

THELMA RYCZKO

Born 1925

Lived at 10 Bridgman Grove, Filton
Married to Jan Ryczko, 1948

A Big Break

On leaving school Thelma Ellis had some training in a high-class restaurant, which stood her in good stead when she applied for a job as a waitress at Filton House in the early 1950s. She was to remain there until the early 1970s, working her way up to the position of supervisor.

Love in Adversity

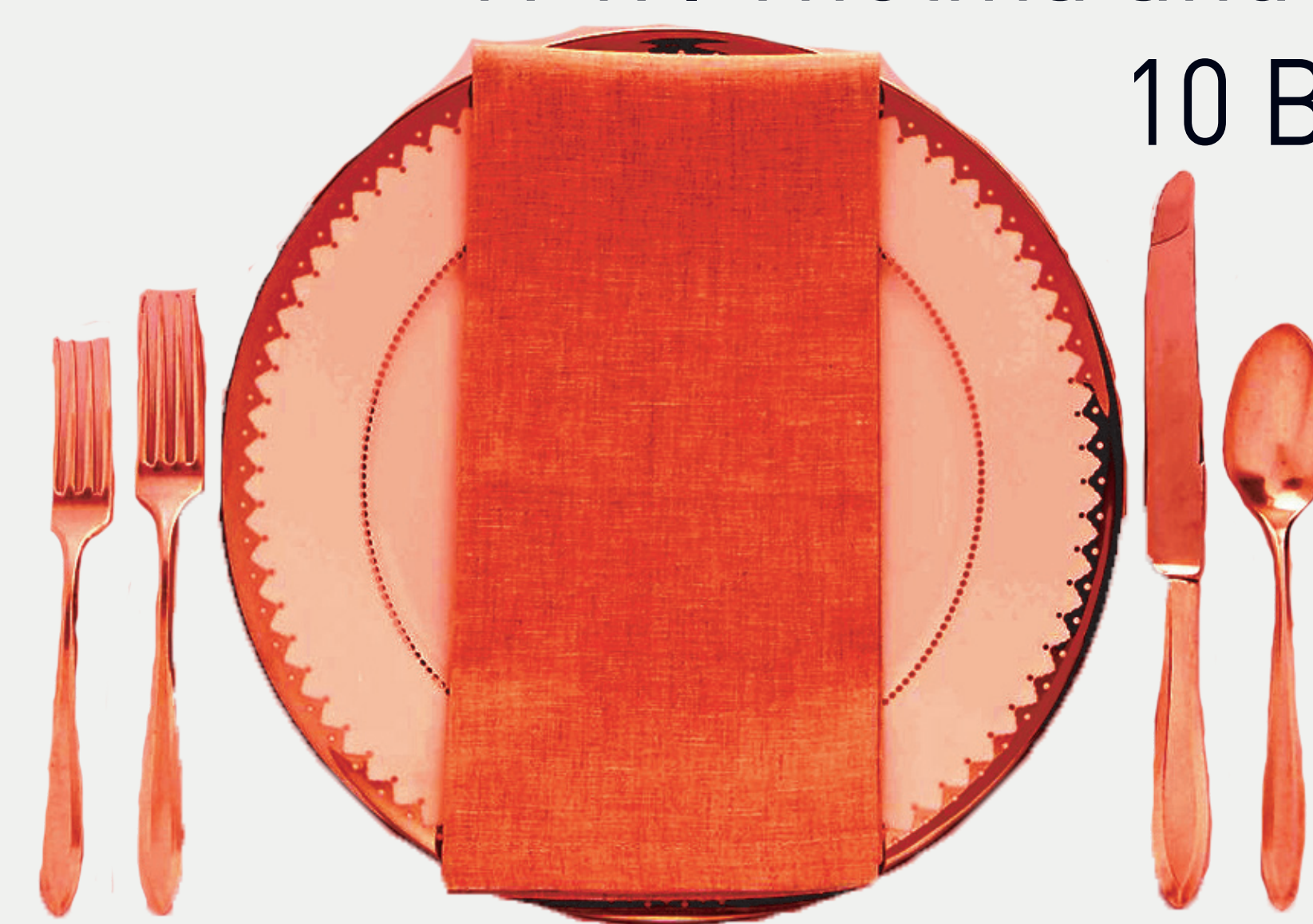
In April 1948 Thelma married Jan Ryczko, who may have been staying at a camp for displaced Polish nationals on the New Road in Filton after the war. Jan may have



been one of the many Polish nationals forced to flee the Soviet invasion at the end of the Second World War. A Jan Ryczko was temporarily residing in Kassel in Germany in a camp for displaced persons in July 1946. He may also have been one of the 220,000 displaced Polish troops on British soil who had fought against the Nazis and then the Soviets, and who were offered British citizenship by the Polish Resettlement Act of 1947. Thelma and Jan lived together at

10 Bridgman Grove, Filton until Jan's death on 15 June 1991.

Thelma was still living at the same address in 2003.



Working at Filton House

The managers, executives and the board of directors of The Bristol Aeroplane Company all worked at Filton House, and each group had a separate dining room. There was also an Exhibition Room and a Conference Room that was used for parties and functions and for entertaining VIPs. Thelma joined a team of fifteen staff that ran the catering and maintenance in the building. Thelma seemed to take great pride in the quality of the food that was provided at Filton House.

A High-Flyer

As well as her duties at Filton House, Thelma was also asked to work for the directors when they were hosting at their private houses, and at other engagements further afield. On one occasion, after serving at a private lunch for Prince William (the eldest son of the Duke of Gloucester) she and her colleagues were offered a lift back to Filton in a Dakota aeroplane!



Photography Source: Aerospace Bristol Archives