

# **Lorraine Gradwell**

**Chronology, 0-30yrs**

**DRAFT**

**28 August 2017**

**for any amendments etc**

	Age	Events
		<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p><b>3</b> Polio, the Friarage hospital</p> <p><b>5</b> Back home</p> <p><b>8</b> Welburn Hall, boarding school</p> <p><b>13</b> Back to the Friarage</p> <p><b>15</b> Back home, St Mary's &amp; sports</p> <p><b>18</b> Mbro Art College</p> <p><b>20</b> Newcastle, placement year New Zealand, gold medal</p> <p><b>21</b> Manchester, Hollins College</p> <p><b>22</b> Ferryhill, factory, job 1</p> <p><b>23</b> Mbro Job Centre, job 2</p> <p><b>24</b> Back to Manchester, Married</p> <p><b>25</b> John born</p> <p><b>27</b> Jenny born</p> <p><b>30</b> Divorce starts</p>

Year	Age	Events
1953	0	<p>Lorraine Susan Mahoney born 24 July to Tom and Inga Mahoney (néé Blythman) at 3 Jefferson Street, North Ormesby, Mbro (at that time part of the North Riding of Yorkshire). Older brother Ian born in July 1951.</p> <p>L had one surviving grandparent, her Nana, Edith Blythman (néé Long), and two great-grandparents – George Earnest Finley (70 years old then) and Elizabeth Finley néé Southall (68 years old then), her father's grandparents. In the family they were called <i>Pop</i> and <i>Nana Pop</i>.</p>
1954	1	
1955	2	<p>L remembers following Ian, walking across pavement cracks which he said were bridges, her only memory of walking.</p>

1956	3	<p>Polio (infantile paralysis) in early July, following a measles infection which made L more susceptible to polio nerve damage. Spent her 3rd birthday in West Lane Isolation Hospital. L remembers her Nana looking in through a window.</p> <p><b>The Friarage</b></p> <p>Then transferred to the Friarage Hospital for 18 months.</p>
1957	4	
1958	5	<p>On 27 January <i>Nana Pop</i> died.</p> <p><b>Back home</b></p> <p>L Returned home. Weekly physio at Mbro General Hosp, which meant L missed the <i>Bill and Ben</i> children's TV programme on Wednesdays.</p> <p>Nov – brother Peter born.</p> <p>L remembers regularly visiting her Nana's house on Saturdays where</p>

		<p>she would have lemon curd sandwiches and read their cousin's comics, the racier Marvel compared with Bunty at home. Her house was triangular, short at the front with just enough room for the front door, and wider at the back.</p> <p>Home at Jefferson Street included coconut matting on the floors which L remembers felt scratchy on her legs. Carpets would come later.</p>
1959	6	<p><b>Home schooling</b></p> <p>Home taught by Mrs Crossman once or twice a week until 8½ years old.</p> <p>L had surgery at the Friarage hospital for 'knock knees'.</p> <p>L tells a local paper reporter in the 1970s that she learnt to swim with the British Polio Fellowship from</p>

		ages six to eight years.
1960	7	<p>On 21 April <i>Pop</i> dies, L's great grandfather.</p> <p>L went to Lourdes with Inga by train and ferry.</p> <p>The ferry was the <i>Paquebot SNCF Cote d'Azur</i>, and a postcard of the ship was posted home by Inga.</p> <p>L recalls the train across France to Lourdes, where L and her Mam had to sleep in different carriages, her Mam having to sleep upright in an ordinary seat. L's carriage had three bunk beds on both sides, each set of beds having a floor-to-ceiling pair of curtains. In the top bunk L would pull the curtains open only to find they would be moved closed again. Later L realised that a "grumpy older woman" in a lower bunk was pulling them closed each time.</p>

		<p>L also recalls she had “funny bread in her sandwich” for her breakfast, years later realising it was a ham croissant.</p> <p>Christmas outing for home-taught pupils to see <i>Tom Thumb</i> film.</p>
1961	8	<p>L started sewing clothes for her dolls, including a lookalike to Sindy.</p> <p>Around this time at Jefferson Street, L was in bed when she awoke, utterly convinced there was a lion sitting on the bottom of the bed. Nothing even years later would convince her otherwise!</p>
1962	9	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welburn Hall</b></p> <p>Feb - went to Welburn Hall boarding school, Kirkymoorside, the other side of the North Yorkshire Moors national park. Tom and Inga took turns to visit by various buses each fortnight (a</p>

journey of 33 miles which still takes over four hours by buses in 2017), plus comics and sweets sent weekly by post.

Mrs C didn't want L to go, but L did, hoping for some fun. L's induction at school showed she needed her right hip strengthening. The operation was done around two weeks later.

The school had a hydrotherapy pool (built while L was there), smaller than a swimming pool, but L was encouraged to learn sidestroke, the idea being it would help her in stretching to straighten her back. Hydrotherapy was timetabled for the same time every week so L was never taught history at the school because of a timetable clash.

The school was said to have had a resident ghost, the Grey Lady.

		c. Oct -Dec Nana died. This was when L was in a hospital near the school, the Adela Shaw Children's Orthopaedic Hospital, known to the school kids at "Kirkby Cowsheds" for its wooden buildings.
1963	10	<p>L had an operation for a pin in her ankle.</p> <p>A woman doctor from the hospital, possibly Dr Adamson, would visit Welburn Hall school to run a regular clinic and she would bring her dog, a small Spaniel, as an ice-breaker for the children she treated.</p> <p>There was also a school based within the Adela Shaw hospital and one of their teachers was a woman who was married to the headmaster of Welburn Hall school. She taught L to crochet.</p>

		<p>Winter – took the “11 Plus” parts one and two exams. Three pupils took the part one but only L went on to take the part two, which L recalls was in the office of the headmaster Mr Williams on very a cold snowy day beside a roaring fireplace.</p> <p>After passing this, L was bullied by some of the pupils, being called “professor” by them.</p>
1964	11	At some point L’s younger brother Peter might have fallen in the lily pond while visiting her at Welburn.
1965	12	Many years later, Ian described these times when L was absent from the family home for years at a time as “Lorraine was the ghost in the house.”

1966	13	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Friarage 2</b></p> <p>July - L left Welburn school and spent the next 2½ years in the Friarage hospital having her back straightened. L was on Ward 10, a mixed ward for children aged 5 to 16 years old. The surgeon was Mr Gilbert Parker, who came to watch the World Cup final on the ward TV on 30 July. L's first operation was in Sept but it wasn't a great success.</p> <p>Attempts were made to straighten L's back with full body plaster casts. The first one was from her hips to her neck, but leaving the arms and legs clear, where L was hung or dangled from a frame they put in on and it set. The first spinal fusion operation followed. When this didn't work a second cast was tried, this time covering her right arm and leg as</p>
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well but not up to the neck, and the trunk of the cast was periodically split half-open on the right hand side and a wedge added to try and force L's back to straighten. This lasted between 4 and 6 weeks.

There had been talk of a different surgeon operating on L, but he was based in a hospital in Beverley, near Hull. L had heard some horror stories about the operation from another girl, and it would be a long way from home, so he wasn't a preferred choice. Inga went to see Mr Parker to ask him to take L instead of having to go to Hull. He asked her why, to which Inga said, "Better the devil you know."

Mr Cooper was the male Sister-in-Charge for Ward 10 and L recalls he was a very kind and thoughtful

man. At Christmas he had the ward fully decorated, including lights, a pond and a fountain.

One girl on the ward was in a plaster cast bed, moulded to her shape like a sandwich above and below, where the bed would spin over so she could face up or down. Mr Cooper would let all the kids play as normal, so unaccompanied they would take her out on a trolley, going around and playing in the hospital grounds.

L's operations included a backbone fusion of lower vertebrae.

The first Christmas-time in the hospital L had not been able to go home. Approaching the second Christmas Mr Parker was on a ward round with staff visiting his patients and told L that she would again have to stay. Mr Cooper

		<p>hung back after the others moved on, making to tuck in the bed blankets, and quietly said to L, “Don't worry, we'll sort you out,” and she did go home that year.</p> <p>L was taught on the ward by Mrs Robertson from the age of 13 to 15½ , teaching her very well as L achieved 5x O levels within 5 months of leaving hospital.</p>
1967	14	<p>Had a <i>Monkees</i> birthday cake while in hospital.</p> <p>On one visit Inga carried Pip the family dog in a carrier bag to see L.</p>
1968	15	<p>Xmas – L left the Friarage hospital, went home, sat alone on the settee, thought “now what?”</p>

1969	16	<p><b>Local School and Sports Club</b></p> <p>Jan - started at St Mary's Convent girls grammar school, Mbro.</p> <p>Summer - Did 5x O levels.</p>
1970	17	<p>In sixth form. One more O level, economics.</p> <p>March - had her broken Harrington rods removed. Photo in hosp of six girls from school, with Ian and Keith Taylor visiting (this event?).</p> <p>L joins the <i>Teesside Disabled Sports Club</i>. At this time L had a taxi provided to get to and from school, sometimes giving a lift to her friend Janet who would walk the last stretch to her home four streets away. Terry drove the Social Services minibus with his mate Gerard in the front seat who attended the day centre.</p> <p>Terry and Gerard saw L and Janet being dropped off. Gerard fancied</p>

Janet, but not knowing where she lived he put a note through L's front door inviting them both to come on a Friday evening to the *Thorntree Community Centre* where the sports club met. L and Janet accepted the invitation, however Janet did so because she fancied Terry.

Des Taylor ran the sports club, and he was the father of Keith Taylor, a friend of L's older brother Ian. Des worked in the occupational therapy workshop at Mbro General Hospital, previously being a parachutist in the army and then a steel erector (steeplejack?) who had broken his back when he tripped backwards over a two-foot high wall.

The sports included wheelchair basketball, table-tennis, air pistol shooting, badminton, discus and

javelin. There was also archery - indoors at Eston sports centre, and outdoors at Prissick sports base and on fields next to the Longlands. Aged around 17, L was going out with Arthur and he would push her to the Longlands for archery. L recalls that when they broke up he joined the Salvation Army!

L was the treasurer of the sports club for a while. One of the fundraising events organised by Des Taylor was a weekend marathon table-tennis tournament in the offices of the local Gazette newspaper. Another typical club fundraiser was marathon wheelchair road self-pushes.

The club also organised weeks away at various regional and national games, and later on L met Neville Strowger and his mate Les

Gradwell during one at Wetherby.

L was entered by the club into competing at the Stoke Mandeville national games in a range of sports including bowls, track and swimming.

At one swimming event Maurice Galvin, the GB swimming coach, told Des Taylor to get L a swimming coach as she "had potential" and through the local *Jack Hatfield Sports* shop in Mbro Des found Arthur Daley who became L's coach. Arthur would eventually become the President of the Northern Amateur Swimming Association. L's usual swimming regime was Friday evenings, Saturdays, and Sunday lunchtimes.

L was accepted by the local art college for an Arts Foundation Course, but having heard a visiting

		speaker at the school she changed her choice to the Fashion Course.
1971	18	<p>There was a school trip for students taking French A level by train and hovercraft to Paris. Going from Dover, L said “Isn’t the sea calm!” to which a woman steward replied, “That’s the harbour, my dear”.</p> <p>The group had two coach drivers, one large, one small, who were very gentle and kind to them. Two particular things impressed the girls – when the drivers got out and bumped a car out of the way to get the coach down a narrow street; and a time when L was upset and one of the drivers comforted her in French.</p> <p>The teacher in Paris was Madame Bone, along with Mr Brown and a woman teacher from L’s own school.</p>

They stayed as guests in a boarding school for girls on the outskirts of Paris near Versailles. They were told how to tell any French boys “to keep their dirty paws off them – *Bas les pattes!*”

The routine was to have classes in the morning and trips out in the afternoon. These trips included two to the theatre to see their A level texts: *Tartuffe* by Molière at the Comedie Francaise, plus a play by Jean Anouilh. The access to the second theatre was not good and L had to sit front and centre. So when the good-looking male lead actor made his big speech it was straight to L – which made her friends very jealous.

There was a trip to Fontainbleu, and one to a fun fair near Versailles where L remembers evocatively a song that was played

		<p>there – <i>Tous les garçons et les filles</i>, by Françoise Hardy.</p> <p>Towards the end of the trip L spent two days in bed with an upset stomach.</p> <p>Returning, their departure from Calais was diverted due to rough seas so the coach from Paris went to Boulogne, and L remembers many school kids being sick on the return crossing, but not her.</p> <p>At the end of the trip, L found out from her friends that they had found the responsibility of “looking after the crip” to be too much – L said that hearing this was like “a kick in the teeth.”</p> <p>Did 3x A levels, French, Art, British Constitution, and the University English Entrance Exam for which she gained a distinction.</p> <p>Having finished her exams and left</p>
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school, L's great-auntie Florrie (her Dad's auntie) was visiting the house and said, "Well, she could get a job at the telephone exchange, a lot of cripples work there."

L got her first car, a blue noddy or "invalid trike" in the summer between sixth form and college.

### **Art College**

Started at Mbro Art College, 2-1-1 sandwich course, in an old Victorian school building in Stockton on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> floor, L climbing the stairs with callipers each day. Later the course transferred to an old Edwardian House and portacabins at the Linthorpe site.

One of the tailoring tutors was Mr Cassidy, a Jewish man who would place his tape measure over his head and have it hanging down

from his collar saying, “this always reminds me of your lot.” He would sit cross-legged on the cutting table and tell the novice students who had marked up a fabric for cutting, “my scissors know better than your chalk.”

In another class there was a group discussion on ‘ergonomic clothing’ and when asked for an example, one of the lads suggested “crotchless knickers.”

While at the art college L was going out with Barry, Gerard’s brother. He babysat for his sister every Monday and L would join him and they’d watch *Call My Bluff* on the TV together.

One time L was visiting Richard, a college friend, and had parked her noddy car outside. Barry had a ‘spare’ key (in that all these cars had the same key!) and when L

		went to leave she found a note inside the noddie from him saying, "I wish you came to see me so early and left so late." L was not impressed, and was annoyed with Barry for opening her car without asking. She broke up with him over this.
1972	19	<p>May – L won two or three gold medals (reports vary) for her slalom, and two silver medals for swimming in the National Paraplegic Games at Stoke Mandeville. Her arch-rival in sports was Dawn Jackson. Other sports meetings included the polio games in Newcastle, in Rochdale, and at Lodge Moor in Sheffield. As L said, these games were virtually every summer weekend.</p> <p>At Stoke Mandeville there was always a team of Durham Miners at the paraplegic games who had</p>

		<p>been injured in mining accidents. They taught L and her friend Sue to play the card game of seven card brag, but then refused to play them after L and Sue kept winning their money!</p> <p>Later, L would make Sue's wedding dress. When Sue asked what she would like as a gift in return, L said a camera.</p> <p>2 July – it was Ian's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and L and her brothers went to the pub (The Jovial Monk) before a party which their parents were organising. L remembers a long line of glasses of rum-and-blacks bought by various friends. After the party three of them ended up in a Chinese restaurant at 3am.</p>
1973	20	May – fundraising for the club, L was involved in a TDSC wheelchair self-push relay, from Mbro to Darlington on the A66, with her

picture with club mates in the local paper.

### **Newcastle**

Summer – for her ACI Part One L started her work year in Dumarsel Dresses, Dukes & Markus Ltd, in West Chirton, North Shields, Newcastle. She lived in a shared house at 9 Rokeby Terrace in Heaton, Newcastle, sharing with Janet White. Each flat in the terrace had its own front door, with a 12-inch step on the front path which L tackled each day in her manual wheelchair. Their landlord lived in the flat above.

During the power cuts due to strikes and a three-day working week the swimming pool in Mbro was only allowed to be heated to 58F (14C) but L didn't miss a session.

September – L is selected for the

GB team to go to the *Commonwealth Paraplegic Games* in New Zealand next year, again featured in the local paper. It will be the first time she has flown. Selections were normally done at the summer national games events but this year there was also a September weekend training camp afterwards to complete the GB squad selection. This was where L qualified.

Before a big swimming event L would calm herself by sitting ready on the poolside and with careful concentration pluck her eyebrows. If doing it messed with her opponents as well, so much the better.

One weekend club event was at the Weeton Barracks now used for training by the fire service, but then a base for the Cheshire

Regiment.

L would collect various ‘trophies’ on her travels around sports events, usually the towels that had been branded with the name of the local baths, ironically to try to prevent losses.

But perhaps her greatest trophy was a sweatshirt from the Cheshire Regiment. The risqué story was that a soldier volunteer at the Leyland Games dared her in a bar to swap her top for his. L agreed, knowing she had another top on underneath. He honoured the swap and then L complained that the sweatshirt was in poor condition, to which the soldier promised L a better replacement at the next year’s games, a promise he kept.

1974	21	<p><b>New Zealand</b></p> <p>13-19 January - swam etc in <i>Fourth Commonwealth Paraplegic Games</i>, Dunedin, New Zealand, won a <i>gold medal for wheelchair slalom</i>, and missed a medal for breaststroke in the Moana Pool by a tenth of a second. L was allocated athlete vest number 184 for the duration of the games.</p> <p>The firm L was working for in North Shields had a sister firm in New Zealand. The managers there came to meet L at the plane with flowers and there was a discussion about a possible placement or job there. They also offered to give her a tour around but she declined, thinking she would be expected to organise it, which she later realised would have been done by them.</p> <p>On the journey to New Zealand the plane stopped over to refuel in</p>
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Winnipeg, then a break in Los Angeles from 7 January during which there was a visit to Disneyland.

All the people's wheelchairs were unloaded from the hold and arranged on the tarmac, with people being lifted off the plane and being put randomly into the nearest empty wheelchair. Gerry Mills was the world champion heavyweight lifter and a very large man, and everyone else in the squad just hoped that Gerry didn't get put in their lightweight sports chair. Gerry's team mate Ralph Rowe was the world light heavyweight champion.

During their two-day stay there was four inches of rain, which they were told was "very unseasonable". A hit record at the time included the lyric, "*it never*

*rains in southern California,”* sung by Albert Hammond and later by the Mamas and the Papas.

From Los Angeles the plane completed the journey and landed in Auckland on 11 January, having touched down to refuel in Hawaii.

The athletes stayed in university halls of residence for the games, and then had four days with holiday trips around the South Island centred on Queenstown in the mountains – the Southern Alps – which L described to the local paper afterwards as “stunning”.

On these trips L and two other girls were allocated to a local bank manager who drove them around to see the sights.

On the way home there was an afternoon visiting the non-disabled Commonwealth Games in Christchurch.

May – L was in a 52-mile fundraising marathon wheelchair relay self-push from York to Mbro with an overnight stay part way.

Starting on 24 June the week-long National Paraplegic Games took place at Stoke Mandeville with over 300 athletes. This event was used to select the GB squad to take part in the international games the following month, and L was one of those selected.

24 July - L's 21st birthday was on a Wednesday at the Stoke Mandeville International Paraplegic Games. She swam that evening, being in lane 1 in event 1, and the PA system announcer gave L a cheerful “Happy Birthday”.

It was common for the athletes to rest on their beds in the huts each afternoon, but this time L didn't notice the room slowly getting

more crowded until her friend Hazel Terry brought in a birthday cake to cheers.

L was due to train each day so was expected to be in bed by 9pm by order of Maurice Galvin, an officer in the Liverpool police force in Huyton and the GB swimming coach. He reluctantly let her miss the 9pm call when Gerry Mills protested, but he ordered her out of the beer tent at 9.30pm. However, a friend was sent to her dormitory with a big lemonade bottle full of brandy and lemonade to continue the celebrating.

L had a second party at home on her return, but by now Ian was away in Papua New Guinea as a VSO volunteer; and then she had a small third party in Newcastle.

September- L got a kiss from the famous boxer Joe Bugner at a

prize-giving ceremony. Although Henry Cooper had kissed the female medal winners the previous day, Joe was shaking everyone's hand as they went up in turn. L's friend Hazel said, "you won't get a kiss from Joe" and L replied, "I bet I do." When L's turn came, as Joe leaned in to shake her hand she said quietly, "Henry Cooper gave me a kiss yesterday", at which Joe did the same, to the surprise of her friends. This was at the British Polio Fellowship national sports event where L won three firsts, a second and a fourth place.

### **Manchester**

September – L started final year at "Hollins College", Mcr (later part of MMU), lived in Didsbury in flat-share with her friends Richard and Maureen, who by now were

married. L had lent Richard the money for his first date with Maureen, who worked in a bank.

Richard was on the same course as L along with another friend John, and they chose their optional lectures so that they could finish their week on Thursdays at lunchtime. The afternoon was lunch at the Royal Oak pub in Didsbury while the clothes were washing at the launderette, followed by shopping, leaving three clear days for every weekend.

L swam every week while in Mcr at a pool, possibly at Withington Girls School, in a pre-fabricated type of building not far from the college.

L would give Richard a lift to college in her noddy car. There was only one seat and passengers

weren't allowed, so he had to lie down on the floor. The worst part was, he said, when a bus pulled alongside and the passengers could all look down at you.

L would also let Richard drive the noddy car at weekends if she was away. Another friend on the course, John, came from Stockton and would give her a lift home in his car, which was easier than driving the noddy car long distances.

L did not like the selection process for swimming used by the British Polio Fellowship for their national games. Basically, every competitor submitted three recent time results from swimming events, and the BPF selectors put people into their events based only on competitors having had similar times previously. L felt this

		<p>simple approach took no account of her extra effort in hard training.</p> <p>The BPF also insisted in a non-disabled swimmer being in the same lane as each competitor. Again, L didn't agree with this and would tell the person allocated to stay at least a yard behind and not to come any nearer.</p> <p>L also recalls at the Paraplegic Games a woman swimmer from Northern Ireland who was hearing impaired, who told L about the way the officials tapped her head to tell her to start. "I can feel the vibration from the starting pistol, but I don't like to tell the officials!"</p>
1975	22	<p>Summer - exams, Associateship of the Clothing Institute Part Two, then returned to live in Mbro.</p> <p>Starting on 26 July the "Paraplegic Olympics" were held at Stoke Mandeville, opened by Sir Ludwig</p>

Guttmann. Apparently he got in trouble for using the Olympic brand, this was before the Paralympics became established. There were 34 nations competing that year, including a team from South Africa.

One weekend away at a sports event was in Edinburgh and L drove herself there and back in her noddy car. On the return she broke down near Gateshead having burnt through the exhaust. She managed to get to a garage, where the mechanic came back with the largest spanner she had ever seen, disappeared underneath the car and returned upright with the exhaust. He handed it through the window. “Will it be OK for getting home?” L asked. “Yes, but keep the windows open,” he replied.

The swimming pool in Edinburgh was a salt-water pool, which makes people more buoyant than in fresh water, and as a result L did her best swimming times there.

Other sports weekends took place at Hexham, and at the Bath and West county show in Shepton Mallet. On the way to the latter L had been in London visiting her friend Hazel, which included a visit to London Zoo where *Guy the Gorilla* took a great interest in L's wheelchair.

While at the Bath and West, L wanted to get some local scrumpy (illicit cider) and was taken to a nearby farm. In the barn where three massive kegs, six feet high, each with a different years' 'vintage'. She bought a bottle and took it home, but her Dad had a tiny taste and then poured the rest

down the sink, calling it “poison.”

### **Working at Ferryhill**

In August L started job at the Ferryhill Manufacturing Co. Ltd on Dean Bank, where she worked for nearly two years, commuting from Mbro.

L met up with Neville again at a sports event after finishing her year in Mcr. He lived thereabouts and had told L to look him up while she was there. He said, “I thought you were coming to Mcr?” “I’ve been,” she replied.

L worked at Ferryhill sometimes on rotation between different departments, but most of the time she was in the Production Office. They were very early users of mechanical calculators, green, and the size of typewriters, which L used with her left hand so that she

could write at the same time.

The managing director was Mr Leonard.

One time L was one of three people in the production office team who were testing out a new production monitoring method in the factory. There was a problem and Mr Leonard phoned L to find out what was going on. His phone was on speakerphone with others listening in. Some of the numbers were wrong, he said, and L corrected him. A woman in the office with him told L later that his face was getting more and more perplexed and annoyed as L kept speaking, up to the point when he saw the point that L was making and fully agreed with her. Apparently they all thought young L had some gumption talking to

him like that!

The factory had two satellite units, one in Sacriston, Durham, and one further away in Yorkshire. This was the time of the Yorkshire Ripper and the woman staff would seriously wonder if it was one of the travelling managers.

There were seven sewing production lines in the factory, two were full-time from 8am to 5pm and five were run during 'school hours,' though during school holidays as well. The works included a crèche and canteen, and L later felt that employment practices had generally regressed after this time. She found no discrimination against her there, and first found it later while in the public sector working at a job centre and was refused promotion

because of “mobility issues.”

The factory had a lot of contracts with Marks and Spencer, shipping velvet jackets “by the wagonload” according to L. Any garments that did not meet their quality standards, eg at least ten stitches per inch, were sold instead to the catalogue companies.

Two of the oldest employees were Mr Hunter and Mr Ridley. The latter had a lot of experience in costings and tried to pass his knowledge on to L, but too much of it was various rules of thumb, too obscure to be learnt. Mr Hunter was rumoured to be sweet on one of the canteen workers who took him his dinner each day to his office, closing the door.

L had a friend there, Philip, who

		<p>had done the same course as her at art college but a few years after her.</p> <p>Each Christmas Mr Leonard would personally give every member of staff a frozen turkey. L recalls Doreen, one of the supervisors, collecting hers and with a loud voice for all to hear saying, "Mr Leonard, it makes my Christmas to see you standing there with your cold cock in your hand!"</p>
1976	23	<p>L first met Les Gradwell at the Wetherby games and show.</p> <p>Les's friend Neville fancied L's friend Teresa, so during the games roughly every hour free drinks would be brought over to both L and Teresa compliments of Neville.</p> <p>One of L's mates was Joe, who had both of his legs amputated in</p>

a railway yard accident. Joe liked his drink and as usual was blotto, so they had to find a way to take him along as well as carry all their own stuff.

When they were going home Les was roped in to help with this, and they realised that Joe could sit on the back seat and two wheelchairs could go in the leg spaces he didn't need.

L was impressed with how considerate Les was with people. He was driving a social services minibus, probably unofficially, and had Anne Miller in her wheelchair in the back "looking like the Queen" said L with all her fleeces and so forth. At the time Anne was living with Neville in Sale, south Manchester.

L recalls that Teresa was called "Mouse" by Neville, possibly the

first time he had used what became his lifelong term of endearment for his women friends.

L bought her first “real” car, a DAF, and passed her driving test after six lessons. It was bottle green, her favourite colour. It had been Richard's suggestion to buy it, for which she got a bank loan of £600. L faced some ridicule for her choice of car, it being called her “sewing machine,” but it had a variable belt drive which worked as automatic gearing.

The four friends - L, Teresa, Les and Neville - took a camping holiday in Scotland, the song in the charts being Dr Hook's *A Little Bit More*.

One time while L was working at Ferryhill she drove to Mcr for a weekend, but broke down in the

		outside fast lane on the motorway bridge at Barton, now the M60 high level bridge near the Trafford Centre. A van of workmen stopped to help, towing her safely off the motorway and taking her to a phone box.
1977	24	<p><b>Back to Middlesbrough</b></p> <p>By April L was getting fed up with commuting 25 miles each way to Ferryhill, and so went into the Mbro Job Centre to ask about the Professional and Executive Register.</p> <p>L had been offered a bungalow in Sedgefield but didn't really want to live on her own.</p> <p>And then, during the interview they asked her if she had ever considered working for the civil service, as they had a vacancy!</p> <p>She started there as an</p>

Administrative Assistant to two Executive Officers, Steve and Dave who were good mates, whose work was with long-term unemployed people. As L says, they were nothing like the typical civil servant today. They did tell her that they were instructed to 'back off' in any interview as soon as anyone mentioned self-harm.

Getting to work was also easy enough, as L could park on the main road outside all day. The work involved typing, filing and checking people against their record cards, work that L described as very boring.

L also noted a big cultural difference from her time at the clothing factory. In the factory, if anything went wrong the question was, who was responsible? In the civil service it was, let's find the

solution. L says she didn't understand this!

Later on, L put in for promotion within the Civil Service and passed the relevant exams at a centre in Newcastle, but was refused by a panel. They said to her that she could not rise above the 'mobility bar' because of her impairment. She said, "I've been to New Zealand, how much further do you expect me to go!"

L became pregnant and the marriage date was set with Les. One of the women working at the job centre made the two beautiful headbands for L and her younger brother's girlfriend Liz.

People at the job centre talked with Lorraine about returning to work after her maternity leave, but this time at another job centre in the Arndale building at

		<p>Stretford, Manchester near her new home. Les worked in the same building and her colleagues were very impressed when he produced an access survey of the Stretford office for them within two hours of being asked.</p>
1978	25	<p><b>Manchester, 2</b></p> <p>On 13 May L married Les Gradwell and moved to Mcr, living in a bungalow in Flixton at 17 Kingston Drive which Les renovated. The honeymoon was in Criccieth, North Wales, including the Black Rock beach. The first night was a stop-over at the Station Hotel in York.</p> <p>L had three DAFs in all, the third being a red one which she and Les used on their marriage day. Des Taylor had a daughter, also called Lorraine, who did L's hair on the wedding morning.</p>

		<p>After the move to Mcr L was told again there was a job for her at Stretford job centre if she wanted it, but she decided to stop working for childcare reasons.</p> <p>John was born in September by C section at Trafford General Hospital. L had to be given oxygen to come out of anaesthetic.</p> <p>In the next bed on the ward was Maureen Keyes who was having twins and she and L became best friends. Maureen's sister Maggie was also at the hospital training as a nurse, who also became a best friend as well.</p> <p>L joined the Manchester Disabled Athletes club (MDA) the year she moved to Mcr.</p>
1979	26	The red DAF was written off in an accident while parked outside their bungalow on Kingston Drive.

		<p>A minibus driver had lost control when a bottle had rolled forward and jammed underneath the brake pedal. Les heard the crash and, looking out the window, said to L, “That's <i>your</i> car written off then”. Not <i>our</i> car, she noticed.</p> <p>L went to the summer games at Stoke Mandeville for the last time as a competitor, though with a young baby she hadn't been training. She went with John, Les, Inga and Tom all in one car with a trailer and they stayed at a B&amp;B seven miles away in Haddenham..</p>
1980	27	<p>One of L's health visitors had spent some time in India and noticed how women carried babies in front or behind them wrapped in a shawl. L adapted a Mothercare sling in a similar fashion and would carry John in her sling from the bungalow to a playgroup on the</p>

other side of the main road. There was no safe crossing point and a campaign for a Pelican crossing was rejected by the Council. A zebra crossing was added some years later.

On 22 September it was the annual general meeting of the Manchester Disabled Athletes club. L is a member, seconding the AGM minutes from 1979 and being elected as club secretary for 1980, a position she kept in 1981 and a club she stayed involved with until its winding up in 2016.

Between John and Jenny being born L went to a night class on painting on plain white china, held at the TAVR centre at the other end of Chassen Road. The tutor would fire the work of the students between classes.

L found she liked doing this, and

her brother Ian bought her an electric kiln, an octagonal tower shape in stainless steel with a red power unit and movable firing bricks inside to support the various shapes of painted china being fired at 1,300C. It probably cost around £600 at the time.

L's china painting included items like vases and brooches as well as tea sets. One particular tea set had a delicate ivy design which L would display at china parties in people's homes to showcase her work, taking orders. She also painted Mother's Day and Father's Day wall plates for her parents and a deep blue china egg for her mother.

L would buy her supplies of plain white china from a shop on the main road in the High Lane area near Lyme Park in Stockport, going

		with a woman friend she met at the class. Her friend was the only other student in the class around her age, also having a young son around John's age. She later moved to Colchester.
1981	28	<p>They moved house but just a short distance, two streets away to 11 Southgate.</p> <p>Jenny born, also at Trafford General Hospital. Short stay of around two weeks in Trafford General Hospital while pregnant due to high blood pressure, given tranquillisers. They had no impact on L but unfortunately a very strong impact on baby Jenny who was having trouble breathing and was rushed in a blue-light ambulance with police motorbikes to St Mary's Children's Hospital, Mcr, returning to TGH five days later to be reunited with L.</p>

Inga visited Jenny while she was at St Mary's and remarked how most of the babies in incubators were so tiny, and then ... there was Jenny, so large by comparison!

Before Jenny returned, L developed an infection in hospital. First she had a high temperature and the medics knew something was wrong, but not where it was. Then one morning L awoke to find everything wet and hearing water dripping on the floor from her C section scar. "Well, at least we know what it is now," said one of the nurses.

The infection was very deep and so the scar cavity had to be washed and repacked every day. L described it as "like seeing a conjuror pulling many ribbons out of a top hat." This routine continued each day when L

returned home, and as the 'hole' grew less and less L was able to unpack and bath herself ready for the nurse to arrive and repack.

This time was also the royal marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana, and as part of the celebrations each cot was decorated with red, white and blue pom-poms. L kept Jenny's for many years.

L's friend Maggie was still working at TGH and said that she would know that L had been admitted because the only copy of *The Guardian* newspaper would be missing from the sales trolley by the time it got to Maggie.

The same month that L was in hospital with Jenny's birth the MDA club was hitting the national headlines. Another club swimmer, Bernard Leach, had withdrawn

from the International Paraplegic Games in an anti-apartheid protest against the games choosing to include a team from South Africa. MDA and others were picketing the games, to the annoyance of the front page of the Daily Mail and other papers.

On 30 October L was re-elected as MDA secretary at the AGM and gave a written report, including accounts of a BBC TV production to be called “Unlucky for Some”, an idea which was abandoned half-way through filming having caused ructions within the MDA committee including the resignation of two members.

One of these annoyed members was Joan Willis, known to her friends as “Joan the Moan.” The BBC producers had worked on her, telling her how nice she looked on

		<p>camera in the pool “with the drops of water on her face.”</p> <p>Joan and her teenage daughter Jackie lived nearby in Urmston and were good friends with Lorraine, and they spent a lot of time together when the children were small.</p> <p>One time L, Joan, and Jackie were going along the pavement with Jackie carrying one of L’s babies. Suddenly Joan started laughing loudly and L asked what was funny. “I can just imagine anyone looking at us all and wondering just whose baby that actually is!”</p>
1982	29	<p>Another time the four of them went to see the film <i>ET</i> showing at the <i>Deansgate Picture House</i> in central Mcr, now the <i>Moon Under The Water</i> pub.</p> <p>As Jenny grew and John started walking L bought a carry-cot which</p>

		<p>had a detachable wheeled frame like a pram.</p> <p>On 29 November MDA members were at a Basketball Tournament at Stoke Mandeville.</p>
1983	30	<p>L started divorce proceedings probably in 1983 or early 1984, first with nine months at Marriage Guidance while Chris from next door babysat. L said she appreciated the counselling because it validated her feelings and made her more confident. Her brother Ian came to Mcr also trying to mediate.</p> <p>L also noticed that going to sports events at the Stoke Mandeville stadium now included staying in proper, purpose-built overnight accommodation for the athletes rather than the old army huts.</p> <p>By now her car was a A-registration Ford Escort in metallic dark green,</p>

probably her first Motability car. She had a car seat in the back for John, then would put Jenny in her carry-cot on the back seat as well, put the carry-cot frame in the car, then would slide onto the front passenger seat, fold and half load the wheelchair behind the seat, transfer to the driving seat, pull the wheelchair fully in, strap in John and Jenny, then be ready to set off.

*From the MDA Newsletter, April 1983:*

“The Apollo Theatre in Manchester recently threatened to throw out an MDA club member who uses a wheelchair. There she was sitting in a chair at the end of a row with her wheelchair neatly folded by her, waiting to watch the Dr Hook concert. Using the old stand-by

of “fire hazard” the management threatened to throw her out unless the wheelchair was left at the back of the theatre.”

L's friend Maggie adds, “We *did* see the show. After much heated discussion between Lorraine and a member of staff Lorraine agreed to allow her wheelchair to be moved to the back of the Apollo. Dr Hook won over principles!” As L says, “you need to choose your battles!” L saw Ray Sawyer look straight at her as he prepared to throw his maracas out to the audience. They came flying towards her, but she was a little too low to catch them and Maggie who was beside her instinctively ducked, leaving someone in the row behind to grab them instead.

On 6 May a meeting was held at the St Thomas Centre in Ardwick, Mcr, to discuss setting up an *Independent Living Movement* for Greater Manchester, which then organised the *Strategies for a Coalition* meeting at County Hall.

By 1984 the *GMCDP Steering Group* was meeting to establish a new Coalition of Disabled People across Greater Manchester (GMCDP), which led to the inaugural meeting, again at County Hall, Piccadilly Gardens, in 1985.

L started work as GMCDP's first Development Worker in December 1986 with a salary of £8,980.

L said, "During my divorce it was Maureen, Maggie and the Coalition that kept me sane."

## Details:

- ❖ 3 Jefferson Street, North Ormesby, Mbro TS3 6JW
- ❖ West Lane Hospital, Acklam Rd, Linthorpe TS5 4EE (now child and adolescent mental health clinic).
- ❖ The Friarage Hospital, Northallerton DL6 1JG.
- ❖ Welburn Hall School, Kirkbymoorside YO62 7HQ.
- ❖ St Mary's Convent RC Grammar School, Saltersgill Avenue, Middlesbrough TS4 3JP (closed in 2011).
- ❖ Teesside Disabled Sports Club, Thorntree Community Centre, Birkhall Road, Thorntree TS3 9JW.
- ❖ Middlesbrough Baths aka Gilkes Street Baths (swimming pool, built 1884, added to 1933, closed 1988, demolished 1998) now part of Captain Cook Square.
- ❖ Jack Hatfield was a local man famous as an 1912 Olympics swimmer. With his brothers he opened a sports shop that year – Jack

Hatfields Sports - on Borough Road, Mbro town centre, still open and successful.

- ❖ Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Guttmann Road, Aylesbury HP21 9PP (opened in 1969, renamed in 2001).
- ❖ Middlesbrough Art College (now Cleveland College of Art and Design), Green Lane, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough TS5 7RJ.
- ❖ Hollins Building (known as *The Toastrack* and by students as "*Hollins College*") was newly opened in 1960 by Manchester City Council for its **Domestic and Trades College**, Old Hall Lane, Fallowfield, Manchester (later became part of Manchester Polytechnic, and then Manchester Metropolitan University (1992). The Department of Apparel became part of the Manchester Fashion Institute following MMU's move out of the site in 2013. The building is proposed (2016) to become apartments.
- ❖ It was probably after 1983 when L joined the Manchester group of UPIAS, the politically radical and private *Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation*. L

described herself as a late-comer to the group in Manchester and says she was somewhat naive. There was a meeting in the Town Hall of Manchester City Council's *Disabled People's Steering Group* where L challenged a point. Neville told her, "It has already been decided," meaning at a UPIAS meeting beforehand. However, Kevin Hyett, a friend of L's told her, "I don't know how you do it, but you say all the right things!" L took it as a great compliment.

- ❖ L probably first met Tony Baldwinson, her future partner and husband, around 1985. His first memory of their meeting is L arriving late for a meeting where he worked at the St Thomas Centre in Ardwick, Manchester, and L smiling at him as she entered. He moved into Southgate in May 1989.

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