



Phone A Friend

Talk on the phone
make up a story....

Round
Two

Phone a Friend began in April 2020 at the start of the national lockdown, with members of the Royal Exchange Elders programme. The project was designed for people who wanted to do something creative with another person, but who were facing barriers to taking part online or who were Zoomed out!

This pack contains the second round of stories created. The title **Chasing Butterflies** was offered as a stimulus, but participants were also free to follow their own story instincts.

The project was led by the Elders Leaders - graduates of the Elders Company who volunteer to support the Elders programme. Participants were partnered with an Elders Leader, who contacted them four times on the phone for a 30-minute call during a two-week period. During each call, the pair had a chat, caught up and explored some creative questions so that together they created a story.

This pack contains their stories...

Elders Leaders Donald McGregor, Dudley Newall, Glyn Treharne, Gordon Emerson, Graham Gillis, Jacque Long, Lorraine Reynolds and Sandy Parkinson.

Participants Anne Tober, Brenda Hickey, Charles McDermott, Elena Staniscia, Helen Browne, Judith Wood, Liz Aniteye, Norman Goodman and Pat Mckenzie.

CHASING BUTTERFLIES

By Anne and Sandy



As I approach the park and look down the hill, I can still see you, free, playing, chasing the crows away. "Shoo! We don't like crows." We were chatting, enjoying being out in the fresh air. The lake was sparkling in the sunshine. We loved the willow trees with their branches swaying lightly over the lake, leaves not quite touching the water, rustling gently, casting shadows; although not for us on that day. Then you suddenly decided to do handstands and cartwheels. There was so much space and with a hop and a skip there you went, one, two, three, no stopping in-between. So much energy, so much love of life, so much joy. I remember that, as we walked home together, I knew that I'd fallen in love with you, head- over - heels, although you didn't know and I was too shy to say.

Too shy to say that I, Andre, loved you, Anna, my beautiful, playful neighbour.

We got used to meeting up and going to the park. I always wore a bow tie and my much-treasured fob watch that I'd inherited from my granddad. You teased me because you thought that I was dressed too formally. One day we heard a rustling in the bushes; we stood quite still and a butterfly appeared and landed on your hand. After a moment it flew away, but then, amazingly, it came back again and again, just resting on your outstretched hand. You, my darling Anna, gleamed with happiness and said, "It's good luck, you know," and as it finally flew away you said, "Come on, let's go," and there we were, chasing butterflies.

We never caught them. The soldiers came for us instead.

We were all arrested from the same apartment block and taken to different camps - Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Ravensbruck. In a short space of time nearly everyone perished, including you, my darling Anna. I was one of the few who survived. I never got to tell you that I loved you, Anna, but I hope and pray and know that you know.

And all these years later, I've returned to our park, Wowule Park. The beautiful willow trees have grown. The lake still shimmers. My granddad's fob watch is long gone, confiscated, as were all valuables, on arrival at the concentration camp, but I'm still wearing bow ties. They remind me of butterflies. As I sit here, looking out over the park, I can hear your voice, teasing me, "Oh, Andre! Still dressing so formally!" And I can hear the crows calling in the distance.

They took so much; devastated our lives; but they will never take away my love for you, nor the memory of you chasing butterflies.





CHASING BUTTERFLIES

By Brenda and Don

I've acquired a beautiful new cloak today
It's colours are sublime.
I really don't want to take it off but,
I have it on borrowed time.

Two months if I am lucky, but
on that I will not pine
for my cloak of many colours
for a short time is all mine.

The sun is warm, the sky is blue,
I'm soaring in the trees,
I'm dancing all around the flowers,
I'm flying with the bees.

I'm such a social Flutterby
fields and gardens are my reserve,
I've eggs to lay to give to the world
a future you all deserve.

People wonder at my beauty
They smile as I pass by,
I'd stay and keep them happy
but I can't, I don't know why.

Do not fret, try not to miss me as
I shed my coloured cloak
I'm leaving you my offspring
Bringing beauty, bringing hope.

I'll never be allowed to live to a graceful old age. I've known since I was born that my life would be short lived. That is my destiny. If I'm lucky, I can live long enough to enjoy the wonders of our beautiful earth. As I frolic in the hedgerows, dance with

the wind, lift up my beauty to the rays of the warming sunshine, I know I will be searched out *because* of my beauty. Not like my friend the 'Mayfly' who has even less time to live than me, as the 'Mayfly' is *not* respected in the same way as I am. Oh yes! You smile as I go by. You oooh and aah in wonder as I silently brighten your day with my majestic presence. Yes, I am respected and revered for my beauty and my colours; beauty and colours which could bring about an even earlier death for me in order that they may be captured for all time. Not in a painting, not in a photo, or in film, yet, this could happen. *No!* My beauty, *will* be the death of me! It could bring about my murder – a stab through the heart so that my captor may preserve me for their entertainment and amusement. Why, *do* you humans feel the need to destroy the wonders of your world; *my* world? The miracle of life. Yes, all life! Yours *and mine!* Why? Because you can. Because I am a Butterfly. You are man.



CHASING BUTTERFLIES

By Charles and Dudley

In the latter part of the 19th century, the civic pride of Manchester was pricked by the numbers of slum dwellings in the industrial suburb known as Ancoats. Disease and overcrowding were rife. Housing provision for the working classes, so often neglected, became a priority, and this was seen by the wealthy councillors as a source of civic pride. The construction of the old Square in 1894 was one of the first manifestations of the city's efforts. Four stories in height, with gardens in the central quadrangle, the Dwellings, as they became known, were home to 848 men, women and children who daily toiled in the factories. The incessant noise of industry filled their lives.

Into this mass of people, two men met. Very different in character and background, but destined to be friends. Carlo Domenico Durante had worked in the mills, but soon left to work in his cousin's ice cream manufactory. Working hard, the cousins soon perfected the flavour of the vanilla ice cream they enjoyed in their youth. Carlo, who thought he had a better command of English, had developed a slight hesitation over his words, especially the letter 'd,' and so he became known as 'Cuddly Dudley.'

His friend was very different. Charles August Johnson, was a Scot by birth, but had moved to Manchester, where he was a supervisor at Ace Mill, where they made coats; good coats mind, that were sold in the finest shops in the country. Charles was seen as being quiet and reserved, hence 'Cheeky Charlie.' One evening, he stopped at Carlo's cart to buy an ice cream for his daughter, and chatted to him about the process of ice cream manufacture. The two foreigners soon became friends, sharing stories of their homelands as they chatted during the hot summer evenings, raising their voices to be heard over the dull roar of the mills.

'Your name, Charles. I will call you 'Cheeky Charlie, me, they call me Cuddly Dudley. Is that ok?'

'You know, Cuddly Dudley, we could do better than this,' Charles said one day, handing an ice cream to his daughter. 'I mean, do you want to sell ice cream all day – and in the winter, too?'

'No,' he replied. Back in Italy, I work in glass factory. Nice glass, Charlie. For, what you call, spectacles? Eye glasses?' He paused. 'You know?'

'Yes, I know. How many people need glasses in the flats, do you think? A lot! And they will sell better than ice cream, especially in the winter! Make some for my wife, so she can sew, and then we can see! Get the joke, Dud?'

Carlo returned to his flat, and got out his glass grinding machine, the one he brought from Liguria, Italy. He had bargained with Ronchielli for a small offcut of glass, and set to work.

Two weeks later, he returned to Charles. 'Look, see if they are ok. Then we talk.'

Several days later, the two men met again, this time with their wives. Charles' wife sported her new glasses. She dipped into her bag and brought out a small cloth, lettered and embroidered with 'Flowers of Scotland.' 'Notice the detail, the textures, the colour? Your glasses, Dud. Or should I say, Carlo?'

Sofia, Carlo's wife bent over to look. 'This is excellent quality.' Your glasses are good?'

'Of course. The thing is, other women on our floor have seen them, and they want to know who has done this. I've not said anything yet about you, Carlo, but...'

Charles looked at Carlo. 'Do you think we could do something here?'

Carlo turned to his wife. 'You said we might find a way? Shall we tell them?' She nodded.

'I make the glasses for people in the Dwellings. This is a lot of work. You, Charles, could meet people, take measurements, bring them to me. I make them, you return them. We split profits. Is that not your plan, Sofia?'

She nodded. 'Plus, Carlo – you said you could make goggles, glasses to protect eyes of foundry workers? To keep their eyes safe.'

'Si. Is also possible.'

Charles laughed. 'You know, I had thought about the goggles, too! But, what about your ice cream? It's very good'

'Right now, no-one wants ice cream. In the summer, sure. This is Manchester, Charlie, not Italy. There will be time to sell ice cream and make glasses. Besides, my cousin has better English now, it will not be a problem.'

The two men shook hands. The women embraced.

'How about an ice cream, Cheeky Charlie?'

'Excellent idea, Cuddly Dudley!'



I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT

By Elena and Glyn

Lytham St Annes, August 1938.

“Clarissa darling!”, Marina Lockwood was anxious to impart some gossip to an old schoolfriend. “Guess who I spied in the Blackpool Tower ballroom last night, and dancing with the prettiest young thing.”

Clarissa took the news badly, what no doubt had started out so innocently was about to become a major drama.

Alice Bottomly loves Blackpool, it is where she was born, and it is to her the best place to live. She even likes working in her parents’ fish and chip shop, but most of all she loves it because that’s where Ron Gregory lives. She has known Ron since nursery school and now at 17 and 18 respectively they are sweethearts. Ron with his dark curly hair and lean frame reminds Alice of crooner Dick Powell, and Ron, who works in a local café has ambitions to go into show business himself. Alice thinks she is the luckiest girl alive.

Freddie Lennox-Boyd has his life very much mapped out; his father has seen to that. He is a trainee accountant at a firm in Blackpool, but when fully qualified he will join Lennox-Boyd and Pennington, the Manchester accountancy firm that his father owns. The family home is in Lytham St. Annes, but Freddie spends a lot of his social life in Blackpool even though he is due to become engaged to Clarissa Pennington, the daughter of his father’s partner, Clarence, at Christmas. Freddie is only nineteen and he believes he needs to sow a few wild oats before he settles down.

“I wish I could dance like Ginger Rogers!”

It was Thursday night and Thursday night was dance night, and Alice as usual was not feeling confident.

“I’d rather dance with you than Ginger any day.” Ron was such a charmer, even so Alice still felt clumsy trying to follow her partner’s steps.

It was when Ron had excused himself to go to the Gents that Alice had felt a tap on her shoulder, she spun round to be greeted by a tall youth with the cheekiest of grins.

“May I be permitted to have the next dance with you?”

Alice didn't remember if she answered or not but the next minute, she was in this stranger's arms being led around the dance floor. When Ron walked back into the ballroom, he was amazed to see his girlfriend in another man's arms.

"The nerve of that bloke, I should have punched his lights out." Ron was still fuming.

"It was only a dance." Alice had never seen Ron so furious. She watched him as he strode angrily away after taking her home. That night the man who entered her dreams were not Ron but Freddie.

The next time Alice entered the Tower ballroom it wasn't with Ron but with her best friend Mavis Briggs. Mavis had heard all about Freddie and she did everything she could to encourage the romance.

News travels fast, bad news even faster.

"You need to sort that lad of yours out!" Clarence Pennington was not one to let things lie for long and he telephoned Frank Lennox-Boyd immediately to tell him about Freddie's indiscretions. Frank was quick to act and arranged Freddie's immediate transfer to his Manchester office hoping to put an end to Alice and Freddie's romance, but it didn't. Alice and Freddie began to meet up at the ballroom in secret once a week, Freddie told his parents he was down the pub with his old school friends, Alice told Ron she was with Mavis. When his parents reminded Freddie of his commitment to Clarissa, he felt trapped.

"Have you two thought of eloping?" Gladys Bottomly threw the suggestion at the young couple. The Bottomlys were eager for Freddie to become their son-in-law and wanted to move the romance along. Freddie was unsure about the move, but Alice was smitten and didn't want to lose him. The next day an eager Alice and a more diffident Freddie headed for the coach station with Alice's parents in tow.

Ron has heard rumours about Alice and Freddie, and he decided to confront her about it. Walking up to the Bottomly's Fish and Chip shop he found it all shuttered up.

"What's up love", Norah Bland, who ran the off-licence next door didn't miss a thing. "Looking for Alice, she's taken off on the coach to Scotland with her Mum and Dad, and that Freddie double barrel's gone with them, I'm taking care of the cat!"

Ron tried to take in all this information.

"If you ask me", Norah offered, "they'll be heading for Gretna Green!"

Ron fumbled through the telephone book. Pennington, Clarence. He was determined to see that Clarissa was in the picture.

Clarissa and Clarence Pennington arrived at Gretna Green first and on finding no sign of the runaways they booked into a local public house and waited.

"This is such a lovely adventure", Alice looked lovingly up at Freddie as they were travelling on the coach to Gretna Green.

"I'm not sure this is a good idea", the logical side of Freddie's brain was taking over.

"Don't have second thoughts now".

"I don't like the idea of deceiving my parents".

Alice screwed up her face, she didn't like the way that this conversation was going. She was about to say something when she found her body lurching forward and with that the coach came to a juddering halt.

They had broken down with two flat tyres and in the middle of nowhere.

Consequently, the Bottomlys and Freddie were left with nothing they could do except wait for alternative transport due the following day. A cold and sleepless night on the coach followed but they were nourished by the packed lunch that Gladys Bottomly had prepared for the journey. The unintentional break in the journey at least allowed Freddie time to reflect on his impulsive actions and his practical side started to take over. His relationship with his parents, who he loved, was now strained, but if he went through with the elopement, it would probably break down irrevocably. He needed to resolve the situation.

Two days later Alice received a letter from Freddie calling the whole thing off and telling her he will never see her again. A week later Alice and her family receive another letter announcing the engagement and imminent marriage of Clarissa and Freddie.

Blackpool, August 1939.

Alice has spent the last twelve months either in her room or at the cinema watching Hollywood musicals. She has vowed never to go dancing again. Mavis Briggs finally persuades her to change her mind.

"May I be permitted to have the next dance with you?"

Alice turned; it was Ron smiling at her and telling her he was so pleased that she was dancing again. Ron danced with Alice until the end of the evening.

He said "I've missed you so much! I would like you to be my dance partner next week and every week after that." He walked Alice home.

Alice thought about Ron's words and his beaming, smiley face. She remembered not only what wonderful dance partners they had been but also how kind he was and how happy they were when they were together. On reflection she realised how much Ron meant to her and she meant to dance with him and only him in future.

A year went by and Alice and Freddie's friendship blossomed. Ron proposed to Alice and she accepted. They couldn't have been happier. A date was set for their marriage. War was imminent and the world would probably change forever but for now all that mattered was that they would soon be together forever.



CHASING BUTTERFLIES

By Helen and Lorraine

Jocelyn was having a bad day. The children were bored and fretful. Entertaining three lively children during lockdown was a Kaleidoscope of trouble. Meta, Mor and Phosis were aged 13, 8 and 4 respectively. Meta was a real teenage Dolly with a White Letter Hairstreak that everyone admired. Mor was a typical lively boy, he could be as naughty as an Essex Skipper whilst Phosis, with her Mountain Ringlets was a proper little Madam.

The children began to argue amongst themselves and Jocelyn felt so cross that she started to flap and she found that once she started flapping, she couldn't stop. She flapped faster and faster and faster! Suddenly there was a rush of wind and the sky, which was normally a Common Blue, became a Dark Clouded Yellow and Jocelyn realised that her flapping had set off a hurricane which was swirling around them. The children began to scream then Mor spotted a telephone box spinning towards them and shouted, 'it's the Tardis!' Quickly they jumped aboard and saw Ria at the controls.

Ria had been in this story before and so she knew what to do. She was not too pleased to go through it all again and shouted at the children to calm down. Mor whispered to the others that she looked like an old Grizzled Skipper. "We have a difficult journey ahead if we are to stop the hurricane" said Ria. Jocelyn did her best to settle the children down and made them all a drink of Painted Lady, which was their favourite. "This is the real McCoy!", Commented Meta, as she sipped her juice. "Nothing but the best on the Tardis", said Ria.

Everyone felt hungry and so Jocelyn, who was a skilled Baker, found the kitchen and made an Eccleston cake from some Pod-Shaped Eggs which the children devoured greedily and then settled off to sleep in the on-board cabins. Jocelyn felt so exhausted that her head sank into the soft Caterpillow and she nodded off leaving Ria alone to navigate their passage across time.

The children woke early and peered excitedly out of the window to see an Orange Tip sky. Mor and Phosis began jumping about on the beds squealing. Jocelyn boomed, "For heavens sake! We have enough Chaos without you two being silly".

Meta told everyone to shush and pointed out the hurricane which was passing by the open window. "Hold tight everyone" said Ria "we are in the centre of the storm but don't be concerned, it will not harm you, it's only me pursuing something I'm not sure of". "Fair enough" said Meta, always one for a sardonic response.

Suddenly Mor piped up "Look at that man holding a packet of Utterly Butterly being whisked around in the wind. His blue jacket is waving about. He looks like a Peacock!" Just at that moment the Tardis began to descend and fell to earth with a bump. Phosis started to cry but soon stopped when the door opened to a beautiful garden and a tall, thin, Grayling looking man pulling up weeds. "Leonard!" cried Ria "is it really you?" and they embraced passionately in front of the red faced children. "Yuck Casanova, gross" muttered Meta in disgust.

A moment later, a packet of Utterly Butterly dropped out of the sky followed by the strange man who apologised profusely saying "I was just making 13 Queen Alexandra Birdwing sandwiches when a hurricane snatched me up into the air." There was a stunned silence, broken by Leonard, "May I introduce Horatio?" He said proudly, "He's an Admiral". "Are you Red or Blue?" enquired Meta. "I never discuss politics" replied Horatio with a wink.

Jocelyn began to feel anxious. "This is all my fault, if I hadn't got into such a flap the hurricane would not have happened." Phosis began to cry again but stopped in her tracks when, out of a Speckled Wood, Jodie appeared accompanied by her little dog. Phosis ran straight to the Canine and looked up beseechingly at her mother... "Don't ask" snapped Jocelyn.

"Who are you?, Leonard asked of the newcomer. "Yes" said Jodie mysteriously. Telling them all not to worry, she picked up a piece of Brimstone and hurled it at the hurricane. With a flash, a bang and a Silver Washed Fritillary, the hurricane expired with a sigh.

Jodie looked around at the astonished group. "Is this your garden Leonard?", "Yes ma-am, he stammered, "Its a Pert Wee thing isn't it?" Jodie snorted and turned to Horatio, "and do you work here?" "I'm a Tennant farmer my dear." he replied proudly. Jodie looked unimpressed, "Good grief. All Creatures Great and Small", she whispered under her breath.

“Well” she said, looking at the men, “We need to get this family home and I need my Tardis back. I’ve a Moth Ball to go to, any suggestions?” Horatio stood to attention and with a brisk salute offered to take them home in his Capaldi. “I have a Silver Spotted Skipper you know” he informed them. “Wow!” exclaimed Mor “Can I sit in the front?”.

So at the end of the day all was well, the hurricane was stopped in its tracks and never reached China. Jocelyn and the children travelled home in style. Horatio provided sandwiches for the journey. Ria and Leonard were reunited and Jodie (and her dog) went to the ball. And Jocelyn promised herself never to get her wings in a flap again.



CHASING BUTTERFLIES

By Judith with Gordon

Libby had always been scatty. Her Mum said she had butterflies in her head. Libby didn't really see it that way. Her thoughts flew so thick and fast that she was unable to grasp most of them before they disappeared. Occasionally, she would manage to hook on to the tail end as they sped off into the blue yonder. Her Mum would smile fondly, yet shake her head, so many things her daughter said and did reminded her of her younger self. Random statements jumped out of Libby's mouth, often at inappropriate moments. Mrs Moore knew, from her own experience, her daughter would have a hard time in the real world if this habit was not checked. Libby adored and idolised her Mum but did not comprehend what was, or was not, an appropriate moment and so did not worry about it. She was confident she would 'catch' something relevant before it fluttered, or sped, away. Although 'relevant' was not a word in her vocabulary or experience.

Often, when it rained, she would crouch on her cushion at the bottom of the stairs, behind the front door- which was open just a crack. In the Moore household this space was known as Libby's territory. Woe betide anyone who entered in; unless the house was actually on fire!

The harder it rained the more she loved it. She would watch the rain bouncing up off the concrete, beyond the porch. It seemed to be trying to return to the sky. The air was fresh. Her cheeks and the tip of her nose were damp and tingly. Her butterflies would roam freely. No longer indecisive and fluttery, they would dart and swoop with jet-like speed.

Other days, when the rain was a gentle misty patter, slowing to a steady drip...drip...drip... they would be sleepy and languorous. She could capture them whole. They were not flying anywhere. Their bodies were soft and flaccid, in pastels of pink, grey, beige. They were easily caught in this dreamy state, but had nothing to say! She would croon to them – coaxing their sleepy forms into words- which she scribbled in her secret book.

Mrs Moore ran a kindly, relaxed, and fairly tolerant household (except for good table manners, for which, she was a stickler). She was shy and ill at ease with the social mores of the '1950's perfect housewife'. She became increasingly nervous and worried when a visit from her, very formal, Aunt Maude was due. She was even

more jumpy about what might tumble out of Libby's mouth. Aunt Maude was of the 'children should be seen and not heard' posse, and never ceased to endlessly hold forth on the subject

On the day of the visit, in a brief respite from cleaning, polishing, and fishing out the Best China from the back of the cupboard, Mrs Moore fired out a whole list of Dos and Don'ts in Libby's direction. She had never seen her mother in such a state. Libby wondered if her Mum had been invaded overnight by Miss Pratt (her dreaded headmistress). She had no clue what it was all about and promptly forgot, as her butterflies were busy on other matters.

Aunt Maude duly arrived and seemed to glide in, as if on wheels. Libby saw a long, grey, buttoned up, tube of a person. The buttons seemed to start below where knees might be and end at a sharp bit, which might be a chin. Libby was fascinated. The afternoon was going well. Tea and cake had been served without incident and Mrs Moore began to relax.

Aunt Maude was mid lecture on her favourite subject, when, one of Libby's butterflies suddenly flew the coop - so fast that she was unable to catch it "Do your buttons pop off when you run?". Aunt Maude's mouth snapped shut. There was an icy silence only broken by the ticking of the front room clock which seemed, to Libby, much louder than usual. Mrs Moore hurriedly jumped into the breach with offers of more tea and cake, but to no avail. The visit came to an end shortly after and Aunt Maude departed with rather more jerking than gliding.

Libby received a severe dressing down from her distraught mother. She stomped into her space in a fearsome tantrum - puce in the face. Her butterflies fled to the farthest corners of her brain and could not be reached. Becoming frustrated and bored she cast around for something to do. She spotted a Daddy Longlegs sheltering from the rain, on the jamb of the open door. She began to tease it by prodding at its legs. It flew up and out into the sodden air. A bird swooped down and snapped it up. It was gone. Libby was shaken, mortified, filled with regret. A creature had died because of her meddling.

Libby's butterflies departed that day, en masse.

Decades went by, during which, the odd butterfly would make a tentative appearance, scouting out to see if more should return. Eventually the forays ceased altogether. Liz hardly noticed. She considered herself an important career woman now, with no time for idle daydreaming. Any lurking feelings that something

important was missing were quickly quashed and dismissed by the perceived urgency of every passing moment.

One day, whilst at work, Liz got a call from the Hospice asking her to come in, as her mother was near her time. She arrived, breathless, to see her Mum, lying flat, with her eyes closed. For a second she feared she was too late, but no, she was sleeping. Liz sat down by the side of the bed and tenderly studied her Mum's face. It was pale but peaceful. She was struck by how familiar, yet unfamiliar, it was. When had she taken the time to really look? When had she become the mother and her mother, the child?

Suddenly her Mum woke up and stared straight ahead at the end of the bed. She broke into a wide smile. "Look Libby a beautiful electric blue butterfly!" Liz stared and stared, screwed her eyes up and stared again. She saw nothing.

Her Mum, slowly, with effort, turned her head to look fully into Liz's face. "Don't forget your butterflies Libby - they make you who you are." Liz was astounded. "How do you know about my butterflies?" But her mother had gone back to sleep, still smiling. A short time later she died.

As Libby was handed a bag of her mothers belongings, a worn and well thumbed notebook fell out onto the floor. She squinted at the faded title " Butterflies " by Elizabeth Ann Moore. Age Eight and a Half. Her Mum had kept it all these years! Her Mum had kept it by her side in her last days! She was overwhelmed.

Libby just about made it through the front door of her home before she burst into floods of tears. She plonked down on the bottom stair and sobbed. Some time later; she wasn't exactly sure how long; as she dried her eyes, she noticed she had left the front door open. The sun had come out and to her astonishment the Buddleia bush was a medley of blazing colours. As she looked closer, she saw It was covered in a myriad of butterflies- some, strangely, out of season.

"Yes, I will welcome you back home" she vowed. She could have almost sworn- she was almost sure- she heard a strange little fluttering in the air. She grabbed a pen and a scrap of paper from the depths of her bag and began to write.....



IN A DIFFERENT WORLD

By Liz with Graham

It was a clear sunny morning and Grace was sitting on her favourite couch clutching a steaming cup of coffee, looking through the large picture window into her garden. The sky was unusually cloudless and she watched the birds and the bees and the multi coloured butterflies flitting from flower to flower. The radio was playing in the background. She had just retired from work and was wondering how she was going to deal with this new phase in her life. A song came on the radio, "I'm in a different World" by the Four Tops. She loved that old soul music and her mind wandered back over the decades to a smiling 18 year old in a bright summer frock, kissing goodbye to her folks, ready to board a plane at Kotoka International Airport, Accra.

She was travelling with her friend Cecilia, two bright eyed, willowy girls preparing to train as nurses in the UK. It was a first flight for both of them and they were bubbling over with excitement and youthful enthusiasm. They had come from happy homes and the peace and beauty of a calm seascape and a glorious daily sunrise and sunset were a given in their existence so far. They had such high hopes for their new lives.

The frantic scene at Heathrow came as a shock but they managed to make contact with the nursing people and they were escorted to stations in central London to continue their journeys. They were surprised to find themselves on different stations headed for different trains, Cecilia at King's Cross and Grace at Euston. They were destined for Huddersfield and Warrington respectively. On the large scale map of the UK it looked as if these two towns were next door to each other but the reality was a little different and it seemed unlikely that they would be seeing much of each other in the near future.

Arriving in Warrington, Grace was given her uniform and allocated a room in the Nurses' Home. Her reception, rather like the weather, was cool and the grey skies were reflected in the long corridors of her new surroundings. However, being the outgoing, happy go lucky character that she was, in her naivete she assumed that things would only get better. How wrong she was!

She excelled in the classroom but her reception on the wards was very different. Many of the patients had no compunction in declaring that they didn't want to be

treated by a black nurse even though they didn't consider themselves to be prejudiced in any way for some reason. On the bus she would often find that people chose not to sit next to her or move if she sat near them. Some of the student nurses were friendlier than others but she was rarely invited to join their expeditions or parties. She was often ignored or kept waiting in shops and although she loved her studies, life was pretty grim. She began to despair and even thought of returning home to Ghana.

And then, in bounced Marjorie, a 35 year old mature Scottish student who had married an Englishman. Their family was growing up and she had decided on a late career change in nursing. She immediately endeared herself to Grace and reminded her that there were still kind and decent people in the world. Despite, or perhaps because of, the age gap, they became firm friends. Grace was invited to share in parties and celebrations with Marjorie and her family both inside and outside her home, and she began to make friends beyond the realms of the hospital. Their lunches out and shopping trips into places like Southport gave them both much pleasure and they often found themselves giggling like schoolgirls. Marjorie's loyalty helped Grace to rise above the cruelty and indifference that she was subject to on an almost daily basis and she began to thrive in her life and her career.

So now, decades later, her children grown up and successful and her grandchildren embarking on the challenges, both great and small, which are part and parcel of all young lives, she was beginning to think more about how she could continue to contribute to society.

The soul music was still playing on the radio and the garden continued to be a hive of nature's activity. She reflected on how lucky she had been, despite all the setbacks and how rich her life had become. She rose from the couch, her empty coffee mug in her hand and bopped her way back to the kitchen. She could still throw a few dance moves to that wonderful music even though the hips didn't sway quite as freely as they had done in the 1970s.

She had arrived in the UK full of naïve hope as a young grub ready for her journey through life. The caterpillar stage had been less than easy but her strength and determination had enabled her to survive all of that and eventually the butterfly in all its glorious colours had emerged and soared off into the sky. There was still time left and she was going to use it wisely and well by continuing to help the community in any way she could.



GROWING UP

By Norman and Graham

At the age of nineteen Derek had so far found little about life to make him smile. He had been born in a small, run down mill town in North Lancashire. He was a late child and his two much older siblings had moved away years ago. His mother had recently died after a careworn life and an over reliance on 'the bottle'. She had suffered frequently at the hands of his bullying father and Derek had tried as best he could to keep the peace between them. After she had gone he'd given up on his dad completely.

His education had been minimal, in that he kept quiet in school and tried to avoid the bullying that went on because of his background and the indifference that the teaching staff had shown towards his plight. He took some comfort in nature and spent much of his childhood in the woods and moors near his home, just keeping out of the way at first. And then he began to develop his love for animals, birds and insects watching them grow from eggs, grubs, caterpillars into beautiful creatures with new lives.

With his lack of qualifications he had found it difficult to get a permanent job and the few temporary work placements he had been given had now all but disappeared. He received no advice or help from his father and so he decided to try his luck in the big city knowing that he wouldn't be missed at home.

So he packed all his worldly goods up in an old rucksack and set off to Manchester, hitch hiking to make his small supply of cash go as far as possible. His last lift dropped him off the motorway a few miles from the city centre and he completed the final stretch of his journey on foot in fine drizzle. He spent his first couple of nights in the city under an archway by Victoria Station wondering if his journey had been worth the effort.

Once he had found his bearings he tried to get a job but his homeless status made this very difficult and with no fixed address it was almost impossible to get any state benefits. He continued to sleep rough interspersed with the occasional night in a hostel or shelter. He made every effort to keep himself as clean as he could and although occasionally tempted, he steered clear of drugs and alcohol, remembering the mess that his parents had made of their lives and though initially not very street wise, his lifelong experience of dealing with bullying helped him to

weather the storm against the constant threat of violence and theft at the hands of the rougher, tougher and more desperate elements of the homeless community.

And then along comes 'Lockdown'. Suddenly he matters. He is found a bed in a hotel with his own room, clean sheets, a bathroom and regular meals. He knows it's only temporary but he starts to feel better about his cleaner, healthier self.

He'd met countless numbers of social workers from all branches during his short lifetime, mostly well meaning but generally ineffective. And then he met Terry who was somewhat different – young, male, interested and who seemed to think that he had something to offer – a whole new experience for Derek. Terry got him talking about his interest in nature, plants and animals and he really opened up to him, talking truthfully about his awful upbringing and general maltreatment in his life so far. He could feel himself emerging from his cocoon. Terry found him a regular place in a sort of halfway house in Moss Side which was easily within walking distance of the city centre. As his confidence grew, so did his prospects.

Although his visits to the Job Centre didn't initially bear much fruit Terry brought to mind an old contact at a nursery just outside the city centre. He took Derek along to meet the chap who ran it. Though not exactly in the countryside, its situation was sufficiently rural – close to the river and open fields in a part of the Green Belt adjacent to the city – to remind Derek of the areas where he had spent much of his childhood and early youth. He liked the idea of working outside with the soil, watching things grow from seeds and shoots and bringing in the birds and insects so necessary to their development.

His transparent enthusiasm instantly impressed Bill, the boss of the outfit and he offered Derek a trial for a couple of weeks to see if they were mutually suited. Bill and his wife Jenny had, a few years earlier and after a long and painful battle, lost a son to drug abuse and there was a huge gap in their lives.

Terry found Derek an old bike which he cleaned up and which transported him quickly and cheaply to his new work placement every day. Needless to say, Derek has taken to it like a duck to water. After only a few days it was clear to Bill that he was going to do well and so he offered him a permanent job. He also felt that as he and Jenny lived in what was now a big empty house they could give Derek a home. Whilst they couldn't replace the loss of their son they could help to make Derek's life a lot better than it had ever been before.

Derek now has a new family, he's made friends and has a healthy glow about him. He loves his job and meeting and advising the customers who come into the

nursery. In the autumn, thanks to Bill and Jenny, he's been signed up for a college course in horticulture for one day a week, a chance to grow in the future and fly high just like the butterflies he's always loved to watch.



CHASING BUTTERFLIES

By Pat with Jacquie

The bright yellow camper-van stood outside the row of terraced houses opposite the canal.

Covered in painted daisies it looked at home close to the traditionally decorated narrowboats, resplendent with their roses and castles, moored at the side of the canal.

A brightly dressed woman emerged from one of the houses, went round to the driver's door and unlocked it. Behind her a much younger woman, similarly dressed in a long patterned skirt, a white blouse, and with her dark hair tied back with a ribbon, walked slowly towards the van.

"Come on Joe," said Meg, "You'll enjoy it once you get there."

"Yes Mum." said Joe rather reluctantly.

They both climbed into the van. Meg started the engine, wound down the window, and hooted the horn for the benefit of a handful of boaters who were watching their departure. She waved cheerily, and then they were on their way.

It had taken Meg sometime to persuade her daughter to accompany her on this trip to Glastonbury. Joe was usually compliant, but the thought of the noise and crowds caused her so much anxiety that she had taken a lot of persuading. Meg was lively and outgoing, but Joe was the opposite, and her quiet disposition and reluctance to mix with people her own age was a concern to her Mother.

Meg had won the tickets at the Annual Raffle held by the Swizzels Sweet Factory where they both worked. It was the largest employer in New Mills, a pretty little town in the Peak District with the canal running through it. Meg had moved there when she managed to escape her marriage to Joe's bullying father, and she felt that they needed a complete change of scene.

The journey went smoothly enough, and on their approach to Glastonbury Meg decided to pull in at a garage and fill up with petrol, thinking to avoid any queues on the way back home.

While Meg filled up Joe got out and walked towards the kiosk ready to pay. Concentrating on getting her purse out of her bag as she approached the door, she missed the step and tripped, dropping the bag, and the contents spilled out onto the floor. As she bent down to retrieve them a quiet voice said,

"Let me help."

"Oh sorry, thank you, no need... really."

"Too late, here you are." He passed her some keys. Joe stood up and looked straight into the eyes of a young man.

"Oh!" she said staring.

"Oh?" he queried, and then smiled and continued in a soft voice, "The butterflies?"

"Well yes." she said regarding this dark young man and the lovely colourful butterflies tattooed up his arms and around his neck, all shown off by his skinny white vest.

"Don't worry I'm used to it!" He smiled at her. "I'm Soul... and... well what's this?" He picked a small book up off the floor, "Assertiveness Training. Interesting," and he passed it to her.

Hurriedly she took it off him and put it in her bag. He smiled at her and they both went into the kiosk to pay.

As they walked out together Joe noticed another yellow camper-van decorated with daisies and also butterflies, at a nearby pump.

"That must be yours," she said, "and there's ours. Snap!"

"Looks like we are both on our way to the Festival. See you there perhaps?"

"Yes perhaps" she took a deep breath, and before she could change her mind quickly said,

"I'm Joe, and I'm with my Mother."

He smiled goodbye and joined his friends in his van. Joe climbed back in beside Meg, who had been watching them with interest. She made no comment and they continued on their way.

They parked in their designated spot in the camper-van park and went off to explore the site. Returning later Joe saw a bright yellow van parked fairly close to theirs. A small crowd was gathered round it, and a strong smelling trickle of black smoke and steam was coming through the doors and windows. Several young men were carrying out rucksacks and putting them on the ground.

"Oh Mum that's Soul's van. The one from the petrol station, I recognise the butterflies."

"Soul?" queried Meg.

"Yes. He told me his name while we were waiting to pay."

Meg looked at Joe, slightly surprised, and said. "Let's check that they are OK."

"Just a small accident on the stove!" laughed Soul on enquiry, "No real damage done."

"I think we'll leave it to air and eat out tonight. Joe do you fancy joining me, we can go and listen to the Music on the main stage afterwards?"

Meg held her breath. Joe looked at her "Mum?"

"Go and have fun," said Meg.

Soul and Joe walked away together, and passing a rubbish bin Joe took a small book out of her bag and popped it in.

Soul looked at her and smiled, and she slipped her hand into his.

Epilogue

Monday morning and Meg and Joe were up bright and early. Not quite early enough though, as when they looked across to where the yellow van with the daisies and butterflies had been, it was gone.

Joe looked sadly at her Mother.

Meg said, "Don't go chasing butterflies as you can't always catch what is beautiful, just remember though that beauty also lies in yourself."

"I know that now." said Joe "But he did ask for my address."