

Do you remember me telling you about butterfly wings when I was working at Burroughs Machines? Well this is where they fluttered to. Bishop Skinner's job advert hadn't mentioned a Sensimatic, but at my interview I was asked if I knew how to use one. I casually mentioned I'd worked at Burroughs and quite honestly added that I'd used one whilst I was there. (It would've been rude to say it'd only been for 20 minutes wouldn't it?) Mentally crossing my fingers behind my back I pointed out that they'd have to show me their set-up. After all I did know that every one was different. I got the job. I was a fast learner and as they showed me their system, they taught me how to use this beastie properly. Even better than that, as I got to know the work I sussed out how to change the Stops on bars to make it all easier.

As well as banking and other stuff to do with money, my job at this Insurance Brokers was keeping track of policies from both the customers' and the insurance companies' sides. At the end of the financial year, a dark haired clerk from the accountant's came to our office to do the company audit. To get to the record cards easily, he was given a desk close to mine. By this time I knew the work but I didn't understand accounts. Seeing as this guy was young and tasty, it was no effort for me to chat him up and get him to explain it all. Guess what? By the end of his week there he'd taught me how to do double entry book-keeping.

Well that was me set up for the future as you'll see if you carry on reading my scribbles. The typing I'd learned at college meant I could do secretarial and PA work. That together with what I learned here, meant that over time I could, and did, turn my hand to anything that was needed in the offices of several different companies, eventually being in charge of accounts and personnel departments and finally starting my own business. But all that's in later entries.

Back to this one. Most break times were spent with Sylvie. We were the same age, had both recently got married and had the same sense of humour. She was a tiny bit taller than my lofty 5 foot 3½ inches - mustn't forget the half - I've shrunk since then so it was important. Our biggest difference was that her hair was short, straight and light brown whilst mine was longer, wavy and a lot darker.

Our office was in Covent Garden in London and my journey to and from work took me through the noisy hustle and bustle of the, then famous, fruit market. As I passed every day some of the friendly stall-holders stopped their loud calls of fruits and prices so they could chat, others called out "Hi" or wolf whistled.

The fruit market has moved from the area now and Covent Garden has completely changed. But in those days, boxes of oranges, apples, pears, tomatoes and loads of other colourful fruits were laid out on the stalls for customers to choose what they wanted to buy to resell in their own shops or local markets. The marketeers, who started at silly o'clock in the morning, knocked off about mid-day. So their day was finishing round about the time Sylvie and I went to lunch. Wanting to

clear as much stock as they could before packing up, some of them would 'accidentally on purpose' drop one piece of fruit on the pavement to bruise it so they could sell a whole tray to us as damaged goods. We often bought these at knock-down prices and shared out our 'spoils' when we got back to the office.

Although I was thrilled for Sylvie when she told me she was pregnant, I was jealous too as my husband and I had been trying for a baby for some time. We'd heard of a Harley Street doctor who'd helped several women to conceive so I made an appointment to see him, ages away at the end of his long waiting list. Guess what? Before the date arrived, I fell pregnant. (I'd probably relaxed when I stopped worrying about it.) So I cancelled and never went to see him.

Sylvie and I often went window shopping or to the sandwich bar at lunch times, but as our bumps got bigger, we kept getting asked if it was catching. It was funny at first but after a while the joke wore a bit thin. Eventually it got difficult to walk far so we started going to a local bar and listen to live music whilst we ate our food. One time my bump started dancing to a particularly lively song and we both got the giggles. As well as me feeling it from the inside, it was unmistakable. My baby was very definitely kicking in time to the beat.

Sylvie's due date was before mine so she left work before me. A few weeks later it was my turn to say goodbye. About a week after I'd left I had to go back to collect something. As it was difficult to park and I couldn't walk very far because I was so huge, my husband dropped me off outside the office then drove round the block aiming to pick me up a few minutes later.

Waddling from the car to the office door, I saw a friend from my college days. Older than me and working backstage at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Tony had been like a brother, worrying about me, buying me lunch and listening to my problems. After giving me a hug, with difficulty because of my enormous frontage, he held me at arms length and asked "Are you in trouble?" Even though it was years since I'd last seen him, I was touched that he still cared about me. I showed him my wedding ring and said we were really looking forward to our sprog's arrival. We didn't have mobile 'phones then otherwise I would've asked for his number. But I'd love to see him again, so if anyone reading this recognises him, please ask him to contact me.

After the birth of my daughter, my office working life took a break and my job for the next couple of years was being a housewife. So instead of a company name, the next entry is headed In the Family Way. Bye for now.

PS. For anyone who knows anything about Astrology, I was 21 when I started here so Saturn Square Saturn must've been around that time of my life. Maybe that's what helped me learn such a lot of new stuff.

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