

On the day she was due to buy a lavish new home with her lover, Jan Sheffield, 57, discovered a shocking secret...



happy. My friends all adored Rod, as did my daughter Tracey, 33, and son Dan, 30.

One morning as we had breakfast in bed, Rod turned to me. 'This would be the perfect time to ask you to marry me,' he said.

My heart flipped as I took in his words. But then I thought of the heartbreak I'd been through when my first marriage ended.

'No, I don't think it would,' I said, as gently as I could. 'I just couldn't go through that again. I'm sorry love, I'm happy how we are.'

I couldn't face the idea of a second marriage, but it didn't change how I felt about Rod.

So when he suggested that we should buy a home together, I happily agreed.

We decided I'd rent out my house and Rod would pay for our

horror as I desperately tried to make sense of his words.

Rod was leaving me. And if he'd lied to me about having money, had he lied to me about his past?

Tears ran down my face as the horrible realisation that I'd been deceived sank in. Stewart had been right. Rod was a con man.

But the more I thought about it, the more it made perfect sense. Rod always talked about his holiday homes, yet I'd never seen evidence of them. Dan and his family were even due to fly out to Rod's Tuscan farmhouse the next day - yet it probably didn't exist.

The newspaper reports were true - Rod was a bigamist and a fraudster. How could I have been so stupid?

I thought about all the money I'd wasted on gifts for him - not to mention the fact that he'd been living rent-free with me for months. And Dan had spent £500 on flights for a holiday that wouldn't happen.

Fighting back my tears, I phoned my solicitor to tell him the house sale was off. Next I cancelled my bank cards and all the furniture we'd ordered.

For two weeks I couldn't bear to see anyone. I felt so humiliated.

But eventually my tears turned to anger - and Dan was furious too.

'You must report him Mum,' he said. He was right.

I contacted the detective in charge of the case against Rod and he told me everything he knew.

It was worse than I could have imagined. Rod had married and divorced Frances Tait before marrying two more women - the third marriage had taken place while he was still married to his second wife.

I'd no idea he'd been married more than once.

Now he was on bail, awaiting trial for bigamy. Rod had left all three women in thousands of pounds of debt, and had faked his third wife's signature to secure a £10,000 loan.

In a strange way, it calmed me down. After all, I wasn't the only

person who had fallen for Rod's lies. He was a smooth operator.

Last month, I attended Rod's trial. He wasn't there as he'd got on the run, but in his absence the court heard how he'd habitually targeted financially stable women then left them with large debts.

Sitting beside each other in court we exchanged tales of the man who had fallen for. I'd felt so foolish for being conned, but after meeting these well-educated women, I realised Rod was a very convincing actor.

Although I feel hugely relieved that Rod didn't manage to ruin financially, I'm very sad that he broke my heart. To be betrayed like that has left me shattered.

Rod has since handed himself in to the police and been jailed for three years for bigamy and forgery. I'm just glad he won't be able to hurt another woman the way he's hurt me. ■

BEWARE OF THE BIGAMIST CON MAN!

Glancing up at my boyfriend Rod, I felt a knot of anxiety in my stomach.

We'd been dating for a few months and I adored him, but I was sure Rod wasn't being entirely straight with me.

Rod claimed that he was working in the hotel industry as a troubleshooter and spent a lot of time jetting around the world.

It should have been a well-paid job, yet he'd never taken me back to his house. In fact, he didn't even seem to have a permanent home - he just stayed at the hotels where he was working. He drove a dirty old car and I'd never been introduced to any of his friends.

There was definitely something weird going on.

Just then, his voice broke into my thoughts. 'Would it be okay if I stayed here for a few nights until my next job comes in?' he asked.

I was torn - I really liked Rod, but I couldn't help feeling he might be taking me for a ride.

'No, I think you should find somewhere else to stay,' I said, gently. He looked dejected, but he reluctantly agreed.

As I sat in front of the computer in my Buckinghamshire home that evening, I tried to concentrate on reading my emails, but my mind kept wandering back to Rod.

I just wished he'd tell me what his secret was. That was when I noticed an email from him.

'Jan, I want to tell you the truth,' it started.

Rod explained he'd inherited a home on a river in Scotland, and

that he'd bought the salmon rights that went with it.

The revenue from that meant he didn't even need to work. In fact, he even owned a farmhouse in Tuscany, a flat in Sussex and a

worried about - just that he seemed to be keeping secrets from me. But all that mattered now was that Rod was finally being honest.

We continued to see each other and everything was great.

Within weeks he'd moved in and we quickly settled into a routine. When I got home from work, dinner was always on the table. It was nice being cared for.

Then one day my son Stewart, 27, approached me with a serious look on his face.

'Mum, I need to show you something,' he said, gently. He handed me a printout of a local newspaper article.

Reading the words, I began to shake. It said that a man - Roderick Sangster - was awaiting trial on bigamy charges.

'I wanted to make sure you were

'Reading the words, I began to shake'

'It was worse than I had imagined'

dating a decent man, so I Googled him,' he said. 'Sorry, Mum.'

It couldn't be my Rod could it? I knew he'd been married, but he and his wife were divorced.

'I'm sure it's a mistake love,' I said. But I vowed to talk to Rod.

When he came home later that evening, I challenged him.

Rod read the words of the article slowly, then shook his head.

'It's not me,' he said. 'You have to believe me - I have letters from the police and my solicitor confirming that it's a case of mistaken identity. I can show them to you. The man they're investigating looks nothing like me.'

As I looked at Rod, his shoulders slumped with disbelief that I'd questioned him, I felt relief that I'd been wrong - and guilt that I'd doubted the man I loved.

Once again our life returned to normal, and I was blissfully

new home. We chose a gorgeous £750,000 converted barn and I spent the next few weeks ordering furniture. I was so excited.

On the morning we were due to exchange contracts, Rod and I had breakfast, then I went off to work.

'See you later, love,' he said. But before long my mobile beeped with a text message from Rod.

As I read it, my heart stopped.

'I'm very, very sorry, I can't make the financial payments,' it said. 'I haven't meant to hurt you. You won't see me again.'

My stomach somersaulted with



Frances Tait (right)

Wife 2

Jill Jackson (above)

Janet Wallace (right)

Jan Sheffield (left) being...