

In 1973, he decided it was time to get married, so he booked annual leave and returned to Sri Lanka in July of that year. He was told by his mother that he needed to see one particular girl, the daughter of Dr Mylvaganam and Rita Indrani. The initial conversation was brief but he made sure to warn her that he was an “awkward character”. To this day, Mummy still says that he did not say how awkward. After going to Jaffna to get his parents’ blessing, he returned to Colombo and they were registered within a week or so. Daddy returned to Colombo in September for the Hindu ceremony. He brought Mummy back to the UK for what he has later described as a lifelong honeymoon, although this is usually in response to Mummy’s “complaint” that he did not take her on a honeymoon.

Mummy and Daddy initially settled in Bolton, where they bought their first house. However, in the meantime, Daddy had persuaded Periappa to come to the UK. He had not planned to move to London but in 1976, he needed a way to pay for the cost of a train ticket to London to see Periappa. Fortunately, he got an interview with an organisation called Crown Agents for Overseas Governments, who would pay for the travel costs. He said that he was not particularly interested in the job but somehow the interviewers were impressed. He ended up working for Crown Agents for the next 30 years until his formal retirement in 2007.

When Daddy and Mummy first moved to London, they lived in Harrow, where Pramila and I were born. Then we moved to Watford and, in 1985, we moved to Cheam when Crown Agents moved to Sutton.

As part of his work, he was able to travel to over fifty countries and dealt with many high-profile clients and suppliers including the United Nations. He made the shift from Textile Engineering to Quality Assurance and became the de facto deputy director of his department. He also achieved membership of the Chartered Institute of Quality Assurance and later became a Fellow of the Institute, something that he was clearly proud of – this is equivalent of at least a PhD in academia. I am particularly proud of how, in this job, he was able to help high profile health problems such as malaria and HIV and disaster relief.

It also seemed a bit like being James Bond. the job involved being entertained by suppliers and clients and this often meant finding ways not to offend his hosts. On one assignment, he said how the representatives on one company were taking turns to eat or drink something and it was not clear what it was. He could not exactly refuse to take part. As it came closer to his turn, he said he needed to use the washroom, where he gave sufficient time for his turn to pass before returning to the table. The job also involved some risk – on another