

**£25
WINNER**

He's a happy wanderer

THE death of a husband, wife or life-partner is one of life's worst times. Ex-Mirror librarian **DEREK DRURY** and his wife Shirley had discussed "life after me" and, being a few years older, Derek thought he would go first. But Shirley died in 1997, aged only 61. Remembering their conversation, Derek determined to make the best of everything. So at the age of 65 he became a world traveller...



MY WIFE Shirley and I were at her mother's one day, talking about her elderly aunt whose husband had been grievously wounded in the Second World War. He was sent home, where he died shortly after his return.

He was buried at the end of her road, and the aunt visited his grave every day, sometimes spending six hours at a time.

I said to Shirley: "What a waste of a life. When I die, don't spend your time mourning. If you've enjoyed our time together [they had known one another for 43 years, and were married for 39] just get on with life."

Fate had its say – Shirley passed away soon afterwards.

Having made my wife promise not to spend time grieving but to get on and enjoy life, I felt it was my duty to do the same. So six months after her death I started my world travels.

Shirley and I had six children, including twins, so family holidays had always been a simple trip somewhere in the UK, sometimes to a caravan park. In 1984 Shirley and I and some of the children did manage a package trip to Benidorm.

When the children were grown up, one



Illustration: Charles Griffin

moved to Spain, one to Portugal and another to Greece, so naturally Shirley and I visited them as a couple.

But I worked for many years in the library speaking to our journalists around the world, so after Shirley's death I thought it would be nice to spread my wings and see what else was at the other end of the phone lines.

I started with a short break in Valencia, and since then have visited five continents, including trips to Australia, New Zealand,

China, Sri Lanka, Brazil and Argentina.

I think I enjoyed Thailand best – the people on the tour were wonderful, and I enjoyed the elephant ride, the river trip on a raft, the floating markets and the visit to a parasol-painting studio. Plus great hotels.

Continuing my "enjoy life" philosophy, later this year I'm off to Peru, with Japan and Cuba on my wish-list for the future.

● Derek wins £25 for his uplifting story. See how you can win, Page 4.



MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS: Shoeshine in China, left, river-rafting in Thailand, parasol perfection, also in Thailand