

## **JOSEPH (Joe) SINCLAIR CAROLIN, BORN 1905**

*Born in Dublin, Joe Carolin qualified as a chartered accountant in London and spent much of his working life in Brazil. There, he rose to be Senior Joint General Manager of the Rio de Janeiro Flour Mills and Granaries Ltd. In the early 50s, the RFM, once described as Britain's most successful industrial investment in Brazil, became the subject of a take-over which was bitterly – and unsuccessfully – resisted by Joe and his colleagues.*

*This life story by his son, Peter Carolin, gives some idea of the life of an expatriate businessman in Brazil during the 30s, 40s and early 50s.*

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## **Joe Carolin**

Chartered Accountant

Born 1905

Life Story

Available at [www.livesretold.co.uk](http://www.livesretold.co.uk)

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# 1. Introduction

Joe Carolin had an inscribed gold watch. It had been given, not by a grateful employer following many years of service, but by his colleagues when, aged only 47, he resigned following a take-over. He had been employed by the Moinho Inglez (as the London-owned Rio de Janeiro Flour Mills – the RFM – was known in Brazil) for 22 years and, in the manner of those days, had hoped to work for the company until retirement.



*The inscribed gold watch and books recording Britain's long-standing link with Brazil*

Founded in 1886, Rio Flour has been described as 'the most successful British industrial investment in Brazil'. Far from declining, as so many British enterprises in Brazil did after WW1, it flourished – and never more so than after WW2. Joe and his colleagues were central to this latter success. The take-over and subsequent dismemberment of the company was a bitter blow.

## ***Britain and Brazil***

The historical context to Joe's life in Brazil is significant. By the time he left, in 1953, Britain and Brazil had enjoyed close links for 144 years. It was the Royal Navy that had escorted the Portuguese royal family from Lisbon to Rio after Soult's troops advanced into Portugal in 1808. Thereafter, Britain enjoyed huge advantages in terms of trade with Brazil and, for much of the C19, was the dominant provider of manufactured goods, finance and engineering skills.

Rio Flour had been successful from the start. Between 1893 and 1902, its dividends were 11% on average and rose to 20% in the following decade. But British dominance was gradually eroded by the Germans and Americans and, by the end of WW2 the RFM was one of the very few (and probably the largest) British company still operating – and expanding – in Brazil. The other major company, the São Paulo Railway (known as the *Ingleza* or English Railway) was nationalised in 1946. RFM had flour, pasta and cotton mills located in cities from Bahia (Salvador) in the north-east to Porto Alegre in the south. Expanding its biscuit production, it had constructed the largest biscuit factory in South America. It became a take-over target.

The take-over and the fight against it was the single most significant event in Joe's business life. He regarded it as harmful to British interests in Brazil and considered it the direct result of incompetence in the company's Moorgate head office. The Report he and his two colleagues subsequently wrote (reproduced in full later in this story) is damning. Writing it perhaps did something to 'get it out of his system' because, although never again to have a full-time job of that significance, he displayed no bitterness at the dramatic transformation in his fortunes.

### ***Source material***

Apart from a CV, Joe – my father – left no written account of his life. But, being a chartered accountant, he did leave us his meticulous personal account books for the years 1923 to 1987. There are also 55 small diaries covering the years 1930 to 1989 (seven non-consecutive years are missing), numerous letters and publications relating to his work, the Report on the Rio Flour take-over and a Memorandum that he wrote on the setting up of a company in Brazil. And 35 albums of his own and others' photographs of the family.

Much of this life story is based on the diaries. These were social and personal and almost never mentioned business activities. But they convey an impression of the life of a hard-working and successful British businessman in an independent non-English speaking country far from Europe before, during and just after WW2. Unfortunately, the history of the company he and his colleagues managed so successfully has never been written.

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## 2. Family

Joe was the youngest of six children. Their parents were a Church of Ireland (Protestant) clergyman, Joseph Carolin, and his wife, Mary (née Wrench). The country was then part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the family would probably have described themselves as Anglo-Irish – but not of the land-owning Ascendancy. Joe must have acquired his first passport in the mid-1920s and it was, like all his subsequent ones, British. He regarded himself as British but of Irish origin.

The earliest record of the Carolin (originally Carolan) family is an indenture dated 1784 for an apprenticeship as a carpenter of Edward Carolin. Born in the town of Monaghan in 1761, Edward was, by 1795, a Freeman (by service) of Dublin. Working as Edward Carolin & Sons, Carpenters and Builders, he built parts of Gardiner and Talbot Streets. He was Joe's great-great-grandfather. The Carolins swiftly progressed from trade to the professions – Joe's grandfather and great grandfather are described as architects on the certificate for his grandfather's 1855 Londonderry marriage to Elizabeth Sinclair. At some stage before the 1800s, they must also have become protestants.



*The 1784 apprentice's indenture*



*Crimean veteran grandfather*



*Clergyman father*

Joe's mother's family came from Norfolk. Wrenches and Elwins, they are well recorded from Norman times. Her father, Colonel Wrench, served in the Army Commissariat. An unfinished journal exists of his journey out to Scutari in the Crimean War. Later, he served in Ceylon, Malta and Ireland, where he retired.

### ***Father***

Joe's father was an exhibitor and prizeman of Trinity College Dublin. Following ordination, he served as a curate in Armagh before being persuaded by a brother to come and work in the Church of England. This brother was the notorious Rector of Wivenhoe, the Reverend John Sinclair Carolin, to this day remembered as 'a brilliant Irishman who liked wine, women and song'. Joseph spent six years as curate in Denmark Hill before returning to Dublin, to a curacy in Rathmines. In 1900 he became Rector of St Matthew's, Irishtown. Joe later claimed that the diversion to London had been a mistake – his father lost his place on the Church of Ireland's promotion ladder.

Joseph and Mary's first child, Eileen, born in 1892, was followed by Charles, Grace, Horace and, in Dublin on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1905, the twins. The eldest was called Elwin Wrench – after his mother's two Norfolk families. The youngest was called Joseph Sinclair – after his father – and, to avoid confusion, was called Sinclair by the family (and, until his marriage, by his friends). The identical twins were sent to separate prep schools as it was felt they would be easier to control that way. From there, in September 1919, they went to Durham School, with the benefit of reduced fees for clergy children. Reaching the Upper Vth, they left in April 1922, aged 16.



*The twins – Sinclair (Joe) and Elwyn – growing up*

Joseph Carolin spent thirty years as Rector of St Matthew's, Irishtown. Located near the docks, it served, among others, the crews of the Liverpool ferries. Joseph did much to reconstruct the parish, building a new parochial hall and a rectory which replaced the family's home at 56 Tritonville Road, Sandymount. When he died, in 1939, he was the subject of a substantial obituary in the *Irish Times*, in which he was described as 'one of the best-loved pastors in the Church of Ireland.' His last years were spent as curate of Kill of the Grange, a small parish then on the Dublin outskirts.

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### 3. Articles in London

At Durham, Elwin had been on the classical side and Joe on the modern. Between leaving Durham in April 1922 and arriving in London a year later, Joseph tutored his sons for Higher School Certificate. Following the establishment of the Irish Free State, the long-term local employment prospects for Anglo-Irish graduates were distinctly unpromising. It was decided that, rather than follow their father and eldest brother to Trinity, the twins should train for a profession in England and, following the recommendation of a Dublin family, the Worthingtons, who lived near their grandfather, they chose accountancy. Training was paid in the form of a premium for his articles, fees for his tuition and exams and a weekly allowance. All are set out in a cash book entitled *Various statements in connection with monies received from Father from March 5<sup>th</sup> 1923 to June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1928* which Joe appears to have drawn up on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1929. The opening page records that he came to London on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1923, commenced articles sixteen days later, completed articles on March 20<sup>th</sup> 1928 and started to earn a salary on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1928.

Joe was articled to Turquand Young and Co. and Elwin to Chantrey Button and Co. The Articles of Agreement for Joe's 'clerkship' is a legal document between Adam Turquand-Young, the then senior partner of TY, described as a 'Gentleman Chartered Accountant'; Joe's father, 'hereinafter the said Parent'; and Joe 'hereinafter the said Clerk'. The Articles 'witnesseth that the said Clerk of his own free will and with the consent of the said Parent doth place and bind himself Clerk to the said Accountant to serve him from the day of the date hereof and during and unto the full end and term of five years ... in consideration whereof and of the sum of three hundred and sixty-seven pounds and ten shillings the said Joseph Sinclair Carolin to the said Accountant paid' ... and so on. The document was signed and witnessed by Adam Turquand-Young and Joe in London. Joseph's signature was witnessed in Dublin by Nat Taylor, the family solicitor based at 23 Stephen's Green.

£367 would be the equivalent of about £23,500 today. Assuming that Elwin's fees were the same, that meant that Joseph paid the equivalent of £47,000 for the twins' articles and upkeep. How on earth did he manage? A probate declaration of 1921 perhaps reveals the answer. In that year, his sister, Ida Carolin, left £8,334 (about £43,350 today) to be shared by Joseph and his younger daughter, Grace. The total cost to his father from when Joe came to London in 1923 to when he started to earn a salary in 1928 is set out by Joe in the cash book mentioned above. Throughout this period his father was paying him an allowance which varied from £146 per annum down, as he started earning, to £32. His father also paid smaller sums for tuition, some fares and so on. Joe, in his turn, gave his father the £74 bonus he earned in 1928. Much later, when he was working in Brazil, he regularly sent money to his father. All told, the fees and allowance came to some £930 or about £59,000 today.

#### ***Keeping his own accounts***

Joe's first account book (*£ Cash Book 1923*) is in a small Belfast Banking Company cash book. It opens on 5<sup>th</sup> March with 17/5½d. in hand, 10/- from his sister Eileen, £1 from his father and a 6d. tip to a taxi driver. The following day he spends 4½d. on a razor outfit, 1½ d. on a stamp, 3d. on a booklet on London street names, 1d. on an evening paper and 9d. on oranges and apples. And so, day by day, it continues. A writing pad, fares and, on the credit side, a generous £3 loan from his oldest brother Charlie, 4/6d. lent by sister Grace followed by ½ d. given by her. The entries for 13<sup>th</sup> March record the disastrous loss in a purse of 5/9d. Lunches varying from 6 ½ d. to 1/5d. start to appear supplemented by sweets, chocolate,

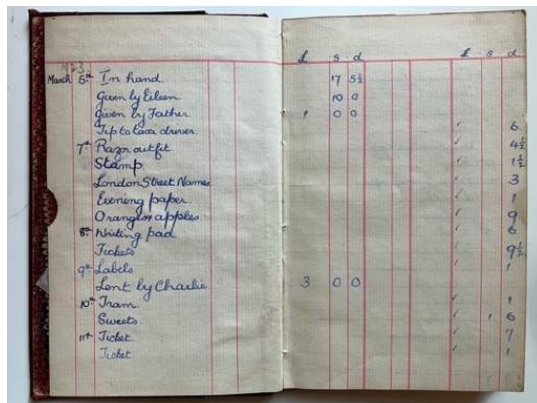


caramel and apples. The rather large expenditure of 4/- on chocolates is explained by a later pencil note – present.

The only books to appear in the cash book are the American, Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Essays' and L Cuthbert Cropper's 'Book Keeping'. The former's exhortations on self-reliance, compensation, experience and spirituality no doubt compensated by the latter's more practical instruction. It looks as if these purchases were recommended by a tutor. Payments for tickets (for the cinema?), tea (at Joe Lyons?), Oxo and tea with brother Horace and even 1p. for a fortune teller appear. So, too, do more loans from Charlie and more gifts from his father. There are also loan repayments and gifts to Lifeboats (today's RNLI).



The first account book



A sample page



Articles for accountancy

The next surviving volume has two titles: *Balance Sheets and Accounts 1924/36* and *Ledger 1925/36*. Here is the first evidence of his accountancy training. All income and expenditure is not only recorded but analysed as well. In 1925, his handwriting starts to change, becoming less round and more deliberately formed. By 1926 his mature hand is becoming evident – more angular, forward leaning and clear. The ledger is organised under headings: Amusements, Board, Books, Books (work), Bank Charges, Bicycle, Allowance, Bad Debts, Bonus, Furniture ... Clothes, Cigarettes tobacco and matches, Dividends and Interest, Charity, Dentist, Capital, Furniture, Fares ... and so on. The monthly totals include what must be the number of transactions, based on other cash books. The ledger reveals that, by 1925, aged 19, he was smoking and bought his first pipe later that year. I remember him as a pipe rather than a cigarette smoker. Gramophone records and tennis are the only two (very occasional) identifiable amusements in the ledger. Medicine was minimal and the dentist was visited but there is no mention of the doctor. As in his later life, he was generous to charities, with gifts and with tips.

During the General Strike of 1926, Joe acted as a conductor on the London underground. Like many other strike breakers, he was given a small silver tray inscribed with the thanks of the London Metropolitan Railway for his work during the strike. Supporting this, there is a cash book entry for 31<sup>st</sup> December 1926 'General Strike wages: Metropolitan Railway £4. 13. 3d.' In later life, Joe regretted his strike-breaking intervention.

### ***First investments – and qualification***

A 1927 entry brings the first mention of savings and investments. This is for some National Savings certificates, by then worth £647, bought for him in 1921 out of the legacy from his Aunt Ida. He bought his first shares for £200 in 1928. These were in John Waddington and Co., a Leeds printing firm. Selling them six years later, he made a profit of £23.15.0d. Apart



from a smaller 1928 investment in Morgan Squire and Co, Joe purchased no more shares until 1934 – a pause explained, no doubt, by the Great Crash of 1929.

Joe qualified as a Chartered Accountant on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1928, shortly before his 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Just over a year later, in December 1930, when he left Turquand Young to join Whinney Murray in Paris, one of the five partners, Stanley Young, wrote:

*On leaving the service of my firm on 31<sup>st</sup> instant, I wish to let you know how sorry I am that you are leaving us.*

*During the period while you were serving your Articles here and since then, in all about seven years, we have formed a high opinion of your abilities as an Accountant and you have always carried out to our entire satisfaction the work entrusted to you.*

*I take this opportunity of wishing you every success in your professional career.*

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## 4. Young man in Paris

At this point, we move away from the Ledger and Cash Book to the first diary – an Agenda Félix Potin – for 1930. Unlike the later diaries, this is a desk diary (issued to customers of the eponymous grocery chain). The entry for *mercredi 1er Janvier (circoncision)* reads:

*Elwin and I left Victoria by 'Golden Arrow' for Berlin and Paris. Seen off by Eileen, Jill and Miss Lyttle. Met by Hernandez and had dinner at his home. Went to Mlle. Dalesme*

His twin, Elwin, had also decided to work on the continent for a British accountancy firm. The diary contains nothing about Joe's auditing work – instead, it records people he meets socially, places he visits and letters and postcards sent and received. He seems to visit Mlle Dalesme a lot – presumably for French conversation lessons. The Sunday after he arrived, he went to an afternoon dance and thence to the Hotel Ambassador followed by dinner in the Rue de la Paix. The following Sunday:

*Went up to the top of Arc de Triomphe  
Went to concert with Pierre Gastonlide and two others at Salle Saveau  
Met Miss Twtchin and Miss Derrick at Gare du Nord. Had dinner with them at the Paris-Lyon Palace Hotel. Afterwards we went to the Folies Bergère.*

What a life! Who were the ladies? They came to lunch the next (working) day. And then things seem to calm down except at weekends when dinners, dancing and women – Eva, 'American girls', a Dutch girl, Bello, Balbin, Marjorie Langton, Jaq and many more – feature regularly. Jaq was Jacquelyne (at first, he seems uncertain how to spell her name), an American with whom he remained in contact for the rest of his life. By June, tennis and swimming feature together with many more mentions of Jaq, now Jac. And then, on 8<sup>th</sup> July:

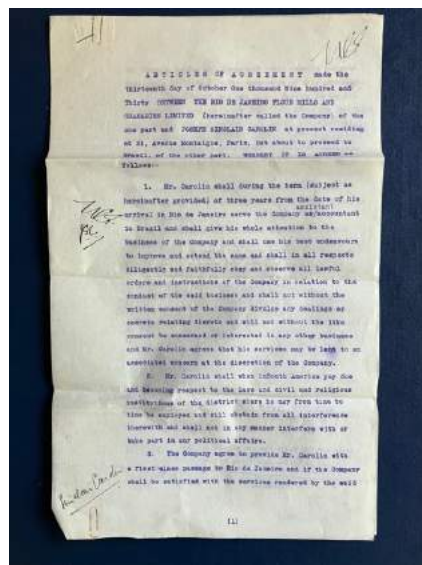
*Jac's last night in Paris. Went to [?] Bar with her  
Dinner at Rotisserie de la Reine Pedanque  
Went to Café de la Paix afterwards. Drinks in restaurant in Bois  
Went for a taxi drive round Paris.*



Jac – American in Paris



Sinclair – young Anglo-Irishman



The RFM job contract

Joe wrote to Jac a week later. The following day a letter from her arrived. They were to continue to correspond at significant moments and, in 1966, they met again in North Carolina.

### ***Planning ahead***

On 14<sup>th</sup> August, he left Paris and returned to England by the Dunkirk to Tilbury ferry. Elwin had also returned from Berlin. Two days later, he had ‘Lunch with Rogers’ – the first mention of someone who was to have a profound influence on his life. Percy Rogers was then Assistant Secretary of the Rio de Janeiro Flour Mills and Granaries (RFM) and I think that Joe must have met him when auditing their accounts at Turquand Young’s. Later that week, he and Elwin crossed over to Ireland by way of the Heysham to Belfast ferry. He stayed with his parents for two weeks, visiting friends and relations, playing tennis, swimming at Howth – and exchanging letters with Jac – before returning to London for a few days during which he had another lunch with Rogers. The following day, before returning to Paris, he had a medical examination – a common preliminary before being accepted for employment overseas.

A week later, back in Paris, there is a diary note ‘Interview with Gregory’. This must have been Mr Gregory, the Rio-based General Manager of the RFM who Joe was to succeed about thirteen years later. He had a French wife and must have been on home leave. Joe then returned to Paris where his social life (and French lessons) picked up again and his two sisters came over for a week. In late September he ‘Had a letter from East’, the RFM Company Secretary. Joe replied to this a few days later questioning the salary and other matters. It’s a tough, business-like letter entirely appropriate for someone for whom ‘any step I may now take must necessarily greatly affect my whole life.’

### ***Leaving Paris – and Europe***

Early in October he returned to London for an interview at the RFM. He spent the night with Rogers – so it must have been a ‘done deal’. Three days later, he signed the Articles of Agreement. He was to be paid £600 for the first year rising in annual steps to £650 and £700 together with £100 when he became proficient in Portuguese. The contract was for three years in the first instance and he was entitled to first-class travel. Returning to Paris he gave his notice to Whinney Murray, leaving on 31<sup>st</sup> November. Once again, he received an excellent reference from the Senior Partner.

For the day before he left Paris there is a tantalizing entry in his diary: Lunch with General Macready at St Lazare. Sir Nevil Macready was the last British military commander in Ireland. A veteran of the Boer and First World Wars, he was later Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Despite Irish connections (his wife was Irish) he claimed to ‘loathe the country’. As General Officer Commanding the British Forces operating in a counter-insurgency role against the IRA he was deeply involved in maintaining order during the Civil War. The General and the 25 years old chartered accountant knew each other through the Worthington family who were near neighbours of Joe’s maternal grandfather in Dublin. A later diary entry for 1<sup>st</sup> December 1932 records Joe writing to Sir Nevil – to which he received a reply in mid-January 1933. The following year, while on home leave, Joe and Elwin visited the General in Paris. They exchanged letters in February 1935 shortly after Joe’s engagement.

The last entry in the 1930 diary is for 15<sup>th</sup> November. He had spent the fortnight since his return in Ireland, with his family and friends. It was to be the last time he would see them for

three years. Elwin remained in Berlin until 1933 when he moved to Paris. He, too, was to move further afield when, in 1934, he went out to Medan, Sumatra to work for Harrisons and Crosfield, the tea, rubber and timber merchants. Whereas Joe was not directly affected by WW2, Elwin was to escape Sumatra in 1942 and move to Australia, where he joined the RAAF as an accounts officer. After the war, he returned briefly to Sumatra before being appointed to the London office.

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## 5. Early years in Brazil

Joe's 1931 diary is a Brazilian desk diary – a good way of familiarising himself with the language. It opens with a list of the 18 persons he had written to whilst on board and starts on 7<sup>th</sup> January:

*Arrived at Rio on 'Desna'*

*Met by Tootal who took me to the Castello. He stayed for dinner.*

*Went for a walk with him afterwards.*



*First sight of the entrance to the bay in Rio*



*RMS Desna*

The *Desna* was a Royal Mail Lines passenger cargo ship built in 1911. She sailed to the River Plate from Liverpool and, at 13 Knots, must have taken about 19 days to reach Rio. Tootal was Stanley Tootal, nearly ten years younger than Joe, English but born in Brazil and working for the RFM. They were to become life-long friends and godfathers to their children. Also travelling on the *Desna* was Tom Rusling, his wife and son. They were to disembark in Santos from whence they would travel to Sao Paulo. Tom, older than Joe, was also an RFM employee, and became, with Joe and Stanley, the third member of the trio who managed the company after WW2 and contested the 1952 take-over.

Temporarily based at the Castello, a hotel near what had been the oldest part of the city, Joe began to familiarise himself with the company and, starting Portuguese lessons at the Berlitz Schools. He met other RFM families who invited him to dinner and swam, played tennis and went to the cinema at weekends. The only entry for 6<sup>th</sup> February reads '*Wedding invitation from Jac*'. It was seven months to the day since the taxi ride round Paris. He replied four days later.

A month after his arrival, Joe left the Castello and moved to 18 Rua Copacabana. No such street exists today but it was almost certainly in Copacabana – which explains the numerous diary entries referring to swimming in the area. By 12<sup>th</sup> March he had completed his report on the RFM Accountancy Department. Nine days later, a Saturday, the diary records:

*Discovered cash fraud of Rs: 100:000c.000*

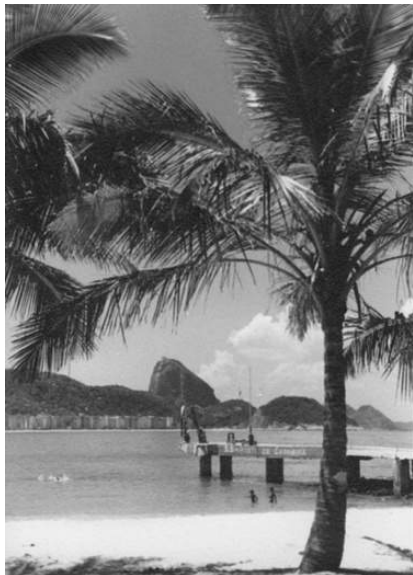
*Lunch at Tootals*

*Went afterwards to play golf*

On 9<sup>th</sup> April he went to '*P of W's banquet at Cop. Palace*'. This was part of the Prince of Wales' 1931 tour of South America. Some 285 of the British community – all men –



attended. The RFM manager, Mr Gregory, sat the end of the top table. Stanley and the newly arrived Joe were at table 26 (out of 30). The interesting thing is the size of this community and the number of names (and people) which my sister and I remember from the postwar period. Many were from families that had built up local businesses and passed them on to the next generation. The ‘Cop Palace’ where the banquet was held was the Copacabana Palace Hotel.



*The bay, the sea and the mountains – a landscape utterly different from anywhere else*

By June, Joe was playing in tennis tournaments and for the Paysandu 2<sup>nd</sup> eleven against the Rio Cricket Club. The latter, which he joined, had a fine ground in Niteroi. I cannot remember my father showing any interest in cricket when, years later, we lived in a house overlooking the second oldest cricket ground in England, the Vine in Sevenoaks. In July, he ‘*Went to the Rigger Dance at Niteroi with Light*’. This is one of the first references to Kenneth Light. Ken worked for the Bank of London and South America, just down the street from the RFM offices in the Rua Quitanda. He, too, was to become a life-long friend.

And so the year – the first of three before any home leave – passed on. He wrote home regularly, recording all letters, post and Christmas cards sent and received. In December there are the first mentions of travels beyond Rio – first to Petropolis, later to Teresopolis where he appears to have spent the New Year holiday. He does not record business travel – so we have no idea if he visited Sao Paulo during this first year.



### ***1932 A rise – and a car***

Joe's 1932 diary is an English Lett's pocket diary – the first of the many small diaries which he used for the rest of his life. It was bought from Crashley & Co., the English language book shop in the fashionable Rua do Ouvidor. The diary records both a widening social circle and his monthly transfers to his London bank – to whom he writes about investing £233 in War Loan rather than shares. On 25<sup>th</sup> March (Good Friday) there is the first mention of the Williams family, to whom he went after supper and met again the following day. Tom Williams was the manager of Nova America Fabril, a cotton mill. Sociable Lancastrians, Tom and his wife, Nell, had three daughters and lived near the mill, at Del Castillo, some way out of Rio. It was at their house that Joe was to meet my mother, Jean.



*Stanley and Joe*



*Joe with friends and his new Hillman*



*In the office*

Diary entries in July and August suggest that Joe was being seen as a safe pair of hands while the General manager, Gregory, was on home leave. They had lunch together before he left for Europe and kept in touch by letter. On 20<sup>th</sup> August, Joe took delivery of a Hillman Minx. The next day, a Sunday, he drove to Gavea with Tootal before visiting the Williams. He seems to have been the first of his friends to own a car and a month later, having done 1100 km., the car went back to Thorneycroft for its first 'examination'. Two days later, he got his Brazilian driving licence. On 24<sup>th</sup> October, his salary was increased to £1,000 – significantly more than had been agreed in his contract.

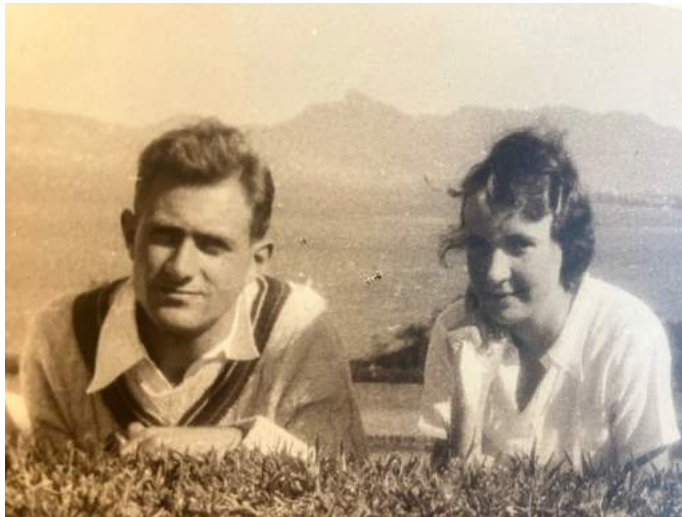
On 14<sup>th</sup> December *Arrived in Sao Paulo. Lunch with [?] and Rusling.* He must have travelled by overnight train and was there for four days before going to Santos where he caught a Royal Mail cargo liner to return to Rio. Christmas Day dinner was at the Williams, where he had become a frequent guest – and where was again invited five days later.

### ***1933 Jean Burns***

By March 1933 Joe was at parties or dinners at the Williams on an almost weekly basis. He was also starting to visit the Lynches – an Anglo Brazilian family who had a farm – Boa Fé – near Teresopolis. His friend Ken Light (later, Bank of London and South America manager in Rio) was to marry Stella Lynch. He was playing golf more often – frequently with Tom Williams – at the beautiful course and clubhouse in Gavea, a relaxation that was to become a weekend habit until he left Brazil.



Joe in cangaceiro hat



Joe and Jean engaged



Jean as Britannia

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July there is the first mention of my mother, Jean. After playing golf, he went to the 'Grill Room with Peggy, Jean, Kathleen, Pat, the Parkinsons and Tootal'. The following week he had a party at the Golf Club. Two weeks later, after golf, he took Jean to the Missions to Seamen dance. The next day, after bathing, he 'Went with Jean to Petropolis. Supper at Burns'. The Burns were Jean's parents. This is becoming serious – so much so that he had dinner with them two days later and again, at the weekend, following golf, a swim at the lido and a concert with Jean in Niteroi. The next day was spent at the Williams and the day after that was 'Jean's cocktail party'. On 21<sup>st</sup> August, Joe travelled to Belo Horizonte with Mr Mascarenhas – a friendly well-built Portuguese who oversaw the RFM cotton mills. Not content with a cocktail party, Jean had a dance on 5<sup>th</sup> September. Four days later, on the Sunday, he 'Went after lunch with Burns up Bay. Supper at Burns.' Going up the Bay was usually done in one of Wilson's tugs – Jean's father was General Manager in Brazil of Wilson Sons, the largest shipping agents in South America.

From now on, Jean features frequently in the diaries and never more so than after 20 December when 'Jean got mumps'. Joe wrote to her the next day and the next when she sent him a photo and the day after when he sent her one. Once she had recovered, Joe even manages to meet her for tea on a weekday working afternoon. I imagine that they went to the Confeitaria Colombo, a few minutes' walk from the office.

### **1934 First home leave**

On 25<sup>th</sup> March 1934, after a final afternoon and dinner at the Burns, Joe returned on the Royal Mail passenger liner *Almanzora* for three months home leave. The ship called at Bahia (San Salvador), Pernambuco (Recife), Madeira, Lisbon and Corunna before reaching Southampton. It was a hectic holiday which included meeting management in London, a family wedding in Ireland, renewing friendships in Dublin, London and Paris, time with his parents, the London theatre, meeting Elwin in Paris (where he was now working), visiting the Hague, a week taking his parents to the Lake District and Chatsworth, a fortnight with Percy Rogers and his wife in Germany and France. After a final hectic week in London, he sailed on the Royal Mail's *Highland Monarch* on 7<sup>th</sup> July. He was entertained – and lived – in some style, certainly well beyond a level which any of his family was accustomed to.

Arriving in Rio on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, he dined that evening at the Burns. He and Jean had been in touch throughout his absence. Life resumed its familiar pattern except that, instead of

mentions of 'dinner at Burns' it sometimes becomes 'Jean's flat'. In early September, he moved lodgings to Santa Teresa. Christmas Eve and Day were spent at the Burns.

### ***1935 Marriage***

On New Year's Day 1935 they went to party at the Williams, where they had met 18 months before. On 15<sup>th</sup> January, Joe wrote to, among others, Jac. This suggests that he was by now engaged – although there is no mention of this in the diary. In mid-March Jean and her parents leave on the *Andalucia Star* for England. While there, Jean was to cross over to Ireland to meet Joe's parents. The visit provoked the following from Joe's father:

*My dear Sinclair,*

*We have now had the pleasure of meeting Jean. We all like her very much. She is a nice and sensible girl, and I consider you are very lucky to have come across her and secured her affections. I hope, when you get married, that you will do whatever she tells you; for I think she will always advise you for your own good.. She is an exceptionally nice girl. ....*

Jean arrived back in Rio on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. They met for dinner, drives, tea, dinner, choosing a flat and furniture and making arrangements for the wedding – the civil version of which took place on 30 November. The diary entry for 7<sup>th</sup> December reads:

*Got myself married to Jean Burns. We went to Petropolis after the Country Club*

They went on to spend a week on the coast at Guaraja, travelling to nearby Santos by ship from Rio.



*Joe and Jean wedding photo*



*Honeymooners*

### ***1936 The family expands***

On 7<sup>th</sup> September 1936, Joe left Rio for São Paulo via Santos. It was not a well-timed trip because, four days later, I was born. He returned to Rio the following day and went straight to the hospital – which he visited once or twice every day until we were released on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

Joe and Jean's social life never quite recovered the hectic pace of the previous years. There were still dinners – but not nearly as many – and friends were still seen off at the Port as they left for 'Home' and greeted when they returned. The procedure usually involved going on board the ship and, sometimes, even lunching aboard.

### ***1937 Second home leave***

In April 1937, three years after his last home leave, Joe took his small family back to London and Dublin. After a week in London, where a nurse was engaged for me, they crossed over to Dublin where my grandfather, Joseph, baptised me at the small church in Kill of the Grange and time was spent with Carolin relations and friends. A month later, they returned to London where it was the turn of the Burns family – although Joseph and Mary came over from Dublin to spend a fortnight in London, as the guests, no doubt, of Joe. In late July, I had my photograph taken by the child photographer, Marcus Adams, a week before the return from Tilbury to Rio.

In October they left the Ipanema flat and moved into a house in the Fonte de Saudade, one street in from the Lagoa Rodrigues Freitas, where the rowing events were to take place in the 2016 Olympic Games.

### ***1938 The family expands again***

Joe's diary entry for 10<sup>th</sup> March 1938 reads '*Diana born 3.30 am in hospital*'. Daily visits – often with me – to my mother and sister in the hospital continued until 26<sup>th</sup> March. This year, Joe had a fortnight's local leave which the family took in Teresopolis. Christmas was quieter than before: Joe swam at the Country Club, had a visit from his manager and the Burns to dinner.

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## 6. War Years in Brazil

1939 saw life continuing much as before – golf on Sundays, Chamber of Commerce lunches, lots of teas and dinners ... In June, Joe 'Took delivery of new Chevrolet'. This car replaced his Hudson Terraplane. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, he flew up to Belo Horizonte where he was the following day, when war broke out. On 31<sup>st</sup> September, Joe attended a farewell lunch for the British Ambassador at the Gloria Hotel.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December the war got closer to Rio than at any time over the next five years when Commodore Sir Henry Harwood won the Battle of the River Plate. The cruisers *Exeter*, *Ajax* and *Achilles* cornered the pocket-battleship *Graf Spee* in Montevideo, after which she scuttled herself. It didn't feature in Joe's diary. On 16<sup>th</sup> December, a cable arrived to tell Joe that his father had died. He wrote to his mother that day. The next day, the battle-cruiser *Renown* and the carrier *Ark Royal* – part of the force that had been collected together to trap the *Graf Spee*, arrived in Rio for a brief stay. Joe and Jean went to church and 'Douglas and Oliver came to tea. Dinner at the Golf Club.' Douglas Drysdale was my mother's cousin. A mere Lieutenant in the Royal Marines, he was commander of the *Renown*'s Marine detachment. He went on to have a most distinguished career and, leading the Royal Marine Commandos in Korea, made his reputation as 'America's favourite Royal Marine.'

Christmas that year appears to have been celebrated much as before.



*HMS Ajax leaves Rio after the Battle of the River Plate. The Graf Spee's smoking hull*

### **1940 Echoes of war**

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 1940, Joe recorded the family's move to 226 Avenida Viera Souto. The house faced the beach at Ipanema on a site which is now occupied by tall blocks of flats.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May, the Blenheim bomber which was being piloted by Jean's brother, Robert, was shot down over the Netherlands and he was taken prisoner. This resulted in Jean dismissing the German Jewish refugee who was our nanny – an unreasonable and irrational act. None of this features in the diary. Six days later, the family sailed for the Argentine on the American-flagged Moore McCormack *Uruguay*. On the passage from Montevideo to Buenos Aires, the ship passed the still smoking wreck of the *Graf Spee*.

A contemporary letter from Joe to his Uncle Ben in Ireland reveals that the trip to the Argentine (where the RFM sourced its wheat) combined business and holiday. It was cut



short by a week when, following the Fall of France, Joe returned to Rio by plane while Jean and the children returned by sea a fortnight later. Joe mentions being kept very busy by work for the British community. He adds that, like many others, he would prefer to return to Britain but adds that it would be impossible to replace them because Brazilian laws made it so difficult to do so with incomers. Joe was of the view that ‘90% of the Brazilian people are on our side’ in the war but that ‘a small though powerful minority thinks the other way ... the [Blacks] and Indians are not looked down on ... and, as most Brazilians have mixed blood ... it is mainly this that makes them favour our side. They know the German reputation for treating conquered people ...’ He mentions his reliance on radio news, listening to the BBC at 8am, 1 pm and 9 pm.

There’s a distinct falling off in the social life recorded in the diary. The entry for Christmas day just about sums it up – no dinners, just ‘Bathed’.

### ***1941 Social life winds down***

On 25<sup>th</sup> January, a Saturday, Joe played golf with three regular friends. In the evening he and Jean went with another couple to Australia Night at the Paysandu Club. Empire, Red Cross and, later, American social events were to feature prominently over the next five years. The news from Europe was very bad and, apart from such war-related events and a monthly visit to the cinema, social life became almost non-existent.

In April there’s evidence of Joe’s involvement with the British Community School. This, together with the English Church, were to be rebuilt on a new site over the next few years. He was to be loosely involved in this. Our first swimming lessons are recorded and – surprisingly – the death of our second dog, Dopey.

In late June, Joe – always a diligent correspondent – had a splurge of letter writing to family and friends in Ireland and England as well as to Elwin in Sumatra and Jac in the US. Warships continued to visit – the cruiser *Birmingham* came into port for a few days in early November. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, ‘Saw *Birmingham* off’. Many of the British community went down to the port on these occasions and there are photos of this one in the family album.

Two couples came to dinner on Christmas Day.

### ***1942 Buying land and donating a plane***

On 9<sup>th</sup> February, Jean’s younger sister, Margaret, sailed for England with many other young British volunteers from the Argentine and Brazil. She was to work at Bletchley Park. [Unrecorded in the diary was the departure of their father, Jim Burns, to England in 1940. By then retired, he was concerned for his mother in the blitz and determined to join the Home Guard. He returned to Rio in 1941 as a member of the British Economic Mission to South America.]

On 14<sup>th</sup>, Joe and Jean drove up beyond Petropolis to see some land at Nougaira. They were to buy this with a view to building a holiday home there at some later date. The home was never built and the land was finally sold when they left Brazil. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Joe attended a meeting about plans for the new Church.

On Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> March, ‘*Bathed. Queen Mary left.*’ I remember going out into Guanabara Bay and circling the huge grey-painted troopship, packed with Australian and New Zealand servicemen. Her stay was brief and she was sailing without an escort.





*Nougreira – where Joe bought land*



*HMT Queen Mary in the bay with troops*

In late October 'Left Avenida Viera Souto'. Leaving the beachfront, we moved to a house one block inland in the Rua Prudente de Moraes. On 5<sup>th</sup> November, 'Moinho Inglez aeroplane named Prefeito Passos. Lunch at Airport.' The plane was a yellow Piper Cub given to the FAB (the Brazilian Air Force) by the RFM and named after a local politician. It followed a Spitfire which the British Community gave the RAF. It had been named *Filho da Puta* (Son of a Bitch).

Christmas Day entry: 'Bathed. Burns to tea. Dinner at Williams'.

### ***1943 War efforts rewarded***

In mid-April, the cruiser *Despatch* arrived in Rio. She was there for nearly three weeks during which Joe and Jean became very friendly with an RNVR sub-lieutenant, Johnny Walker. The diary records parties, dinners and Johnny's stay with the family. The friendship was maintained until after the war.

On 6<sup>th</sup> May 'Lunch with Squire. Offered M.B.E. Cinema.' Four days later: 'Accepted M.B.E. Lunch with Haynes and Light. Mrs Burns to dinner and stayed.' The M.B.E. must have been for Joe's work as Treasurer of the British Community Fund, in raising money for the war effort (the Spitfire and Piper Cub) and the community (the Church and School).

Christmas was another sober affair: 'Bathed. Burns came to dinner.'

### ***1944 Appointed General Manager***

*No diary survives for the year when Joe was appointed Joint General Manager*

This is sad. It was in this year that Mr Gregory, the long-standing General Manager of the RFM in Brazil, died and Joe and Tom Rusling were appointed Joint General Managers in his place. Joe, the younger, was the senior of the two.

### ***1945 In London on VE Day***

On 8<sup>th</sup> March the diary has the first mention of Mr Corner – someone who was to have a profound impact on the RFM and all who worked in the company. 'Dinner with Cörners.' Mr Corner was a director of Warburgs which had purchased shares in the RFM. The following day, Joe flew to Curitiba and thence to Sao Paulo. Such visits by air to the company's mills and factories elsewhere in Brazil were to become more and more frequent.



*Joe flew on a PanAmerican clipper from Natal to Lisbon*



*Victory in Europe celebrations in London*

On the 8<sup>th</sup> April, Joe, summoned back to London head office, left Rio for the long flight to England. That first day he flew from Rio to Maceio and thence to Bahia, Recife and Natal. Eight hours in all. There he waited for ten days for a PanAmerican Clipper flying-boat. Fortunately, he was not alone – he appears to have had several introductions. On the 18<sup>th</sup> he flew from Natal to Fisherman’s Lake in Liberia – a transatlantic flight of thirteen and a half hours. From there he flew to Bolama in Portuguese Guinea and thence, on the following day, to Lisbon – a flight of sixteen hours. The next day, the 21<sup>st</sup>, he flew to Hurn (by a KLM land plane – presumably a DC-3) in five and a half hours. The total flying time from Rio had been 43 hours.

That journey was described in the first of the letters which Jo and Jean exchanged over the next few weeks. Just three survive – three of Joe’s and one of Jean’s. His are typewritten – almost certainly dictated to a secretary. Shortly after arriving in England, Joe went over to Ireland for four days. On his return he was engaged in Company matters but took time to look at two prep schools – in preparation for my coming to England to boarding school. Hedging his bets and looking even further ahead, he also put my name down for five public schools. A combination of the Chairman’s illness and Victory Day celebrations extended his stay and enabled him to see relations and friends in and around London. He also managed to see Jean’s brother very shortly after his arrival from a prisoner of war camp in Germany.

Jean sent six letters but only the last survives. Three foolscap ages long, it is in her usual clear, well-formed handwriting and carried the devastating news that the Rusling’s twelve year old son was seriously ill with meningitis and that, since I had been playing with him, our family was in quarantine. The letter was never delivered – which is why it survives.

On 26<sup>th</sup> May, Joe returned from Hurn to Lisbon, where he stayed at the Palace Hotel in Estoril. He was there for four days, meeting friends, going to church, calling at the embassy ... He left Lisbon late on the 30<sup>th</sup>, arriving at Dakar the following morning and flying on to Bolama and Fishermans Lake. Thence, over the next three days, he flew on to Natal, Recife, Maceio and Caravelas (Rio). The return flight had taken 44 hours and 25 minutes. A few days later Jean and the two children went off to Sao Paulo to stay with cousins in the country for nearly three weeks.

In late July, Jean’s brother Robert who had been a prisoner of war since May 1940 arrived for ten weeks leave. He looked pretty gaunt.

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## 7. Postwar in Brazil

With the arrival of Peace, social life started to pick up. Here are the entries for 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> December:

*Dinner at Ruslings*

*Mills and K Ryan for dinner*

*Lunch at Jockey Club with Mulhall, Tom, Jordao and Mascarenhas*

*Dinner at Gloria with Mulhalls*

*Mulhalls, Squires, Ruslings and Kenyon to dinner at ABI*

*AAMI party. Lights to dinner*

*Bathed. Kenyon to tea. Burns to dinner*

On Christmas Day, we went to Church, had the Ruslings to tea and Mr Kenyon and our grandparents (the Burns) for dinner.

### ***1946 The family starts dispersing***

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 1946, we bathed at Ipanema and then went up with our grandparents to the restaurant in the Floresta de Tijuca for lunch. That was a special treat. Three days later, we sailed on the *Jutlandia* with our mother to England, where I was going to be ‘settled into school’. Joe, having had dinner on board before we sailed, stayed in Rio. He led a busy life – involved not just with the ever-expanding RFM but with the Chamber of Commerce (of which he was now Chairman), the new Church and School and much else. The RFM had acquired a printing firm and was now planning the construction of the largest biscuit factory in South America, in Sao Paulo.



*Last family group photo, December 1945*



*Our beach at Ipanema*

Jean and my sister Diana returned to Rio on 11<sup>th</sup> October. On 14<sup>th</sup> November, they moved to 39A Ladeira d’Ascurra, Cosme Velho. With the exception of a few years by the Lagoa, Joe and Jean had always lived in Ipanema. 39A was a big change. It was the first floor of a two-storey house set in a very steep cobbled street on the lower slopes of the Corcovado, the mountain surmounted by the very large figure of Christ. Outside the drawing room, a large balcony opened almost into the trees. Our part of the garden was shaded, densely planted and full of fruit trees and a coffee plant surviving from the days when it was part of a coffee plantation. It was cool and very different from the cement and sand of Ipanema. In an old part of the city, it had some history. And when it rained, torrents flowed down the street.

On Christmas Day there were six for dinner.



*The first floor flat opened out onto a balcony with a view down the valley towards the city and the bay*

### ***1947 First post war Home Leave***

British politicians and personalities of various kinds – authors, musicians and retired military men started visiting Brazil and Joe, as he became more prominent in the community, found himself drawn in to meeting them. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1947, there was a lunch at the ABI (Brazilian Press Association) for Anthony Eden followed by a reception at the Church Hall. The next day, there was a lunch at the Itamarati (the Brazilian Foreign Ministry) and another reception at the Embassy. Finally, on the third day, Joe went to the airport to see Eden off. This custom of ‘seeing people off’ began with long sea journeys – when people were going away for a long time (or for ever). It was interesting to see how it continued to be followed now that people were flying. And people wore their best clothes both to travel and to say farewell – and welcome. On 22<sup>nd</sup> April, there’s a diary entry: ‘Saw Ambassador off’. This Ambassador was Sir Donald Gainer – one of the two Joe worked closely with. As Consul in Vienna in the early 30s, Gainer had lent Paddy Leigh Fermor money (mentioned in *A Time of Gifts*).

On 16<sup>th</sup> June, Joe left for Home Leave in England on the *Highland Brigade*. Jean and Diana, unable to get passage on a ship (these were rationed), returned to England by a British South American Airways York. Landing at Tilbury, Joe was met at Liverpool Street by Jean, his brother Elwin and sister Eileen and, for some mysterious reason, Jean’s Uncle Jack. The following day they visited me at my prep school. Elwin, my godfather, having arrived in England a few weeks before, had also come to see me at school. The visit was completely unexpected – indeed, I did not even know that he had returned from the Far East. Joe and Elwin were identical twins and I was shocked into silence to find, waiting for me, a man who looked like my father with a strange woman who was definitely not my mother. There was much catching up to do. Joe and Elwin had not seen each other since 1934.

The first six weeks were spent visiting friends in the Home Counties, lunching and dining with other friends in London – Pruniers, the Café Royal, the Great Eastern Hotel, the City Club, the Berkley, Piccadilly Grill, Savoy and Dorchester House are among the places mentioned. The extravagance is deceptive – the basic meal charge was limited by law to 5 shillings. On 12<sup>th</sup> July, Joe picked up a Hillman Minx under a scheme that allowed visitors to Britain to purchase a car here free of purchase tax on condition that they exported it to their home country at the end of their stay. They also received a generous allowance of



petrol ration coupons. At the end of August, we drove from Liphook, where we had been based, to Fishguard. The first night was spent in Abergavenny, the second on the ferry to Rosslare from where we drove to Shelton Abbey, a hotel (now Ireland's 'most progressive prison') near Wicklow. There we were joined by Joe's mother, Gran, and stayed for the next three weeks. Dublin did not feature as prominently as on previous visits.

Both before the Irish visit and on the way back, visits were made to 'look at' schools. Such visits had been a feature of Jo's return in 1945 – looking for a prep school for me. Now it was public schools for both me and Diana – Winchester, Stowe, Shrewsbury, Charterhouse and St Mary's Calne. There were also business meetings and trips. These started with, shortly after his arrival, an afternoon at Wimbledon with the RFM chairman, Mr Sheppard and concluded with a four-day trip to Zurich in connection with macaroni manufacturing machines (RFM made pasta in Rio). And then, on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, Joe sailed for Rio, leaving Jean and Diana in England ...

### ***1948 Mr Körner reappears***

... who returned to Rio on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1948. Their arrival coincided with that of Mr Sheppard who, over next month, Joe accompanied on visits to RFM factories and agents in Brazil and the Argentine. Joe's diary is as full as it was in the late 30s – indeed, even fuller. Other visitors wined and dined included Field Marshall Alexander – presumably in Brazil in recognition of his command of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army in Italy of which the Brazilian Expeditionary Force was a part. On 3<sup>rd</sup> August, I arrived on the *Highland Princess*. We remained in Rio but joined other British families for Sunday picnics on remote beaches or on a tug in the bay. A month later, Jean, Diana and I left for England on the *Princess*.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November Joe and his fellow Joint General Manager '*Had lunch with Körner at Airport*'. This was the gentleman who first appeared on the scene in 1944 [note the spelling change]. The Airport restaurant was in one of the most important modernist buildings in Rio. It overlooked the flying-boat moorings on the bay side, had gardens by Roberto Burle Marx on the landside and a fine atrium inside – a pleasant place for a meal, close to the city centre.

### ***1949 Second post war Home Leave***

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 1949, in São Paulo, Körner, Joe and Stanley Tootal (the local manager) had lunch at the Esplanada. The RFM was constructing the largest biscuit factory in South America. Körner would certainly have been interested. Joe and Körner, together with Tom Rusling, met again in Rio on 31<sup>st</sup> January –for another lunch at the Airport.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February, Jean arrived from England on one of the new Blue Star cargo liners – replacements for war losses. Diana had joined me at boarding school in England. On 24<sup>th</sup> March, Joe '*Visited Magdalena*'. This was the new Royal Mail Lines cargo liner – another war loss replacement – on its much-heralded maiden voyage to the River Plate. A month later, on its homeward passage, the *Magdalena* left Santos for Rio. At 4 a.m. on 25<sup>th</sup> April, she grounded (owing to a navigational error) on a reef close to the Tijucas Islands, off Rio. The next day, while under tow into drydock in Rio, she touched bottom on the harbour bar, broke in two and became a total loss. For many months she was a very visible wreck.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May, Körner was in Rio again for another Airport lunch. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Joe and Jean left on the *Andes* for Buenos Aires. Santos was the first port of call and there Joe and Körner had lunch with Stanley Tootal and other São Paulo staff. The visit to Buenos Aires appears to be business related although they also met friends. Körner does not appear to have accompanied

them but, on the return, Joe disembarked at Santos and spent two days in São Paulo which included ‘Dinner at Körner’s’.



*The 1949 wreck of the Royal Mail Lines’ Magdalena and their flagship, the Andes*

On 13<sup>th</sup> July, Joe and Jean sailed for England on the *Andes*, arriving on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Evidently, Home Leave was now granted every other year. This time, rather than the frantic period catching up with friends and relations which had characterised the first post-war Home Leave, there was a week in London with two visits to head office, a few family encounters and the collection of another Hillman Minx under the Visitor to Britain scheme. The school holidays had just begun so we went to a wonderfully modest hotel at Burnham Overy Staithe, Norfolk for four weeks. Swimming, learning to sail and seeing friends occupied the time until we drove north by way of Lincoln and York to Durham, where Joe and Elwin had been at school. Returning south, we based ourselves in a small hotel in the village of Liss, near Petersfield until the end of the school holidays. The last two months were taken up by a brief visit to Ireland – Joe’s mother had died earlier in the year – more visits to friends and meetings with companies like Mather and Platt and Baker Perkins who must have been making the machinery for the new biscuit factory. Perhaps the major family event was the arrival in England of the Burns – Jean’s parents – to retire in England.

After last visits to Diana and me at our schools, Joe sailed for Rio on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Jean stayed in England until February for my transition to public school.

### ***1950 New biscuit factory and embassy***

Late in March, Joe and Jean flew to São Paulo where they had dinner with Körner before travelling on to Curitiba. Back in São Paulo, Joe showed the British Ambassador round the new biscuit factory. On 25<sup>th</sup> May, it was the Ambassador’s turn to show Joe round the new Embassy. The building, in the classical manner, was sold to the Brazilians after the capital was moved to Brasilia in the early 60s. It is now the Rio Mayor’s ‘Palacio de Cidade’.

In mid June, Joe and Jean attended ‘Sir Malcolm Sargent’s concert at the Teatro Municipal’. And on 27<sup>th</sup> July, ‘Peter and Diana arrived on the *Uruguay Star*’ – leaving five weeks later on the *Andes*. In September and October Jo and Jean flew first to São Paulo and then to Bahia. The return journeys were made by sea – from Santos in the case of São Paulo. This use of Royal Mail ‘s London to the River Plate ships to coast-hop was quite common.

### ***1951 The company prospers***

On 18<sup>th</sup> January a swimming pool was ‘inaugurated’ at the mill in Rio. A volume of large format photographs survive of the RFM’s mills, factories and offices and staff throughout



Brazil in 1951. Looking at it, one cannot help being impressed by the scale and order of the works and the care taken for workers' well-being. There is also another volume of exceptionally fine images of the new São Paulo biscuit factory at work, taken by the visiting French photographer, Jean Manzon.



*Some RFM buildings*



*Rio mill and silos in the port area*



*Rio office in city centre*



*São Paulo biscuit factory – the largest in S America*



*The biscuit trade mark was Aymoré*



*The Rio creche and the Cardinal's visit – Joe, Tom, the Cardinal and his staff*

On 4<sup>th</sup> April, Jo and Jean left Rio by KLM to London by way of Recife, Dakar and Lisbon. There followed meetings and lunches with RFM directors and others in London –

interspersed with visits to the family in Hindhead and Liphook. Joe returned on a BOAC flight to Rio on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Jean returned two weeks later.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August, Diana and I arrived in Rio on a much-delayed BOAC flight. Over the western Sahara, the exhaust had fallen off one of the engines and the plane had to return to Lisbon. The resulting lack of information in Rio had proved extremely worrying for the parents of the many schoolchildren aboard – the poor safety record of BOAC's predecessor, BSAA, was never far from people's minds. It was decided that my sister and I would return on separate flights. Diana and our mother departed first and I followed three days later – seen off at the airport by my father, Luiza the cook and Eugenio the driver.

Life in Rio remained much as before – the diaries contain the usual mix of social engagements, golf and visits to company units elsewhere. There were also important visitors to be escorted round the factories. One, on 19<sup>th</sup> October, featuring the Cardinal and the pasta factory, was recorded in photographs. On 8<sup>th</sup> December, Joe left for London on the *Andes*. By this time, journeys were so frequent that welcoming groups appear to have become a thing of the past. The family based itself at the St James' Court Hotel before flying to Lisbon on 29<sup>th</sup> ...

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## 8. Take-over battle

... where we stayed at the Atlantico in Estoril until 17<sup>th</sup> January 1952, when Diana and I returned to school. Joe and Jean had friends in Lisbon – a natural result of the Rio connection – but the real reason for leaving England was that the frequency of Joe's visits was reaching the point when he would have to pay tax in England. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, they went to Ireland for three weeks, visiting friends and relations.

At this point, everything that needs to be said about this period in this Life Story is recorded in the Report which Joe, Tom and Stanley drafted.

**REPORT on the resignation of Messrs J.S. Carolin, T.C. Rusling and C.S.A. Tootal from The Rio de Janeiro Flour Mills & Granaries Ltd., following the acquisition of a large block of the Company's stock by interests controlled by Messrs S.G. Warburg & Co. Ltd.**

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Early in 1951 considerable buying took place of Rio Flour Mills stock, the £1 units moving up from 37/- to 79/- at one time. Last year's peak was 75/6d. Rumours of a possible 'take-over' were rife and the matter was much discussed in the financial columns of the London papers. In October 1951 we had confidential news that Brazilians were interested in buying the Company. It was general knowledge by now that Messrs Warburg's interests had been buying our stock. As Messrs Warburg make a speciality of buying and selling companies, or acting as intermediaries in such deals, it was natural that most people should expect that the Rio Flour Mills would become the object of such a business. To quote from a recent edition of the Sunday Express in connection with Messrs Waring & Gillow 'They (Messrs Warburg) are never satisfied with half measures. Quietly, methodically, they buy a minority interest and put themselves in a position to dominate it'.

Such news and information as we obtained was passed on to Head Office in London but it seems *[some text missing here]* there.

At the end of 1951 the Chairman of the Rio Flour Mills came out to Brazil and shortly after he arrived Mr. Carolin went to England on leave. By this time we were convinced that efforts were being made, or would be made, to buy the Company. It seemed to us a very great shame that anything so valuable to Britain should be allowed to pass into foreign hands without some effort being made to keep it for Britain.

For a considerable time before this story begins the General Managers in Rio (Messrs Carolin and Rusling) had been pressing for the increase of the capital of the Rio Flour Mills, pointing out to the Board of Directors that this would:

- (a) bring the registered capital, both in U.K. and in Brazil, more in line with the true value of the Company's assets,
- (b) facilitate larger remittances to London as permission to remit was limited by Brazil to a percentage on the registered capital,
- (c) give a truer picture of the profits earned which, on the Consolidated Profit & Loss Account, appeared excessive in relation to the Capital of the Company, thus attracting the attention of financiers on the look-out for 'plums',

(d) assist the Company greatly from a psychological point of view so that increased profits which were being earned, to some extent due to inflation, would appear to the public to bear a more reasonable relationship to nominal capital. In our opinion this was a matter of vital importance.

The Board consistently refused to increase the Capital of the Company despite facilities offered by the Brazilian Government for the capitalisation of reserves and the revaluation of fixed assets up to 31st December 1952, later extended to 30th June 1953. Although their General Managers presented many suggestions as to how capital increases could be effected at reasonable cost, these had received little or no consideration from the Board. As late as August 1952 the General Managers in Rio addressed a letter to the Managing Director of the Company giving important ideas on this vital subject but it is understood that this letter was not even considered by the Board as there was just not going to be a bonus issue. The matter was a very complicated one but from conversations held later in Rio between the General Managers and the Chairman and Secretary of the Company, it was quickly appreciated that the matter was simply not understood in London. The refusal of the Board to increase the capital is all the more difficult to understand because at the end of 1952 they agreed to increase the capital of the subsidiaries in Brazil by revaluation of assets. Putting to one side personal interests, which will be mentioned later, in increasing the capital of The Rio Flour Mills, it is very hard to conceive why the Board should agree to increase the capital of subsidiary companies whilst refusing similar action with the parent company in whose interests capital increase was doubly necessary.

On 10th March 1952 we were informed officially by Head Office in London, that at the request of Messrs Warburg & Co., Mr. Erik Korner had been appointed a Director of The Rio Flour Mills.

Whilst in England, Mr. Carolin, with the Board's knowledge, did everything in his power to remove the possibility of the Company passing out of British hands. This involved trying to organise a block of shareholders who would oppose the sale of the company abroad, trying to persuade Government officials of the need to stop this sort of thing and to get them to act in the case of The Rio Flour Mills. Unfortunately all his efforts were of no avail.

All this time Mr. Carolin had kept in close touch with Messrs Rusling and Tootal. When it was evident that all his efforts had been in vain, these two met in Rio, on 13th March 1952, and after much consideration sent a very strong telegram to Mr. Carolin informing him that, in their view, if all efforts to prevent the possible sale of the Company had failed then it was imperative that adequate and immediate guarantees be given to the British contract staff and to the senior Brazilian staff. These guarantees were to consist of two months' total remuneration for each year of service to be paid, in the event of a take-over, to those wishing to leave the Company but prepared to remain with it for one year after the date of an actual take-over. On receipt of this telegram Mr. Carolin sought advice from Sir Alan Rae Smith of Messrs Doloitte, Plender, Griffiths & Co., who agreed that he could consult him, and who put Mr. Carolin in touch with Mr. K.D.Cole of Messrs Linklaters & Paines, Solicitors. Mr. Carolin asked the Board to meet these gentlemen so

that they could hear the Board's point of view, as he felt it important that they should hear both sides of the question. The Board agreed to this request though unfortunately only two Directors were present at the meeting.

The Board's reception of our request for guarantees was not favourable and they seemed to object to our consultation with Sir Alan and Mr. Cole. They informed us that it was not legally possible to give guarantees. Mr. Cole did not agree with this (he was later definitely proved correct in view of the Queen's Counsel's opinion obtained by the Board) and he furthermore informed the Company's Solicitor that the General Managers were quite willing to leave the decision on this to the shareholders, provided the Board were willing to put it up to them. After various meetings Mr. Carolin judged that the issues involved were so great that it would be better for all concerned if Mr. Rusling could be present with him in London. On 5th April 1952 Mr. Rusling obtained permission to join Mr Carolin.

Further meetings were held and disagreement focussed itself on the question of guarantees for the staff and increasing the capital of the Company. This latter created much bad feeling, the origins of which must be explained. For many years it had been customary for senior executives (at the present time the two General Managers and two others in Brazil) to receive, under contract terms, a percentage interest on dividends paid by The Rio Flour Mills. This interest also covered bonus issues of stock and, in the past, former General Managers and others had obtained considerable advantage from this. For some reason or other London caused enquiries to be made regarding the legality of these percentage interests, consequent upon the Companies Act of 1948. As a result we were informed that this part of our contracts was 'ultra vires'. In the discussions with Messrs Carolin and Rusling the Board informed them that unless they were prepared to accept a proposal, which to them seemed grossly unfair, in place of their contractual rights, 'there would' - to use the Chairman's words - 'be no bonus issue'.

We judged this to be a terrible blow at the confidence which had always existed between Rio and London. In the matter of guarantees Messrs Carolin and Rusling expressed our views to the Board; that following on the recent sale of many British companies in Brazil and Argentina we know perfectly well what the effect on our staff would be after the appointment of Mr. Korner to the Board. Unless one accepted the fact that the majority of British people prefer to work for British Companies one could not begin to understand staff reactions: for the security and fair play that normally go with employment in a British company most people are prepared to accept smaller remuneration than when working for others: probably the best example of this can be seen in our technicians, the majority of whom would almost certainly be better paid if working for Brazilian concerns: the point is that they prefer the solidity of British employment. With the prospect of the Company passing into foreign hands we saw no possibility of maintaining it in its usual state of efficiency and harmony, and of holding the majority of the staff together contentedly, unless the Board gave the guarantees we asked for. With these we were prepared to stay on ourselves, setting the example to others and by our very presence among them giving them the assurance that their interests were in hands they knew, understood and trusted.



In these discussions the Board maintained that they were ignorant of any move to take over the Company. We insisted that the present circumstances were special and would have a very bad effect on the staff, that if the Board considered that the Company was not to be made the object of a bid from foreign interests, then there could be no objection to granting the guarantee which would only become operative in the event of the Company passing out of British hands.

When Mr. Rusling left to join Mr. Carolin in London, Mr. Tootal gave him a letter stating the importance attached to the matter of guarantees, placing himself unquestionably alongside both of them in their discussions and stating that unless the Board were prepared to grant the guarantees asked for he would resign. Mr. Tootal asked Mr. Rusling to show this letter to the Board, which he did, after it had been seen by Mr. Cole. At this point a meeting had been arranged between Messrs Carolin and Rusling and the Chairman and the new director Mr. Korner. When Mr. Tootal's letter was circulated to the Board, Mr. Korner took exception to a certain paragraph therein. The Chairman asked Messrs Carolin and Rusling if they associated themselves with the terms of the letter. They replied that they most certainly did, whereupon the Chairman said that in that event Mr. Korner refused to meet them.

From this point matters deteriorated rapidly. On the Board's instructions the Secretary wrote to Mr. Rusling instructing him to inform Mr. Tootal in the most definite and categorical terms that the Board would not grant the guarantees asked for. As we had all attached the utmost importance to these guarantees we all re-affirmed that unless these guarantees were given we would be unwilling to renew our contracts when they expired. Messrs Carolin and Rusling returned to Brazil.

In May 1952 the new director, Mr. Korner, visited Brazil with introductions to a sub-manager in Rio and the assistant manager in São Paulo. He visited the Company's interests in Rio, Bahia, Santos and São Paulo without calling at the main offices in Rio and São Paulo or meeting Messrs Carolin and Rusling in Rio or Mr. Tootal in São Paulo. It was generally appreciated that such a procedure was, to say the least of it, absurd.

On 19th June 1952, when it was evident that London was not going to give the guarantees, the General Managers asked that an opportunity be given to any of the staff, who so wished, to dispose of their shares in the Subsidiary Companies and London was asked to agree that C.A.R.A. [Compania Aymoré de Representação e Administração] should buy such shares up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1952. It was not until 18th September that London replied, making, then, an offer for these shares which had to be accepted or rejected up to 31st October 1952. In this offer no compensation was allowed for the forthcoming revaluation of the assets of most of the Subsidiary Companies and the considerable value in excess of book values of inter-company shareholdings, which deprived those of the staff selling their shares of considerable amounts really due to them. Protests to London and requests for reconsideration of this vital point were of no avail.

By October 1952 the Board in London had decided that, based on Queen's Counsel's opinion, they could offer some guarantees to the staff and Mr. L.W.Lowe, Secretary of the Company, flew out to Rio to discuss the matter,

arriving on 31st October.

The Company's lawyer in Brazil saw that in order to avoid trouble the two matters, repayment of shares and guarantees, should be dealt with together and the General Managers, therefore, on the lawyer's advice, decided to hold up the offer for the shares for a few days. This was greatly resented by the Board, who accused the General Managers of failing to do their duty, and they were not even prepared to await receipt by air mail of the lawyer's written opinion in considering the matter. It is important to note that it would only have been necessary to give a few days grace beyond the time limit of 31st October as Mr. Lowe arrived on this day, bringing details of the guarantees with him.

Messrs Carolin and Rusling felt so strongly over this refusal of the Board to allow joint consideration of the offer for the shares together with the proposed guarantees that on 1st November they cabled London stating that, in view of the Board's attitude, completely ignoring the interests of their loyal staff, they confirmed their unwillingness to renew their contracts, furthermore stating that they proposed to inform all those concerned when the guarantees were offered by Mr. Lowe to the staff.

On Mr. Lowe's arrival he proceeded to interview every member of the contract staff and certain of the senior Brazilian staff, each of whom was told that Messrs Carolin, Rusling and Tootal were resigning. It was generally felt that the guarantees were inadequate and too tied up with conditions to give the staff that feeling of security, which it had been our original intention to promote. In view of our resignations it was left to the Sub-managers in Rio to negotiate with the Board in an attempt to improve on the terms offered. In pursuance of these negotiations the Chairman, with Mr. Marriage of Messrs Slaughter & May, solicitors, flew to Rio to join Mr. Lowe. They returned to London in December. Negotiations continued until February 1953 the two Sub-managers in Rio were called to London where they concluded the terms of the guarantees and were appointed General Managers as from April 1st, 1953, the day after Messrs Carolin, Rusling and Tootal severed connections with the Company for which they had worked 23, 36 and 25.5 years respectively.

J. S. CAROLIN  
T.C. RUSLING  
C.S.A. TOOTAL

Rio de Janeiro, April 1953

The battle had been lost and, from around July onwards, the diary entries have a different feel to them. There are fewer and the writing is not as well formed. For Christmas there is just one word in the diary. '*Bathed*'. Things were winding down.



Opponents: Stanley, Joe and Tom – and company Directors Mr Körner and Percy Rogers

### **1953 Leaving Brazil**

On 17<sup>th</sup> February, Joe 'Saw Fleming off at Airport'. Fleming was Joe and Tom's successor as General Manager and was going to London to see the Board. On 31<sup>st</sup> March, after 'Lunch at the Halfway' (Club) there was a 'Despedida [farewell] party at the Aeroporto' followed by dinner with the Tootals at the Ruslings.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April, the diary records 'Chamber (of Commerce) lunch for Rusling and me at Bankers Club'. They were both previous Chairmen of the Chamber – Joe from 1946 to 1948, when he became chair of the British Community Council for a year. He spoke of the RFM's success and progress and the importance of forwarding British enterprise in Brazil. He said he would always have 'saudades' of Brazil for it was there that he had met his wife and his children had been born. He had found many friends and had found all sorts of intensely interesting work. He concluded: 'I wish you all happiness and success in the protection and promotion – I use that word with all the strength at my command – of British interests in this country.' He had tried.

Later, Sir Henry King, the grand old man of the Chamber, who had been unable to attend the lunch, wrote to Joe:

*'I had then no opportunity to pay my own tribute, not only to the outstanding services you rendered the Chamber for so many years, in a field of activity in which your knowledge is unrivalled, but to the unfailing assistance you always so whole-heartedly gave me during the seven years I was in charge of the Commercial Department of the British Embassy here. You were a tower of strength ... and you never failed me ...'*

There were many other last lunches and dinners with friends before, on 27<sup>th</sup> April, Joe and Jean flew to Belo Horizonte and drove on to the colonial gold-mining towns of Ouro Preto and Mariana for two days. The final three days in Rio were spent with friends. The last game of golf on the beautiful Gavea course had been played on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

A month later, on 4<sup>th</sup> May, Joe and Jean sailed for England on the *Alcantara*. The quayside was crowded with well-wishers. Also on board were Tom and Olive Rusling who had travelled on the *Desna*, 22 years before, on Joe's first journey to Brazil. The ship called at Bahia, where Tom had managed the mill for several years, and at Recife where Jean had been

born. In Lisbon they lunched with their old friend, José Mascarenhas, the manager of the RFM cotton mills.

### ***The RFM***

Among Joe's papers there was a small booklet, the company's 'Manual do Empregado' or 'Employees Handbook'. For its time and place of origin, it's an extraordinary document which says much about the company that was, following the take-over, so brutally dismembered. Over 16 pages, in short sections interspersed by cartoons, this little booklet sets out the background to the company and its objectives, its responsibilities to the worker and the worker's to the company. The Welcome page has a space for inserting the name of the employee designated to orientate the new employee during his or her early days. Working hours, personal hygiene (important in a food producer), paid holidays, absence notification, overtime, pay arrangements, annual holidays, accidents, medical facilities, smoking, fire drills, locker arrangements, refectories and café, creche, personal details, lost and found, produce purchase and what would now be called feed-back are all outlined. Each entry reveals an unusually considerate employer. There was a doctor on site twice a week, the creche looked after all children until a year old and a telephone number was available for the use of families in emergencies .... (At no point does the book give any indication of the company's foreign ownership.)



*Tom Rusling, Joe Carolin and some staff in the Rio office*



*Eugenio, Joe's company driver*

The two albums of photographs of the company's staff and premises convey the impression of exceptionally well-run mills and factories and of well-cared for and valued staff. There was something special, too, about the atmosphere among the management staff. Most, but not all, of the senior staff were British. The others were Brazilian. Whether working in offices, mills or factories, they got on well together. Their families – both parents and children – mixed and contributed to local society. Joe always spoke warmly of the two most senior Brazilian staff in particular – Sr Jordão (the company lawyer) and Sr Mascarenhas (the cotton milling manager). They were in the crowd on the quayside when the *Alcantara* sailed and stayed in touch for many years. And, at the other end of the scale, Joe and Jean maintained touch with Eugenio, the company driver, and Luiza, their cook, and supported them financially.

The take-over was the cause of huge regret. It was a loss to Britain, to Britain's reputation in Brazil and, to its employees, of a way of life and work. Rio Flour – the largest British-owned company in Brazil – was subsequently dismembered by Warburgs and their allies and the site of its Rio mills, silos and factories flattened.

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## 9. Life in England

Returning to England, Joe, Tom and Stanley faced very different futures. The oldest, Tom, was retiring. The youngest, Stanley, was soon to find a new job at Rank's, later Rank-Hovis-MacDougall, of which he was to become a director. But Joe?

Joe was 47. He had no desire to return to accountancy *per se* – it just wasn't interesting enough. He had been told by friends that they doubted that he would ever again have a job of the kind he had enjoyed in Brazil – managing and growing a large national firm. They were to be proved right. He became Managing Director of a small family flour milling firm in Bow, in London's East End. It was not a job with any prospects and he did not enjoy it, leaving after nine years.

But if the ideal job was not available, a beautiful home might be. Temporarily based in London, Jo and Jean started house-hunting. A house in Worplesdon, Surrey was rejected following an ambiguous survey report. And then, after a year of searching, they found The Vine House, a 1732 building set in a walled garden on the cricket green in Sevenoaks, Kent. They moved in just before Christmas 1954 and were to stay there for 26 years, very much part of the local community. Immensely hospitable, they welcomed friends and visitors from Brazil, foreign students and grandchildren.



*The Vine House and first grandchild in the snow*



*Jean and Joe in later life*

Joe had returned to England a fairly wealthy man. He used that wealth discreetly. He helped others – both individuals and, more interestingly, young companies. One of the latter was Micron Sprayers, a tiny outfit based on the spray atomising invention of an engaging Austrian, Edward Bals. The atomiser was used for both crop and fruit spraying, often from small aircraft – which brought another firm, the small aircraft manufacturers, Britten Norman, into their orbit. Joe invested in these and other companies and acted as a consultant on financial matters. Micron and Britten Norman continue to flourish to this day.

He also invested on the stock exchange. He had excellent judgement and took a long-term view – his broker at Hoare Govett admired his picks. Following in the steps of his father-in-law, he bought prints of Brazil by Debret, Rugendas, Bauch and others. But it was his rare books on Brazil and South America that he treasured most – the 1824 edition of Maria Graham's 'Journal of a Voyage to Brazil' above all.

Gradually, on the basis of his financial and managerial expertise, Joe acquired some directorships. These included one with Raphael Tuck, the greeting card makers, another with St Michaels' Press and, thanks to his long-standing connection with Baker Perkins (who made much of the machinery used by the RFM), Graham-Enock Manufacturing (where he was Chairman for a period), William Douglas, Molins and Bryant and May (Latin America). The years that gave him the greatest satisfaction were those on the main board of Baker Perkins, the Peterborough based food processing equipment manufacturers who had supplied the RFM. Some of these directorships utilised his Brazilian expertise and he and Jean visited Brazil on several occasions. He kept in close contact with developments and, together with a São Paulo lawyer, José Martins Pinheiro Neto, authored a publication for the Bank of London and South America on how to establish a (British) company in Brazil.

Closer to home, Joe was involved for many years with the London Union of Youth Clubs, National Association of Youth Clubs and the local Abbeyfield Society, Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau and Probus – invariably as Treasurer and sometimes as Chairman. For ten years, he was a 'worker' at the CAB, helping people, face to face, with tax and other problems.

In 1981, Joe and Jean moved to a much smaller house, at the other end of the town, overlooking Knole Park. They continued to be hospitable. But they were slowing down. The books went in April 1989 in a sale that attracted many dealers to Sevenoaks.

Five months later, on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1989, Joe died, at home.

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