. Behind the screen he did private work, mending watches and clocks in what little time he had which was not taken up in church matters. This supplementary income in those recessionary times enabled us to live modestly, and allowed us a week by the sea once a year.

He was not a gardener, and just liked to keep the grass short at the front of the house so that it was tidy. The back, I recall, was left to fend for itself, and we kids did what we wanted in it without fear of retribution!

In his dress he was neat and tidy, shoes highly polished and shirt collars well starched, and always immaculately shaven. In fact looking back on him after all these years, he was the model respectable working man who

knew his place in society and was proud of it! Some little while ago I found among some old family papers a reference given to him by his employer before he left the shop, directed as many were to war work in 1939 in the factories. It described him as a man of impeccable character, and I believe he was just that.

He was not, unfortunately, endued with a great sense of humour, probably knocked out of him by his upbringing; he didn't tell jokes and preferred not to listen to them, but would occasionally smile at some of the antics that came with ITMA and Tommy Handley, which for some reason we were allowed to listen to when the radio battery was charged up enough.

But Mother was of different material, she had an impish sense of laughter and would make some very funny comments at times which were usually most perceptive. I always recall her telling me in confidence – 'and don't tell your father', she said – that as a child on her first day at school, she heard a boy refer to his bottom as his bum. Unfortunately when she went home that evening she used this term, and for her pains was threatened that she would have her mouth washed out with soap and water if she said it again. However the word stuck in her mind and she could not get it out of her system, so one day in sheer frustration she went down to the riverside where it was very quiet, and with nobody around shouted the word at the top of her voice until she was exhausted!

Mother was also from the same background, but from a city. She was the youngest daughter in a family of eight children. Her father was a businessman who was also a lay preacher in the Strict Baptist circuit. Quite well-to-do, they lived in a large town house of some three stories high in Luton, in which I can remember as a small child getting lost!

Mother had much the same type of upbringing as my father, but she had worked after she left school in a big drapery store in London and lived over the shop. She was very musical, not an attribute in the opinion of her parents, but she had a lovely soprano voice which had she been allowed adequate training would have taken her to unimagined heights in the music circles of the day; but as a woman, and as a member of the Strict Baptist chapel, she was expected to show no signs of elitism (this would have been designated as pride by the faithful), but to know her place and become a good wife and mother, and indeed she became just that!

She was always neatly dressed, and pictures of her in her youth show her to be an attractive young lady, an acceptable catch for any young man from the same background. My parents met because of their family membership of the chapel circuit. They were married in 1927 at the chapel in Luton which is still there, and I am told has a fair membership. They always used their faith to guide them in all decisions in their lives, and rested content within the limitations it set on them; proscriptive it may have been as I look at it from some eighty years on, but it gave direction to their lives and they rested spiritually comfortable within its enveloping arms.

So these were the two ordinary, but rather wonderfully content and hard working people, who gave me my being, and I'm sure that their influence has been the cause of my well fulfilled existence, giving me direction 'in all the changing scenes of life in trouble and in joy' and I think from Mother in particular, a great sense of humour, and I revere their memory.