

Louisa Reid

Born 31.3.1906

Autobiographical life story.

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Note: The text of this life story has been compiled from her papers by her son Alex. Text from her documents is in roman; his additions are in italics.

1. Luttrell Ancestors



Dunster Castle, Somerset.

Starting with my father's family, the Luttrells. As 'landed gentry' they may be popularly known as having owned Dunster Castle in Somerset from the 14th century until it was given to the National Trust in 1976. As an instance of the Luttrell - Dunster link, I remember my Aunt May telling me the following story. She used to stay at a small hotel in Italy, the San Giorgio, at Lenno near Lake Como. On one occasion they sent her a letter addressed to Miss Luttrell, England. Presumably arriving at the GPO London, 'Try Dunster' was added and it was duly delivered!

Of general interest is the fact that Mrs Alexander, the writer of several hymns in our present hymn books was a friend of my grandmother and was staying at the Castle when she wrote 'All things bright and beautiful'. She was sitting on the terrace, describing Grabbist Hill and the river Avill nearby. The verse referring to the rich and poor is no more out-of-date than is 'gathering rushes', but the church authorities evidently took exception to it as denoting class distinction and have banished it from our hymn books.

The first recorded Luttrells were living at Irnham in Lincolnshire. Of these, Andrew was one of the knights entrusted with the defence of Windsor Castle after the battle of Lewes in 1264.

Sir Geoffrey Luttrell (1276-1345) is chiefly remembered as being responsible for the Luttrell Psalter with its fascinating illustrations of contemporary life. There are scenes of harvesting, preparing and cooking food and entertainments. Sir Geoffrey and his family are shown sitting at the high table at a banquet. It is now permanently on view at the British Museum. For a further description of the fourteenth century I will quote Sir Geoffrey's will, made after his wife's death and shortly before his own. He bequeathed various sums of money to sixteen of his relations some of them members of religious communities, to his chaplain, his confessor, his chief esquire, and his chamberlain. The largest bequests were those to works of religion and charity. For his funeral at Irnham, twenty quarters of wheat

and twenty of malt, wine, spices, and other condiments to the value of 20 pounds were to be provided for friends attending the service. A sum of 200 pounds to be distributed among the poor in three instalments within a month. The beggars of the parish were also to have forty quarters of wheat and on the anniversary a further sum of 20 pounds was to be given to the poor praying for him. For the first five years after his death, twenty chaplains were to say masses for his soul in the church at Irnham, dividing among them a hundred marks a year.



Sir Geoffrey Luttrell dining, from the 14th century Luttrell Psalter, now in the British Museum.

Skipping through the centuries, Hugh Luttrell of Dunster was created a Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII in 1487. He was Sheriff of Somerset and Dorset for a year beginning in November 1488. Nine years later he took the field against Perkin Warbeck under the Duke of Buckingham. When the Princess Catherine of Aragon came to England in 1501 in order to marry the Prince of Wales, Sir Hugh Luttrell was one of the seven knights and gentlemen of Somerset who were selected to escort her from Crewkerne to Sherborne. In 1513, he was serving in the Royal Navy ship of Leonard Fiscaballi.

On March 31st 1514 Sir Hugh entered into an agreement with Sir Thomas Wyndham as follows:

'Andrew Luttrell, sonne and heire apparent of the said Sir Hugh, by the grace of God, shall mary and take to his wief Margaret one of the daughters of the said Sir Thomas, or any other of the daughters of the said Sir Thomas such as the said Andrew shall best lieke if the said Margaret or such of her sisters as the said Andrew shall best like thereunto will agree and the laws of holy church will permit and suffer.'

Andrew and Margaret duly married on April 22nd! Andrew's son John spent most of his time away from home, fighting both in Scotland and France. In 1544 he was at Boulogne in command of over two hundred men. In 1547, under the Duke of Somerset, he led three hundred men in the vanguard of the English army at the battle of Pinkie.

The Battle of Pinkie Cleugh, sometimes known as the Battle of Pinkie, took place on 10 September 1547 on the banks of the River Esk, near Musselburgh, Scotland. The

last pitched battle between Scottish and English armies, it was part of the conflict known as the Rough Wooing. It was a catastrophic defeat for Scotland, where it became known as Black Saturday.

Enough of my early forbears. In 1867 my grandfather George Luttrell inherited Dunster Castle and the prosperity that went with it. This included most of Minehead, Luxborough, Wooten Courtenay and East Quantoxhead in Somerset. Also Wootton Fitzpaine Manor and land in Dorset and Nethway in Devon. The land, which included the ruins of Cleeve Abbey was bought in 1870. At that time the buildings were used for farming with pig sties in the cloisters!

My grandfather and later his son my Uncle Alec had the Abbey restored. I remember when visiting my uncle, seeing the work in progress. It was exciting to watch more tiles being discovered as the mounds of earth were dug out. These were carefully re-laid as flooring with no original pattern of arrangement. We always had a talk with Cleeva Clapp, the custodian, who lived nearby and was devoted to the place.



Cleeve Abbey is now in the care of English Heritage.

My uncle used to tell the story of Cleeva's name, which seems typical of those Victorian days. My grandmother had called on her parents to see the new baby and asking what she was called was told Plevna, which was just in the news. 'It seems a pity to call her after a battle, why don't you call her Cleeva after the Abbey?' she suggested. When the christening came and the rector asked for the name and was given Cleeva, he objected to it's not being a Christian name. The godparent answered 'Mrs Luttrell ordained it so' and the rector duly complied!

Uncle Alec was the eldest of the sons, the next being my father Hugh, the youngest Claude and their sisters my Aunt May and Aunt Bee. They evidently took their religion seriously as children. Uncle Alec told me how once they were having a walk when one of them remembered that he hadn't said his prayers that morning so, then and there, he knelt on the path and did so, to the approval of the others. Uncle

Claude remembered that when he was a small boy Gladstone, then Prime Minister, came to stay with his parents. Not realizing that Family Prayers took place each morning, Gladstone was half way down the main staircase leading to the hall where he could see that the Prayers had already started. Instead of disappearing upstairs again, Claude was impressed to see him kneel on the stairs and take part.

My grandfather was Master of the private pack of foxhounds without subscription known as 'Mr.Luttrell's'. The country hunted was later to become the West Somerset of which my grandfather became Master. All his children enjoyed hunting and riding.



My father is next in my list of ancestors. He chose an Army career, going into the Rifle Brigade. He was ADC to Lord Cowper and then Lord Spencer when each was Governor of Ireland. During his time there he enjoyed the hunting and polo. His next appointment was ADC to Sir John Adye, Governor of Gibraltar. Here he was on the staff of the Calpe Hunt. While he was there, the Prince of Wales, later to become George V (above right) stopped off on his way to India and had a game of polo. It always amuses me that my father lent him both his clothes and his polo ponies for this!

In the year 1892 at the age of 35 my father (right) stood as the Liberal candidate for the Tavistock Division of Devon, which included Dartmoor. Until then it had been Conservative. I remember Aunt Bee telling me how she stayed with her brother at the Bedford Hotel in Tavistock for the election. The sitting member and his wife were also staying there. Quite confident that they would win, they were very friendly, but as soon as my father's success was declared the Conservative pair were so surprised and angry that they would not speak to them again!



In 1904, my father married Dorothy Hope Wedderburn, aged 24, daughter of a fellow Liberal MP. They were married at Holy Trinity Church in Chelsea. Between 400 and 500 guests came and Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister, was at the wedding reception.

2. Wedderburn Ancestors

And now to my mother's family - the Wedderburn ancestors. Many of these who were well before my time are surprisingly familiar to me. I seem to know them as well as present-day friends who I seldom see! The reason is that I am surrounded by their faces in family portraits and have an insight into their lives by reading hand-written diaries and books that I have, written by and about them.

The pictures, diaries and books came to me in various ways. The oil-paintings were given to me by my mother. Her father, Sir William Wedderburn, 4th baronet of Ballindean, was in direct line from the earliest ancestors. He had no sons so the baronetcy went to a Wedderburn-Ogilvy cousin and the possessions to my mother. His elder brother, David, wrote detailed diaries of his worldwide travels between 1866 and 1882. These were passed on to me after the death of my cousin David Percival.

A charming pair of water-colour portraits came to me by a lucky chance. They had been in the possession of my cousins Sir John and Lucilla Percival. His mother had been Louisa, the youngest sister of my grandfather. When I stayed with them I used to see the head-and-shoulder likenesses of the young couple in the room where I slept and I knew the sad story of how they and their baby son were murdered in the Indian Mutiny. The pictures were eventually in the sale of Kimsbury House. We were about to holiday in France at the time so I left a bid for them. On our return, finding that I had been outbid, I traced the buyer, hoping that if a dealer, he might part with them for a profit. The surprising outcome of this was that he had bought the pictures solely for their plain, gold, oval frames and intended throwing away the contents. Fortunately, I had contacted him just in time and instead of destroying them, he gave them to me!

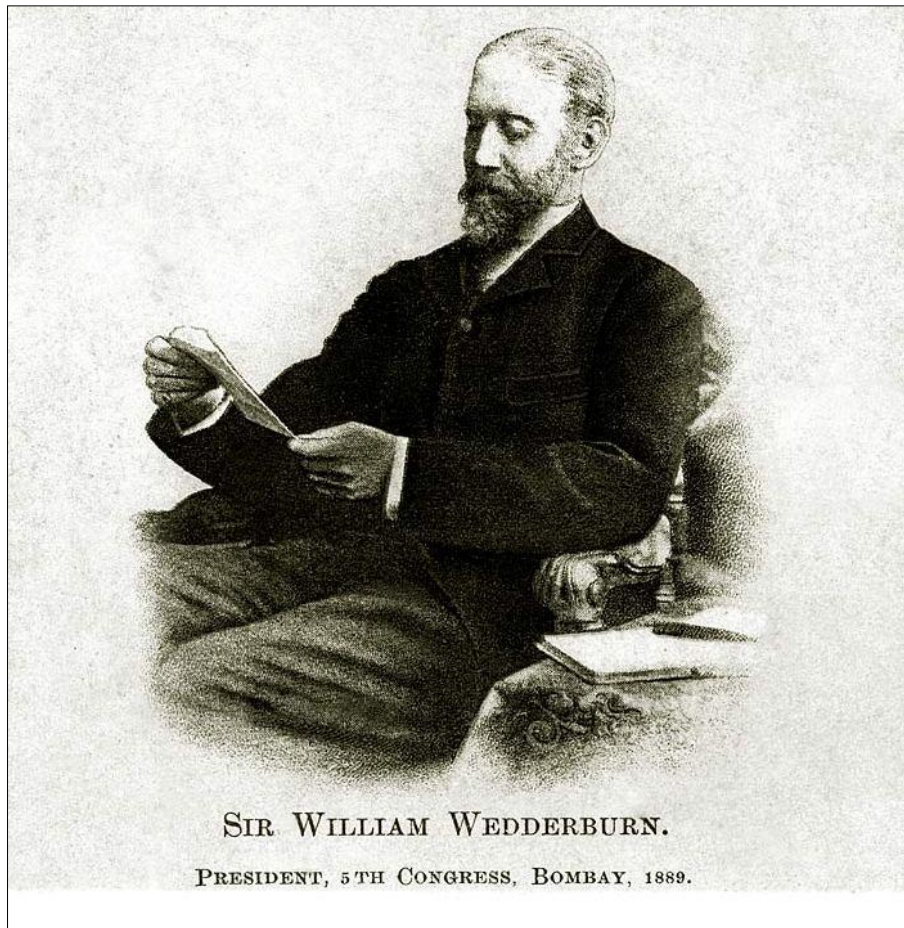
In recording my maternal forbears, I will skip quickly through the lives of some of the earlier ones and then give more detailed descriptions of those with whom I am familiar.

Walter de Wedderburn is named in the famous Ragman Roll that lists the barons, who swore fealty to Edward I on 28th August, 1296. Another Wedderburn of historical interest was Alexander, 1561-1626. He was certainly remarkable in his time and did much to increase the prosperity of his family. He sat in the Scottish Parliament for nearly thirty years from 1593 to 1621, representing Dundee. He was one of the Scottish commissioners to treat for Union between England and Scotland in 1604. He is said to have been on intimate terms with James VI who gave him the ring.

My earliest Wedderburn family portrait is of Dr. John Wedderburn of Idvies, 1678-1751. In the records, he is named on February 7th 1681 as a witness at the baptism of his cousin John Wedderburn, son of his uncle Peter, himself being less than three years old! He became a doctor of medicine and was 'for many years a physician of considerable eminence'. He lived in Dundee in 'a large mansion built by his father in 1684'. In 1733 he purchased the property of Idvies in Forfar. He died on the 3rd July, 1751, was buried in the Howff of Dundee under a tomb with an inscription recording 'his amiable character and professional skill'. He left his property to his

great-nephew Sir John Wedderburn, who at his death was living in Jamaica. I have now given this picture to my grandson Theo Hobson.

My next portrait, in chronological order, is of my direct ancestor sir John Wedderburn, Bart 5th of Blackness, 1704-1746. He is wearing a coral red coat and waistcoat with gold buttons and braid. It was painted by his niece Katherine Read, from memory after his death. She was a celebrated artist and at one time portrait painter to Queen Charlotte. Her work was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773, 1774 and 1776. I have given the picture to my grandson Harry Hobson, but at the time of writing it is in my possession.



I now come to my grandfather Sir William Wedderburn (1838-1918) who I knew in his seventies. He was born in Edinburgh on March 25th 1838, after his parents' retirement from India. David, two years older, was his constant companion and they attended the same schools in Switzerland, England and Scotland, and Edinburgh University.

3. Early Childhood



Louisa, Mary and Elizabeth as toddlers.

When my father was MP for the Tavistock Division he rented Ward House, Bere Alston. It was a square Georgian house belonging to Lord Mount Edgecombe who lived at Cotehele, the other side of the river. The nearest large village, or small town, was Calstock. To get there we walked down to the river, and for a penny were rowed across by a man in a navy blue jersey. Our cook, Mrs Grills, lived in Calstock and arrived in this way. On Monday, washing was done in the laundry - a room that formed the right hand side of the 'hard' at the back of the house. On Tuesday, ironing was done here, and we liked to watch the little bubbles on the iron when it was spat on to test its heat. We brought our own hair-ribbons and dolls' clothes to be ironed.



Calstock, with its railway viaduct.

We got over a stile from the garden to walk up across a field to the railway, where the newspaper was thrown out to us by the guard. I don't remember now if this was a daily occurrence. Bere Alston is about two and half miles from Ward House and we went there in the pony trap with Miss Hands (who looked after us) or with my mother in the high, two-wheeled dog cart or on special occasions in the wagonette. This had cushioned seats all round it facing inwards, and was driven by Frost, the groom. All these were made of light-coloured varnished wood and had a long-handled whip slotted into a holder.

To give work to women in the neighbourhood my father started a fruit and flower farm. Raspberries were grown in rows and between them were planted narcissi. As far as I remember these were all 'pheasant eyes'. Early in the morning we heard 'It's a long way to Tipperary' and other songs of the time being sung by the pickers. We would watch the flowers being bunched neatly with flowers all facing one way, and packed into boxes. At raspberry time, these were loaded into barrels and weighed ready for the jam factory.

We spent most of our time 'playing in the garden'. This included climbing up into the laurel bushes, and talking amongst ourselves an invented 'double Dutch' language. We had our own pet rabbits and guinea pigs to look after. Each of us had an oblong patch of garden and our own wheelbarrow and tools. I remember taking my white turnips to the kitchen. We sometimes rode the pony and I remember falling off near a holly hedge and rolling onto the very prickly dry leaves.

On wet days we made things. These included kites made of brown paper fixed onto cross sticks and painted, with tails of cut up paper. Making scrapbooks was an everlasting pastime. These were made of brown paper and we cut out and pasted in pictures. We enjoyed paper chases through the surrounding fields, keeping to the edges. The excitements started the day before when we all sat round cutting up newspaper and filling the canvas satchel.

I don't remember any photograph albums of our own but we had post-card albums with slits to fit the cards into. There were five of us close in age - Mary, Louisa, Elizabeth, William and Anne. Two of us talking together would refer to the 'others'. 'I'll get/tell/find/ the others'. Mary probably kept the peace because I don't remember any quarrelling.

As well as Miss Hands, there was 'Mademoiselle'. There was probably a change of young French girl, but I just think of her now as a French speaking person. She would be there at meal-times when we had to say 'Puis je avoir quelque chose a manger' and would have a piece of bread and butter etc put on our empty plate. We always had to finish the food on our plate and if we were disinclined to would be told not to waste food and 'think of the poor Russians'. I didn't like runny boiled eggs and one occasion when I wouldn't eat one, it was kept until I did. It was much nastier cold. The only French I remember Mademoiselle saying to us was 'Depechez vous mes enfants' and 'Taisez vous mes enfants'. She seemed to be in charge when we were getting on our outdoor clothes that needed a lot of buttoning up. I remember a button-hook being used, and the discomfort as it was twisted around the button.

In summer, our hats had elastic under the chin, and could also hurt if it snapped back. We were dressed to match for our everyday clothes. I remember the white check cotton in summer and navy serge smocked in red in winter. All these had no waistline and three tucks at the hem, which were let down as we grew. Our clothes were also handed down. Our best dresses were different to each other and also handed down. These had a lot of lace and we wore pink or blue sashes with them. We liked our matching hats. Our everyday ones were called rush hats and one year had wreaths of buttercups and another bright red and black realistic cherries; we liked these as they rattled as we ran. Our best straw hats were called Leghorn - a creamy colour with wreaths of mixed flowers.

In those days everyday objects were not coloured. Hairbrushes were natural wood colour and toothbrushes white. To distinguish our own possessions we each had a colour - Mary's pink, mine blue and Elizabeth's green. Sylko of these colours was twisted around the handle. The same distinguished our identical toys. I remember our dolls' beds with the sheets and blankets marked by little ribbon bows of our own colour. A few of our toys differed, probably given as presents.

Mary had a real china tea set with pink roses on it which fitted back into its box after every use. This was a special treat; Mary pound out and we had coloured flat pieces of coffee sugar for food. We pretended we were grown ups and conversed accordingly. It would be amusing have a recording of this! My tea set was blue enamel and I could use it at any time.

I liked to sit under the beech trees and collect the beech nuts to use on the plates. The Harness Room next to the stables was under the charge of Frost and we liked to visit him there and see everything so well polished. He had a notice there with the words 'A place for everything - and everything in its place'. Our father's sword hung in a place of honour! I suppose it was a relic of when he was in the Rifle Brigade before he was married.

The semi-basement floor was no longer in use as the pantry on the ground floor had been made into a kitchen. One of the rooms in the lower area had been made into a gym for us. The floor was covered with thick mattresses and a rope and rope ladder trapeze were hung from the ceiling. The old kitchen had a range which was lit when we had our hair washed and sat in a row with our backs to the tall guard to dry. Our hair was cut by a visiting hairdresser. This included singeing the ends, which produced a burning smell.

Mrs Pedrick came to teach us drawing and a dance teacher came on certain days; her instructions included deportment which meant walking with a book balanced on the head. I also remember learning to curtsy with a rug fixed to trail behind as a train. It was many years later that I was presented at Court with ostrich feather headdress and fan. I curtsied to Queen Mary and King George V, with Edward standing, brazen-haired, behind them.

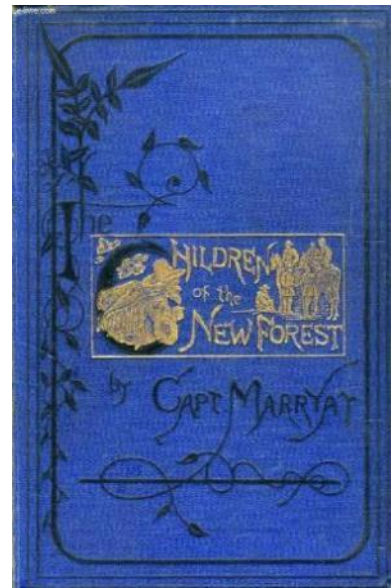


Our early education at Ward House was mostly from our mother. She taught us to read 'The cat sat on the mat' from a little green book and to write. We made the letters join up into words, unlike the script children learn today. Spelling was learnt as a game and I have never had any difficulty with it since.

My mother had been at Somerville College Oxford and at the Sorbonne in Paris. At twenty two she had married a fellow Liberal MP of her father's, who was double her age. Educating us was probably a career for her.

She read to us while we lay on the floor with our little red cushions for 'rest' or were having our hair brushed. The books were teaching us. They included 'Little Gera in Sweden', and all the 'Shown to Children' series.

Picture books of nests, shells, stars etc, 'Children of the New Forest' and 'The Little Duke'.



As well as Ludo and Halma we had instructive games. We each had a jigsaw puzzle of England with our initial on the back of each piece and would race each other to complete them. I still remember the largest yellow piece of Yorkshire and little brown Rutland. The game of Lotto was foreign flags which we soon recognised.



A wagonette.

I remember family drives in the wagonette when our parents would ask us in turn arithmetical problems, such as 'If apples each cost one penny, how many would you get for two shillings?'. Spelling has always been easy, having it well taught to us as a game.



Plymouth in 1910.

We sometimes went shopping with Mama in Plymouth. The shops I remember were called Pophams, Spooner and Yeo. It always included tea at Goodbody. Here we were each allowed to carry our plate to the counter and put on it a cake of our choice. Before Christmas, we went to the Penny Bazaar where our mother bought presents to put on the Christmas tree.

The Christmas party was at Bere Alston school for all the children of the village. There were steps up to the platform where the tree stood, sparkling with its lit candles. Two women, perhaps the schoolmistresses, stood beside it, one with a cane with a cone on the end to put out candles that bent over and might have set the tree on fire. The other took presents off the tree and handed them to Father Christmas. Two of us stood, dressed as fairies holding a wand in one hand, and with the other taking each toy from Father Christmas and giving it to the child who had mounted the steps.



Horrabridge.

For the next few days we visited the houses of babies or children who hadn't been able to come, to give them their presents. These walks would have been with Miss Hands, who looked after us most of the time. She also used to drive us in the pony trap with Topsy. I remember the scent of honeysuckle and the wild roses so near to us in the lanes as we went at a brisk trot.

My brother John was born when I was ten. We hadn't been told anything about it, but had gone to stay with Miss Hands at her parent's house. This happened sometimes and we always enjoyed it. They kept the Post Office at Horrabridge on Dartmoor.

Our stay would usually include a picnic at a Tor on Dartmoor, but perhaps not this time as John was born on December 31st! We liked to sit on the Post Office counter, presumably after office hours, and tap out messages on the telegraph machine. At the end of this visit, we were told that would be a surprise when we got home. As we neared the house we all guessed what it would be.

I had recently learnt to whistle. My guess was a puppy and as we neared the house I whistled away hoping to see one! Back at the house we were taken to our mother's bedroom, where we were told the surprise would be. On entering the room the first thing I saw as a wizened old woman sitting on a chair. Surely that wasn't the surprise. Then my mother in bed. And in bed with her the very bald head of our new baby brother. We already had William three years younger than me but I don't remember his arrival.

Our father's mother, Gran-at-Dunster, lived at Dunster Castle near Minehead in Somerset. Also there were her daughters Aunt May and Aunt Bee. And sometimes Uncle Alec and Uncle Claude were there too. There were several staircases but the one that we used was a stone spiral one that took a long time to get to our nursery. I remember being in the dining room while the grown-ups were having breakfast and my uncles walking round the table to eat their porridge. I was asked what we were going to do today and said 'We are going to the seashores'. I was told to say 'seaside' and however I tried I couldn't and felt so unhappy about it. I still remember what a relief it was when one of the uncles helped me with 'Louisa is quite right; the sea does have sides to it'. There was a gramophone in the hall; the records I liked best were a canary singing (or was it a nightingale?) and 'Angels, angels bright and fair, take oh take me to your care'.

Once when we were there, the Fire Brigade came to check the water pumps. Our nursery windows were closed as they were 'rained' on. The head gardener was called Thrush which we thought very funny. We used to go in the pony trap to Dunster beach.

Visits to Gran-at-Meredith were in Gloucestershire and there was no beach to go to. There were two swings next to each other from a pole fixed between elm trees. We called our grandfather Baba - perhaps this was from an Indian word. He had spent a long time in Bombay in the Indian Civil Service. He died in 1918. In 1923 his life was written by S.K.Ratcliffe and published by George Allen & Unwin. It is entitled 'Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement'.



Dining room at Meredith, Tibberton, Gloucestershire.

There was a large garden at Meredith with a long strip of mown lawn from the path outside the drawing room windows to where the sundial stood. This had been brought from Inveresk (now belonging to the Scottish National Trust) when my grandfather sold it and moved to Meredith. The lawns were laid out to be a golf course with unobtrusive 'holes' of sunken flower pots. I have read of gardens in India being treated in the same way, so perhaps Baba got the idea from there. I remember him with short, neat beard, wearing straight narrow silver grey silk tie that Gran knitted.

We played with the children of the family then renting Tibberton Court. I didn't meet them again until we were all grandmothers. They still remembered me, aged nine, asking 'Does cow taste like sheep?'. We were brought up as vegetarians which was very uncommon then. I have now 86, never tasted meat and still don't know!

At Meredith my grandfather said Family Prayers in the hall. The gong, hung on a stand made from a pair of elephant's tusks, was boozing as we hurried down the white-scrubbed back stairs. The maids also attended in a row. At a suitable age, Christian names changed to surnames. I remember when Gran's lady's maid who we had always known as Gertrude became Warren. Cooks were always given the courtesy title of Mrs. When my grandmother died, Hawkins had been working in the garden for 25 years; he had probably been known by his Christian name when garden boy. In those days there was a young boy who cleaned the lamps, shoes and knives.

Aunt Mable and Uncle Paget Hoskyns were our great aunt and great uncle. They lived at North Perrott Manor near Crewkerne which is now a prep school called Perrott Hill. They had one son, Hal, who was older than us and we never saw him. I expect we were there when he was at school. However we saw his toys, which were more elaborate than our own. I remember a gypsy caravan with little baskets etc hanging on its outside. We also saw some of his clothes which were sometimes sent

to us at Ward House. These were mostly made of silk and I cannot remember William wearing them.

My childhood recollections of North Perrott were holding the basket while Aunt Mabel dead-headed in the rose garden. I have a snapshot of us all, sitting on the stone seat which is still there, with Miss Hands and Mademoiselle. I remember too, standing on arrival, wearing new shoes which hadn't been scratched underneath to avoid slipping. The stretch of polished floor ahead of me was like a skating rink and I was afraid to venture on to it, probably aged about four.

It may have been the first time we had been in a car that we drove into Crewkerne in a green one. As we stopped by a shop, the road sloped slightly near the pavement and I was frightened that it was turning over!

It was always summer when we stayed with our relations, so the gardens were full of summer flowers.

I haven't any special memories of winters at Ward House. We wore stockings knitted for us by Mrs Bonny who lived at Bere Alston. We always seemed to be falling down when running on the gravel paths in the garden and getting holes in the knees of our stockings. This also caused grazed knees that the gravel washed out and stinging iodine applied. For colds we sucked a lump of sugar soaked in Eucalyptus and had camphorated oil rubbed on our chests. For sore throats we had spoonfuls of honey mixed with lemon juice.

Our winter underwear was our 'combies' (combinations), an all-over woollen garment from neck to knee. Over this we wore the all-year-round Liberty bodice that had a great many buttons to do up including the side ones where the front and back button holes of our knickers had to be correctly dealt with so that the back could be done first. Suspenders were also attached to the Liberty bodice to hold up our stockings. Petticoats, like our dresses, hung straight from shoulder to knee. They were made of white flannel in winter and cotton, edged with lace, in summer. These also had tucks above the hem for letting down.

4. Schools and Inveresk

My father died aged 59 in January 1918, after being ill for only a fortnight, when I was eleven. Although we did not realize it, my mother must have had a great shock and a very sad time. Within a few months she had lost her only sister, our Aunt Griselda Freemantle, and her father. In both of these cases she had presumably been very involved as Gran-at-Meredith was now almost an invalid. She had been married for 14 years and was left with six children and another on the way. Ward House was rented and I suppose my mother vacated it soon after my father's death.



THE ABBEY SCHOOL,
MALVERN WELLS.

Principals :—THE MISSES JUDSON AND FRAULEIN MARIE DWORZAK
RECEIVE a limited number of resident pupils grouped together into a Senior House and a Preparatory House respectively. These houses are beautifully situated, high on the slope of the Malvern Hills, overlooking the Severn Valley. The grounds are large and well laid out, and there is a playing field of 14 acres for cricket, tennis, hockey, and other games.

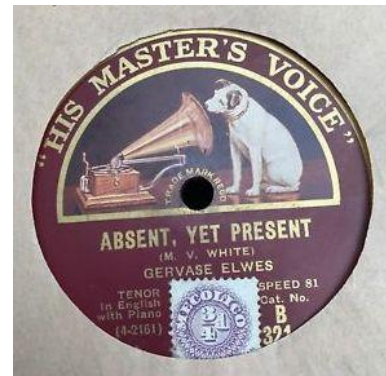
The lessons given are so arranged that the pupils may enter, in the ordinary course, for Public Examinations, but preparation for Examinations is not allowed to interfere with the moral and physical development of pupils, who have every opportunity for exercise and recreation. Elder girls who wish to specialise in Science, Music, Mathematics, or any other subject, receive special attention.

Great care is given to the teaching of Modern Languages.

Prospectus, references, etc., on application.

William was already at boarding school and within the year Mary, Elizabeth and I went to the Abbey Malvern Wells. I think Mary settled into the Senior School but Elizabeth and I missed home life and although we were given a bedroom to ourselves we were not happy in the Junior School. The school was run by the three Miss Judsons. 'Miss Judson' was headmistress, 'Miss Alice' didn't come into our lives except as Commissioner of Girl Guides. 'Miss Margaret' was head of the Junior School. She was sarcastic and had favourites. Our uniform consisted of a

great many clothes. For winter we wore white serge 'coats and skirts' on Sundays. Ours had a black arm band on the left sleeve in mourning for our father. For games we wore white flannel blouses and red-and-white ties. The only non-uniform were the white dresses for concerts etc. I remember Gervaise Elwes singing 'In Normandy'.



I don't remember how long we stayed at the Abbey but it must have been hard for my mother that Elizabeth and I wrote home begging her to take us away. We stayed till after the birth of Catherine Griselda in August of 1918. By then we had moved to the Old Rectory, Great Whitcombe near Gloucester, which my mother had rented. It must have been by the following holidays that my mother had bought the house at Bussage near Stroud and gave it the name of Inveresk - after the Inveresk she had known in Scotland. Once settled there Elizabeth and I left the Abbey and went daily by train from Brimscombe to Stroud High School.

I liked the lessons there but it was always a scramble to get ready in the mornings and run down the hilly road or across the field to the station. I don't remember how long this lasted. John was by now about five. I remember his being in the motor-rail train with us once and reading the notice above the seat and saying 'Two pounds for one little spit!'. I also remember taking him for a walk and his asking me 'Why does it get dark before it rains?'. Before I had thought of an answer he said 'Is it because God gets his hand in the way of the sun when he turns on the tap?'.

We had two live-in maids who may have been sisters and a nurse for John and Catherine - sometimes a holiday governess for the rest of us. A contrast to my mother's mother widowed at the same time with a full staff in the house including a lady's maid and at least two gardeners.

I forget how long we were at Stroud High School - perhaps a year. Then boarding school again. This time Elizabeth was sent to a convent school in Belgium and I to St. Winifred's in Clifton Bristol. I made friends there and found lessons easy after the good teaching at the High School. I became a keen Girl Guide and enjoyed the camp with the school Guides. I especially remember sitting round the camp fire singing 'Now the day is over ...' in the dusk.

We played cricket and hockey on the Downs. It was particularly pretty when the hawthorn bushes there were in flower. 'Gen Lit' was my favourite subject and I am still grateful for the Shakespeare poems we had to learn by heart. I quote apt pieces to myself such as rising in the morning Longfellow's 'Let us then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate'. Or Wordsworth's 'Mid primrose's tufts the periwinkle trails its wreaths'. The latter was not learnt at school but taught us by our father.

Staying with very wealthy friends was a strange experience. In one such family the mother had the money and on the strength of this her husband was the Master of the local foxhounds and gained a Conservative baronetcy. I remember staying there when the French couturier came to visit to show his latest models and take orders from Lady Boles. Nesta and I watched these being unpacked from a large hump-

backed leather trunk. As I had a figure that more conveniently fitted into them than Nest would have, I was used as a model. Dresses were duly chosen and ordered for mother and daughter - but not for me!

Staying there, as at some other houses, I handed over the keys to my luggage after arrival. By the time you went to your bedroom, your clothes were unpacked and laid out on the bed was the dress etc. that was thought suitable for that evening's wear. In the morning, before bedroom basins were fitted, a maid would come in to draw the curtains. In some cases, as when staying with Uncle Alec at Dunster Castle, she would light the fire and put a can of hot water, carefully covered, in the wash basin stand. Staying with the Boles I remember having my toothbrush laid over the poured-out water in the tumbler! It was there, too that new satin ribbon shoulder straps replaced my slightly frayed ones. However, with all this attention to visitors all was not perfect 'below stairs'. Nesta and I returned late one evening and went to the kitchen for a snack after everyone was in bed. The floor was black with beetles! Perhaps this was their coming out time, and they would have disappeared by morning.

Rather before this, while we were living at Inveresk, I remember that our two maids were going to a fancy dress dance at the Village Hall. I think we were home for the holidays from boarding school. We took a great deal of trouble making them their 'costumes'. The taller one went as Joan of Arc, dressed in shining armour we made by pressing silver paper onto cardboard, with ties to attached each separate piece. The other was dressed as April Showers - a pale blue dress with a rainbow sewn onto it. Glass beads were strung onto threads from a waist band to be the rain. It was much the same time that we elder ones were discussing what to give them for Christmas. John aged about five joined in with 'They would like a tin of meat'. He was a very thoughtful little boy and realized that although we didn't like meat they did.

We went to church with my mother every Sunday and at one time learnt the Collect by heart and repeated it to her before leaving. There were not the social gatherings in aid of charities, coffee mornings, church fetes, etc as now. There were many more private parties and dances. I remember a Subscription Hospital Ball in Stroud. The Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester was the occasion for private entertaining.

5. Training to be a Nursery Nurse

I was always very fond of small children and of flowers and gardening. A training in horticulture might have suited me, but probably not then considered women's work. After leaving school I did a training in child care and housework at Nursery Training College in Hampstead. Following this I took a three months course at the Infants Hospital in Vincent Square, London. I would have liked to go to university, but mother could only afford that for William.



This game, produced for the Infants Hospital at Vincent Square, involved tipping the board so that each ball (representing a baby patient or the doctor) rolled into their appointed places. It would have been difficult to do without another ball rolling out of place.

I liked living in London and the interests it provided. Hampstead Heath was close by for walks. Golders Green church had a well known preacher called Bouchier, brother of the actor. As well as going to his services, I tried out others. At Kingsleigh House there were good sermons. Perhaps it was there that I went to hear a lady preacher of the time called Maud Royden. I remember seeking out a service to sit under the 'Gloomy Dean' Dean Inge.

Visiting cards were part of one's equipment, with the copperplate kept by a stationer who would replenish the supply as needed. These were of course engraved and not printed as was our notepaper.

6. My Early Twenties



Louisa dressed for presentation at Court with ostrich feather headdress and fan.

After I had finished my education and training I started to look around for ways of living away from home and including as much fun as possible. I think I must have rather automatically taken my first job organised by the Training College, who were applied to for students. It is curious that I cannot now remember this time with any clarity. For a short time I looked after the children of Cyril Scott (below). I think he was well known as a pianist and composer.

At this time it was taken for granted that our brothers would start earning after leaving Oxford or Cambridge. As far as I remember none of my female friends or relations started a career. They earned a certain amount of pocket money to add to the dress allowance from parents.

We had had the glamour of being presented at Court with ostrich feathers on our heads, long white dresses, long white kid gloves and ostrich feature fan. Hunt Balls and private dances depended for their enjoyment on the people one went with or danced with. The settings are now memorable than those who were there. I remember staying in Oxford for Eights Week when my brother Bill was at New College. It is the only time in my life that I didn't go to bed one night but changed in the morning from evening to day clothes when we went down to the river. Hatherop Castle, now a school, was the setting for a private summer ball - a very hot evening and the garden floodlit. Blocks of ice around the dance floor.



For smaller entertainments we had car treasure hunts and tennis parties. I remember we mowed and rolled the lawn and renewed the chalk lines before we had a party at Inveresk.



Hatherop Castle. There were blocks of ice around the dance floor.

Pamela Paget's wedding to Christopher Glenconner is still in my memory. I think I was going with my mother, first cousin of Pamela's father, and meeting her at Wells.

But my own involvement and remembrance of the day started at a London railway station, presumably Paddington. There was a private train and as I walked along the corridor there were already some seated passengers and newspapers strewn over all the other seats. I thought these were taken until I was told that there were free newspapers provided in the train!

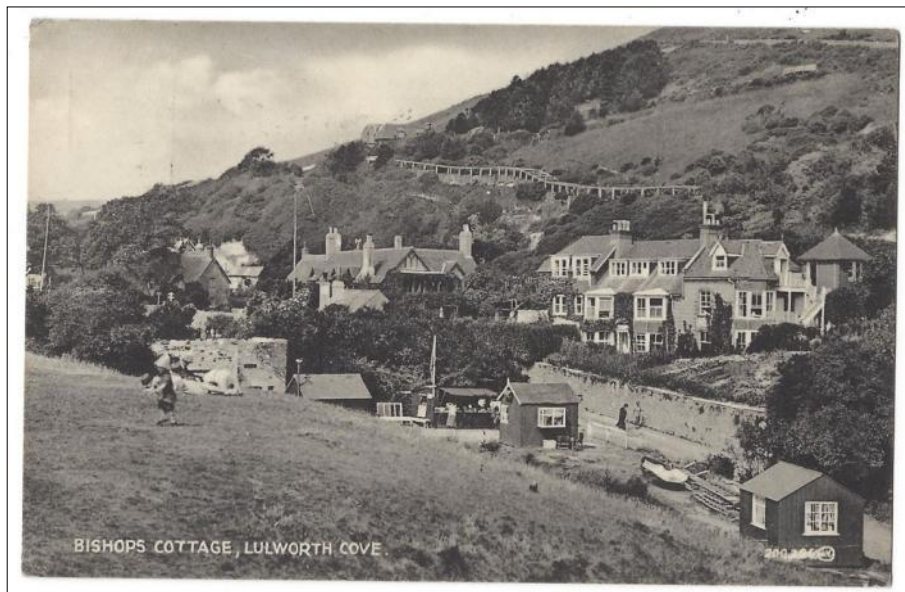
As I sat down I saw that the young man sitting next to me had polished finger nails, something I had never seen before. It transpired that he was Cecil Beaton, who later became a famous photographer.



A photograph by Cecil Beaton, who had polished finger nails. Louisa sat next to him on a private train.

The wedding was a splendid spectacle with the bride in gold and little Rose in a pearl encrusted cap. We visited Rose when she was a grandmother at Chateaux de Bellet near Nice with Griselda, and stayed there earlier with Alexander. The grown up bridesmaids including Pamela's sisters, Sylvia older and Angela younger, each wore a dress of a different colour to match the stained glass window - ruby red, emerald green, deep blue etc. Stephen Tennant, Christopher Glenconner's brother, had designed them.

Two jobs that I did at this time were the result of contacts through the families. A cousin, Hylda Balfour, knew Admiral Blake's wife. He may have been a captain when I first went to them. Their children Simon and Jennifer were about five and three. While I was there, he and his wife both went to Australia and I, aged 23, was left in complete charge for five months. I could take the children to stay with my relations.



Bishop's Cottage, Lulworth Cove, Dorset.

I could rent a house anywhere I liked for holidays and have who I liked to stay. Their house in Kent was fully staffed as was any rented so life was very comfortable. I gave lessons to Susan, which included learning by heart. She liked all the repetition in the creation of the world in Genesis and learnt it perfectly.

When I rented Bishop's Cottage in Allworth Cove in Dorset I took one of the maids and I remember her asking if she ought to bring some Vim or if they would have it in Dorset shops! My sister Elizabeth was with me some of the time and we had many friends to stay. I have snapshots of this.

The other time that contact was made for me was to the Hobhouse family who were Liberal friends of my mother. They lived at Hadspen House, Castle Cary except in the summer when we all, including the indoor staff moved to a house by the sea rented from Lord Leicester in Norfolk. At Hadspen I was in charge of Libby six, Tom two and a half, and Paul about four or five months. I think I was there about nine months. Libby was taught by her mother who mostly looked after her riding etc. Tom was difficult to look after because his mother spoilt him, unlike the baby who she was very strict with. They had a lot of relations and friends to stay so we had plenty of interests.

In Norfolk, there were tents put up in the garden for extra visitors, with carpets and furniture and well waited on! We all changed for dinner in the evening into long dresses. We podded peas in the flower garden by the lavender hedge sitting on the grass bank, as well as swimming during the day. I don't remember any nursery routine while there.



Hadspen House, now a hotel.

Tom, now called Henry, has lately been Chairman of Somerset County Council!

Wikipedia in 2020 described the history of the Hobhouses at Hadspen (now a hotel) thus:

In 1785 Henry Hobhouse II, Esquire a lawyer and head of the Bristol Bar purchased Hadspen and Hadspen House, significantly expanding the Hobhouse land ownership in Somersetshire and establishing the Hobhouse family seat. 'The Hobhouses were Bristol merchants who had recently established themselves as country gentlemen.' Henry Hobhouse I and his brother Isaac made their fortune as Bristol merchants in the sugar and tobacco trades between Bristol, Africa, the West Indies and Virginia in the early- and mid-18th century.

At the time of purchase in 1785 the Hadspen estate comprised 717 acres. Hadspen House was 'a modern stone-built House of Six rooms on a floor with marble chimney-pieces, stabling for 20 horses, a good garden and extensive woodland.'^[11] In 1786 and 1786 Henry Hobhouse II continued to expand the house and the furnishings. His alterations in 1786-87 include 'raising the ceilings of the front rooms, adding a new dining room to the north-east, three reception rooms, the drawing and library rooms and reroofing the house in grey Welsh slate. His alterations created Hadspen House into an the grandeur of the 18th century Georgian manor house for which it is known today.

One summer, I had a very enjoyable time going with Percival cousins to stay with them in Scotland and help look after the two little boys, Alan six and Claude (Doodie) three. We drove up stopping in the Lake District on the way. Dorothy Percival's two Allen aunts owned a large house on the Clyde and we stayed in a small house on the property. There was a steam yacht with crew and an eight metre yacht that we sailed and raced in.

The Allen family had owned a shipping line, by then sold to P&O. Dorothy was a friend of Alice Percival. I think they had met while working together in the First World War. They had started a farm together at Lytton Cheyney in Dorset, probably financed by Dorothy. Alice's brother Dave was a Gunner and met there and then married Dorothy. Alice continued with the farm and one of us would sometimes visit her. It was quite unlike staying with other friends or relations. I don't remember doing anything practical on the farm as Alice had a manager to deal with it. The farmhouse was tucked in between the sea and the sloping fields covered in sheep. Cousin Alice was rather alarming and exacting and probably very erudite. She and my mother were first cousins and got on well together, but I don't remember much fun or meeting anyone of my age when staying there.



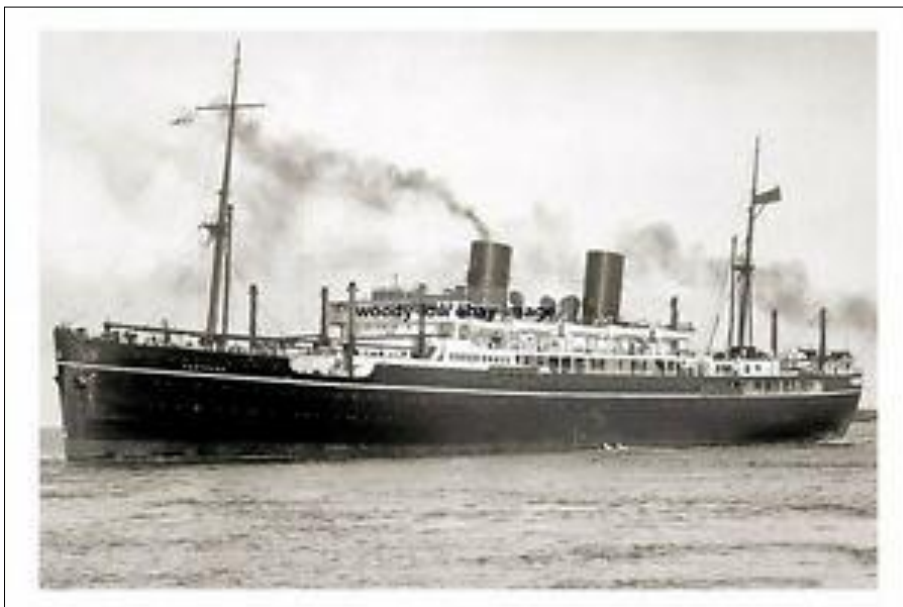
Schloss Kaps, Kitzbuhel.

In January 1931 I very much enjoyed winter sports at Kitzbuhel. I travelled with Isabel Bruce, and have a snapshot of her on the Channel crossing. We stayed at Schloss Kaps, where the owner received paying guests in a friendly atmosphere - I have my own album of snapshots I took. This may have been the first time I went abroad, at the age of 24. It seems unbelievable nowadays. I think the Blake's financed it as a present to me. It made a very good free-and-easy holiday with a group of friends of much the same age and meeting new ones. In the evenings we went to restaurants in the small town for eating and dancing, wearing casual after-ski clothes. Everyone was relaxed and jolly and enjoyed the change from the more conventional existence at home.

One incident I remember was going into a jeweller's shop to ask for a replacement for my broken watch glass. My German could only produce 'Bitte' and I showed and handed over my damaged watch. On coming out of the shop I met a German speaking friend and asked what I should have said for 'new' and 'glass'. Just that, the said. They are spelt differently but pronounced the same, or near enough to be understood!

There were local children, but as far as I remember no English or other foreign family parties. Winter sports at that time used to cater for groups of young, unmarried, grown-ups.

7. Morocco and Lake Como



RMS Carthage, built 1931.

My next journey abroad was in 1932. I am helped to remember it by reading letters I sent to Elizabeth that she kept for me. I used to stay with an elderly Luttrell cousin, Cousin Margaret, at Edington. She was a great traveller and was usually accompanied by her on Collin and wife. On this occasion a neighbour's daughter of about my age was going and I was invited to join the party. Collin's wife didn't come. The four of us left from London King George V Docks in the P&O liner Carthage on April 22nd. I was surprised to see the Lascar crew throughout the ship. We landed at Gibraltar and I remember my surprise at the coinage being the same as in England!

We stayed at the Hotel Cristina, Algeciras, Spain. I wrote to my sister Bet on April 28th: 'My dear Bet, it is marvellous here. Yesterday we went for a drive through the cork woods. There is an undergrowth of flowering gum looking like wild roses ...'. I see on the hotel notepaper: 'Telegraphic address Cristina Gibraltar or Cristina Algeciras. Parcels c/o Railway Office Gibraltar'. I remember being in the garden there, so bright with all the summer flowers and butterflies, a contrast to the spring we had left so few days before.



My next letter is from Continental Hotel in Tangier, Morocco. I wrote to Bet:

'It is lovely being here. We came over by boat yesterday, three hours from Algeciras. Quite a good crossing but I'm glad it wasn't longer! Glad it wasn't today, as there's been a high wind all day. This is the most fascinating place - really Eastern, all the men, women and children wear yellow leather slippers with the heel part tucked in, so the streets are quite quiet. This hotel is right in the Moorish quarter and my bedroom windows look out onto one their little streets. Just opposite is a little boys' school and we can see into it as the door is always open. The

children leave their shoes in the doorway and sit on grass matting swaying from side to side chanting the Koran continuously from 7am.



The Continental Hotel, Tangier, in about 1930.

There is also a mosque nearby and we hear the call to prayer. It is fascinating to walk about the Moorish streets and see the tailors sitting on the floor their shop cross-legged at work. This morning we saw over the Sultan's Palace and went to the local market where the Riff women were squatting with their wares - cheeses on palm leaves and milk in pitchers. You see the water carriers with their skins full of water - a disgusting sight like dead animals on their backs! Tomorrow we are going to drive to Tetuan and next week most likely go to Fez for two nights. We leave next Sunday and go to Marseilles by sea staying there one night and Bordighera for two or three nights and then proceed to San Giorgio Hotel, Lenno, Lake Como, Italy.'

I have an amusing snapshot in my album that I took during our trip from Algeciras to Tangier. It appears to be an open boat with our luggage piled beside the standing boatman who seems to be steering with his foot.

The next letter I quote from is dated 'May 3rd 1932, in the train between Tangier and Fez.'

'We breakfasted at 8 o'clock caught the 9 o'clock train and will arrive Fez at 5.30 this evening. The train goes very slowly (it is only 150 miles to Fez) so that you can see the flowers etc quite clearly. Some of the corn is quite golden. It is very hot indeed with a hot wind blowing like the thing they dry your hair with. In the distance we can see the snow-topped Atlas mountains. The wild flowers are wonderful - a carpet of blue convolvulus, sheets of pink mallow and little wild marigold and lots I don't know the name of. Every now and then we pass villages looking like dark brown haystacks or beehives enclosed in hedges of prickly pear. Large black and white storks walk about in the fields and stand on the roof-tops.'

Of this journey I remember the very hot wind and the many times the train slowed down and stopped, perhaps to cool off. At some of these I was allowed to clamber

down to ground level to see the flowers more closely.



Fez railway station in the 1930s.

On arrival at Fez we were surprised to see how very up-to-date was the large, luxurious hotel where we stayed outside the walls of the old town. I also remember the very narrow streets crowded this laden donkeys and people either riding mules or walking and all in their picturesque clothing. Our European-owned modern hotel and its surround was a complete contrast. Our two day visit was described in the following letter:

'May 5th. In the train between Fez and Tangier. We had the most interesting day yesterday. In the morning we went with a guide all through the old town and cobbled streets with little open shops on either side. You are jostled by laden donkeys and rich Arabs riding on mules with brightly coloured trappings. We saw the inside of two mosques. In the courtyard there is a foundation where you see the people wash themselves before entering to pray, and the sacred pigeons flying around. Everywhere there is wonderful mosaic.

We were also taken to the harem of a rich silk merchant! We first went to a little shop of which he is patron. We sat round on Moorish stools while the wares were exhibited to us. When we had made a few purchases we were taken through winding dark alleys and into the richly decorated harem. We only saw his latest wife - very young and pretty - a swarm of small children and the people looking after them. The embroidered cushions and hangings were most beautiful.

In the afternoon we drove round the old town and to a berber village where I took some snapshots of the little children beside the mud and bamboo huts and storks nesting on the roofs. There was a hot spring surrounded by palm trees just what you imagine an oasis to look like. In one pool was a tiny boy who swam under the water for coins we threw in. We stay at Tangier till Sunday and then go to Marseilles. We will be at the Hotel Bordighera from the 11th to the 12th so if you write to that address now I will get it.'

It is interesting that the mail was more reliable in those days! I expected this letter, presumably not posted till May 6th in Tangier to get back to England and the answer to arrive in Italy within about six days. After our two nights in Fez we evidently had three in Tangier again before our 24 hours on board ship to Marseilles.

My memories of our stay in Tangier include a visit to the Brookes and the wonderful wisteria on their house with yard-long flower sprays. The other families who entertained us were the Lumbs (she was Aunt Rose Luttrell's sister) and the Sinclairs who used to live near Minehead. They lived in the part of Tangier called 'The Mountain'. Quite a collection of retired army had houses there. I remember watching polo and pig-sticking with them, the pigs being stuffed sacks.

The next letter is dated May 9th Monday 1932, written on notepaper headed Compagnie de Navigation Paquet, Marseilles.

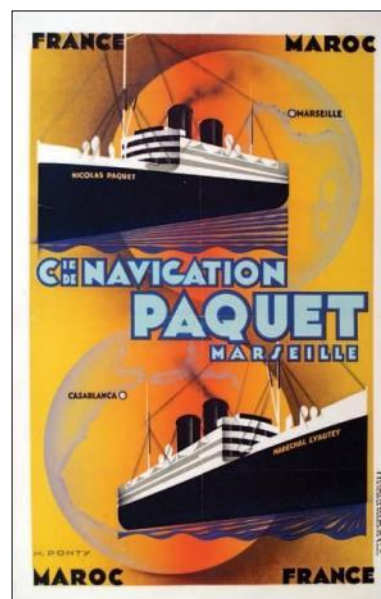
'My dear Bet, We left Tangier in the early hours of yesterday morning and now in the Mediterranean with the coast of Spain just visible on our left and that of the Balearic Islands still fainter on our right. We get to Marseille early tomorrow morning. Everything on this boat is French, mostly French colonials with hordes of children on their way back from West Africa. It is a very much smaller and less luxurious boat than the Carthage. There was dancing last night and G and I felt very honoured as we were the first to be asked by the Captain!

There was the most wonderful sunset that I have ever seen last night. We were quite close to the Spanish coast - very high and rugged. As the sun went down the sea became a deeper blue and the rocks a mauvy grey and the wonderful golden sky with streaks of red changing gradually and remaining beautiful for a long time.

There are no flying fish or other excitements in the sea, but when we were crossing from Algeciras to Tangier we saw a school of porpoises. They look so absurd bobbing out of the water and into the next wave.

Our last day in Tangier we shopped in the morning. I got a few Moroccan leather things for presents. In the afternoon we went to see the Brookes. Collin knew them quite well and had been in the same Regiment with Captain Brookes. They had the most wonderful place. It had belonged to his great grandfather - the great Rajah Brooke. He showed us his lovely Arab horses and all over the grounds. G says that Bordighera will be very dull as it's like a place of the dead once the season is over - all the hotels and shops of any account close. However we are only there for about three days because M loves the place.

Tuesday 10th. We have meals at the most odd hours on board this ship. Breakfast at 8 o'clock. Lunch 11.30. Tea 3.45 and Dinner at 7. Tonight the clocks have just been put back an hour, so we are hoping it doesn't mean our last meal is at 6 o'clock. It has been great fun seeing so many places. Just at the moment it is a



bit dull as there are no English people to talk to.'

We evidently left in the morning as the next letter is also dated Tuesday 10th. Written in the train between Marseilles and Cannes after lunching at the Hotel du Louvre de la Paix at Marseilles. To quote from it:

'This train is very comfortable. We are travelling 1st Class and do everything in great comfort. It is a three hours train journey from Marseilles to Cannes. We are going to stay there for one night and go on to Bordighera tomorrow afternoon. Toulon, this is a large town but does not have such a dreary look as ours as the houses are yellow washed with yellow and brown tiles.

Thursday May 12th. After breakfast Bordighera. The views of the coast were perfectly lovely all the way along from St.Raphael to Cannes, the sea an indescribable blue. We got to Cannes about 5 o'clock and stayed at a very nice hotel, Hotel Mediterranee, on the sea. The next morning (that is yesterday) Mrs Bridges and Geoff came down to see us at the hotel and took G and me back in her car to see her villa. We came to Menton by train from Cannes, were met by a taxi, had tea there at a very nice Russian tea rooms G knew of, where we served by the Princess who keeps it. It is called the 'Victoria' and they give you a delicious kind of rusk toast and peach jam. We then drove to Bordighera. This is not at all an exciting town. Our hotel is the Hotel Bristol - most of the hotels were closed as the season is over. We are most likely spending Monday night at Genoa on our way to Como. Will you keep my letters together as I may like to read them over to remember the rip in later years!! Do write to S.Giorgio Hotel, Lenno, Lake Como.'

I have left out the description of the scenery on the train journey and the flowers in Mrs Bridge's (Alys Luttrell's mother) villa, garden etc. It is now sixty years later that I am reading the letters from which I quote which are the last I have of the trip. I think we drove to Lenno. While there we went by boat to other towns. I remember going to church by boat and the wonderful colours of the massed azaleas at the Villa Carlotta. Collin's daughter Romela Mostyn-Owen joined us at Lenno. She had Italian friends who owned a little island with their house on it nearby and we visited them. We drove up into the Swiss mountains one day with the sudden change to snow and ice. I have a snapshot I took of a frozen lake. I have no record or recollection of how long we stayed at Lenno or of the journey home.

Later, in the summer of 1932, I was one of Marian Percival's bridesmaids, as she married Gilbert McMeekan. I have a photograph taken in the garden at Kimsbury House, carrying sheaves of delphiniums. As I write now my co-bridesmaids Gwen Whicher and Isabel Armytage live in Cheltenham. Allan Percival, the little page boy, died recently. Marian celebrated her 90th birthday with a party this year (1992).

I have no records of the years 1933 and 1934. It may have been during this time that Margie Yates (daughter of Cousin Margaret, and Andrew's mother) invited me to go with her and St.John to S.Jean de Luz in late autumn. The hotel overlooked the bay and it was still warm enough to enjoy the sea-bathing. Margie was very energetic and we were always going off on coach trips to see interesting places like St.John Pied or Loyola.

One evening when we were sitting at dinner, people who I knew arrived to stay at the hotel and came over to me. Next day, St. John drove over to Biarritz with them to go to the Casino. It was the first time I had been to a Casino and the gambling scene was most dramatic and just what I had imagined with the croupiers raking in the chips and the types of people crowded around the tables.

I remember the café meal we had afterwards - my first French onion soup with the toast and melted cheese floating in it. It could have been before this trip abroad that Robin Brooke gave me 'The Travellers Companion' inscribed 'To the Eternal Traveller from the Traveller's Companion'. In those days there would have been no question of travelling with him a deux as our grandchildren do now. But I do not regret our ways of doing things.

8. A Houseboat in Cairo

There is plenty of documentation of my travelling in 1935 as I have letters sent to Elizabeth and Catherine as well as a diary and pages of an engagement book of the January to May that I spent with Bill in his Cairo house boat. I will quote from these and give my general remembrances:

This was the first foreign journey that I had arranged and done by myself. After spending the night with my cousin Nina and her husband Foyle Randolph at Kitnocks, Curdridge (right, now a nursing home) her sister Margery drove me to join the boat at Southampton, bringing an enormous bunch of flowers grown in a frame that scented my cabin.



The ship was the Hobsons Bay, of the Aberdeen and Commonwealth Line. It had on its writing paper 'Australia and the Suez Canal'. It was one-class and had a Scottish crew. I had probably shopped around for the cheapest possible passage. I think it was £24 return, and I now realize that it was mostly used by emigrants to Australia. I remember the colourful but sad scene. A rainbow of paper streamers joined those on deck to the land they were leaving until as we pulled away the contacts were broken.



The SS Hobsons Bay.

Our only stop was Malta where Gerald Curteis met me and we lunch at the Union Club. Food in the ship was plain and stodgy; suet puddings appeared in various guises and names on the menu flavoured with coconut, ginger etc. I usually dodged thee by asking for fresh fruit. I kept a mother-of-pearl and silver clasp knife in my handbag to peel the apples etc instead of using the metal one provided.

On one occasion I realised I had left on my plate. At the next meal I told this to the waiter who promptly found it for me with 'That's a very tempting little article'!



A silver and mother-of-pearl folding fruit knife of the period.

On arrival at Port Said on Friday January 11th, I was pleased to be met by the Shell agent to deal with my luggage. (Editor's note: Louisa's brother Bill was based in Cairo working for Shell).

In the interval between ship and train I went with three others of my fellow passengers Anthony Powell RAF, Baroness van Hutten, and Major Peto, to look round Port Said. I have a snapshot of us having a drink at a pavement table while a small boy polishes our shoes. Being typical tourists!

Bill met me at Cairo station and I remember how impressed I was with his fluent Arabic dealing with the porters. In my first letter to Elizabeth I describe our arrival at the dahabieh 'Yvonne' moored in the Nile near the Gezira Club:

'We arrived here in the setting sun. I felt as if I was sleep-walking coming down through the palm trees. It all looked so romantic. As soon as its dark, the lights across the river are so pretty, making long coloured reflections like Chinese lanterns in the water.'

Looking back on my visit to Bill, I realise that it was a splendid mix of cheerful, social life and very interesting experiences. At the age of 26 and having been in Cairo for two years, after a spell with Shell at Port Sudan Bill had a very wide circle of friends. Some taught at the University, a few in the Army, British Government Services, excavating the sites, at the Embassy as well as those we knew at home who were visiting Cairo.

It was easy for us to entertain as Edrees, who lived at the end of the dahabieh could always produce an excellent meal. He did all the food shopping. Mahomet also slept there, but his duties were to guard the boat, scrub the deck and look after and sail the small sailing boat kept alongside. Neither of them spoke or understood any English.

I plunged straight into the social round. To quote again from my first letter to Elizabeth:

'Gezira Club. I went there on Saturday afternoon with Bill to the Races, saw various people. That night we supped with Waldo and Gwen Clark. Also there was Mary Reid. We were all going on to a Domino dance given by a girl called Isobel Hibbert. Mary Reid had made our dominoes, sort of loose-fitting coats with hoods, mine was

a pretty pale green sateen - Bill's choice. We all wore masks and took them off at midnight. It was more amusing when you could see that people looked like. Ralph Stockley was there.

We went along to the Club on Sunday (yesterday). Bill played squash very well. Then we went to tea with a friend of Bill's called Bryn Davis who is about his age and a professor at the University here. He lives miles way on the outskirts of Cairo and has a little native house and pretty garden. There was a cheery girl there called Yvonne Williams and a Swiss man called Le Ferrier. Lady Rowlatt had also asked us to tea and Bill had said we would look in after.

Mary Rowlatt came back to the dahabieh with us for drinks and we'd also asked some others; two quite nice men from Shell called Mackenzie and McNamara and Ralph (Stockley). They went about 7.45 and Bill and I supped here then went to see 'The House of Rothschild'. It started about 10 o'clock and we got back here at midnight. I could hardly keep awake, not having gone to bed till four the night before! Mary Rowlatt has asked me if I'd like to go and see an old mosque tomorrow afternoon. I will be very interested to.



The Gezira Sporting Club in 1935.

I've done pretty well so far I think as I only arrived Friday at 4.30 pm and now it's Monday. It all seems like a different planet here, with everyone taken up with life here it doesn't seem to matter never seeing the news. I haven't looked at a paper since I've been here yet, and no-one bothers about wireless.'

I remember the Domino dance. The idea was that your partner had to guess who you were. As I'd only arrived the afternoon before, they were never right.

When Bill was at the office I had plenty to do as well as writing long letters. I suppose the wives were busy with housekeeping and children - but during the months I was there a great many girls came to stay with relations. There were also some daughters of older Government officials, like Mary Rowlatt and Diana

Graves. It was convenient being so close to the Club and I often made up a four at tennis there.

The Cairo Museum was of great interest coupled with the books I read on Egyptology. The discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb had been fairly recent, in 1922, and the contents were well displayed. But at the time these were thought to be very second rate compared to earlier finds, just as anything Victorian was discredited in England at that time. I very much enjoyed our visits to the various digs' mostly being done by Americans and Germans. Also, at weekends walks in the desert. From my diary:



'Saturday February 2nd. Excellent day. Bryn to lunch. Three of us to Heluan and Wadi Hof. Walked until a glorious sunset. Dined Mena House with Mckintosh, Jules. Feb 16th. Persian Exhibition with Joan Trevelyan and Bill. Enjoyed pictures and prayer mats. Tea with Bryn. Lecture on Poetry by Lawrence Binyon (below).

Sunday Feb 17th. Expedition to Wadi Natrun with Ayliffes, Molesworth, Stephanie, Mary Ganton, Keith Foster, Macnamara, Bob Wimbush and Jo Ann Maxwell. Various breakdowns, ending with abandoning cars and legging it home. Picked up by Egyptian Army lorry with Coptic driver. Before this, some or all of them had breakfast with us on the deck of the dahabieh. Snapshot of this in Green album. Also in this pictures of an interesting trip to a Coptic Monastery that we arranged with Alastair Balfour and Alison Dodd came with us. We slept in the desert with sleeping bags, making 'hip holes' to lie in. Candles in bottles for light.

We had an evening party in fancy (nautical) dress with dancing to a gramophone on the deck of the dahabieh. We had hired boats for couples to row themselves out between dances.'

As this was April 2nd it may have been to celebrate my birthday, March 31st. It was a great success. Fancy dress with a 'subject' was popular at the time. One was given to come to a 'shipwreck'. One guest wore a specially made 'nightdress' and had an elaborate hair-do in aped curlers done by the hairdresser. An original party that we went to, I describe in a letter:

'I went to quite an amusing treasure hunt the other day that a Belgian girl had. Bill and I were the only English. There were Turks, French, Swiss etc. My partner was Don Roberto Caracciolo. We hunted for clues in the semi-darkness in the garden after tea. The last paper told you to go round the house and down some steps to a certain door and knock on it three times.

When it was opened you saw a most eerie chamber of horrors. The whole room was draped around with black veils and the only lights were from behind masks light up ghostly looking greenish faces and hands etc and great serpents lit from inside. It was certainly very cleverly thought out. You had to hunt in the dark amongst these horrors with hidden people behind the veils grabbing you every now and then. My Italian friend found me a prize - a very nice glass powder bowl.'

It is circled with silver stripes, and I still have it. On April 6th I write:

I've just got back from a marvellous two days at Luxor! I went with an American girl called Anna Grace, travelling cheaply by night train 2nd class without sleepers. Once there, we stayed in great comfort, costing us nothing, at Chicago House, the centre of the American Exploration Society, where the business side was managed by Anna Grace's brother. I remember our rooms opened onto a central courtyard garden full of flowers. Snapshot that I took is in the green album. Members of the Institute took us to see the temples with their wonderful great pillars.

I saw Tutankhamen's tomb which has amusing monkeys painted on the wall. But the tombs we saw were much older and better work. In the nobles' tombs there were excellent coloured pictures of people cutting corn and harvesting grapes and fishing and duck shooting and quite amusing touches such as two women hanging a quarrel and pulling each other's hair and a nice stripey cat under the Ming's chair, eating a fish.

Yesterday morning I went with some of the others for an hour's donkey ride from 6am to 7am in the cultivation beside the Nile. The colours and reflections were perfect. My mule moved along at a good speed but my shins are very bruised now as a result of coinciding with the stirrup buckle!

I remember this ride very well. Looking back on my time in Cairo, I do not remember meeting any Egyptians socially. Although I studied the ancient history of Egypt, I cannot remember knowing much about the politics of the time I was there. Sir Miles Lampson was High Commissioner and had just married Jacqui, daughter of the Italian head of the Tropical Diseases Hospital. Sir Miles' daughter, Mary, was also there aged about 19. We went to the High Commission for a lunch party, a large garden party, and a smaller dance to gramophone. Mary used to come to us, as well as Peter Flower and George Labouchere and Frank Roberts.

9. A Rolls Royce in Menton

My next visit abroad was staying with (great) Aunt Rose, widow of Uncle Arthur Hoskyns. She was already installed in a large hotel in Menton with Kathleen her lady's maid and her Rolls Royce and chauffeur. I did not particularly enjoy it as everyone seemed very old in the hotel.



A 1935 Rolls Royce.

My aunt made one condition while I was staying there. She thought being a vegetarian was a disadvantage for me when going out to meals or staying on visits. So she insisted on my eating fish, chicken, or game at either lunch or dinner every day. Of course the French cooking of these made the best of them and you mainly tasted the very good sauces, so it wasn't a hardship. It has probably been useful to me during the rest of my life.



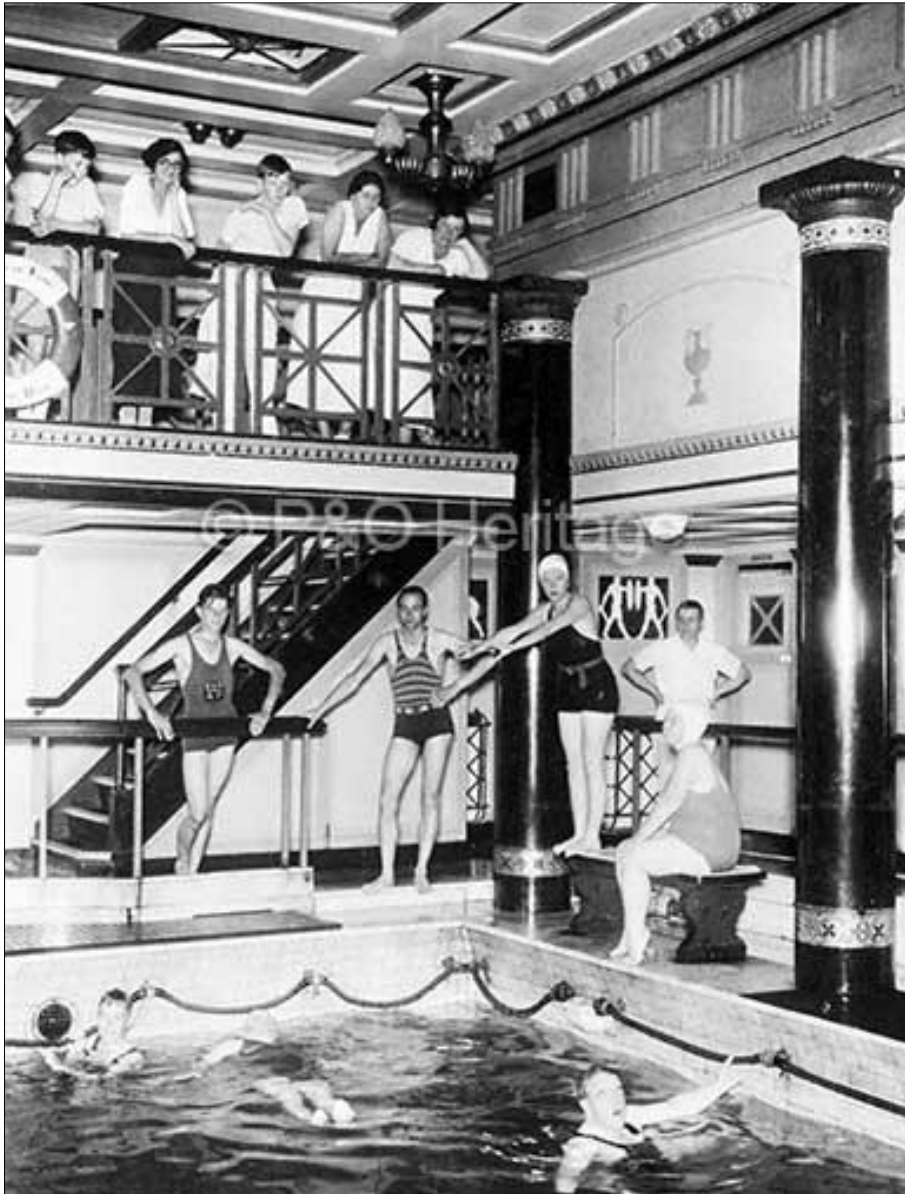
Chateau de la Garoupe, Antibes.

One day we drove to lunch with friends of my mother's, Sir Henry and Lady Norman at Chateau de la Garoupe at Antibes. It was a large lunch party, very grand and formal. What I particularly remember was being announced by the footman as we entered the dining room and the guest ahead of me was announced as 'The Honourable Barbara Boot'. Lady Norman was a daughter of Lord Aberconway who created the beautiful gardens at Bodnant in North Wales. It is odd that I now have no recollection of my travel to or from France on that occasion, but I can date it exactly, being the time of the death of George V.

The Chateau de la Garoupe had a colourful history. The following description is from Wikipedia in 2020. In 1907, British MP Charles McLaren, Baron Aberconway, bought 4 acres at the point of the Cap d'Antibes. He hired English architect Ernest George to build the property. It features a long façade with half moon windows and a long stairway leading to the sea. The garden features rose bushes, irises and begonias. At times the house was rented or visited by various celebrities, including Cole Porter and Pablo Picasso. The house passed to the McLaren's daughter Florence and her husband, Sir Henry Norman. Norman expanded the property and added an extra storey to the house. In 1999, the home was purchased by Russian tycoon Boris Berezovsky for €22 million.

10. India and Goa

By November 1936 , I was off abroad again. Mrs Russell invited me to travel to India with her and spend three months there. She was a friend of our cousins Lucilla and John Percival; her son Wilfred was with the trading company Killick Nixon in Bombay. We sailed on the Viceroy of India with plenty of entertainment, dancing, deck games, swimming in the 'Pompeian Pool', described as 'very gay with green tiles and red pillars'.



The Pompeian Pool on the Viceroy of India.

In a letter sent on November 19th, nearing Aden, I wrote:

'We are having a perfect voyage. I loved the day coming through the Canal, sliding along so slowly and the lovely colours of the desert and the excitement of seeing Egypt and camels again! There are some amusing people on board, my chief dancing partner is a somewhat ardent young Hungarian'.



The P&O liner the Viceroy of India.

There were several Maharajahs on board; one of them, the young Maharajah of Barathpur, saw my name on the Passenger List and asked to be introduced to me. He had been at Bryanston School with my first cousin John Luttrell. He asked us to visit him during our time in India. In the evening he wore his traditional dress with diamond buttons down the front of the black coat!

Wilfred shared a modern flat with a friend, and they moved out to a beach hut at Juhu to lend the flat to his mother. It was at the top of the block on the 5th floor, so always a breeze. We were looked after by two Indians who cooked and cleaned. But our very modern bathrooms, bright with chrome, were dealt with by a 'sweeper' of the untouchable class. My description of Bombay in a letter to my brother John on December 4th reads:

It's not a particularly attractive place in the way of buildings, but the people and oxen carts are very picturesque. Everyone seems to be carrying something on their head, usually twice the size of themselves. Load of hay or enormous, shallow basket hung around with pots and pans. Then carrying them keep up a sharp trot without holding it at all. The water carriers are very picturesque, a bamboo pole across their shoulder with brass pots either end.

In another letter I describe the Maharajahs who:

'Come here to watch the polo and races. They are mostly a strange shape - a brightly coloured crisp muslin turban with flowing end and below it a white coat buttoned up to the neck and bulging outwards with its wearer to an amazing extent, so that its 'skirt' that comes to just above the knees is spread out into a wide circle. Then a sudden change of outline to the thin legs with their fitting white jodhpurs. I forgot to mention the diamond rings and earrings!'

On December 17th I wrote:

'Yesterday we started at 7.30am from here, picked up Wilfred and another man called Rudy (short for Rudolph) von Leyden and went off to a place two hours driving beyond Juhu. It was a wonderful drive beside lakes and wooded hills,

almost like Scotland. The hills are the Ghats. Near the road were palms of different kinds and bamboos and wild mango trees. The object of our drive was Bassein - a ruined fort containing the ruins of twelve churches.



The Ghat Hills.

After a picnic lunch we drove back to the shack at Juhu. The shack, which Wilfred shares with three others, is made of bamboo and palm leaves and is most attractive standing among tall coconut palms beside a perfect sandy beach. Well, having got back there by 3.30 we went to sleep and I didn't wake till 4.50. Had tea, then some of us walked along the beach.



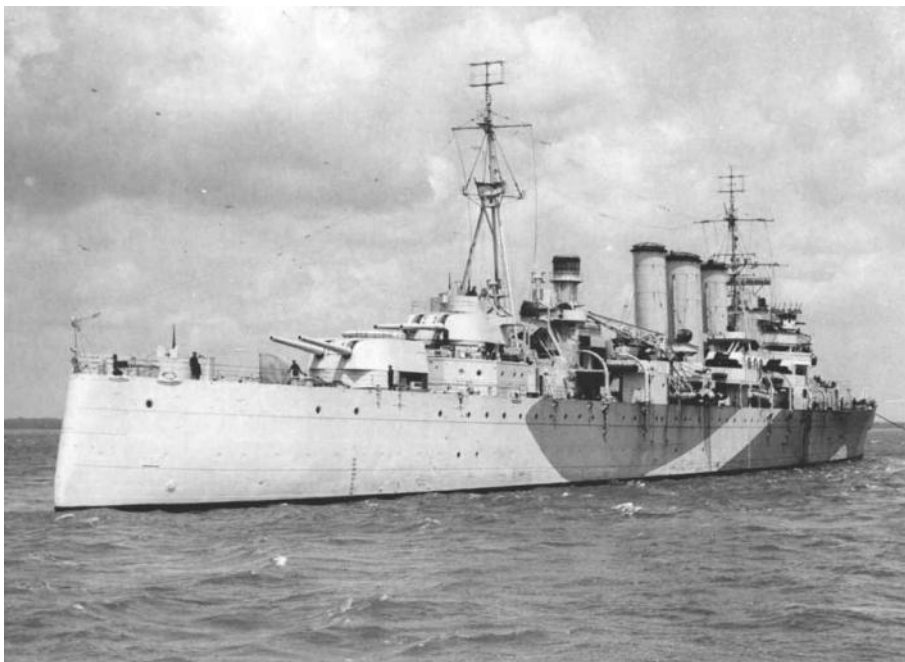
Royal Western India Turf Club, Bombay.

The sunset, as always, was wonderful. The sky brilliant reds reflected in the wet sand near the sea, so that it looked as if it was burnished brass. Back to the shack and soon people began to arrive for the party. It started at 7 and went on till midnight with food about 9 o'clock. There must have been about 60 people or more. I got back here at about 1 o'clock and had forgotten to be called at 6.30 for riding, but fortunately managed to wake just in time. I'm going to the Bodyguard riding

school. After riding we go across to the Turf Club and foregather with others who have been riding around the racecourse for coffee and I'm back here again by 8.30 and bath and change in time to have breakfast with Mrs R at 9 o'clock.

I'm afraid she's not enjoying it here very much although there's no reason - as it's perfectly marvellous always having the sun and we have this very nice flat and a car and chauffeur.

I love it here. Wilfred has a very nice set of cheerful intelligent friends, mostly a bit younger than me. Mrs R doesn't much like it when I'm asked to parties without her. Last week there was a very good one on the Norfolk which was in for a few days.



HMS Norfolk.

I've been doing some sketches. I go out into the street near here with pad and fountain pen and just do quick ones standing up. The only difficulty is that people think I'm some sort of entertainer giving them a show so crowd round! I had such a lot yesterday that a policeman had to come and disperse them!

These sketches I remember came in usefully as I sold some locally to be designs for Christmas cards. Also later, I copied them onto linen sets of dinner mats for the Army & Navy Store. I made enough for my trip to Agra just before we left India. I remember being in some outdoor official place, when the announcement of the abdication was read. It made a great impression with the English, who were disappointed about it. The only mention of the affair in the letters I have was in one I wrote on December 4th 1936:

'What a state of excitement there must be at home with all the Royal marriage business. I suppose Mrs.S isn't content to be anything but Queen of England, but I doubt if she will achieve it.'

In February, I had a letter from Lilah Gelf asking if I would like to go to Mexico with her in June which I declined. I'd already just hear from Bill, by then in Jerusalem with Shell, inviting me to stay from the end of March until May 'when

the riots are expected to start again'. This I accepted. From Mary Loder, saying that she and her mother had booked a passage to Cairo in March and would I join them on my return journey and go to Rhodes, Cyprus, Greece, Southern Germany, and the northern capitals, home end of June. Some of this we did. From John Miles asking me to stay with friends of his at Bareilly, where he was stationed, but I didn't manage this. From Philip inviting me to see the Coronation Procession from his Club where had won two tickets in the ballot for seats. I had arranged with Mary to meet them in Cyprus in May.



Louisa, in stripey dress, on a picnic in the Ghat Hills.

Before leaving India, I had two trips away from Bombay that were most interesting. The first was with Mrs Russell, Wilfred and two others. I wrote to Mary Loden on February 1st:

'We got back at 6 this morning from a wonderful five day visit to Goa, in an excellent little steamer that goes at 13knots. We were the only 1st Class so had the deck to ourselves. The most they can take in 1st Class is 10, though they have 1075 huddled together in the deck below.'

I remember seeing the squatting round their pots cooking their food. We had an excellent dinner and cabins almost as good as in P&O, radio gramophone and plenty of records, as good as being in your own steam yacht. The captain is amiable and says yes to everything we ask. He looked very smart when we left Bombay in white, gold epaulettes and red tarboosh, but soon appeared looking ordinary. We stopped about every two hours to put off and take on some of the 1075, with a great

deal of shouting and noise. One or more large boats are rowed over with at least 50 men, women, babies and bundles. We had left Bombay at 9.30 am and arrived Panjim at 8 the next morning:

'Entered another country - postage stamps and currency of their own and all the men wearing wide-brimmed felt hats with their Indian clothes which looks so incongruous.'

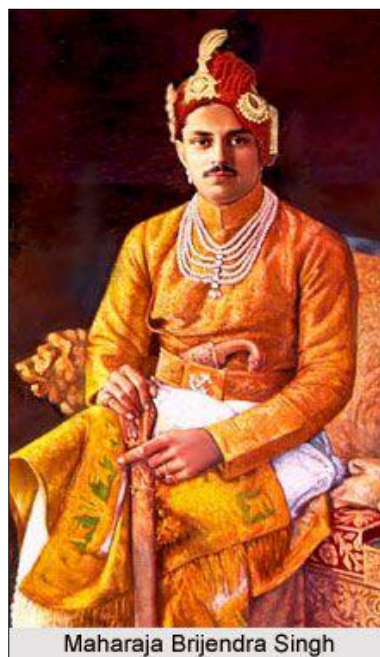
Since the Portuguese conquest, Goa had remained Christian and I remember that the shop windows had rosaries and prayer books in them. We stayed at a bungalow at Marmagod. In the most fascinating position high on a cliff at the head of a creek and brilliant blue-green sea dotted with islands and white sails whichever way you look. I remember the purple-red rocks the colour of Devon earth. There won't a way down to the sea directly below us,

But about a quarter of a mile away we scrambled down the cliffs to a perfect bathing cove. Rocks and clear green sea - so warm it's like getting into your bath. Pretty hot climbing up again although the sun is down and moon up. A dinner party that night of the few other Europeans, two of them Greek and staying with them a very nice man called George Demetriadi. We went on to the Casino - a wonderful marble building with one small roulette table in the charge of the bank manager's wife. You are only allowed to play for very small stakes in case you break he bank! Next day we went to old Goa and saw all the churches there.

I have snapshots of the outsides. Inside, an overwhelming amount of gold. My other visit away from Bombay was to Agra. Karin Sundgren, a Swedish girl, and I had arranged to go together. At the last moment she got engaged to Terry Arbutnot (whose elder brother we knew in England, married to Elizabeth Kemeys-Tynte) so the three of us went together. We stayed at a very nice hotel - the Cecil - masses of sweet peas and every kind of flower and a glorious change from Bombay. I stayed on two nights by myself and went with some very nice people called Hull in the Queen's to see Fatepur Sikri. I also went to Gwalior which was v. interesting.

I had an invitation to lunch with the Maharajah of Bharatpur (right) and so phoned and asked if could bring Terry and Karin too. We drove over from Agra about 30 miles. After lunch he drove us himself in an enormous car all through his game reserve. He has one of the best duck shoots in the world and their record (in a day) is 4,000! He is only 18 and was at Bryanston School with my cousin John Luttrell. In a letter to Philip I say:

'I got back this morning from Agra and Gwalior – a last minute visit to see some more of India before we leave on Saturday. It was very much worth it, to. The Taj Mahal came well up to expectation, first in the pink glow of the setting sun and later looking as if it would float away – by moonlight. Lunch at Bharatpur with its Maharajah. It was amusing to see



Maharaja Brijendra Singh

him in his palace; he drove us through his game reserve and I've never seen such a collection of different birds. Driving back through the bazaars there was a continuous wail of Salaam! Salaam! and everybody stopped work to make obeisance to him!

The Maharajah of Bharatpur, who entertained Louisa, came from a colourful family. His obituary in the Independent includes this account:

Brajendra Singh was born in 1918 in Bharatpur, the son of the newly installed Maharaja Kishan Singh, whose eccentricities and extravagance were legion. His grandfather had been declared insane and deposed, following his involvement in a murder. Kishan Singh was a spendthrift who beggared Bharatpur by spending 7.8 million rupees, more than twice its revenue, in 1924. Ultimately he himself was deposed in the early Twenties and died in exile.

But as Maharaja he amassed over 30 Rolls-Royces, two dozen custom-built Purdy rifles and a string of thoroughbred Arab polo ponies, and always had a private jazz band in attendance. He bought dozens of lions, elephants, leopards and rare animals at astronomical prices, releasing them into the thick jungles around Bharatpur.

Brajendra Singh was a minor, studying at a private school in England, when his father was deposed for "gross misrule" and for several years Bharatpur was administered by Cyril Hancock, a British civil servant. On returning home he underwent administrative training before being crowned, at 21, as Maharaja in 1939. Eight years later he signed the Instruments of Accession, merging Bharatpur within the Indian union of states. A voracious reader with an excellent library, Brajendra Singh was by reputation quietly eccentric and temperamental.'

My diary entry of Tuesday March 2nd 1937:

'Tea in bed at 4.15. Left Agra 5am. Unpacked bed and slept again. Arrived Gwalior about 8. Left everything at station and went in tonga to the Fort. You have to sit back to horse, feet nearly touching ground and hold onto rail. Wed 3rd. Returned to Bombay am.'

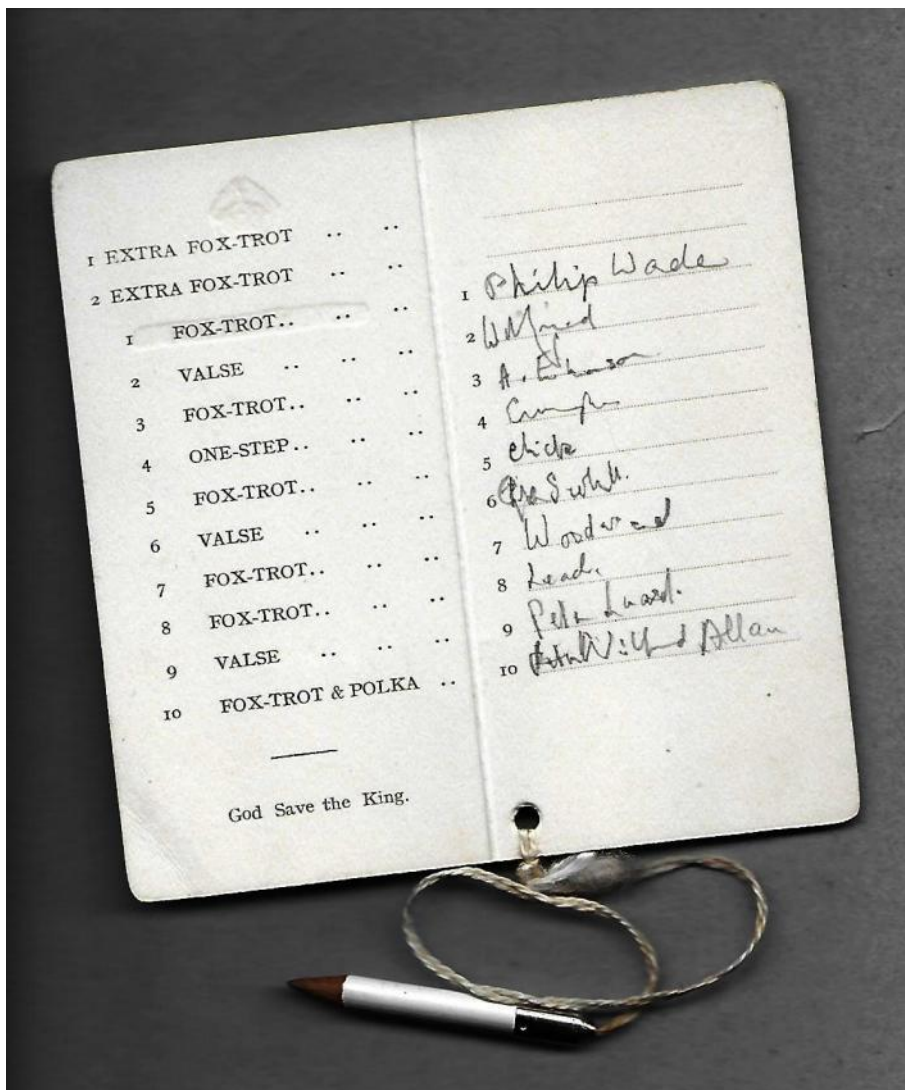
My further aide memoire is the collection of snapshots I took. The elderly guide who showed us over the Gwalior Fort stands at attention for his photograph, long white coat and narrow trousers, large patterned turban meeting at ear level his short, fluffy white beard. His only English was 'Min' your head' as we came to each doorway. A man riding an elephant at the entrance to the Fort gives an idea of the height of the building.

The snapshots that I took in Bombay show what struck me most as unusual. A policeman on traffic duty with his open sun umbrella fixed into a harness so that both arms are free; a matched pair of white oxen yoked together drawing the rubbish cart; the back view of a toddler wearing nothing but necklace, bracelets and anklets and a thread around his middle, examining the portable sweet-shop; its owner has lowered the frame, with about 40 compartments, to ground level with a convenient slope. A row of snake charmers squatting by their shallow baskets; one is blowing a gourd-like trumpet as the snake has risen upright.

A curious sight, not mentioned in my letters, I remember. On the train journey to Agra, stopping at a station, a woman in purdah wrapped into a bundle of clothes was pushed by about a dozen people to the train without being able to see or be seen.

A pleasing quote ends my memoir of India:

'Feb 20th 1937. Indian friends of Wilfred's were here. Talking of the recent elections in Bombay I realized that he was a friend and follower of Pandit Nehru. I said I thought Englishmen were tolerant rulers. He said he didn't agree but said of course there have been exceptions like Sir William Wedderburn, one of the finest examples of Englishmen they had had in India. So of course I said he was my grandfather.'



Among Louisa's papers, but not mentioned in her account, is this elegant folding dance card, with pencil attached. The front carries (in gold) a royal crest and the words Government House. She evidently filled her dance card, and the proceedings appear to have concluded with the playing of the National Anthem. The dance presumably took place during her visit to India.

11. Getting Married



On December 3rd 1937 Louisa married Philip Reid, then a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy. The wedding took place at Chelsea Old Church, the service being conducted by the Bishop of Rochester, a distant cousin of Philip. It was reported in the Times of December 3rd.

MARRIAGE	
<p style="text-align: center;">LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER P. REID, R.N., AND MISS LUTTRELL</p> <p>The marriage took place yesterday at Chelsea Old Church of Lieutenant-Commander Philip Reid, R.N., son of the late Sir Arthur Reid and of Lady Reid, of 46, Tedworth Square, S.W., and Miss Louisa Luttrell, eldest daughter of the late Mr. Hugh Fownes-Luttrell, M.P., and of Mrs. Fownes-Luttrell, Bussage, Gloucestershire. Bishop Harmer officiated, assisted by the Rev. R. E. Sadleir.</p> <p>The bride, who was given away by her mother, was escorted up the nave by her uncle, Mr. Luttrell. She wore a gown of ivory-tinted satin with a train cut in one with the skirt, and a long veil of old Honiton lace. She carried a sheaf of lilies and wore a diamond brooch. There were three pages—Bill and Anthony Hoskyns and Julian Luttrell—and four child bridesmaids—Penelope Luttrell, Bridget and Juliet Adair (cousins of the bride), and Heda Stuart (god-daughter of the bridegroom). The boys were in suits of ivory-tinted satin, with georgette frills at neck and wrist, and the girls had dresses of crimson velvet, with halo wreaths of red berries. They carried posies of red and white flowers. Lieutenant-Commander Andrew Yates was best man and, like the bridegroom, wore full-dress uniform.</p> <p>A reception was held at Crosby Hall, after which the bride and bridegroom left for Rome and Sicily, the bride going away in a lizard-green jersey tweed suit and hat.</p> <p>Among those who accepted invitations were:—</p> <p>Mrs. Hugh Fownes-Luttrell, Lady Reid, Mr. Alexander Luttrell, Miss Elizabeth Luttrell, Mr. John Luttrell, Miss Catherine Luttrell, Miss Hylda Reid, Miss Lesley Reid, Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Luttrell, Mr. Walter Luttrell, Sir John and Lady Percival, Mr. and Mrs. Hal Foskyns, Major and Mrs. Allan Adair, Lady Ogilvy-Wedderburn, Sir Robert Adair,</p>	<p>Lieutenant and Mrs. Acheson, Lieutenant-Commander and Mrs. Armytage, Mrs. Anstice, the Hon. Maud Acland-Hood, the Hon. John Acland-Hood, Mrs. Bernard, Commander and Mrs. Balfour, Mrs. Beadon, Mrs. Balfour, Mrs. Buchanan, Lieutenant-Commander Ball, Mrs. Bridgeman, Mr. Justice and Lady Bucknill, Captain and Mrs. Bovell, Major and Mrs. Bullen, Commander Boswell, Colonel and Mrs. Beadon, Mrs. Binney, Mrs. Brocklehurst,</p> <p>Commander and Mrs. Birch, Commander and Mrs. Buxton, Lieutenant-Commander and Mrs. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Detmar Blow, Colonel and Mrs. Beadon, Mr. and Mrs. Bevan, Commander and Mrs. Barnard, Lieutenant-Commander Currie, Commander and Mrs. Creswell, Captain and Mrs. Curtis, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Mr. J. Campbell, Commander and Mrs. Chapman, Mr. C. Campbell, Major and Mrs. Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. Christopher, Commander and Mrs. Donne, Mr. and Mrs. Davie, Lieutenant-Commander and Mrs. Duke,</p> <p>Lord and Lady Dickinson, Captain and Mrs. Donckwerts, Rear-Admiral and Mrs. England, Colonel and Mrs. Elwes, Captain Fremantle, the Hon. Lady Fremantle, Mrs. Fanshawe, Lieutenant and Mrs. Gipps, Lady Gamble, Captain and Mrs. Graham, Commander and Mrs. Godsell, Pamela Lady Glenconner, Viscountess Gladstone, Mrs. Arthur Hoskyns, Mr. and Mrs. Hodder-Williams, General Sir Aslyner Haldane, Miss Haldane, Lady Holland, Mrs. Paget Hoskyns,</p> <p>Captain and Mrs. Hawes, Commander Foster Hall, Lieutenant-Commander and Mrs. G. Hurry, Mrs. Harmer, Captain and Mrs. James, Lieutenant-Colonel and Mrs. Ibert, Mr. Cedric Kennedy, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Luttrell, Miss E. Luttrell, Major and Mrs. Luttrell, Miss B. Luttrell, Miss M. Luttrell, Mrs. R. Luttrell, Miss Honor Luttrell, Mrs. Livingstone-Learmonth, the Hon. Mary Loder, Mr. and Mrs. Marsden-Smedley, Mr. and Mrs. Butt Miller, Lady Malcolm, Captain and Mrs. McMeekan, Commander Miller, Commander and Mrs. Moore, Colonel and Mrs. Messervy, Commander and Mrs. Mackay, Mrs. R. H. Mallinson, Miss A. and Miss E. Maxwell-Lyte,</p> <p>Commander and Mrs. Matheson, Colonel and Mrs. Macfie, Lieutenant Moreland, Sir Henry and the Hon. Lady Norman, the Hon. Lady Orr-Ewing, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Napier, Mrs. Mostyn Owen, Mr. and Mrs. P. Percival, Major and Mrs. D. Percival, Vice-Admiral and Mrs. Pearson, Sir Richard and Lady Muriel Paget, Lady Pentland, Commander and Mrs. Parham, Lieutenant-Commander and Mrs. Redman, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Stanton, Mr. J. Stanton, Mr. A. Stanton, Mr. and Mrs. Skirving, the Hon. Margaret Sinclair, Lady De Ramsey, Colonel Spencer, Commander and Mrs. Stuart, Lady St. Audries, Mr. and Mrs. Somers-Cocks, Commander Dalrymple Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Stoddart, Commander and Mrs. Small, Mrs. Thornton-Jones, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Reginald and Lady Tyrwhitt, Mr. and Mrs. H. Woodcock, Louise Lady Wakehurst, Captain and Mrs. Worthington, Commander Whitelock, Mrs. Whitlock, Captain and Mrs. Vernon-Wentworth, Mrs. Yates, Mr. St. J. Yates, Mr. P. C. Yorke, and Major-General Sir George and Lady Youngusband.</p>

Mrs Hugh Fownes-Luttrell
requests the pleasure of your Company
at the Marriage of her daughter
Louisa
to
Lieutenant - Commander Philip Reid,
Royal Navy.
at Chelsea Old Church
on Friday, December 3rd
at 2.30 p.m.
and afterwards at
Crosby Hall, Cheyne Walk.

R. J. V. P.
Bussage,
Gloucestershire.

Louisa's last solo travel before getting married was in April 1937 to stay with her brother Bill, now working for Shell in Jerusalem. She wrote the following picture postcard of Bedouin from Jerusalem on 16th April 1937 to her friend in Gloucestershire, Mrs Maitland Macgill-Chrichton:



I'm staying with Bill in a most attractive little Arab house he's taken for the summer. Towards the Mount of Olives. We are having perfect weather, hot sun and a breeze, and all the summer flowers, sweet peas etc in full flower. It's a splendid centre for drives, though the town is surrounded by barren hill and is itself fairly unexciting. Sailing and bathing are an hour and a quarter drive away. Do write, I'd love to hear news of you. Love from Louisa.

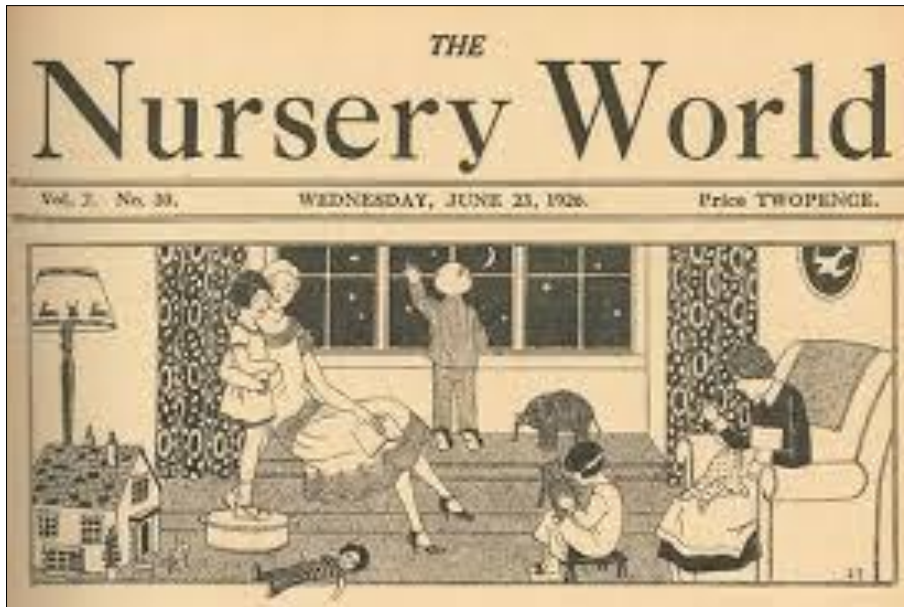


Louisa (centre) with her sisters Elizabeth (left) and Catherine (right) in 1937.

After getting married, Louisa and Philip set up their first home in a rented cottage in Yealmpton, near Plymouth, Devon, where Philip was based. Their first child, Griselda, was born on March 13th 1939. A few months later Philip, who was a gunnery specialist, was posted to Singapore.

12. My First Wartime Journey

Philip left peace-time England in June 1939 to take up his appointment of Ordnance Inspector Officer for Hong Kong and Singapore and Port Gunnery Office in Singapore. We were advised that it would be a hot time to travel, with Griselda then aged three months, so booked a passage in a liner leaving on September 1st, sold our car and gave up the lease of Church Cottage Yealmpton from that date. Nurse Marshall accepted another post and I engaged Amah Po Heng through an advertisement in the 'Nursery World'. She had been brought to England with a family and wanted to return to Singapore and would join me when we left England.



Amah Po Heng was recruited through an advertisement in Nursery World.

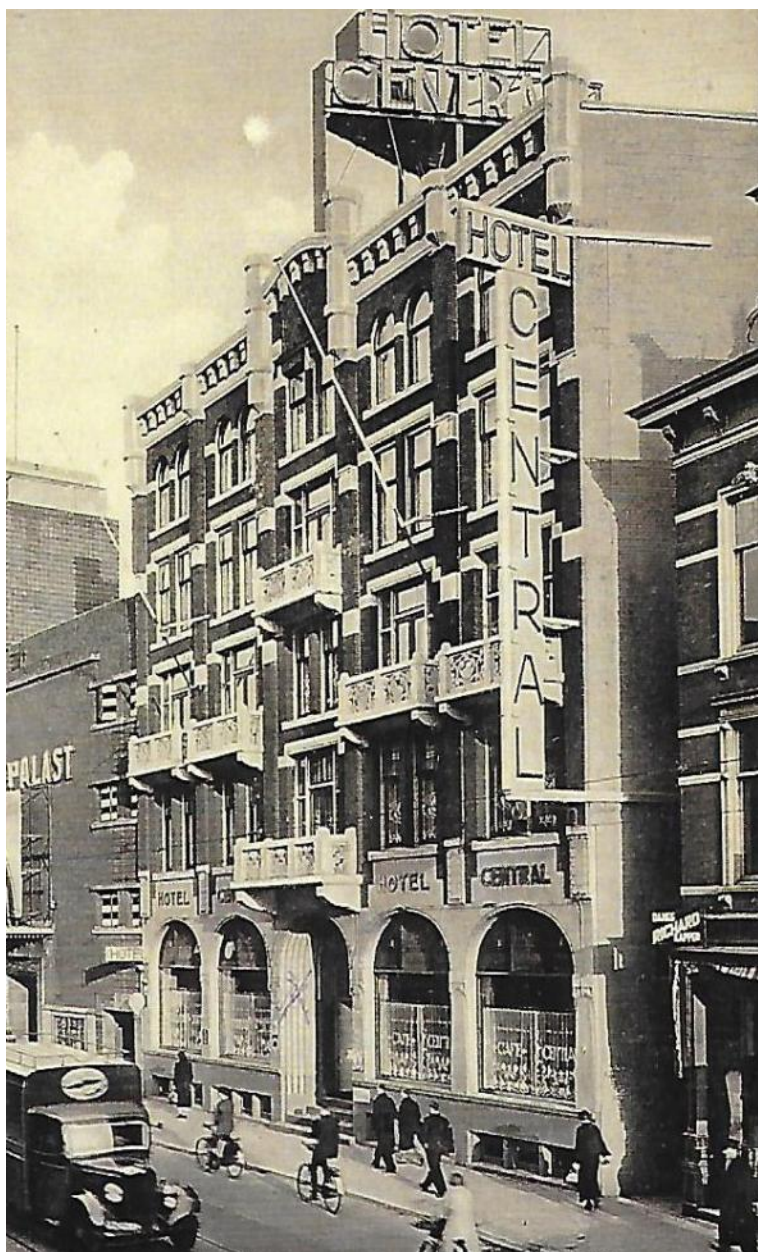
Our furniture went into store in Plymouth and we left Church Cottage on August 30th, but not for Singapore – well before this, England was making preparations for a possible war and our passage had been cancelled when the P&O liner was commandeered. Mary-Griselda (as we then called her) and I went to stay with Aunt Mary and Aunt Bee at The Hall, Dunster for September; and went on to Uncle Alec at Court House East Quantoxhead in October.

By then Philip had rented a newly-built house (7 Jalan Straits View, Johore Bahru) from the Sultan of Johore. This was complete with furniture, designed by its architect to fit the rooms. Philip had also bought from a German family a blue-painted set of nursery furniture, including a cot and playpen. It was all ready for us to arrive.

My first difficulty was obtaining an exit permit to leave Great Britain, which was necessary once the war had started. For this I had to go to Bath for an interview with Captain Long, who was in charge of Philip's department. My passage was not being paid for, but his influence and help were needed to obtain the permit. Once I had the exit permit, I could go ahead with deciding the best way – in fact the safest way – to travel. Convoys had not then been started. There were photographs in the papers of torpedoed ships with bodies, even babies, floating in the sea. So I made

enquiries about a passage in a neutral ship. I could get an American crossing, trains across to the West coast and sail from there. I eventually paid in England to travel to Rotterdam and wait there for a passage to Singapore in a Rotterdam Lloyd liner.

So after a night with the Reids at Tedworth Square – the amah joining us there the next morning – we set off from Victoria Station. I have a snapshot taken there by Catherine of my mother, Bill, Elizabeth, Hilda and Margie Yates, dated October 22nd 1939. It looks a dismally grey day. Catherine kindly travelled down to Gravesend with us and saw us onto the ship. I think we remained in harbour that night and our passage was cleared of possible mines the next day.



At Rotterdam we stayed at the Hotel Central, right in the town. As I had an amah, I was able to visit the Hague, the Hook of Holland and a fishing village, where I took a snapshot of two fisherwomen in the white head dresses and shawls. I bought a sailor suit in the smallest size. I was surprised it was impossible to buy quite ordinary sewing requirements, like cotton or needles, as the war had already affected imports.

After a few days, we boarded the mail ship Indrapeora. I remember reading instructions in my cabin that at a certain combination of blasts I must go to the top deck in case of a torpedo attack; for another combination of blasts down below for an air attack. Our first morning was spent in the Downs – in sight of the white English cliffs with other neutral ships for inspection by the British authorities. Evidently every passenger was suspect, as I say on a card dated 29th October off Portugal ‘The man who looked at my passport knew Philip’.



After a few days, we boarded the mail ship Indrapeora. I remember reading instructions in my cabin that at a certain combination of blasts I must go to the top deck in case of a torpedo attack; for another combination of blasts down below for an air attack. Our first morning was spent in the Downs – in sight of the white English cliffs with other neutral ships for inspection by the British authorities. Evidently every passenger was suspect, as I say on a card dated 29th October off Portugal ‘The man who looked at my passport knew Philip’.

We called at Lisbon, sailing up the wide estuary. I had friends there – Guy (the military attaché at the Embassy) and Elizabeth Fenton, who kindly met me and took me for a sightseeing drive. The captain of our ship had not known until leaving whether we would be going via Suez Canal or the Cape. We stopped at Durban and Sabang in Sumatra, where we saw five German cargo ships taking refuge. This was the end of the journey for the Dutch passengers. We knew the Dutch might come into the war on our side. So I risked this happening during my journey and being vulnerable to German attack.

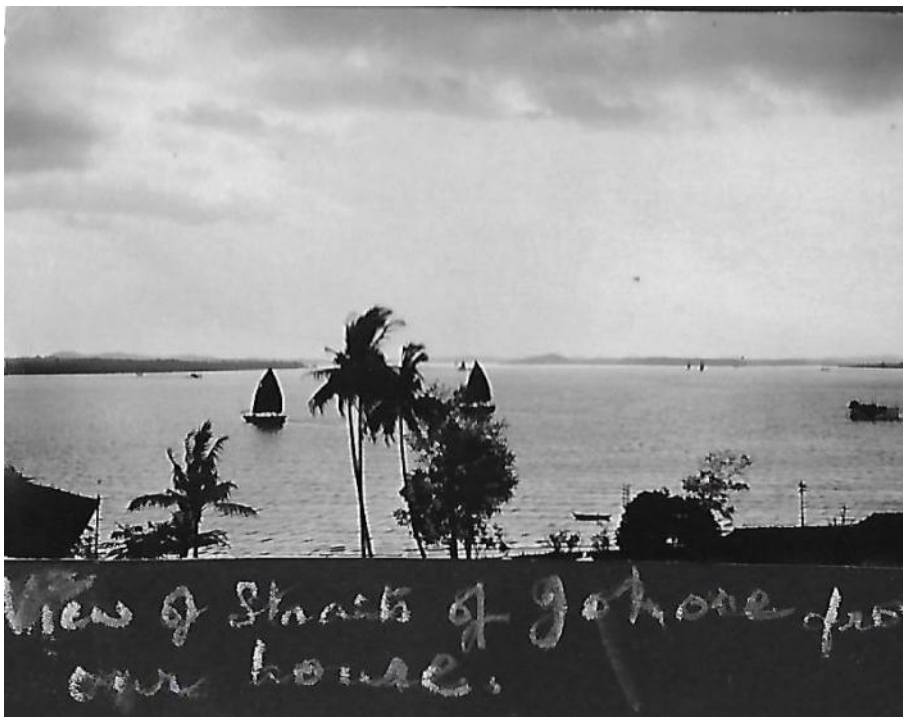
The cargo ships had steam up ready to escape capture. I remember the very good food on board. On entering the dining room, there was a display of giant open tarts of every kind. During one dinner there were intervals between courses when the captain made short speeches, toasting various passengers including honeymooners, with much drink and clapping.

13. Singapore



Singapore High Street in 1940.

We arrived in Singapore on 2nd December. Letters to my sisters over the next two years give an account of our life – Griselda’s progress, Alexander’s arrival and our trips to Fraser’s Hill, Port Dickson, Penang and Malacca. Amah was a great success. When Alexander arrived, she found Chum Di as No.2 amah – I have a snapshot of her with Griselda hanging up the washing.



The view of the Straits of Johore from the Reid house in Johore Bahru.

We had a very enjoyable two years with a comfortable existence meeting interesting people and making new friends. I learned some Malay from a passenger on the ship and added to my vocabulary fairly soon. It was needed for talking to our syce

(chauffeur) and keboon (gardener). I remember very little now – only piggi (go) and plan-plan (slow). Amah talked English in her own way – answering the phone ‘Here tomato lee’(Commander Reid). Her ideas amused me: I once found her using a handkerchief I had inherited, bordered with two inches of real lace. When I told her it was valuable and a hundred years old, she said ‘Time he die’. Another snippet of conversation I remember was a doctor saying after Alexander’s birth – ‘I saw a friend of yours today and she said she hoped her baby would be just like Mrs. Reid’s’.



Philip (in his tropical naval uniform), with Louisa, Griselda, and recently born Alexander in their garden in Johore Bahru in early 1941.

The photo below shows Griselda dressed as a fairy for the 1940 Christmas party at the Tanglin Club, Singapore. She was one and three quarters.



14. My Second Wartime Journey



Griselda and Alex a few weeks before leaving Malaya for South Africa. Louisa took black and white photos and tinted them by hand using special crayons.

My second wartime journey started on December 31st 1941 with Griselda (aged two and three quarters) and Alexander, ten days before his first birthday. Letters I wrote during December describe the events before leaving:

'December 13th

Dearest Bet,

Here we are in the war too. So far we are staying in our same nice house, two and a half miles from a town, so no fear of intentional bombs. But if the fighting gets nearer, we might move into a house on the base, where houses have shelters provided in the garden, about one to two houses. Philip has to be on duty at least one night out of three and although I don't mind at all being alone here (neighbours all around) I'm very anxious for him. I would be much more convenient for him to live nearer his work and if things don't go well safer for us to have the protection of the base police etc. In spite of the noise of our own guns and possibility of bombs. At present there is no scheme that I know of for evacuation out of Malaya but if they do bring it in at any time and give you a choice of places to go to in India, S.Africa, or Australia, we think that the best link to take up would be Pat Messurvy who as far as I know still has her children in some hill station of India. I should simply hate leaving P. here, but there may be no choice ... You will know all the news as it is broadcast. Don't worry, it was a great shock here about the P. of Wales and Repulse, but people don't think we are by any means lost ...

Fortunately, neither of the children mind the sirens we've had them practising regularly, for about half a year now. We have two excellent shelters in the house, very well reinforced cupboards under either side of the main arch of the house. G

and A each has a 'tiny house'. G is very proud of hers and takes anyone who comes to see it. She has a mattress on the floor so that she can be carried down to it asleep ... (She says I have an upstairs bed and a downstairs bed and when the oo-oos go, Amah takes one from my upstairs bed to my downstairs bed). We have all our black-out arrangements well taped now and can sit comfortably under black shaded lamp with the electric ceiling fan on. Rationing hasn't come in yet but is sure to in a few days. Everything in the way of food stocks will have been well thought out as they've had a dept. dealing with it for some time, I think ...

Later we are thinking that S.Africa may be better for evacuating to. We will cable if we get there. Also I'm arranging the scheme here to give holidays to the ratings from Prince of Wales and Repulse in Johore Bahru ... There were a great many Australian trips in Johore and I had also been organising entertainments for them some months earlier. My recollections of that was about 70 of us dancing on concrete floors with about 700 or more of them. I also remember meeting their Commander-in-Chief General Gordon Bennet and having him to tea with us. He later came in for a lot of criticism when they were fighting up country, left for Australia leaving his troops to be taken by the Japanese. This was from the English press. I have been told since that he was very popular. The Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth had transported the troops from Australia after arriving there via America. Philip's duties as Port Gunnery Officer included going aboard these ships and both cases he brought the Commodore to lunch with us. Commodore Luvine from the Queen Mary came with a batch of current American magazines and a bottle of rum. The Queen Elizabeth Commodore gave us the recipe of the cocktail they used on board which became our party one!

To quote from the last letter from Singapore dated December 28th 1941:

'Now we are in the throes of packing up as we are going to Simonstown, S.Africa when the next ship goes in that direction. I hate leaving P but it seems the best thing to do as there are sure to be raids here ... Amah has made a navy blue dungaree suit for G on board, and I've got here a pair of tiny 'tennis' shoes - she's very proud of having tie-up shoes like Daddy!'

On a form, printed 'Naval Message', the typed orders include 'Personal Residents outside the Base who wish their baggage collected should inform N.S.O. phone no. 474 before 1600 on 29th December ... Term 'baggage' includes all baggage except small hand luggage which must be restricted to lady's handbag, personal toilet necessities and pyjamas or night-dress'.

Shortly before leaving, I managed to buy three identity discs in Johore Bahru. The owner of the shop could not undertake engraving them immediately, but lent me his tool and I scratched the information that I thought would be useful in case of shipwreck. I still have mine:

**L.REID, MOTHER OF GRISELDA AND ALEXANDER, WIFE OF
COMMANDER P.H.S. REID**

Similar relationship on the children's so that they could be identified if rescued. We wore these permanently around our necks throughout the journeys.

As we boarded our ships on December 31st only those travelling were allowed on. We stood crowded against the rail, waving to Philip and Amah far below us. Rather like the émigrés at Southampton, but without the streamers.



The Marnex.

For security, we were not then allowed to know that our ship was the Marnex. It was Dutch with a burly Dutch captain. I only saw him once on the journey and well remember the occasion. I was with another mother and our children on the top deck when the Captain in his white uniform came out from his cabin and walked over to talk to us. Presently he bent down to Griselda, looking quite nautical in her navy dungarees, white shirt and shoes, and say 'And how do you like *my* ship?' Very distinctly Griselda answered 'It isn't *your* ship, it's *my* ship'. We were all very surprised but he took it in his stride, 'Well, little lady, you're welcome to it'. He had great responsibility with such a load of women and children in dangerous conditions. I asked Griselda why she thought it was her ship. 'Daddy said it is mine'. I then realised how many times in the last 24 hours Philip, in trying to accustom her to the sudden change of home, had explained what it would be like 'in your ship'.

Our cabin was very small, with two bunks on top of each other and just room for a cot on the floor. But we were extremely lucky in having the Brooke-Pophams next to us. We had already met them as our friends Walter Fawcett and Terence Back worked with Sir Robert in Singapore. They worked with an Air Force officer and the two were nicknamed the 'Brookham Boys'. The VIP accommodation included a private deck, which they invited us to use. I was glad to share a washing line there - in the afternoon Alexander slept in his cot at one of the deck and 'Uncle Pom Pom' as Griselda called him in his chair at the other end. He would be carrying her if we had to take to the boats.

Arrived at Durban, the Marnex went on to Britain and those of us for Africa were transferred to another ship to remain uncomfortably in harbour for a week. Even when we got to Capetown there was a night in the harbour and a night alongside before we were allowed ashore. The journey had taken just over a month. Alexander became one year old during it.

My recollection of the journey is of being in a state of anxiety and tiredness and both children being ill. It was very tiring having to carry my own and children's boxlike lifebelts as well as carrying Alexander up and down the stairs between the decks for meal times etc. Night or day we had a 'shipwreck bag' ready and were reminded to have hats for an open boat. I never changed into nightwear and had a torch attached to the belt of my cotton dress as I slept.

15. South Africa

Alexander was very white and limp when we arrived in Capetown; he had lost the skills he'd achieved of waving goodbye etc. and all three of us had colds. However, we were lucky that our Naval friends, who Philip had contacted, the Ainslies had found us a room in a hotel at Kalk Bay close to the beach. Both children benefited from the sea air and were soon in good health and spirits.

We spent from February 1942 until August 1944 in South Africa, but it wasn't easy to find accommodation. During that time we slept in ten different places. We had a month at Chartfield Hotel, where we were confined to our small bedroom as children were not allowed in the public rooms except with adults in the dining room. No garden and nowhere for Alexander to crawl. It was however perfect for the beach.




Wartime Capetown in 1943.

The accountant of the local bank and his wife kindly took us as paying guests for the month of March. Their Scarth was about a year older than Griselda. She had her third birthday party with them. It was interesting to live with a South African family. The Afrikaans (Boers) and English had their separate religion and churches.

Looking for somewhere to live next, I inquired at the Vineyard Hotel, Newlands. As we arrived at the entrance, two little girls were playing outside. 'What's your name?' the younger asked Griselda. G: 'Griselda'. 'My name is Griselda too' she said. 'What's your other name?'. G: 'Mary'. 'My other name is Mary too', she said. She was older than Griselda and I thought she was teasing until her mother, Mrs Hamilton-Moore came along and we found that it was true though she was always called Sarah!

We were able to book a room and moved there at the beginning of April. During that time, Mrs Duncan Baxter contacted me. She said that a friend of ours had offered me a small house which she had to let on a month's tenancy. The rent was too expensive, but luckily Ursula Hamilton-Moor was willing to share and we moved there in May, with Christine 6 and Sarah 4.

20/10/42

<p>Cruz Vermelha Portuguesa Delegação de LOURENÇO MARQUES, África Oriental Portuguesa.</p>	<p>Croix Rouge Portugaise LOURENÇO MARQUES, Afrique Orientale Portugaise.</p>
	
<p>Portuguese Red Cross Delegation in LOURENÇO MARQUES, Portuguese East Africa.</p>	<p>Portugiesische Rote Kreuz Delegation in LOURENÇO MARQUES, Portug Ost Afrika.</p>

DEMANDEUR — ANFRAGESTELLER — ENQUIRER:

Nom: MRS PHILIP REID
Name: _____

Prénom: _____
Vorname: LOUISA
Christian Name: _____

Rue: _____
Strasse: C/O STANDARD BANK
Street: _____

Localité: _____
Ortschaft: SIMONSTOWN, CAPE, S. AFRICA
Locality: _____

MESSAGE A TRANSMETTRE — MITTEILUNG — MESSAGE:

(25 mots au maximum, nouvelles de caractère strictement personnel et familial; — nicht ueber 25 Worte, nur persoennliche Familiennachrichten; — not over 25 words, family news of strictly personal character.)

STILL ANXIOUSLY AWAITING NEWS OF YOU
HAVE WRITTEN WEEKLY SINCE AUGUST THROUGH
RED-CROSS AND SENT PARCEL. GRISELDA
ALEXANDER FLOURISHING. TEDWORTH SQUARE
ALL WELL. LOVE DARLING.
Date — Datum: OCTOBER 20th 1942

DESTINATAIRE — EMPFAENGER — ADDRESSEE:

Nom: COMMANDER P. H. S REID
Name: _____

Prénom: _____
Vorname: PHILIP
Christian Name: _____

Rue: _____
Strasse: ROYAL NAVY. ATTACHED 18th DIV ARMY
Street: H.Q.

Localité: _____
Ortschaft: SINGAPORE
Locality: _____

Province: _____
Provinz: _____
Country: _____

Pays: _____
Land: _____
Country: _____

RESPONSE AU VERSO — ANTWORT UMSEITIG — REPLY OVER.

Sch

An example of the weekly messages Louisa sent, via the Red Cross, in the hope of reaching Philip. She got no reply, and did not know if he was alive or dead, until August 1943.

Langi-Banool was a little modern bungalow in pleasant surroundings, inland from the coast but part of the grounds of Newlands House, at one time the Government House. Ursula had a secretarial job at the High Commissioner's Office, so I did all the housekeeping and most of the cooking, with a nineteen year old girl coming to do the housework.

It was a wonderful change for me and the children to have the freedom of a house and garden for the first time since leaving Singapore. Griselda was delighted with 'my tiny house' after the long corridors at Vineyard Hotel, with strangers all around her. It had two double rooms and a slip of a room with just a camp-bed where Christine slept.

Griselda used to call out to Daddy each evening when she said her prayers. On the first evening I heard her explain how to get to us: 'First you go in one big ship and then in another ship and then to a hotel and then to Scarth's house, then in another hotel and then you get to *this* house'. I also heard her say in her prayers 'and look after mine Daddy; Daddy far away, Jesus'. She was three and two months.

Ursula and family were with us for six months, and moved to a rent-free house which they were lent by the sea - I next had Joan Grey and her two for about six months, a Wren expecting a baby and finally Mrs Oakley and her 14 month old twin boys.

Christine and Sara went to a nursery school, and I was lucky to have Auntie Dora's kindergarten of seven children in Acorn Street close to us, for Griselda.

I still had no news of Philip since the fall of Singapore and could just go on hoping that he was alive as a prisoner of war. To start with I was too depressed to get in touch with introductions and spent all my time with the children. But when I contacted Doris Syfret, sister of Admiral Syfret who we had known in England, she was extremely kind to us. James Somerville was Commander-in-Chief Far East and drove out to see us when his duties brought him to the Cape to see Smuts and others. He was very popular - Doris Syfret said he was like a 'breath of fresh air' when he came to Capetown. Through him I met Mrs Smuts, went to the House of Parliament and met some of the Members of Parliament at a lunch party. James's son, John, also came to see us from his ship Rotherham in 1943.

The Lampsons, whom I knew in Cairo, were lent the Smuts' house. Their son, Victor, came to play with Griselda and Alexander - I have a photograph in my album. I also have photographs of Alexander's second birthday party in January 1943 - all dressed as elves and fairies. I was very lucky to meet up again with Cecilia Caldicott, whom I had known before either of us was married. It had been a lovely surprise to be hailed by my Christian name on a crowded Capetown shopping street! Cecilia and her three sons, David, Gerald and Richard - had rented a house at Rondesbosch for a year. They had bought a white pony, Snow White and a cart - enjoyed by all the children.

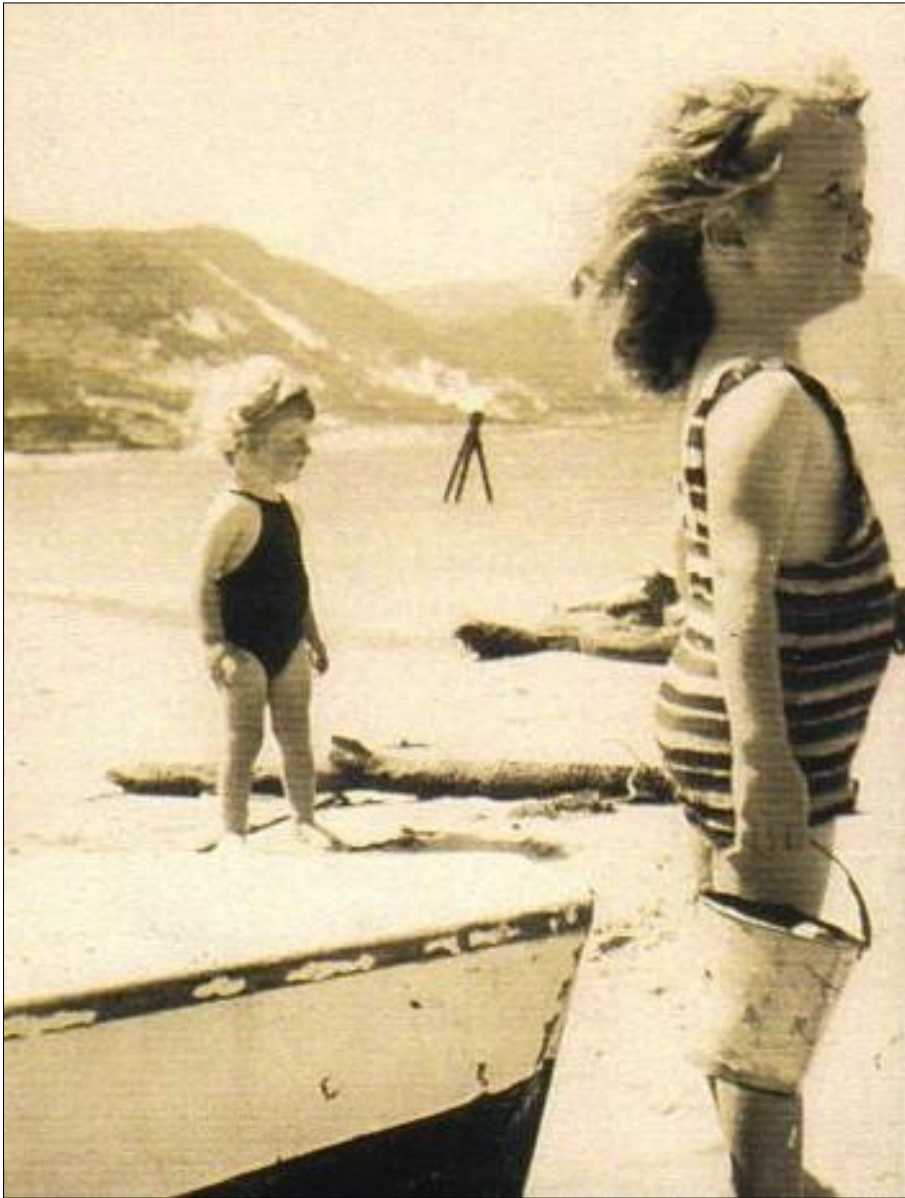
During our time at Langi-Banool, Alexander was learning to talk. I remember Griselda telling him that her porridge was too hot and smoking. 'Team not moke' he said. 'Fire have moke, porridge have team'. At a third year old birthday party, when he was only two. Alexander astonished all the mothers by knowing the alphabet and

knowing all the number biscuits. At this age, too, when a visiting child addressed him as 'boy' he said 'My name is Alexander Arfur Luttrell Reid'.



Alexander's second birthday party. The children came dressed as elves and fairies. They thought this was completely normal.

For Griselda's fourth birthday party, she wanted all the children to wear crowns, being kinds and queens. I made a dress she wanted - 'down to my feet'. It was at about this time she asked me if I was telling the truth that she had a Daddy. Most of her friends only had their mothers with them, but meeting local children she realised that some of them had fathers too. At that time I had no idea if Philip was alive, but had to keep up her hopes.

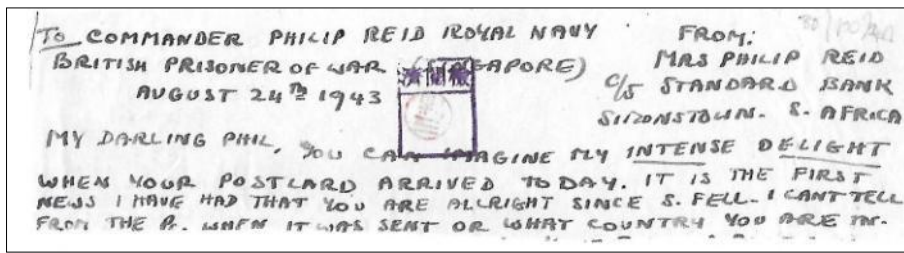


Griselda (with Alexander in background) at the beach in South Africa about 1943.

For a fortnight in April 1943, Doris Syfret very kindly lent me her sea side house, Watersedge, Simonstown. I asked Cecilia Caldicott with her three boys. It was a wonderful holiday - the children aged from 7 to 2.

I explained to David, 7, that he must not on leaving Simonstown tell anyone if he had seen any ship. I heard him telling Gerald, 5, that Hitler might get to know. 'But I could tell you?'. 'No, you can't'. 'But if we were alone in a room, I could tell you then?'. 'No, not even then'. 'Is Hitler like God and see us wherever we are?'

A postcard from Philip arrived on August 25th, 1943 - the first news since before the fall of Singapore on February 12th 1942. It was a relief to know that he was a prisoner of war - but with no date or address there was no indication of when it had been written.



Louisa's reply, via the Red Cross, to the first communication she had from Philip since the fall of Singapore, 18 months earlier, in February 1942



Louisa had this family photo taken in South Africa, after getting Phillip's first postcard from prisoner of war camp. It was a black and white photo which she coloured by hand using special crayons.

It was about then that we heard the owner of Langi-Banool needed the house back by October. I chose for our next move the bedroom floor of a pleasant little modern house with a garden in Milnerton. It was an easy walk to a sandy beach. I shared the kitchen with Mrs Harris - who had the ground floor - and was surprised she had oatmeal and sugar by the sackful, as we might have coal or potatoes. It was summer while we were there, so we spent much of our time in the garden and on the beach. I was glad to have a bedroom without sharing with the children for the first time. When an elderly couple, Mr. and Mrs. Alers Hankey asked if I had good servant, Alexander (aged two and three quarters) piped up, 'Mummy is our servant' - quite true!

Miss Syfret asked us for Christmas Day - a large family party of all ages for mid-day Christmas lunch. I remember the scene - Miss Syfret at one end of the table, her brother-in-law at the other, and about eight on each side. Her brother-in-law served the Christmas pudding, probably inserting silver threepenny pieces (or the South African equivalent) in each helping. When eating his own he cried out that he hadn't had a coin in his - to amuse the older children. Alexander was at the far end of the table - without saying anything he wriggled down and trotted off to give him his

own coin, not realising it was a joke. It was tactfully accepted and he was given half a crown - the first money he had ever earned!

Soon after it was Alexander's third birthday party. It was in the garden and Auntie Dora gave a puppet show. He was upset when the wind blew out his candles 'I'm not three, the wind is three'. But he was satisfied when the cake was taken indoors and he blew out the candles himself.

I was amused by Alexander's remark when selling the pram I had brought from England, saying it was comfortable to sleep in! Griselda was very surprised to discover cherries were real, saying that she thought they were only in pictures. I asked her what else she thought was not real and just in pictures. 'There are witches and Father Christmas and God'.

Our next move was to Johannesburg, where distant cousins of Philip's, Jill and Gordon Gasson very kindly asked us to stay. We spent two months with them and I remember Gordon running up the Union Jack every Sunday. I liked the more bracing climate - 3,000 feet higher than Capetown.

We then stayed with Doris Syfret for May and June. She already had John Spencer-Jones staying - the son of the Astronomer Royal. Griselda and Alexander attended a good nursery school, run by a Froebel-trained English girl. In early June we had 12 days with Doris's sister Gladys, at Ridglands, Elgin. This was the children's first experience of living in the country. The large garden extended into limitless woods, with wild flowers and red toadstools. It was the most comfortable house with log fires, cream on the porridge, plenty of staff and home grown food.

Back with Doris, there were preparations for the charity tableaux she was organising. A large frame had been borrowed from an art gallery. This was placed on the stage of a local hall, fixed with footlights at the base and transparent gauze as glass. The backgrounds were painted on sheets and changed for each scene. Griselda, aged 5, was the girl with an urn by Greuze. Alexander, three and a half, had great applause as Bubbles, wearing an exact copy of the green velvet suit and the bubble was a suspended witch ball. Griselda was also a 'fine lady' sitting on the Caldicott's white pony, and Alexander was Wee Willie Winkie. They both were babes in the wood, partly covered with leafy branches.

I had kept in touch with the Naval authority in Simonstown to ask about a passage home. I took a room at a hotel on the coast, knowing that we might move at very short notice. Security was strict and we were not allowed to mention when we expected to leave. I packed our main luggage and, as instructed, had the name and address painted in white capitals. I used the Tedworth Square address, not knowing where we would be living.

Before finishing my memories of South Africa, I will add a little. In May 1942 I wrote, referring to Admiral Syfret - 'He is now in charge of the Madagascar show. I hope it is going well but our news service seems very silent about it. I hope we don't get anything happening here. I'd much rather be back in England if we have to go through anything ... life is pretty awful until I know that Philip is alright'.

There was at that time the fear of a possible invasion by the Japanese until Madagascar was taken by the British from the French. We had blackouts, but not continuously. There was no rationing but shortages - even of clothes pegs. It is surprising how little was manufactured in the country. The imports still arriving seemed to be mostly from Argentina. There were very poor quality materials and I heard of an umbrella which dripped colour when it rained.

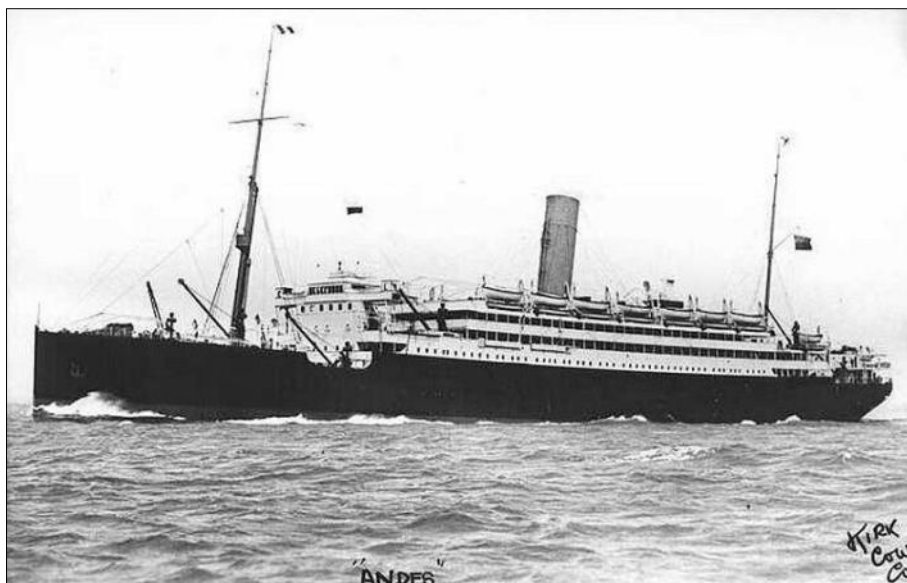
The occasional British - or more likely American - arrivals in the shops always caused a rush. I once saw a long queue outside a Capetown store and asked what they were queuing for. They said they didn't know, but it must be worth it with such a long queue! Men from the troop ships would buy English imports such as dress material, rationed at home, to send their families. One felt that there was more concern about 'our boys in the North' than the war as a whole.

Although there was no shortage of meat, a form of patriotism was introduced to have a meatless day every Wednesday. Even tinned meat was not sold that day. This caused me an embarrassing experience. Asked out to lunch on a Wednesday, I declined the meat not out of patriotism but because I had always been vegetarian.

We English mothers with small children mostly missed among ourselves - coming from India, Palestine, Egypt, Malaya and Singapore. My old friend with family there was Grace Andre, whose uncle was the Archbishop of Capetown. Lucy Bean was well known as the organiser of hospitality for the troopships calling at Capetown. This was much appreciated. There was no similar plan for us. We were known as evacuees. None of us had fled from England. We were birds of passage en route to war-time Britain. The Greek royal family were in Capetown - I remember their son riding the Caldicott's pony and Griselda being given a prize by the Princess.

16. My Third Wartime Journey

When we left South Africa, there had been no news of Philip since the undated postcard I received in September 1943. From November 1943 it had been possible to send 25 word messages via the Red Cross to our PW husbands in the Far East. We never had any assurance that these were being received, but I continued writing until May 1945 and have the copies. It had seemed best to stay in Capetown until it was safe to return to Britain, but I was anxious to get back, rent a house, and take our furniture out of store. I wanted to have a home ready for Philip's return.



RMS Andes.

Judging by the number of women and children on the Andes, it must have been organised for us. I have no photographs or letters to jog my memory and my recollections of this my third war time journey are surprisingly scanty. There was still a certain amount of risk as the ship was not in convoy. Alexander had a high temperature the first night and was admitted to the ship's hospital. He was most impressed that his red jelly matched his dressing gown!

Toddlers under three had labels attached to them, with name and cabin number. One Tannoy announcement informed us that we were in submarine-infested waters and the ship would not stop even to rescue anyone. Luckily the only accident I remember was a teddy bear being lost overboard.

We did not know - even the Captain probably did not know - which port we would be reaching. In fact we arrived at Liverpool.

17. Bagborough

After claiming our luggage, we were taken to private houses, used as hostels. There we could telephone friends and relations. I then remember a long train journey to Somerset, where we stayed with cousins - Florence and Colin Luttrell. My sister, Catherine, asked Griselda if she had a good journey. 'I'm not allowed to say!' replied Griselda, obeying our instructions. After a few days, Mrs Cooke-Hurle kindly offered us the top floor of her house, Kilve Court.



Kilve Court, Somerset.

It was wonderful to see the children enjoying a summer in the country. I have a copy of a card I sent Philip on 21st August, 1944 - 'Delighted home again, corncocks, apple orchards. Everything, everyone, wonderfully well'. Our next move was to be to Margaret Barrett and her family in Wales. Alexander, having heard that heaven was perfect, asked me if after Wales we could go to heaven!

I then looked for a home of our own. Unfortunately Church Cottage, Yealhampton was not free - it would have been so convenient with the furniture stored in Plymouth. I was anxious to make a home for Philip's return after six years.

Luckily an old friend, Nesta Bowles, offered me a house in Bagborough, Somerset - Bashford Farmhouse (right). I was amazed she recognised my voice on the phone after so many years. My sisters in law Hilda and Lesley kindly helped me with the move.

We had heard that the furniture store in Plymouth had been hit in air raids. Until we received the furniture



we would not know what was missing - made even more difficult with no inventory. I can still remember some of our wedding presents - a shagreen coffee set from Alan and Enid Adair, with matching gold-lined cups from their daughters, Bridgett and Juliet (two of my bridesmaids). With these we used gilt coffee spoons, backed in different coloured enamel, from Frank and Pat Messervy. Bettine and Harry Woodcock gave us an enormous amber-coloured glass inkpot. I also remember a garden ornament of a prancing lion (shown in a photograph of the children in Malaya).



Bashfords Farmhouse, Bagborough, Somerset, in 2020.

Our possessions in Malaya had been packed up but never transported back. Philip told me on his return that he had happened to see our crates and their smashed contents at the base, which he thought had been sent back.



Griselda, Granny Reid, Alexander and Louisa at Bagborough. The sturdy white bench moved with the family to the allotment in Bath, to all their other houses, and eventually to the garden of their final home in Lopen, Somerset. The photograph was tinted by Louisa.

Everything we had taken out had been lost, including the Reid family christening gown, just worn by Alexander. I had bought colourful kelim rugs with the money I earned at the Naval base coding office hoping to use them in England. Now they only furnish my memory of the happy two years in Malaya.

Lesley helped me arrange our possessions at Bagborough in the autumn of 1944. Much had been lost in store at Plymouth - but I remember Aunt Rose found saucepans in her attic which had been Aunt Bee's. One of the missing treasures was a Persian rug from Gilbert and Margaret Barrett - the unusual gold and blue colouring dictated the colour scheme of our first home, Church Cottage, Yealhampton.

Unmodernized, Bashford Farmhouse had its drawbacks. All the cooking was done on a coal-fired range. An open shelf was my store cupboard - I remember a mouse jumping out of a packet of semolina! It was rewarding seeing the children enjoy their first snow (right) - then the spring with bluebells and primroses. They understood about rationing. I remember Griselda telling Alexander that it was a waste of time putting on his indoor shoes as it was time for rest (which in those days meant bed). 'I can waste time if I like', he answered, 'Time isn't rationed'.



18. Bath

In 1947 the navy moved Philip to a job at the Admiralty establishment Endsleigh, on the northern edge of Bath. It had been evacuated there during the Second World War.



They rented a top floor flat at the extreme western end of the Royal Crescent, a spectacular Georgian building set on a slope overlooking the centre of Bath. There was no lift, and it was a considerable walk up and down the bare stone stairs.

Some of the parkland to the south had been turned into allotments during the Second World War, and was still in use as such. Louisa took an allotment, and proved to be an enthusiastic vegetable gardener. As well as potatoes and peas she grew remarkable sweet corn, which grew to a great height. Griselda and Alexander went to local day schools.



Griselda and Alexander with Royal Crescent in the background.

While living at Bath, the family took several seaside holidays in St.Briac, in Brittany, which gave the children an opportunity to try out their French. The photo below shows Griselda and Alexander messing about in the sand there in 1951. .



19. Scotland

After Bath, Philip was posted to London and then to take charge of a testing range at Inchterf, Kirkintilloch, which is near Glasgow. The Secret Scotland website describes the work of the range:

'MoD P&EE Inchterf, was a former Proof & Experimental Establishment located off the A803 near Kirkintilloch, which was operational from the 1930s until its closure during the mid-1990s.

The facility did exactly what its name implied, and carried out proof testing of guns and propellant charges. The equipment was able to measure the tremendous pressures generated as the propellant burnt in the barrel, and show how this varied with time. In simple terms, burning too fast means excess pressure is generated early in the shot, while the shell is still low in the barrel, leading to unnecessarily high internal pressure, and an increased risk of the barrel exploding. Burning too slow means the propellant is still burning when the shell leaves the barrel, leading to waste and underpowered shots.

Originally built during the 1930s by William Beardmore & Company, and used to test guns manufactured from its Parkhead munitions factory, the establishment was taken over by the Royal Navy in 1940, and later shared with the Army.

The establishment came to be known locally as The Gun Range, and was able test guns ranging from rifles up to 7.2-inch Howitzers, and had two 150 metre long batteries, each with eight firing positions and six reinforced concrete, sand-filled stop butts, and one smaller 75 metre battery.

Firing was controlled from a blast proof building, while a long corridor linked the various firing positions with z-shaped blast walls. At its peak, the facility employed more than 150 military and civilian staff, with a branch off the main railway line, the Kelvin Valley Railway, to the south and west bringing in equipment and [ordnance](#) to be tested. When the facility was in operation, the vibrations from the explosions were regularly felt in properties over four miles away. Homes on the Moodiesburn estate would shake during test periods.'

The family moved to married quarters provided on site by the navy. By this stage both Griselda and Alexander were at boarding school – Griselda at St.Swithin's, Winchester, and Alexander at Earleywood prep school near Ascot, then at Winchester College.

During this time Philip inherited from his cousin Herbert Eckford a large house called Templeknowe in the Scottish borders near St.Boswells. Herbert Eckford has a colourful career as a pioneer rancher and horse breeder in western Canada. He retired to Templeknowe where he indulged his passion for hunting. The house, built in Scottish baronial style, had stables for about a dozen horses.

The family made use of Templeknowe during school holidays, but at the end of his Inchterf posting Philip retired, and it was not practical to keep it. The house was sold.



Templeknowe, near St. Boswells, Roxburghshire.

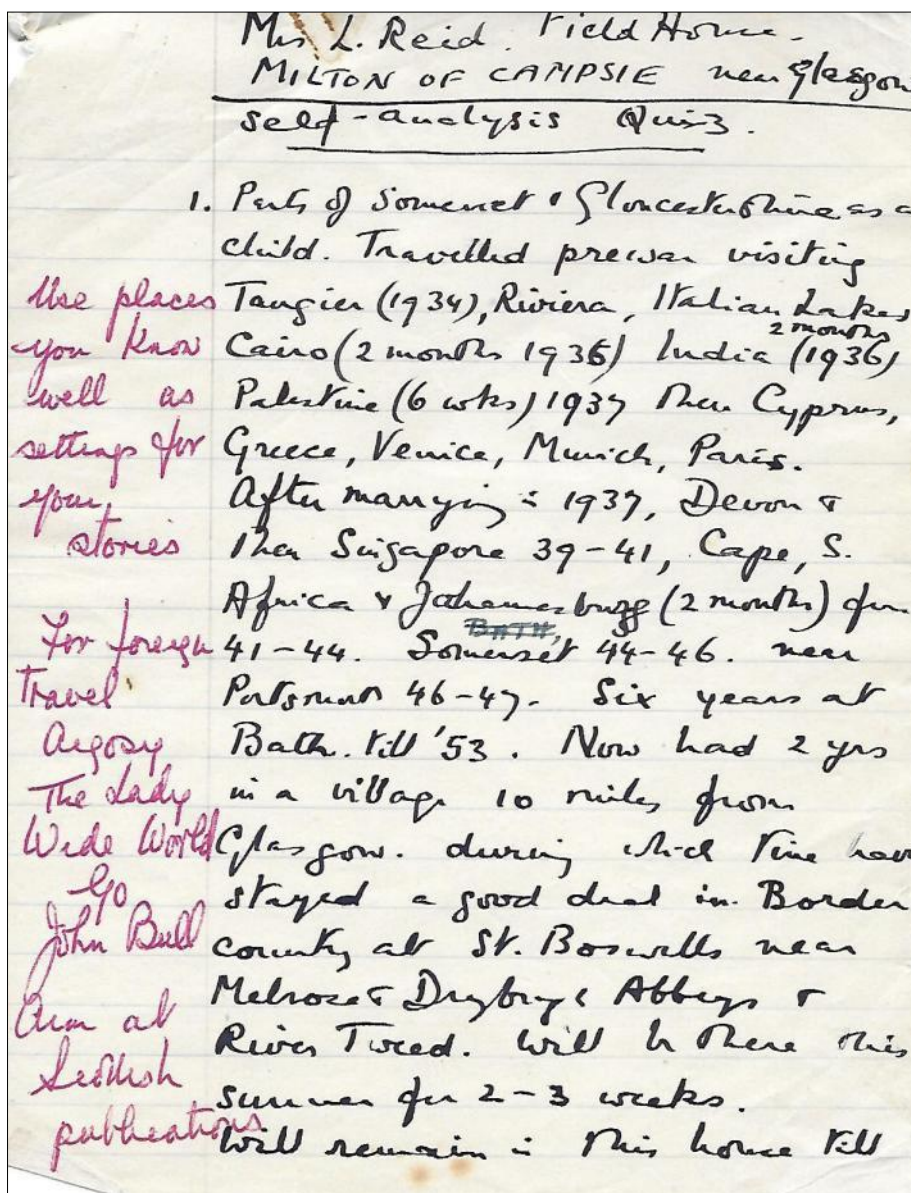
Philip and Louisa applied the proceeds of the sale of Templeknowe to buy as a retirement home the first house they had ever owned – Greenhill in Thorncombe, near Chard in Dorset.



Greenhill, Thorncombe, Dorset.

20. Training in Journalism

While the family were still living in Scotland, Louisa decided to undertake a correspondence course in magazine writing. The first step in the correspondence course was to write a 'self analysis quiz', the first page of which is reproduced below.



A later section of the 'self analysis quiz' reflects frustration at her limited career opportunities. She writes:

'I feel there isn't enough scope for educated women of my age (late 40's) unless they had a degree, or specialised training before marriage or enough money and initiative for starting a business of their own.'

Her tutor advises Louisa to use places she knows well as settings for her stories. He also advised her to pack a punch into the first sentence. As well as providing advice on her writing, he made helpful suggestions (above) as to which magazines might

be most appropriate to approach on specific subjects. This advice stood her in good stead, and she had dozens of articles published in numerous magazines right into her 90's.

Most of her articles were on gardening, and she had a regular column in more than one gardening magazine. Three, broadly autobiographic articles on My Many Gardens, on a Snow Siege, and on Caves, follow.

21. My Many Gardens

The quickest garden I ever made was while staying in a top-floor Bombay flat. Learning that seeds could be sown at any time of the year in that climate, I sprinkled a packet of phlox drummondii (right) on the window box soil. In no time at all there was a spread of mixed colours that lasted throughout my visit.



In Egypt, I stayed in a houseboat that was moored permanently on the bank of the Nile. Towards the river we had a passing view of graceful, tall-masted 'feluccas' and long low barges carrying stone.

Landwards, we could see palms growing in the Public Gardens beyond the tow-path. Our 'garden' consisted of a few square yards of sloping river bank that became more or less according to the height of the tide. A small boy came as gardener. Under my guidance, he ridged out narrow terraces for flower-beds, then pressed in rooted tufts of grass to spread over the slopes between. Marigolds were planted in the beds and we soon had a gold and green bank to look out on to. The little gardener, wearing a striped garment down to his ankles and a white, embroidered skull cap, continued to tend the garden, clipping the grass and watering it and the flowers.

Visiting Jerusalem, I found it a difficult place in which to garden. The soil is thin and needs constant watering for anything to grow well. There is very little rainfall. An orchard of olive trees with their silver foliage was part of the garden. This made a good setting for evening parties, when we strung lit Chinese Lanterns from the branches. On the front of the house, I grew sweet peas. Each plant was trained up a single string to surround the windows and scent the rooms inside.

We were fifty miles from the equator when we lived in Malaya for two years. Our house was one of a group recently built and we were its first occupants. Designed by an American architect, the houses faced away from each other, but had no boundaries between their gardens. From the end of our lawn, we could step up the low slope to our neighbour's.

Our view was on to the Straits of Johore with Chinese junks passing the palm fringed shore. A tropical garden is soon established in the hot, rainy climate where plants grow quickly. Shrubs remain green and flower continuously throughout the year; there is no seasonal change at all.



We grew red and gold cannas (right) in the flower-beds and a frangipane with its exquisitely scented white flowers next to the veranda. There were no trees. Taking the advice of our Chinese baby-amah, we planted the slender slip of a cherry and were amazed at the speed of its growth.

In six months' time, the branches gave sufficient shade to helter the baby's pram and were stout enough for our two-year-old to climb in!

A sudden end to this garden came with my evacuation with the children from the Japanese invasion. After temporary life in South Africa, sampling other people's gardens. I returned to wartime Great Britain. My next home was in a Somerset village. Here the garden faced the street and lacked any privacy. We soon cleared nettles from behind the house, levelled and grassed down a square and made a sitting-out place. It was at this time that I bought the white seat at a house-auction in the village. Ever since, it has moved house with us and been the focal feature of our garden.

Moving to Bath we lived for five years in a top flat, but were fortunate in having the opportunity of taking over a nearby allotment. I soon converted this into a liveable little garden. The white seat stood on a tiny lawn with a packing case beside it to serve as both table and toolbox. We had shade from a tall clump of sweet corn; flowers edged the vegetables. A rambler rose and a lavender bush grew behind the seat. Kitchen jobs of preparing the vegetables were pleasantly done in the garden. Anything unusable went straight into our compost pit. The photograph shows our daughter shelling peas.

From Bath to Stirlingshire. Here we had a newly-built terrace house with the garden until recently part of the adjoining field. This field was our view and it changed each year. We started with cows, that pushed their heads through our wire boundary, so we left the last yard of the garden as rough grass and planted it with bulbs. A little red tractor chugged past preparing for the next crop. Once we had corn, then the lively scenes when schoolchildren had a special holiday to harvest the potatoes. Our garden started with the lavender bush that had come from the Bath allotment with our other possessions. By the following year its cuttings had made a short, sweet-smelling hedge.

Our last Service appointment gave us eighteen months in Kent. Here, we lived in a garden full of roses. The house had been built two years previously in the rose-garden of the neighbouring, divided property. Roses rambled up posts, along pergolas and stood singly as standards. There were however some eyesores. Clay that had been dug out when the house was built was left in bare, uneven heaps with the rough ground beyond overgrown with weeds. Two varieties of seed soon converted these into sweeps of gold and yellow flowers. Giant nasturtiums (right) spread long trails over the clay and lemon Shirley poppies flourished where the weeds had been.



Now, permanently settled, I enjoy the interest of having yearly changes in the garden. For this, I broadcast different annuals' seeds throughout the flower-beds. These are of mixed colours to tone with the perennials already there.

22. Snow Siege



The now siege of 1962 came upon us suddenly. One December night soon after Christmas we went to bed to the usual brown-grey of winter and woke to complete whiteness. Our village was cut off from the outside world, the three lanes leading out of it in different directions blocked hedge high with drifted snow and no-one seemed to mind. MY memory recalls that everyone was joking and jolly as we met to dig out ourselves and our neighbours from doorway to garden gate. After that it was a case of stepping into wellington foot-holes.

One cottage was so buried that a burrow had to be scooped through the snow to the door. The owner and her mynah bird greeted the rescuers laughing heartily at the novel experience. She certainly had the laugh on them as far as mod cons were concerned. No fear for her of electric cuts as no electricity or water were laid on in the cottage. Her old-fashioned grate was a height where you sat opposite the fire, with a kettle always on the hob. The paraffin lamp was her normal lighting and the oil-cooker standing in the corner of the room did her daily cooking. Her one request was to have a snapshot taken as she said she would never see the like of it again in her lifetime.

No-one went to work except a few agricultural workers to farms in the parish. Factories in nearby towns could no longer send in their transport to collect those who worked for them, so within our fortifications of snow everyone could enjoy a lie in of a morning and an unexpected holiday.

The village shop Post Office became shop only and continued to be a general meeting place for exchange of news. Our hero was the baker. He kept us supplied with bread, buns and even mince-pies. Families trod through the snow to collect for themselves and their elderly neighbours. As soon as it was possible for tractors to travel, our baker filled sacks with his loaves, got a lift from a farmer and distributed bread to outlying parts of the parish.

Cheerfulness was everywhere and this was, I think, thanks to the sun. Almost every day it shone, gleaming on everything it could find to brighten including the golden cock on the church weathervane. The red letterbox was redder against the snow and cheeks were rosy with the cold and extra exercise. There were no buses or mail to catch or engagements to keep and everyone's time was their own. Never the need to hurry in those weeks of leisure. One neighbour was busy with extra cleaning. 'It makes everything look so dirty when you see it against the white snow', she told me.

23. Caves Have Characters

Visiting caves is a hobby of mine. Not pot-holing with the urge to discover new untrodden ways. I like mine already inhabited - in fact the interest lies in what's inside them.

My first ever was Cheddar. A headmistress' birthday treat for us. Driving there in an open char-a-banc on a sweltering day. De-bussing in the torrid Gorge, queuing for the Caves, and then - the cool refreshing atmosphere inside. 'Stagmites montent, stalactites tombent' a French friend once told me was her clue to remembering which was which. High, low, thick, thin, ridge and plain, they mounted and fell in exciting abundance. Electricity had been a boon in commercialising these caves. Hidden lighting sharpened shadows and exaggerated shapes while colour turned puddles into fairy pools. Bright, light and cheerful, these caves were very much alive. Happy exclaiming trippers, like a theatre's audience, produced an air of shared experience and holiday.

At High Wycombe the Hell-fire Caves were chilling to mind and body. Historically interesting, having read references to them. The circle of rich, dissipated men who performed secret rites. These were the very stones that saw their mock sacrifices. No wonder the place felt spooky still.

Real religion founded the Indian caves I visited next. One was a simple gallery of pillars cut out from perpendicular rock-face. Behind it a temple had been hewn with gigantic gods sculpted on the inner walls. A solitary holy man lived here - long-bearded and dressed yellow. He paid no attention to us, just continued in prayer. To get there we had walked miles through wooded country.



The Elephanta Caves, near Bombay.

The Elephanta Caves are reached by boat as they are on an island in Bombay Bay. These cave-temples are sacred to the Hindu God Siva. The whole interior of the

main temple is spanned from floor to ceiling by massive fluted pillars reminiscent of Christian cathedrals. Groups of Gods and Goddesses from twelve to twenty feet high are carved from the rock walls. Both these caves were the result of religious fervour and wonderful workmanship.

I slept in a cave in Petra. We had arrived on mule-back in spring, going slowly to enjoy it all as we rode beside a winding stream, edged by pink oleanders. Through a rocky defile just room enough to ride. A slit of light beyond, then face to face with the first of many beautiful cave-temples. Smooth symmetrical pilasters and graceful urns atop them, all carved from the 'rose red' rock. The choice of accommodation had been tent or tomb. Warned by previous guests of possible scorpions in the sand, I chose the rock cave-tomb. Here a camp bed and enamel basin on circular metal stand were sufficient furniture. A simple square room above ground level - nothing eerie about it. Clean, quiet and safe with the solidity of rock wherever I looked.

I found my next caves in France. After visiting the Chateau of Amboise on the Loire, choosing postcards at a nearby stationer, I saw pictures of cave-houses and asked where they were. Threading our way up behind the chateau we soon came to them. Ordinary houses one side of the road and on the other neat garden gates and paths leading to a row of house front only. The doors and two-storied windows were like any others, but where roofs should have been was grass field with chimneys jutting from it. One owner was sweeping her door step and I asked if I could see inside. Once in, it was difficult to believe this was in fact a cave. The table laid for a meal, children, washing, cooking-stove and lino on the floor. She preferred it to their previous house, warm in winter and cool in summer, she said, and no roof repairs!



Cave houses near Saumur, in the Loire Valley, France.

Some years later we were again on the Loire. After a night at Saumur, driving east beside the river, I noticed openings in an escarpment away on our right. It was early in the day to delay and diverge from our scheduled route. My husband was persuaded to bump along up a side-track. The track mounted and to our surprise ended in an impressive wrought-iron gate standing open. There was no way of turning without driving in.

As we pulled inside, we saw that the gravel was neatly raked in even patterns. But the cave-house looked shuttered and empty. The imposing frontage included a pillared door-way and stone sills - an eighteenth century façade delightfully matching its background. While we stood and admired, a back door opened and an elderly lady appeared.

We, of course, apologised for our intrusion and she charmingly asked us in. She and her husband, she told us, were both over eighty, had lived there forty-five years and could no longer get or afford live-in help. Opening the shutters of room after room, she showed us over their house. Telephone, electric lights - in faded silk shades - pictures and elegant furniture everywhere. Above our heads, she said, was the vineyard that was once the source of their income. Now it was sold s was the house, with the arrangement for them to live on there till they died. She told us this quite natural with no self-pity but I felt sad as we left.

Lastly Lascaux. It had long been my ambition to visit these caves with their fascinating murals of animals and this spring I achieved it. Driving from Perigueux, we stayed the night at a comfortable auberge - Bon Repos - at Montignac, where the patron cooked as delicious omelettes. Next morning we set out early for the short drive to the caves. The secondary road skirts a valley and bends uphill through unspoilt country. A spacious car-park and a short walk through trees to the entrance. These caves ere only recently discovered. Found by a dog! Its young owners saw it disappear down a hole, followed and found themselves in the cave. Now, twenty two years older, they are two of the official guides.



The cave paintings at Lascaux.

The artistic aspect has been well considered in displaying the wall paintings. Lighting is just sufficient to see the colours and contours; the detail was pinpointed by the guide's torch. The natural colours of the rock, golden-yellow and grey, blend with the natural materials used for painting - brown black and purpose-red. Naturalness is indeed the main note. Horses, cows and reindeer leap and stand and

even swim through flooded water. So realistic and indicative of movement are the poses that you almost feel yourself watching a coloured film.

Of all my caves, Lascaux moved me most. Art linking pre-history with the present so smoothly seem to annihilate space and time.

24. Epilogue

After selling Greenhill, in Thorncombe, Louisa and Philip briefly moved to a small modern house in Cheltenham - near the croquet club. They felt far from their friends, and move back to Somerset - to a modern detached house with an added flat-roofed garden room, in Lopen. The garden was small but profuse, and they spent much of the day in the sunroom. In the evening they sat next to each other in two large armchairs. These had been lifted on special plastic blocks, to make them easier to get in and out of.

The white garden bench, which Louisa had bought at an auction at Bagborough more than fifty years before, had followed them around the country, and was still going strong at Lopen.



Philip's eyesight had deteriorated seriously, and he could no longer read. He made great use of an old-fashioned tape recorder provided to him by the Talking Books programme of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. It was maintained, on a voluntary basis, by a retired RAF engineer. He also made good use of the radio; he enjoyed listening to the commentary on cricket matches.

After a short illness, Philip died in October 1993, at the age of 92. Louisa lived on at Lopen as a widow, looking after herself very effectively. She was always pleased to receive visitors, including her children and grandchildren. She retained a keen curiosity, and had a particular interest in innovation.

Alex recalls taking Louisa to see the Poundbury housing development at Dorchester, initiated by Price Charles. The buildings are all of extremely traditional design, like stone cottages three hundred years old. Louisa was scathing; she thought this approach had produced mean interior space, dark and poky with small windows. She said that now large sheets of glass have been invented, they should be used. She said she was also disappointed that the houses

contained no radical innovations, such as interior walls which could be easily re-positioned to alter the number and size of rooms as family needs changed.

She was fascinated by the gift of a radio-controlled wall clock. It was explained to her that when the clocks changed from summer to winter time the clock would automatically stop at two in the morning for an hour, and would then magically resume its motion. She could hardly believe this, and decided to stay up till three in the morning on the appointed night, so that she could watch this spectacle. Rather like watching an eclipse of the sun.

Louisa was equally intrigued when she received one year a Christmas card that played music when you opened it. She shut it very quickly, so that the battery would not run out, and so she could show it to a neighbour. The demonstration to the suitably impressed neighbour was limited to a few seconds, in order to preserve the battery for one more visitor. In fact, to her surprise, it turned out that the tiny battery lasted a long time, and for many weeks her visitors were able to enjoy brief demonstrations.

