



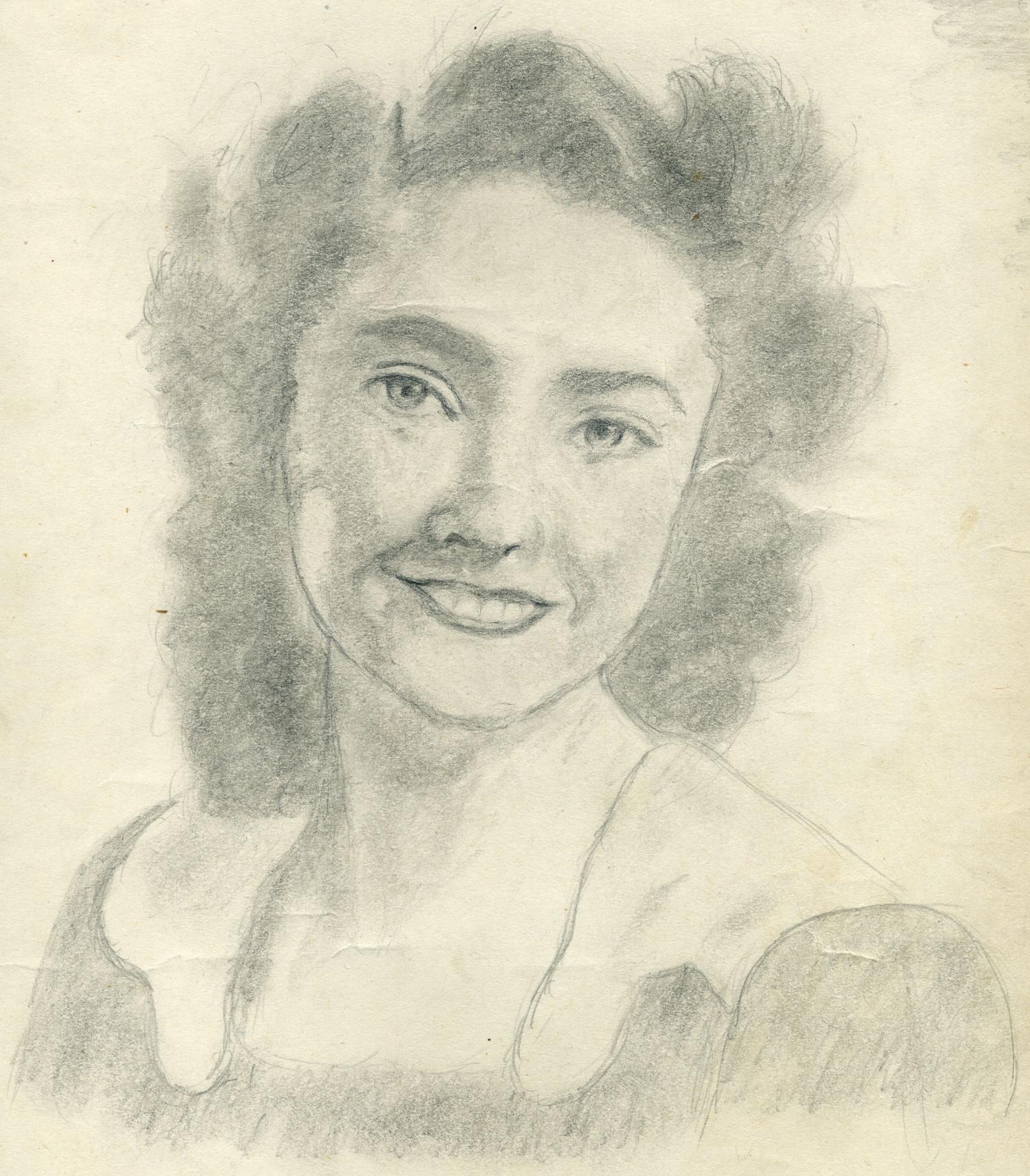
Some of my Sketches from 70 years ago!

The following Pages are a few of my sketches done when I was 13 and 14 that have somehow survived the past 70 years (probably thanks to my Mum); a little scuffed and worse for wear, but still...you can be the judge as to whether I had the talent or not.

Commercial Art was my dream as a young teenager. I believed I had the talent and supported this by winning a scholarship to an art training institute. However, they told me I could not enter the institute until I was 17. Then, at age of 15, I contracted Polio.

That put an end to my dream when the damage to nerves and muscles made it nearly impossible to write (I had to use a typewriter), much less draw.

(See sketch attempts page 7 - post polio.)

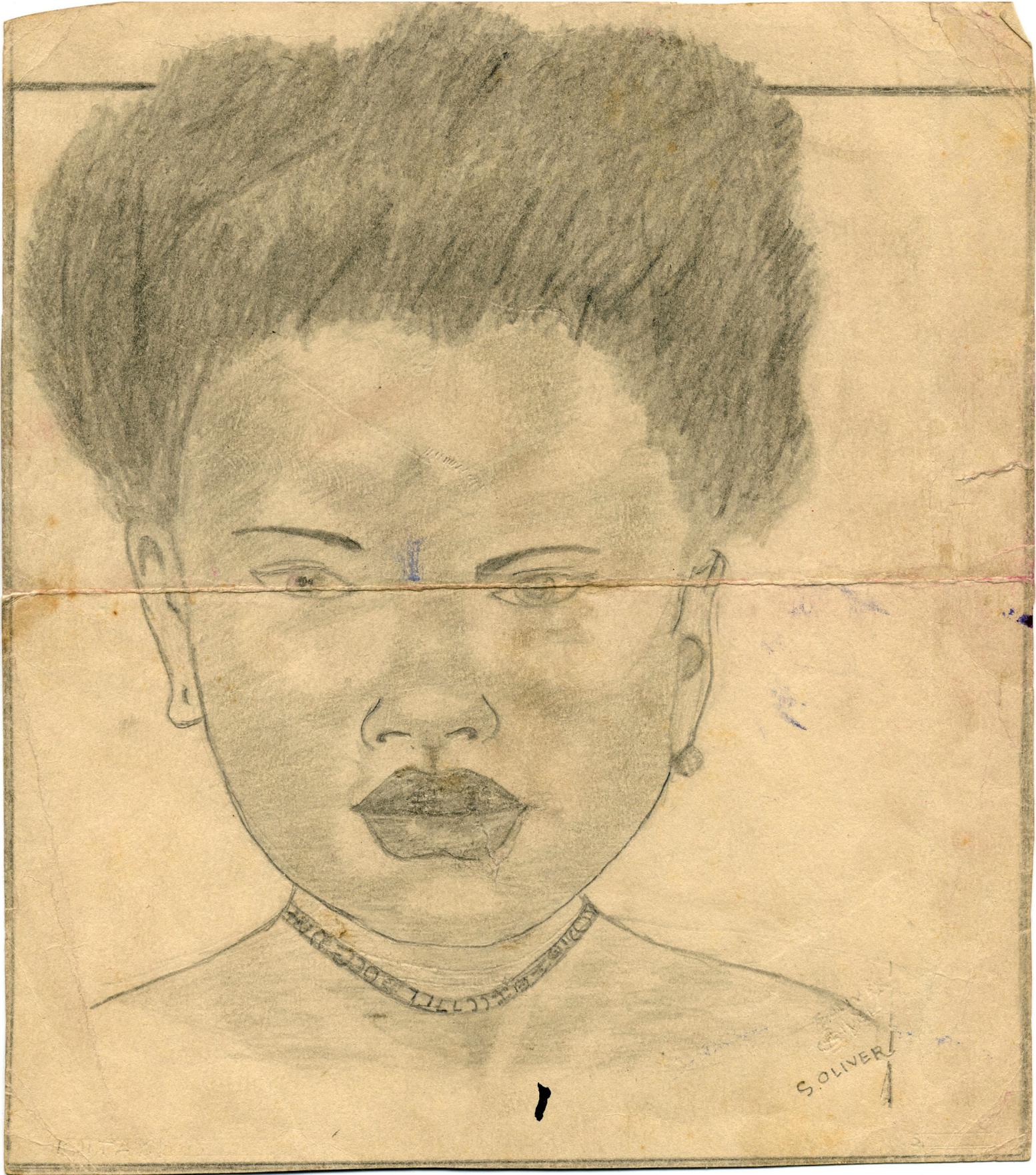


S. OLIVER



OLIVER







AFTER THE POLIO

I always preferred pencil as you could use your thumb for shading, bringing life to the portrait; but that meant you could not make mistakes, as rubbing out without it showing was not possible. (At least, not with the rubbers and poor quality papers we had in those post war years. Also, we did not have the fixitive sprays that artists have today, so smudging over the years has taken a toll.

However, after the polio I found I did not have the steady control of my hand - it would jerk and make a mess of lines (that is still the case to this day). You can see this in the images below where I would get so far and then the pencil would start to jerk. So, at 16, I called it quits and never took it up again.

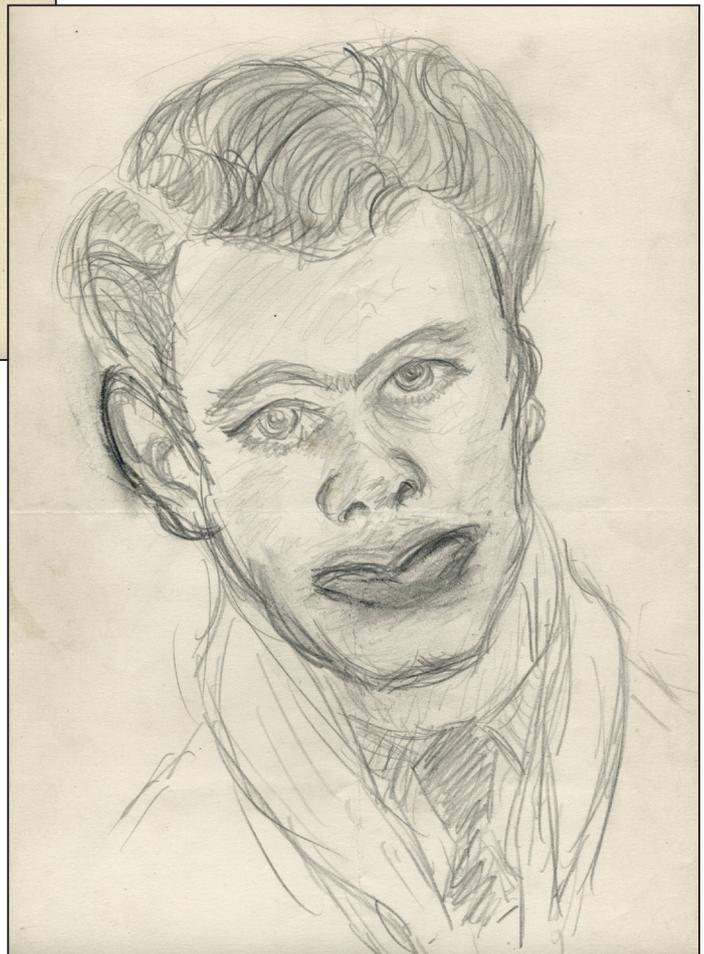


These sketches were done sitting in front of a mirror after I had got back on my feet. But, as always, the hand would start to jerk.

In the bottom image I tried drawing faster with less detail, but the same problem would arise.

So ended my dream of being a commercial artist and time to start dreaming in a different direction.

Only when I came to do this book did I realise that these two images are mirror images of me - a simple mistake made by a 16-year-old looking in a mirror.



I always preferred portraits as that is how I see people; first the eyes, then the face, and then the rest. That is why I always started with the eyes...get the eyes right and the character comes to life.

There is an old saying: "The eyes are the windows to the soul". I have always thought how true that is as, in most cases, when you look into the eyes of others, you really do get a glimpse of just who and what they are like.

The loss of my ability to properly control my arm and hand meant my dream of being an artist and commercial artist was gone.

However, I was not one to sit back and cry over what may have been. As the story, *Why I Consider Myself so "Lucky"*, indicates, I have always considered myself lucky . . . lucky to have survived, lucky to not need leg or back braces, lucky to not be in an iron lung...in other words, what have I got to complain about?

When you read the story of "An Old Polio - Me!" you will have an inkling of just how dire the times of those mass epidemics were and how today's people are blessed with the ability to be inoculated against these scourges of nature.

This is where I again push for all of you to make sure you have your children vaccinated, as there is only a thin line between freedom from these viruses and a return to the bad times.

I simply got on with my life and attacked other endeavours with which I got involved.

As the back cover of my book says about my life, "I have enjoyed it all!"

