

A thumbnail autobiography

I was born in 1946, after my infantryman father had escaped from captivity in Germany in February 1945. His account of his experiences in the war can be read via this link ([Extracts from a POW's diary](#))



**6th February 1941 – the wedding of Ernest Mellett and Mary Bill.
A rifle is leaning against the wall of the church; in my father's
pocket are five rounds of ammunition and a 48-hour pass**

My parents were born and brought up poor in the working-class tenements – known as 'The Buildings' – in Shoreditch in the East End of London, both leaving Elementary School at the age of 14.



**Gladstone Buildings where my father lived 1914–1940
(early 1970s prior to demolition)**



After the war, my parents settled in Reigate, a suburban town 20 miles south of London, where my brother was born in 1949. I contracted whooping cough at 18 months and suffered from debilitating asthma until the age of 13, when it disappeared.



Me back row, far left, 1953 with Mrs. Jackson – Holmesdale Road County Primary School, Reigate, Surrey

My parents started a manufacturing business in 1952, which slowly grew to prosperity in the 1960s, seeing my father becoming a leading Rotarian and a member of his local magistrates' bench. My mother carried out the administration of the business until its sale in 1974 and was an equal partner and guiding hand in their very strong personal and work relationship.



At primary school, being always 'top of the class', I passed the 11+ examination in 1957 – which sent me on to Reigate Grammar School, where I proved to be an erratic and sometimes mediocre pupil.



With brother Howard 1960: age 14



1963: age 17

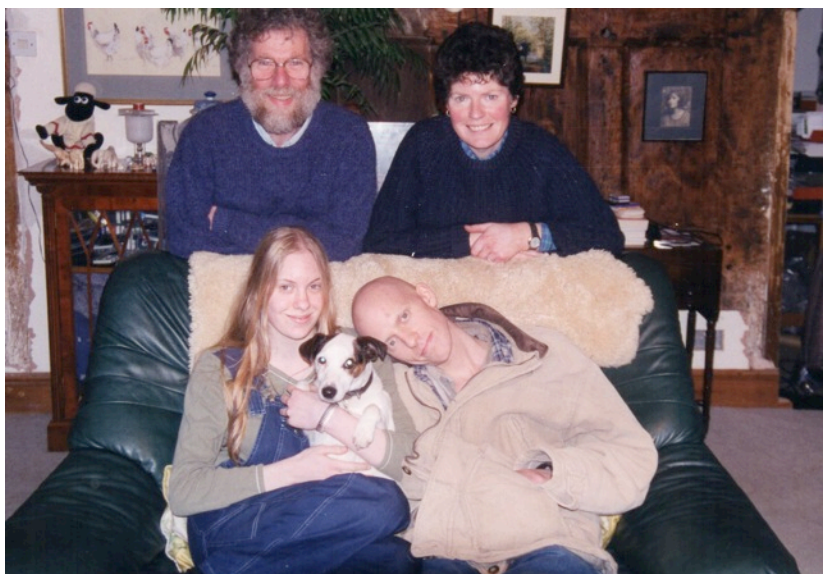
Passing the 11+ was the most significant act of my life, diverting me from the third-rate provision of the local secondary modern school and the labour exchange to the academic rigour of the grammar school, which drew in selected boys from a 30-mile radius and sent 40% of us on to university.

Finally established as a secondary school chemistry teacher, I married Jane in 1974; our son Paul was born in 1979 and daughter Mary in 1983.



**Jane with Paul 1983
(Mary being gestated)**

During this period, while I was working at a local comprehensive school, we demolished part of our house and then built on a large extension. Plastering was the only construction job that Jane and I did not do ourselves. In 1999, Paul was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia but, following six months of brutal treatment, he was rescued by a stem cell transplant from his sister Mary.



December 1998 - three chemotherapy sessions completed and awaiting the transplant in the New Year

Paul slowly regained his health and became firstly an eco-warrior ...



Houses of Parliament 2008

... which evolved into him becoming an international worker in sustainability and regeneration, marrying Ruth from Brazil in 2012.



Paul and Ruth – Poole, UK September 2012

While working in Ghana in February 2014, he became infected with *falciparum* malaria and, after four months in intensive care ...



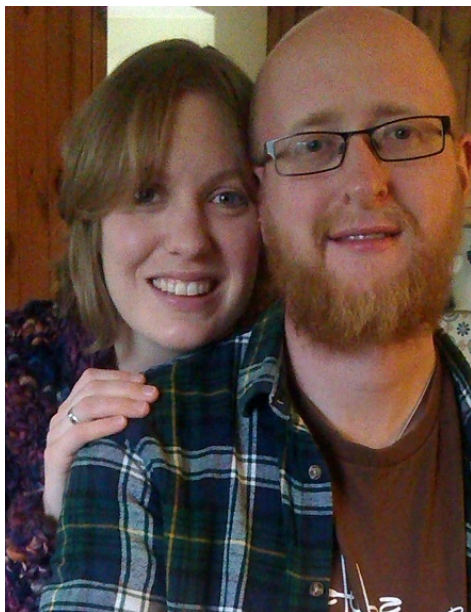
Paul and Ruth – Sao Paulo April 2014

... Paul died in June at the age of 34.



Wedding photo and ashes urn – Sao Paulo, June 2014

During this time, Mary married Matt ...



... and their son – my grandson – Rowan was born in 2015.



Rowan James Mellett Rink

Rowan is now 18 months old and we all agree that he greatly helps to fill the huge emotional hole in our family left by Paul's loss.

Turning now to values and the role they play in our lives, I return to the obvious fact that, as Peter Mellett, I am son to my father Ernest and my mother Mary – and, in turn, father to my son Paul and my daughter Mary who were born to Jane; Paul married Ruth; Mary married Matt and they have a son, Rowan. On the male side of the family, I bridge the generations between my father and my son; I am the conduit through which my parents' fundamental values relating to freedom, justice and democracy have flowed through the generations – values that have successively adapted to inform each generation and the spirit of the age in which they have found themselves. On the female side of the family, there are equally strong and parallel values that have flowed through my mother, Mary, Paul's mother Jane and from her mother Ann. Those values will flow onwards through Mary to Rowan – and also through the [Blueprint Project](http://www.blueprintnetwork.org/) (http://www.blueprintnetwork.org/) founded on Paul's death by his colleagues as his [living legacy](http://www.r-u-g.info/) (http://www.r-u-g.info/)