

Anthony "Tony" Betts (born 1943)

Having decided at an early age that I wanted to be in the hospitality business, in 1958 I applied to **Westminster Technical College Hotel School** for entry to their Hotel Management course. One year later having successfully completed my GCE, I was accepted on full scholarship to the Hotel School.

From day one, I knew I had made the right choice of career. Everyday was something different, new and exciting. During the two year course I had opportunities to work in a variety of the top five star hotels around the country including **Turnberry in Scotland, Charing Cross and Hyde Park.**

After graduation I spent a year as a Trainee Manager with London Transport Executive before obtaining my first management position as Assistant Manager of the newly opened **Master Robert Motel** near London Heathrow Airport. I was fortunate to work with a very experienced management couple Alfred and Jean Cockerill who mentored me and gave me a wonderful insight into the business.

Whilst at the Master Robert I met Brenda (my first wife). After our marriage we moved around the UK for the next 3 years, gaining experience in a variety of hotel and catering operations including a period with the Cockerills when they opened their own business. Our most memorable was position was as joint managers of **The Green Man**, a delightful old coaching inn in the village of Old Harlow.



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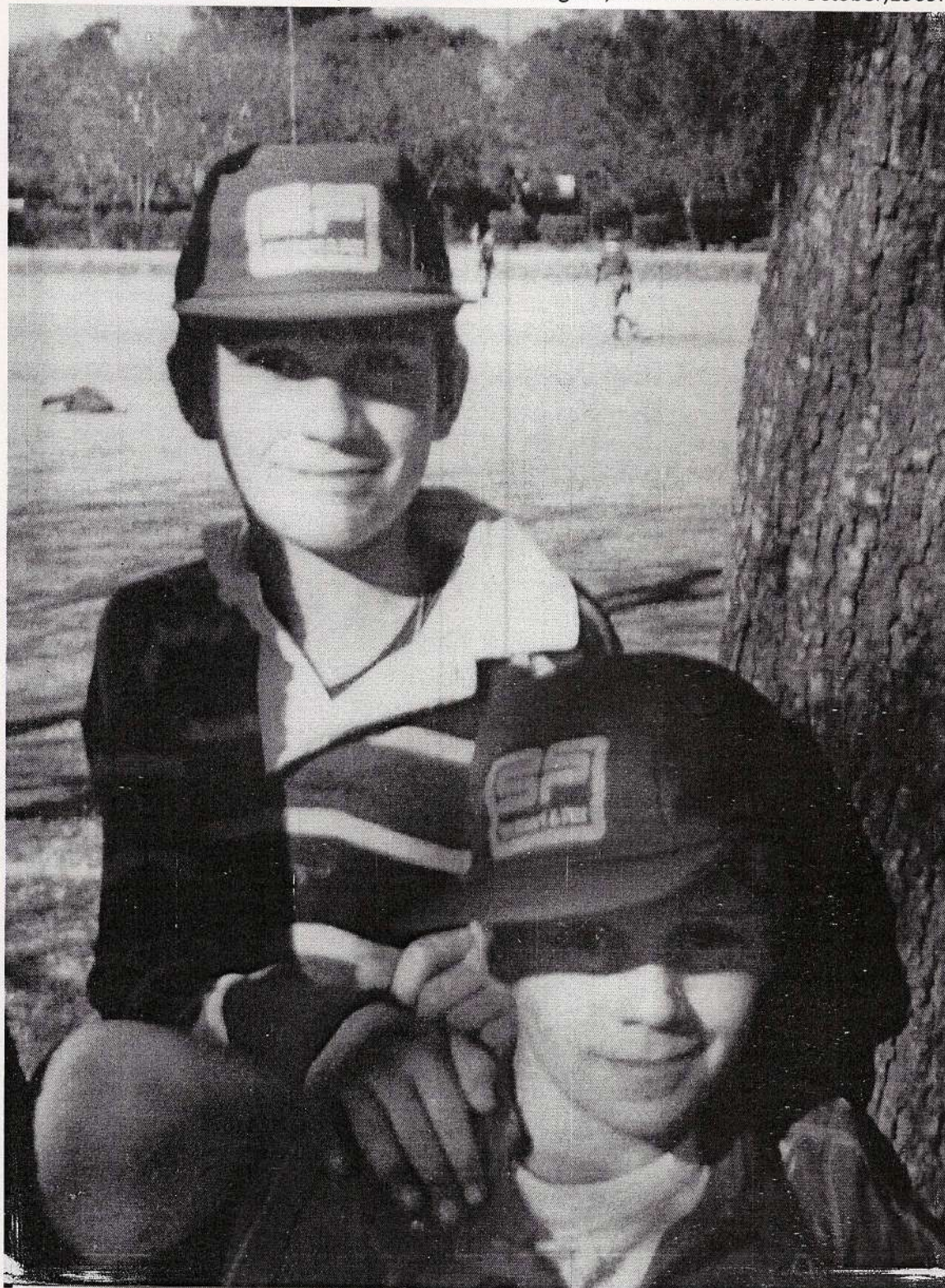
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In late 1965, Brenda became very ill with emphysema and bronchitis and doctors recommended a move away from Britain to a healthier climate. Whilst Brenda convalesced in Madrid with friends, an opportunity came up in Jersey in the Channel Islands. I was appointed as Assistant Manager of the **Pomme D'Or Hotel** in St. Helier. The hotel was owned and operated by a prominent local family, the Seymours. At the time, their 5 hotels were managed by sons and cousins of the owner.

I was indeed very fortunate in May 1967 to be offered the opportunity to take over from one of the sons, Derek Seymour as **General Manager of the Pomme D'Or.**

With the support and encouragement of the owners I was able to enjoy great success and Brenda and I were able to start our family with Mark born in August ,1967 and Russell in October,1969.



With the start of the new decade (the 1970's), we decided to try to move into the next tier of management , the "**international level**". Although I was offered a position as Resident Manager of the Apollo Hotel in Kampala, Uganda, by the Commonwealth Development Corporation I was persuaded by my tutors at the **Westminster Hotel School** to take up a position under the Overseas Aid Ministry of Great Britain, to open a Hotel and Catering school in **Lusaka, Zambia**. Thus began the **African Adventure**.

During the next 14 years I alternated my time between training/educational and operational positions in Zambia, South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Although as a family we were committed to Rhodesia (having become citizens) the loss of the family in the 2nd Viscount tragedy and the gradual creep of dictatorship finally forced my return to Europe in 1983.

Once back in England I decided to go into the restaurant business and over the next few years ran a number of high profile restaurants including the Rock Garden in Covent Garden, and Monkey Business London and Monkey Business in Paris (Americian Bistro Management Co.), France. On the sale of that company I joined the owner, Frank Solano in his main business, Interior Architecture and Design of Hotels and Restaurants. Our relationship lasted for almost 20 years and took me to many countries including Turkey, Cyprus, Dubai, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, the Canaries, Hungary and Georgia.

On one of my many visits to Turkey in 1993 I met Dilek (a hotelier); a year later we were married and I moved my home to Istanbul, although still working with Frank. During the period 1991-1996, I continued my academic studies on a part-time basis and obtained my MBA and PhD in Hospitality Management.

From 2002, as Frank and I viewed retirement , it was decided that we would not seek new contracts but would complete our outstanding projects and then close down the business. This enabled me to accept a faculty position at a private university in Istanbul, where I am now an Ass. Professor of Gastronomy, Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management.

Our daughter, Sara who is now 16 and at high school, has recently told Dilek and I that she wants to enter the hospitality business. As we have not tried to influence her choice of career we are delighted at her choice and are now trying to get her place in a specialist hotel management university in Holland. As she is already fluent in Turkish, English and German, she should have a head start en-route to an international career.

(Extracted from my autobiography)