

this state of affairs could not continue indefinitely and in 1980 WW Web Offset went into receivership; it proved impossible to find a buyer for the company as a going concern and after six months it was liquidated with those of us who were still left working there being made redundant with the government minimum redundancy payment.

After being unemployed for two and a half years I obtained, through my trade union the National Graphical Association, employment at Eastern Press in Reading, travelling there each day. I was originally engaged in the copy preparation department, which involved marking up copy with the correct typesetting codes ready to be inputted onto the online system in use at that company.

However on my arrival for my first day's employment I was asked, because of my previous experience in Banbury, to work instead on the online vdu correction terminals, inputting corrections marked on printouts by the reading department. Due in no small measure to the poor English displayed by some of the overseas operators working in the typesetting department, I was afforded plenty of opportunity to hone my English, spelling and typesetting skills!

After about two months working in Reading I was "headhunted" by some colleagues who were working at Robert Maxwell's flagship publishing company Pergamon Press, based at Headington Hill Hall in Oxford. After an interview I was asked to join the style-editing department at Pergamon Press, which meant better working conditions, more money and a shorter journey to work each day.

The job entailed traditional proof reading against copy, and also final reading of typeset books without a manuscript to check for grammar, spelling, and context and to make sure illustrations appeared correctly. Also original manuscripts were checked to make sure they conformed to one style throughout and there were no obvious errors, to use the technical term, copy-editing.

The working conditions were the best I have ever worked in, with individual oak desks and special ergonomically designed chairs all set in the surroundings of an oak panelled library lined with books from floor to ceiling. Additionally there was a subsidised canteen in the main office block which not only served excellent meals but opened mid morning for hot bacon rolls. Also because we had worked in Banbury we made use of the flexitime system in use there to stagger our working times during the week, and also we were allowed to take our overtime work home with us to do. The work was not too onerous, as we all had an