

To Mom on reaching ninety

In thirty-four before the war, the sun shone bright that May,

Though midst the belching furnaces they knew not night from day;

And black the puddings, black the skies, Black Country by repute,

Black yet the washing on the lines, hard work undone by soot.

But there midst darkened cottages, a bud burst through that spring:

New life! New England! New expense! of prospects bright I sing.

For there all swaddled soft and fresh, in raiments white as snow

Lay Maureen, Blackheath's fairest spot, whom fondest friends called Mo.

No easy times for children then, no sweets, no phones, no telly,

But Jerry's bombs came raining down, and worse than that Pöllheli.

Yet education nothing lacked: at school the avid teen

Learnt subjects that enriched the mind, and use of nicotine.

The world of work awaited her, to Cadbury's she sped

And sweeter still than chocolate bars she met the man she'd wed

Parental edict named the church, the pub to follow too,

But then what feelings of release – a honeymoon for two!

In Jersey way across the seas, 'neath skies not black but bonny,

Our Mo began her life anew, and by her side her Donny.

He'd promised her a homestead fair, a dwelling for a queen,

But still, to have one's own front door in verdant Bordesley Green.

Then children three, what progeny, and every one a lad:

What miscreant deeds that held in store, abetted by their Dad.

Llandudno, Newquay, Tenby called, for summer days so sweet

With carefree sounds of bats on balls and surf and running feet.

From Bourton through to Richmond Road life's pendulum did swing

From Mini through Ford Zephyr to four wheels secured by string.

The boys they went their separate ways with grandchildren in tow

And nan (and grandad) like the spring from which they all did flow.

To educate and entertain, to know that love meant all,

The precious hours spent with them meant, and mean still to recall.

Mom cherished so the life she'd lived, her family was her pride;

Through them she said the world moved on, and thus she lived and died.

We'll miss you so our Mom (and Nan) – some hurts one can't repair –

But move on with you in our hearts, in parting just as fair.