



1947 **Langstone
Cliff Hotel** 1997



The Rogers Family and their staff are delighted to have arrived at this very significant landmark and look forward to sharing many memories and some very happy times with you during the course of 1997, our fiftieth anniversary year.

We consider ourselves exceptionally privileged to have been able to offer a service to the local community, to have played host to countless family holidays and to have welcomed so many wonderful guests through the doors, many of whom have become personal friends.

We are exceptionally grateful to you all for your amazing support and loyalty.



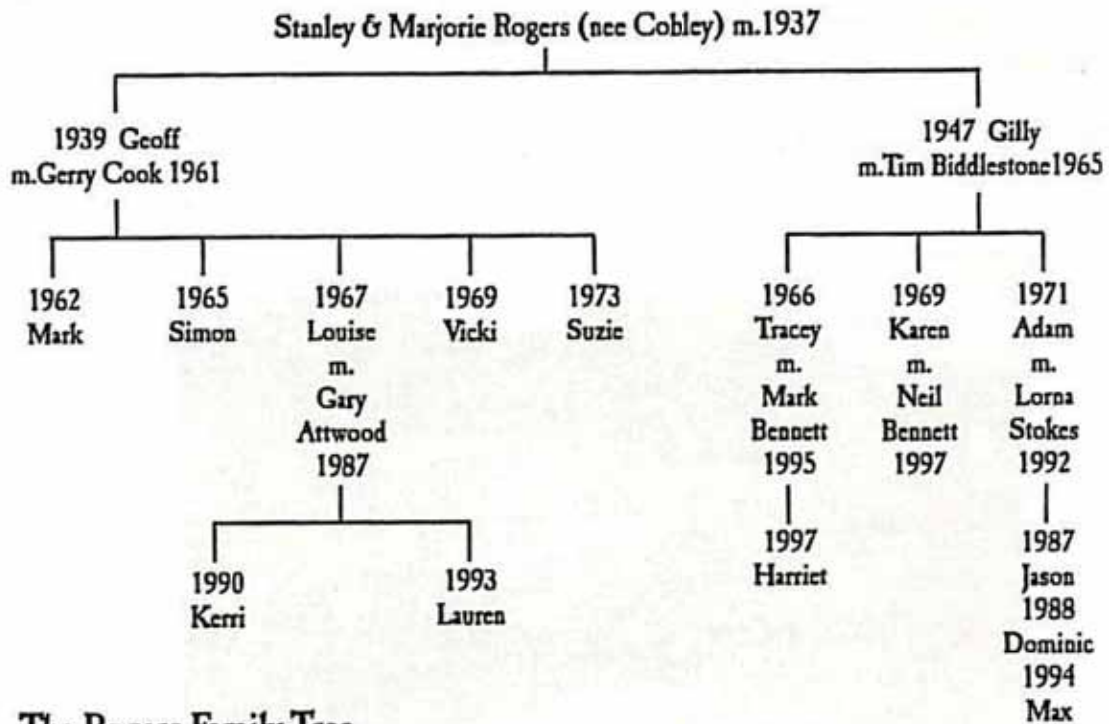
“Out of the Frying Pan, into the Fire”

In May 1946 this could have been a particularly apt maxim for Stanley and Marjorie Rogers. They were, at the time, running a fish and chip shop in Exeter. Stanley went to Dawlish supposedly to view a furniture auction, for no particular reason. In the event, he had turned up a day too early and the property, rather than the effects was being auctioned. He returned to Marjorie, frying for the lunchtime rush, to tell her he had bought Langstone Cliff House at Dawlish Warren - neither of them had previously heard of or seen the property, neither of them had ever contemplated running a hotel! But perhaps at £4,500.00 he had an eye for a bargain! Not that this was an insignificant amount in 1946. They returned the next day to attend the furniture auction in the hopes of furnishing their new acquisition. Needless to say, as this had been rather a “grand home” - there were some beautiful pieces including carpets, chandeliers and tapestries that had been commissioned for the house. But fate was not on their side on this particular day. My mother slipped as she entered the front door on the mosaic flooring, broke her arm and had to be taken to

hospital by Father. Hence they missed the auction and became the proud owners of a large threadbare house. This minor catastrophe meant that for many months Father scoured local auction houses and private sales, sourcing suitable furniture for the property; new was beyond their financial constraints and in any case not easily available in 1946. Just under a year later, 30th March 1947, the Langstone Cliff Hotel welcomed its first guest. Geoff was seven years old, Gilly just born! It was certainly a baptism of fire for Stanley and Marjorie in those austere times immediately after the Second World War,

- but it did take them out of the frying pan!

And here we are 50 years later! Stanley and Marjorie both died in 1970 but Geoff and Gilly are still partners here at the Langstone, together with Gerry and Mark. For the un-initiated, the curious and the forgetful, the simple Family Tree may be helpful.



The Rogers Family Tree

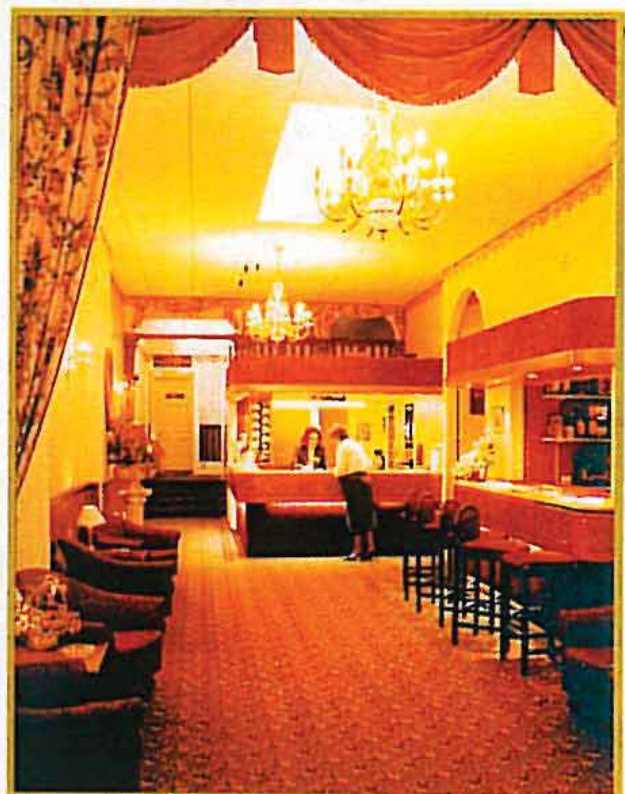


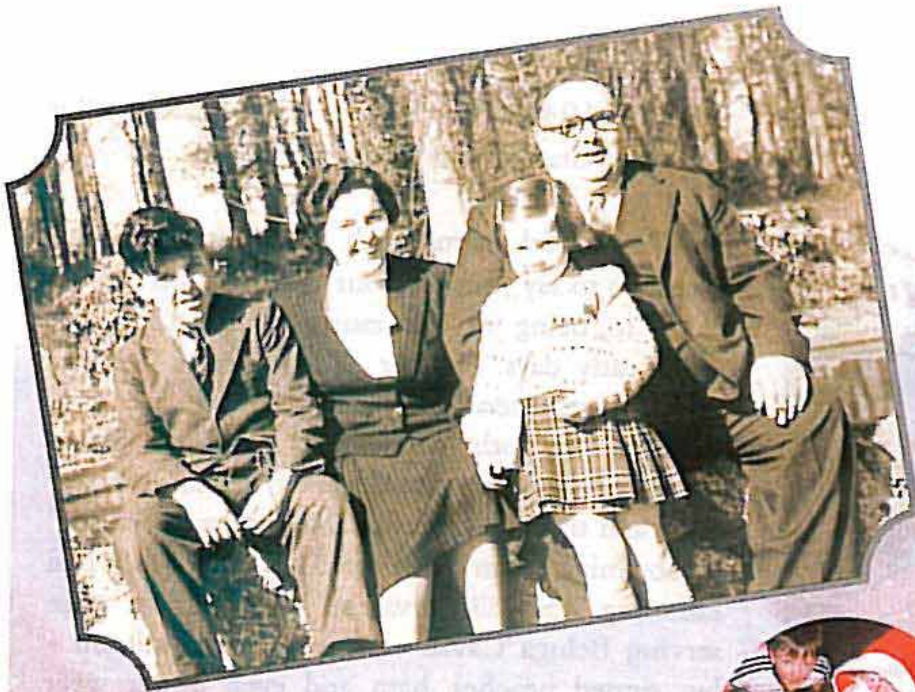
The deeds of the Langstone Cliff Hotel were lost in the blitz of Exeter during the Second World War and consequently no accurate details of the history are easily available. Nonetheless "snippets" emerge now and then from a variety of sources. It was believed to have been built originally around the late 1700s and there is a painting, at present in the Lincoln Bar, showing the house in the background, dating from about that time. The American styled verandah was added in the 1900-1910 region we believe, and is virtually as we found it! Prior to the Rogers Family arrival and the conversion to a hotel the house was the home of Mr & Mrs Avant-Washington - she was formerly a Mrs Washington who was related to the family descended from George Washington, first President of America. It is this Lady's portrait that hangs in the Washington Suite foyer and of course the reason the suite was so named. By amazing coincidence rather than design the Washington Ballroom was opened on the 4th July 1976 which was the Bi-Centenary of American Independence, a very appropriate day considering our tenuous American connection.

But let's try some sort of chronological presentation - with the odd deviation perhaps!

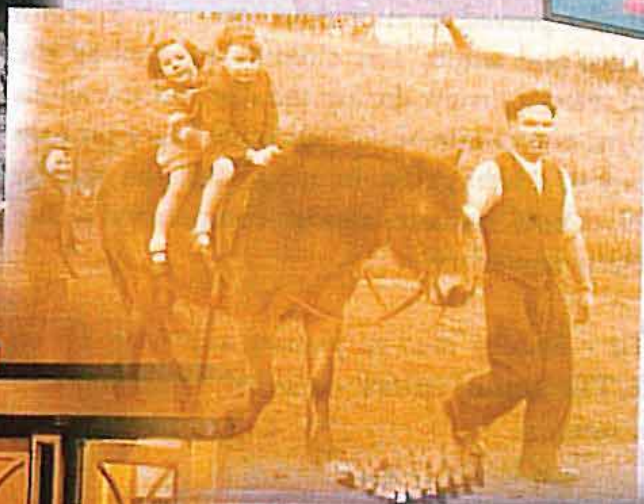
APRIL 1946 - Purchase of the Langstone Cliff House by Stanley and Marjorie Rogers.

1947 - Hotel opens with 12 guest bedrooms. Needless to say none of your current hosts can lay claim to being of any assistance whatsoever in those early days. Neither of my parents had any catering experience beyond the fish and chip business, but both had worked for World Stores (a sort of Sainsbury pre-decessor) during the war years and this proved invaluable for "connections" in obtaining luxury and semi-luxury foods when rationing was still prevalent. Not that we were serving Beluga Caviar or even smoked salmon - but tinned peaches, ham and even butter were considered luxuries of the time. Indeed tinned fruit salad and Devonshire cream (or Ideal milk!) was the Sunday Lunch sweet for many a year. Mother was an excellent "family" style cook and Father the front-of-house character with a fund of stories that seemed never ending. There was a round table in the hall - where Reception is now - where he would regularly hold court after dinner into the small hours with his endless jokes - after this the survivors would adjourn to the minute windowless office to play cards until the even smaller hours. But I am beginning to ramble - back to the script.





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1948-1958 - Various minor alterations and improvements increased the size of the hotel to 18 bedrooms - proudly advertised as "all with hot & cold running water and interior sprung mattresses". "Separate dining tables" was also an advertised feature.

1958 - Business must have been booming at this time as Sandygate was purchased for use as an annexe. Sandygate was a large family house situated on the corner site of Beach Road and Warren Road, opposite what is now the Welcome Inn. It was divided into two large flats and was in a somewhat run down condition. However we redecorated throughout, put the absolutely essential "hot and cold running water" in all rooms and let it as annexed accommodation only, all meals taken in the hotel. Although the five hundred yard walk did not make it ideal, the business continued to thrive and Sandygate was regularly full up during the high season months. At its peak we were offering 10 letting bedrooms and accommodation for one division of the family or another.

APRIL 1962 - Opening of the Lincoln Restaurant on the occasion of my parent's Silver Wedding. That same winter a further 22 bedrooms were added - more than doubling the size of the hotel. By this time Gerry and I had married and were both fully involved in the business with my parents beginning to take a back seat - not that Father was ever going to release the purse strings!

1963 - The 1962 extensions rolled on into 1963 with the addition of the Garden Room (Table Tennis room to most of you!) and the Sun Lounge - later to become the Coffee Shop and now the Poolside Room. The addition of all this extra accommodation significantly reduced the demand for annexed accommodation and Sandygate reverted to staff and family accommodation. Ah! Sweet Memories!

1963 (or maybe '64!) - The Outdoor Pool and the Tennis Court were added. The Pool in particular proved an enormous attraction for both children and adults. The children enjoyed all the usual water pursuits during the day and the adults enjoyed even more all the less usual water pursuits by night! Midnight swimming after the regular hotel dances became almost compulsory - and certainly legendary.

1970 - Stanley died in January and Marjorie in June. The end of an era - and the beginning of a new one.

1972 - The Poolside wing was added. The first bedrooms in the hotel to have private bathrooms.

1973 - The Bungalow was built as private accommodation for the family.

1976 - The Washington Suite was built. Work did not start until 3rd December 1975 and yet 17 bedrooms were available for service by 15th May 1976 and the ballroom complex opened on 4th July the same year.



1978 - The first visit of Kenny Ball and The Jazzmen and the start of our very successful and on-going Langstone Special Cabaret Weekends that enjoy such wonderful support.

1980 - Indoor Pool and two further bedrooms were added. We had two parties to celebrate the opening of the pool. It was running a week or so behind schedule and we had mistakenly announced in our literature that an indoor pool would be available from Whitsun 1980. We managed to get it available for swimming (although not absolutely complete) on the Friday at the end of the Bank Holiday week and inevitably this called for celebrations. Two weeks later when the niceties had been finalised came party number two. Those of you that know the family well will be aware that we do not need much of an excuse for a party! I mention these especially as they were positively wild! Definitely Hollywood style stuff as I am sure those of you that were there can recall. For many years the photographic evidence adorned the walls of the indoor pool.

1980 - 1986 - Gradual upgrading to 64 bedrooms all with private bathroom.

1986 - Tim left the partnership.

1987 - Mark who had been in the business full time since leaving college, became a partner.

1989 - Major refurbishment to the Lincoln Restaurant/Ballroom

1991 - The bungalow had to be rebuilt following major subsidence. The new design allowed a further four guest bedrooms.



1993 - Main Hall refurbished.

1995 - Coffee shop and Verandah Bar are re-designed and re-named as the Poolside and Woodland Rooms. The hotel became licenced to hold Civil Wedding ceremonies. We presented our first wedding reception way back in 1947 and have hosted many hundred since then. However, not until 1995 when the law changed were we able to actually marry here at the hotel. To date we have held eight such ceremonies and there are many more in the coming months. They are extremely successful with a very relaxed atmosphere, no cars to worry about and never mind the weather!

1996 - Very mixed feelings at the decision to remove the Goldfish Pond - the last remaining vestige of the "old" Langstone, but very pleased at the final outcome of the re-modelled approach and entrance.

1997 - Currently updating many bedrooms. About 25 rooms have been redecorated between October 1996 and March 1997. And beyond 1997? Ideas galore, but not to get bigger - just to get better!



Without a doubt we as a family are proud of our long record here at the Langstone Cliff Hotel – indeed we would not be presenting this celebratory booklet were we not so. However any success we may have achieved we like to feel we keep firmly in proportion. With giant corporations dominating the world of hotels our single unit pales to insignificance in the business. One can read regularly in guides and newspapers of the most beautifully run and kept hotels, serving the most imaginative foods in sumptuous surroundings. Again we are going to be an “also ran”. However some of you we have welcomed year in year out, generation after generation – (some families with over a hundred visits to their credit).

On the local front we have been delighted to play host to Christenings, 18ths, 21sts, Weddings, Anniversaries and Retirements indeed the whole gambit of family celebrations. There are local companies, associations, clubs and lodges who have held their annual events with us for over thirty consecutive years. In recent years our conference and training facilities have been used by many companies for conference and training events – some maybe once or twice a year but others almost weekly throughout the winter months. All of these things certainly give us the “tingle factor”.

In spite of the size of the family and the nepotism practiced we still cannot run the hotel unaided and we would pay great tribute to our staff, both past and present, for all their efforts in caring for you, our guests. Our current team is about 80 strong, of whom half are full time employees and a dozen or so students who we see at weekends and holiday times.

We are very proud that seven of the team have been a part of the hotel for over twenty years and well over half of the team (excluding students) have been with us for a minimum of five years. The Magnificent Seven! (over 20 years) are Bob Kentispeer our driver/gardener – Bob’s father Charlie also worked at the hotel virtually from the start – he went to school with my Mother! Freda and Peter Slee – Peter manages the Bars and Freda currently assists him, but she has worked just about everywhere in her 35 year stint. Freda is also responsible for several miles of curtain throughout the hotel. All of Peter and Freda’s four children have also worked at the hotel. Phyllis Barton, also

been everywhere and done everything and presently tucks herself away in the bungalow looking after the family (or some of them!). Four of Phyllis’s children also had spells with us. Nigel Coble, a cousin of the family is managing director of Stéptoe’s Yard! Nigel’s mother, Joan, was also a much loved member of our family hotel. Dawn Konetsky is head housekeeper and prominent member of the reception team – still full of ambition after thirty years! I still have trouble keeping her out of my seat! Dawn’s daughter Paula is also “one of us” and Terry her eldest son had a spell in the kitchens a few years ago. Finally, Sue Rabbage – a Peter Pan of a waitress who looks now as she did when she joined us twenty years ago. The department heads of the hotel at present are Dawn and Peter, mentioned above in housekeeping and bars respectively. Valerie Santer, head receptionist; Jenny Green, restaurant manageress; Wendy Rawlings, financial control and back office, and Dave Stevens, head chef. A super team – our very sincere thanks to you all.

But after all these words and pictures, celebrations and parties what would our hotel be without you – our regular guests and friends?

You are the really important ingredient,
You create the atmosphere,
You make the fun and
You leave the memories.

*Thank You All
So Very Much*





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