

# **Philip Reid**

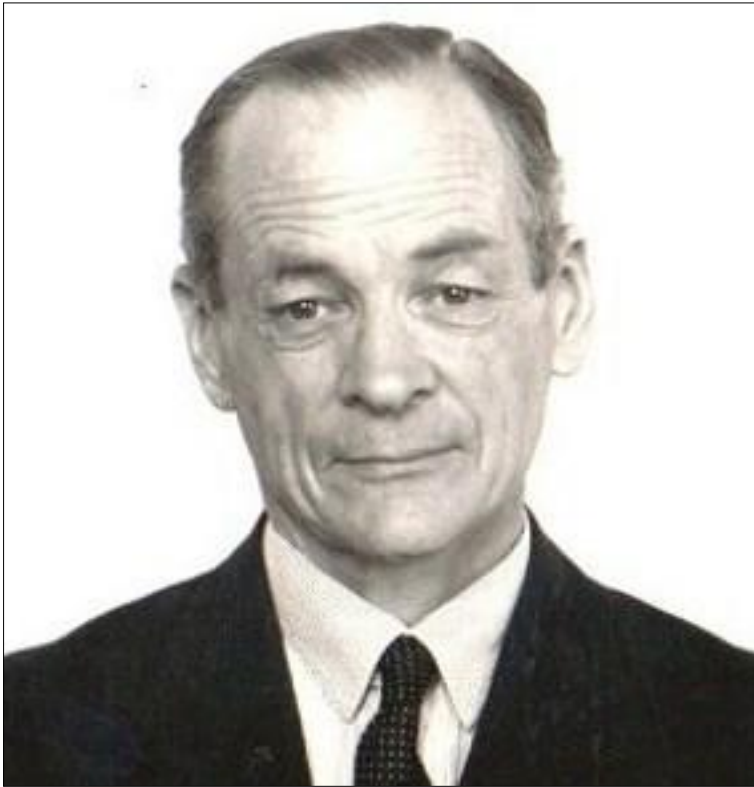
Born 12.1.1901.

Life story by his son Alex.

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

## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Childhood in India
3. Earleywood School
4. Osborne & Dartmouth
5. First World War
6. After the First World War
7. Between the Wars
8. Second World War
9. After the War
10. Retirement
11. Tributes



Philip Henry Stewart Reid

## 1. Introduction

I am writing this life story of my father here at 27 Millington Road, Cambridge, in 2007. The news is of the war in Iraq, the new Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama in the US primaries.

Philip Reid was born on 12th January 1901 in Lahore, then in India, now part of Pakistan. He had an older sister Hilda, and a younger sister Lesley. But before telling Philip's life story, a word about his parents.

Philip's father Arthur Reid came from a Scottish family which had sent its sons to India for several generations.

Arthur's grandfather, John Fleming Martin Reid (1797-1859), served in the Bengal Civil Service. Arthur's great grandfather, John Reid (1754-1810), was a surgeon in the service of the East India Company.

Philip's mother, Imogen Beadon, also came from a family with strong Indian connections. Her father, Sir Cecil Beadon (1816-1880), had been Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. He is buried in the churchyard of St. John the Baptist Church, Latton, Wiltshire. The glazed bureau bookcase, now with our daughter Anna, came from the Beadon house in Latton.



Philip's parents, Dieppe, 1899.



Imogen Beadon, Philip's mother

My father wrote an autobiography while he was a prisoner of war in Palembang, Sumatra, during the Second World War. He completed it when homeward bound on the MV Tegelberg in October 1945.



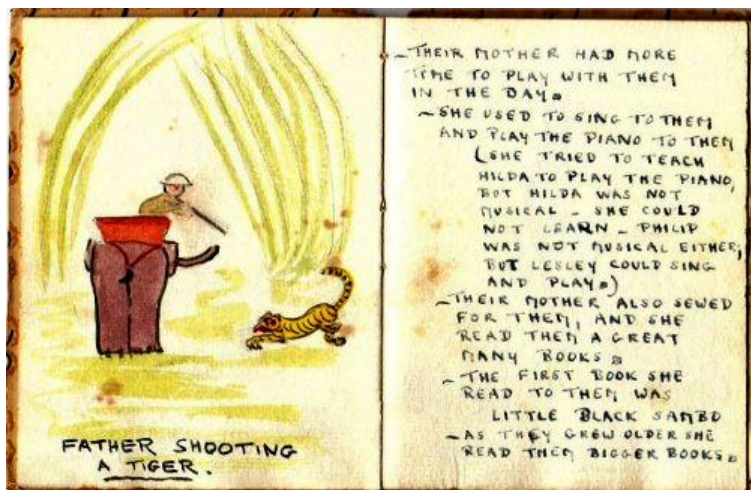
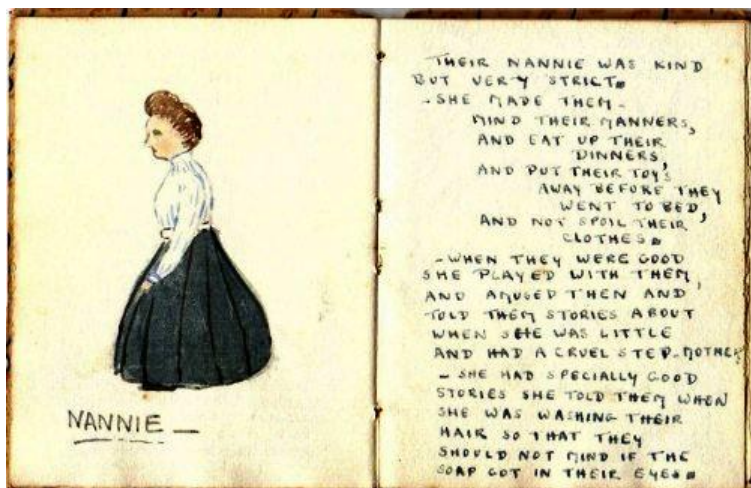
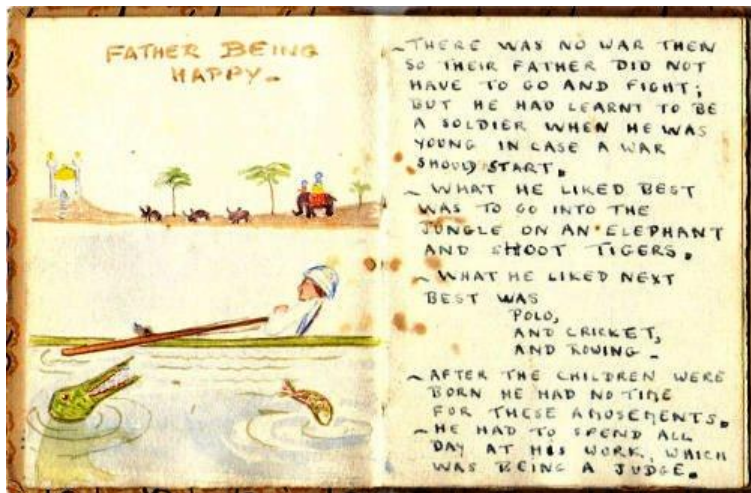
MV Tegelberg

Philip used the pseudonym Martin, and gave his autobiography the title 'Mainly Martin'. It is written in the third person, and much of this life story is based on it.

---

## 2. Childhood in India

In about 1945, Philip's sister Hilda hand wrote and illustrated a little book called *Once There Were Three Children* about their childhood in India. It is very special, and there is only one copy. Its first few spreads, featuring a crocodile, Nanny Bugg, and a tiger shoot, are below:



The Reid children had an English nanny - Annie Bugg - and an Indian nurse called an Ayah. A log fire blazed behind the big brass guard in the day nursery; the hot weather was spent in the hills. Their father, who was Chief Judge of the Punjab province, kept an establishment of about thirty servants. The servants lived with their families in the compound - a village behind the house. Arthur was fond of entertaining, and proud of his horses and stables.

The garden was bounded by a cactus hedge. Water came from a well, worked by bullocks that walked round in a circle. The machinery was made of wood; one could hear it continually creaking and clattering. The flower beds and lawns were fed from irrigation ditches.

Philip liked to ride in the driving seat behind the bullocks and played for hours damming the little streams. Two men did the household washing, standing in a cemented tank with the water up to their thighs, and beating the clothes on a slab.

An old bespectacled tailor sat cross-legged on the house verandah, sewing.



Nanny Bugg with Philip and Hilda

The children said 'Good-night' to their father as he sat over home work in his study. Their mother came to see them in bed, often beautifully dressed for a dinner party or a ball; once she wore fancy dress.

The Reid children left India when Philip was seven. Their father served some more years before retirement. In the autumn of 1909, when Philip was eight, he started boarding at Earleywood School.

His sisters Hilda and Lesley went to live with their Aunt Nini. Their mother returned to India for the winter. Nanny Bugg married Sergeant Applin, who had waited patiently for her.



Philip on his pony Monarch, drawn by Hilda



Sir Arthur Reid, Philip's father



Philip, Hilda & Lesley with their mother



Philip Reid in about 1905.



### 3. Earleywood School



Earleywood School, near Ascot, was a small establishment with a total of 28 boys. It was described in its prospectus:

*The school buildings, designed and built for the present Principals in 1902, are situated near Ascot on the well-known 'Bagshot Sands' in a high and bracing locality. The playing fields and garden comprise nearly 10 acres of ground, including cricket and football meadows and a gravelled playground.*

*The lighting, ventilation, and sanitation have been carefully arranged in accordance with the latest modern methods of Hygiene. An experienced Matron has charge of the health and comfort of the boys.*

*Breathing and other exercises for boys of insufficient physical development are carried out daily under the personal supervision of Mr. Pitkin (St. Thomas' Hospital).*

Philip had three outfits: a tweed suit with breeches and belted Norfolk jacket in the winter; grey flannel coat and shorts for the summer; and Etons on Sundays. The Eton suit had a black jacket like a page-boy's, black waistcoat and striped trousers, stiff white collar over the coat collar, and black tie.

The collar was difficult to button with cold fingers, and collar studs were a new thing to Philip.

In addition to the headmaster, there were two assistant masters, and a governess for the younger boys. Sergeant Buckle, who had a spiky, waxed moustache, taught Swedish drill, rifle shooting and swimming.

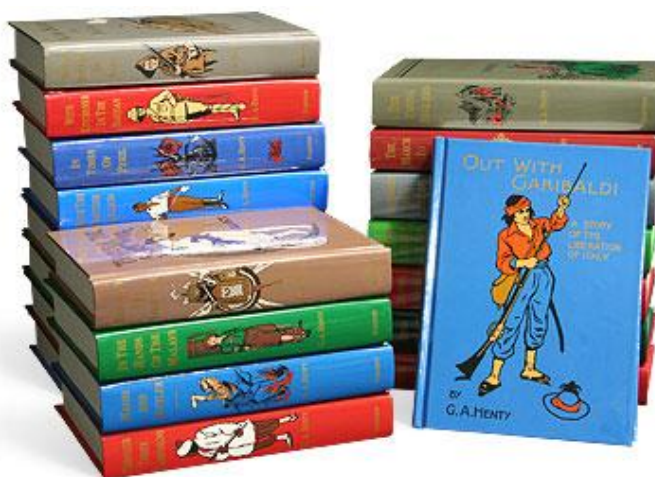
Philip enjoyed winter carpentering lessons with the atmosphere of pine shavings and glue. Sergeant Buckle and the carpentering were both still going strong when I was at Earleywood forty years later.

Philip had an aunt and uncle who lived at Sunninghill, two miles from Earleywood. They had no children, and were very kind to Philip. Their house was beautifully tidy and clean, as though just painted out with white enamel. Philip walked there every Sunday.

Arriving while the grown-ups were still in church, he played with their black cocker spaniel, or read Punch in the drawing room.



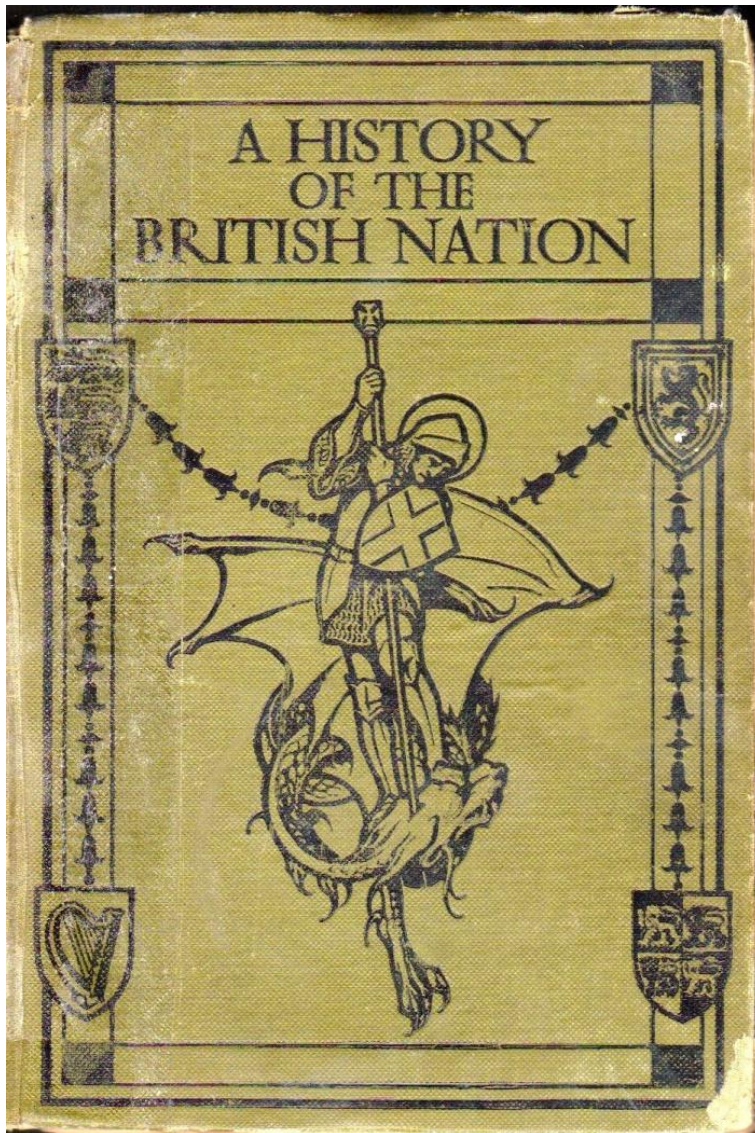
Philip in his Norfolk jacket



Henty novels

Philip loved Henty novels and boy's magazines. Chums was a penny weekly paper with serial stories of pirates, and the heavy red annual volume formed a splendid Christmas present.

He took in The Scout - General Baden-Powell's paper - and a monthly magazine The Captain. Captain readers of this period discovered P.G.Wodehouse and John Buchan.



Bought on Sunningdale station. 984 pages.

Philip also enjoyed more serious reading. On his way home for the Easter holidays of 1913 he bought at Sunningdale Station a secondhand copy of 'A History of the British Nation' by A.D. Innes (above). It is more than three inches thick and runs to 984 pages. I still have it.

When he was ten, Philip made up his mind to join the Navy. He cannot remember why, for the Reids had no naval connections, and he was always sea sick. His father knew nothing of the Navy, and wrote on Philip's application form 'Not willing, but resigned'.

In the summer term of 1913 Philip went to London for an Admiralty interview. He was asked where Cape Finisterre was. A few days later written examinations were held in Bloomsbury. The naval tailors Gieve, Matthews and Seagrove took a room in a hotel nearby and measured the boys for uniform, as a speculation.



Not sure which one is Philip. He played the part of Toby Belch in an Earleywood school play.

---

## 4. Osborne & Dartmouth



Philip flying a kite on holiday

In 1905 Admiral Sir John Fisher had abolished the old system of training officers in the Britannia and substituted a plan under which cadets were entered very young, to learn a great deal of science and engineering.

There were two Royal Naval Colleges - one at Osborne for boys aged from twelve to fourteen, and the other at Dartmouth, from fourteen to sixteen. After a further six months training, the cadets became midshipmen and could serve at sea.

Osborne was organised on a term basis. Each term, named after an Admiral, lived and worked and played by itself, despising those below and frightened of those above. The St. Vincent Term - seventy little boys wearing naval uniform for the first time - collected at Waterloo and took train for Portsmouth. They crossed to Osborne, which is on the Isle of Wight, in a paddle-tug. They learned to salute on the way.

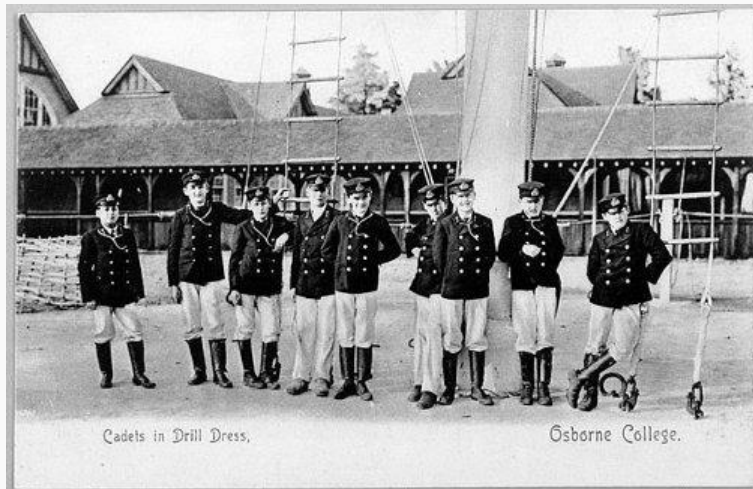


Osborne House

Cadets wore an officer's gilt-buttoned serge monkey-jacket and serge trousers, white shirt, stiff double collar, black tie, black boots, officer's cap, and a lanyard that had the key of one's sea chest on the end. White flannel trousers, which shrank very much in the wash, were worn for daily work.

The College was in the grounds of Osborne House, where Queen Victoria had once lived. Most of the buildings were bungalow rooms, joined by covered passages. The walls were of a patent material, through which a driven golf ball punched a neat, round hole.

Philip described life there:



Cadets at Osborne

*Long rows of beds were allocated in alphabetical order. On each bed was spread a dark blue rug, with red embroidered initials. At the foot stood the occupant's sea chest - a great heavy black and white iron-bound wooden box, its brass name plate on the lid. The chests had partitioned spaces and trays, which held all a cadet's clothes. Old pensioner servants kept them tidied. At the end of the dormitory was the plunge - a cold bath into which the boys jumped every morning.*

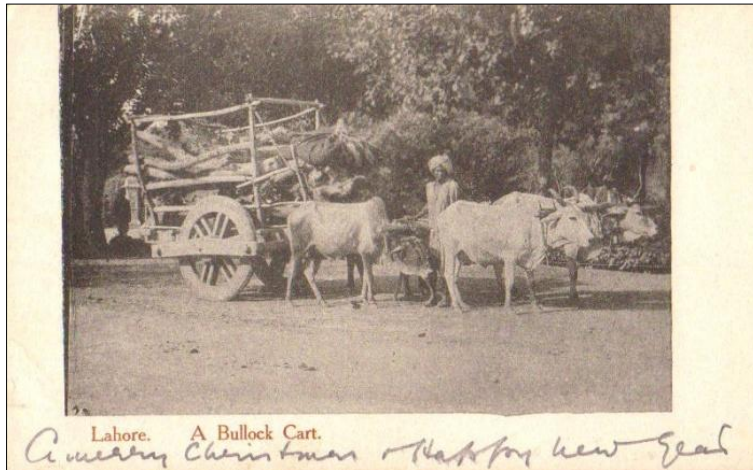
*The drill for going to bed and getting up was rigid. Two minutes were allowed for arranging clothes and turning in; one began to undress during the wild stampede up the long corridors after the final parade. The uniform cap was balanced on the open sea chest's lid, with vest and drawers hung on either side. The rest of the things were neatly folded and put in their ordered place; then the cadets said their prayers and brushed their teeth, by signal from a brass gong.*

*The Term was divided into two Watches - Port and Starboard. By an arbitrary rule, the Port Watch learned German and the Starboard Watch learned French. Cadets were paid a shilling a week, and spent it buying sweets at the canteen, where each used to shout what he wanted at the top of his voice, and 'mouldies' - a kind of toffee - were the usual food. Oranges were provided at Sunday supper, before the Evening Service, so sticky orange juice on his fingers reminds Philip of Osborne Sundays.*

*Much time was wasted on the usual illnesses. An amusement at the Isolation Hospital was to peel an orange in two halves, fill the skin with rice pudding, and*

*throw it at someone. Philip had pneumonia in the summer term of 1914; he was back just in time for the Sports, which included a great tug-of-war involving all four hundred cadets - Port watch versus Starboard.*

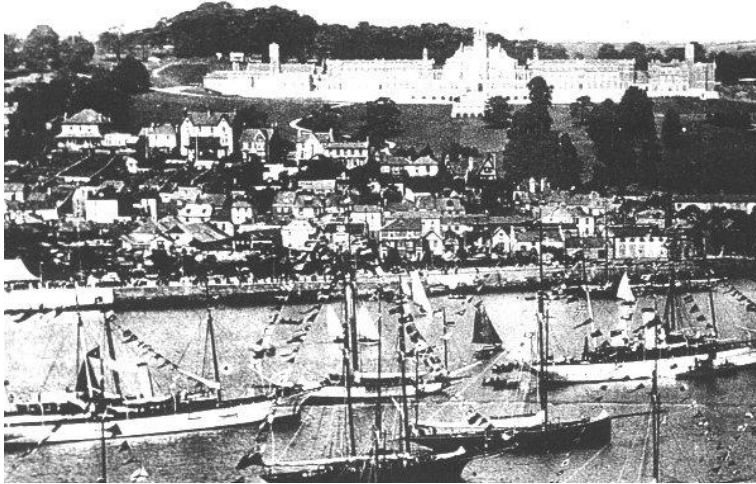
During the summer leave of 1914, Philip's appendix was removed. As he lay in bed at Leonard Place there was shouting and cheering in the street - the beginning of the First World War.



A Christmas card from Philip's father in India

---

## 5. First World War



Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth

In 1915, at the age of 14, Philip moved to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, in Devon. Dartmouth was just like Osborne only even more strenuous. The hill up from the engineering school was steeper, and there was scarcely time to wash the mud off one's knees after playing football. The river was pleasant in the summer; rowing up to Dittisham in a 'blue boat' for tea, or fishing round the moorings of the old Britannia hulk.

The Reids moved from place to place in Gloucestershire during the war years. Philip was happy fishing for chub near Tewkesbury, and learning to shoot. He had a single bared sixteen bore gun, hired in Cheltenham, and a dangerous miniature rifle.

The bicycle that his mother gave him afforded great delight. He got more pleasure swooping downhill on the shiny new thing, than he ever felt in any motor car or aeroplane.

In January 1917, three days after his sixteenth birthday, Philip went to sea. His father saw him off at Gloucester station, where a sea-chest dismayed the war-time women porters. Now Philip had his first sight of Scotland - the snowy scene which his ancestors must have dreamed of, sweltering under the punkah.

At Rosyth, he found that the squadron had sailed to Scapa Flow. It was a cold journey through the Highlands, with deer feeding close to the railway lines. He crossed in the King Orry to the Orkneys where his ship, HMS Valiant, lay with the Grand Fleet. Eight months after the Battle of Jutland, the Grand Fleet had greatly increased in strength. Workmen were constantly on board fitting deck armour and protection against cordite flash. The Barham, Malaya, Valiant and Warspite formed the Fifth Battle Squadron.

Training took place in aggressive tactics, night fighting, and the concentration of gunfire. Everyone longed for another great battle, but the Germans avoided action, and it never came.





HMS Valiant (Courtesy: Maritime Quest)

HMS Valiant



Leslie Henson.

The Captain of HMS Valiant, Maurice Woolcombe, was a formidable figure - tall, with a deeply lined face the colour of a brick, firm mouth and iron-grey hair. He

was a Gunnery Officer of the days when all orders were shouted, and made a brave noise hailing the fore-castle from his high bridge.

At the after end of the Mess, dilapidated basketwork chairs for the sub-lieutenants were grouped round a coal stove. Forward was the buttery, with hatches opening into the pantry. Junior midshipmen read or did their work at the two long dining tables. On Sunday morning they cleaned the brass rims of the scuttles. Philip's hands smelled of Brasso on Sundays, and his locker did so all the time. The gramophone was nearly always in use - Tonight's the Night, with Leslie Henson singing Three Hundred and Sixty Five Days, was the latest thing. Wireless broadcasting was unknown.

The midshipmen's sea-chests were stowed, and their hammocks were slung, in the middle cabin flat. This was a space down below aft, where the air got very thick when ventilation was shut off in rough weather. The canvas hammocks were comfortable, with mattresses, pillows, and blankets. In harbour, the midshipmen did physical drill before breakfast. The day was spent under instruction, running picket boats or keeping watch. In the evening they rehearsed theatricals or wrote up their notebooks.

Their instruction covered a wide field. For example the textbook 'Queries in Seamanship' advised on how to deal with the following situation: You are Officer of the Watch on Easter Day. Russian officers come aboard to call and say to you 'Christ is Risen!'. What would you reply, and what action would you take in the matter?

The ship carried two 56 foot picket boats, got in and out by the main derrick - a great steel stick hinged to the foot of the main mast. Their crew was a coxswain, three seamen, an engineer and a stoker, with a midshipman in charge. The midshipman steered, though some of them were barely tall enough to see over the spray shield. When hoisted out, these boats were moored up to the lower booms - wooden spars that stuck out on either side of the ship, about fifteen feet above the water. Manning the boats over the boom in rough weather was a tricky business.



Sopwith Pup.

A ship in each squadron towed a captive balloon manned by gunnery spotters. As an experiment, the Valiant carried a little Sopwith Pup fighter biplane on her forward turret. the pilot flew off boldly with no definite plan for landing.



Admiral Beatty

Trips to sea were restricted by an oil fuel shortage, caused by the German submarine campaign. Such trips usually lasted three days. While at sea half the armament was continually manned; men off watch slept in the turrets and batteries. On winter nights at sea Philip wore a flannel shirt and long drawers over his pyjamas, thick socks, grey flannel trousers, long white sea-boot stockings, two sweaters, a woollen muffler, a monkey jacket, sea-boots and Balaclava helmet, with a 'lammy suit' on top of all. The lammy suit was a thick blanket affair with wide trousers and a hooded coat. He had a Gieve's life-saving waistcoat, to be blown up through a rubber tube.

In the spotting top, Philip worked an optical instrument. The control Officer ordered 'Shoot!' the fire-gong went 'Ting Ting' - then, after a second's pause that seemed much longer, the ship jumped and quivered, the mast on which they were whipped like a fishing rod, a hot blast fanned their faces, and the tremendous noise of big guns fired together was followed by sour clouds of yellow smoke that blanketed them.

Towards the end of the war an increasing amount of time was spent at Rosyth; the squadron usually moored just east of the Forth Bridge. Philip's messmate, Bob Stuart, was an Edinburgh boy; his family lived by the Dene Bridge, and were extremely good to Philip. One went from South Queensferry to Edinburgh by bus

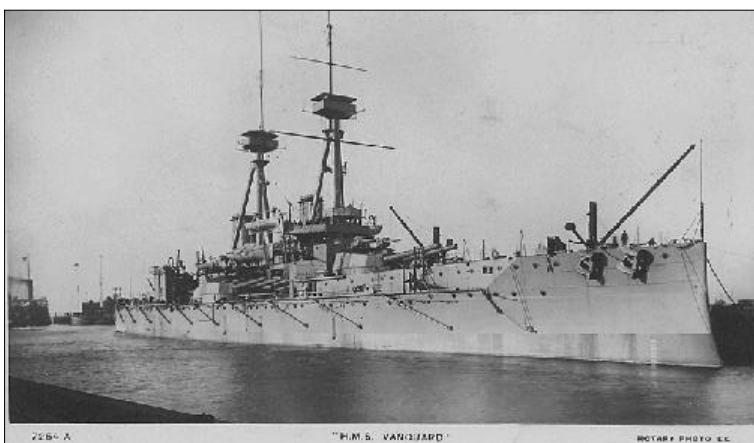
with a gas balloon on top of it. Aunt Nini had charge of a Church Army hut at Rosyth, and Philip used to see her there. Her old Sheffield maid, Walker, was on the staff. Philip sometimes dined in the Malaya - the next door ship - with his St. Vincent Term friend Andrew Yates. They played pool on a small billiard table, and the slight roll of the ship was excuse for missing a shot.



'Shoot!'

It must have been difficult to keep a huge fleet keen and happy during long dull periods in harbour, and the Commander in Chief, Sir David Beatty, deserves much credit for this. He visited once a year, when he gave away the prizes for the pulling regatta. Each time he said 'This year, I am convinced, we shall see the whites of their eyes!', and everyone was re-filled with enthusiasm, though nothing of the sort had been sighted in the interim.

Philip experienced no battles or horrors. Just before midnight one summer night at Scapa Flow HMS Vanguard, the next ship in the line, blew up and disappeared, but Philip knew nothing of it until the next day.



Over 800 of the Vanguard's crew were drowned. The cordite in one of the Vanguard's magazines had exploded, probably as a result of the heat from an undetected fire in an adjacent coal bunker.

The surrender of the German High Seas Fleet was the most remarkable thing that Philip ever saw. One had been out so often to look for them, and their appearance

was so familiar from the little black silhouettes stuck up in the gun control positions. On a clam, grey November morning the Grand Fleet steamed out to meet them, and in they came - German battleships, cruisers and destroyers, in long lines, keeping perfect station.



German sailors surrendering in 1918

In November 1918 Philip's batch passed for sub-lieutenants. A few days later the Armistice with Germany was signed, and the war ended. The ships let off their stock of fireworks and blew their sirens, whilst all hands shouted and cheered. 'Splice the Mainbrace!' was ordered, and everyone got tipsy - excusable only at the end of each war.

---

## 6. After the First World War

### Minesweeping

In January 1919 Acting Sub-Lieutenant Reid joined a torpedo boat, P.41, at Portsmouth. She was 200 feet long and 700 tons, with maximum speed of 20 knots. She carried one 4 inch gun, stern torpedo tubes and depth charges. Aged just 18, Philip was the green and ignorant First Lieutenant. P.41 was Senior Officer's ship of a mine-sweeping flotilla working from IJmuiden, at the mouth of the Amsterdam Canal. The Senior Officer was a temporary Lieutenant Commander, ex Royal Indian Marine. He sometimes gave Philip a strange look; it turned out he had a glass eye. There was difficulty in inducing men due for demobilisation to do minesweeping work, so a highly paid Mine Clearance Service was formed, and Philip drew forty pounds a month for the three months that the job lasted. This began his extravagant bachelor phase, which lasted eighteen years.

### HMS Bramble in the Persian Gulf

In August 1919 Philip was appointed to the Bramble, a Persian Gulf gunboat. It was an interesting relic - built of wood copper sheathed, rigged to sail as well as steam, and fitted with a hand capstan. There was no refrigerators or fans. The ship carried a Royal Marine detachment of a sergeant and six men, including a butcher who dealt with the live sheep penned on the upper deck.



HMS Bramble

They set off on a cruise, stopping first at the stifling little harbour at Muscat. During the hot still night one could hear the Sultan's sentries hailing each other across the mouth of the harbour. At the next port, Jask, they got orders to go to Bombay, pay off and sell themselves.

### HMS Wivern

Philip's next ship, and a happy one, was the Wivern, building at Samuel White's yard in East Cowes. They joined a new flotilla at Port Edgar, for training in the Firth of Forth. In March they went to Scapa Flow, and each ship attempted to tow a surrendered German destroyer to Rosyth for breaking up. Whilst alongside her tow

in narrow Gutta Sound the Wivern broke adrift from her buoy in a squall, and they had an exciting night.

## Cambridge



Downing College.

The Admiralty decided that young officers hurriedly trained during the war needed further education, so Philip and his contemporaries were sent to Cambridge for a few months.

Philip found himself at Downing college for the May Term and Long Vacation of 1920. His father, a trinity Hall man of the 1860s, looked upon Downing as a poor, unfashionable place, and admittedly the undergraduates there could not spare much time or money for clothes or amusements; they were scholarship men competing for degrees that would be their livelihood. Many of the older ones had fought in the war. The Sailors, and obstreperous lot, were treated with great kindness. Philip had friends in many of the Colleges and got glimpses of a different world - the Classics and all the liberal studies in a light hearted summer setting.

The Reid family were living at this time at Canford Magna, near Wimborne in Dorset. There was a Real Tennis court there, with grille and penthouse and dedans, so Philip took lessons from the Cambridge Real Tennis professional.

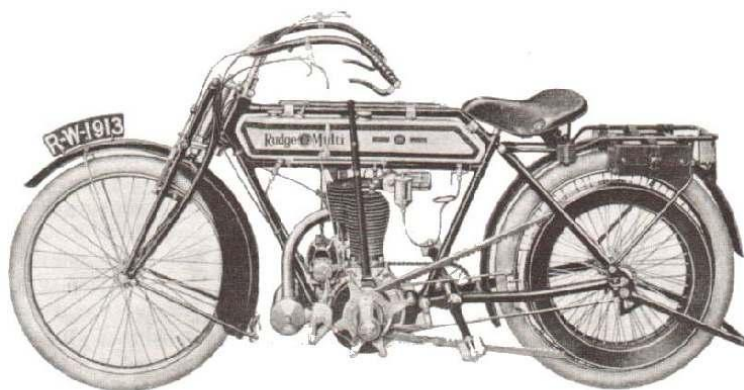


A Real Tennis court.



The Reid's rented house in Canford Magna

He bought a little two-stroke motor bicycle second hand for sixty pounds - motors are expensive after wars.



**3½ H.P. (499 c.c.) Rudge Motor Bicycle.**

Rudge Multi

This was later succeeded by a heavy machine, the Rudge Multi. One went along like a human bullet, but the Portsmouth tramlines were treacherous and Philip's shoulder long reminded him of one heavy fall there.

In the autumn Philip returned to the Wivern, leaving the ship before Christmas to undertake Sub-Lieutenant's courses at Portsmouth. They learned navigation, signals, torpedo, and gunnery. The torpedo instruction was done afloat in the Vernon hulk; the gunnery instruction was at Whale Island.

## Whale Island

Whale Island, known as HMS Excellent or 'Whaley' was the home of naval gunnery. For nearly forty years the capital ship had been the unit of naval power, and the big gun its principal weapon.





Gunnery course, Whale Island.

Gunnery officers have shaped naval policy and predominated in the high commands. Whether or not the bomb and the airborne torpedo have ousted the big gun, Philip remained very proud to have been a Gunnery Officer in the great days.

At the Sub-Lieutenants' course at Whale Island there was plenty of hard exercise, work, and fun in the evening. Philip liked it all, and applied to do a long gunnery course.

The drill rig was white flannel trousers, flannel shirt, scarf and khaki leggings. Classes always moved at the double. Morning Divisions was a parade under arms, usually followed by field training - squad, small arms or company drill.

The Mess provided good food and cheerful guest nights. Philip played rugby, and lots of squash. Lord Louis Mountbatten was the outstanding member of the class - a hard worker of great ability.

In the summer of 1921 there was a serious coal strike. Most of the Regular Army were stationed in Ireland, and there was fear of Red revolution, so all naval reservists were recalled, and formed into units for maintaining order.

Philip joined the Fourth Devonport Battalion at Tidworth, near Salisbury, and there they remained, since there was no trouble in the industrial areas.

---

## 7. Between the Wars

Philip wrote in 1983 the following chronology of his naval career in the 1920s and 1930s:

1919 January to May. Sub Lieutenant HMS P.41, minesweeping off Dutch coast.

1919 June to December. Sub Lieutenant HMS Bramble, Persian Gulf.

1920 January to March. Sub Lieutenant HMS Wivern. Family move to Court House, Canford Magna.

1920 May to August. Downing College Cambridge.

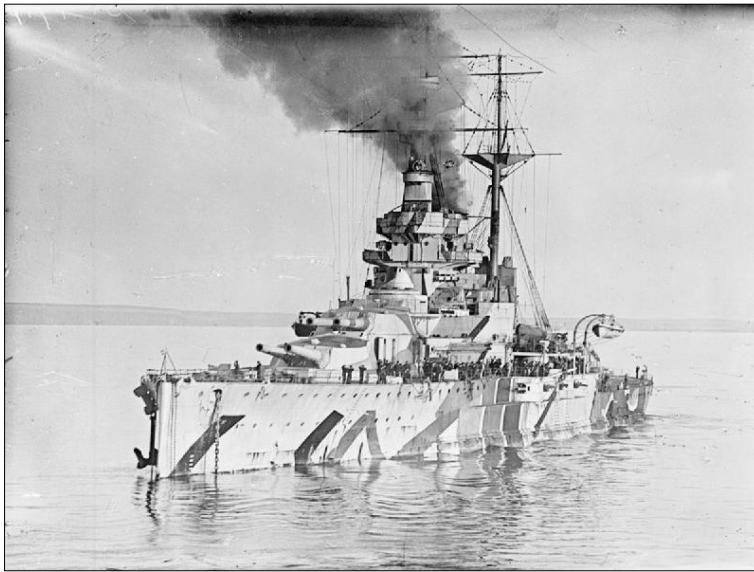
1920-21 September to February. HMS Wivern, second spell.

1921 February to April. Sub Lieutenant's Courses at Portsmouth.

1921 summer. Naval Reserve Battalion during coal strike.

1921 autumn. HMS Venetia. Baltic Cruise. Promoted to Lieutenant.

1922-23. HMS Ramillies, Atlantic Fleet.



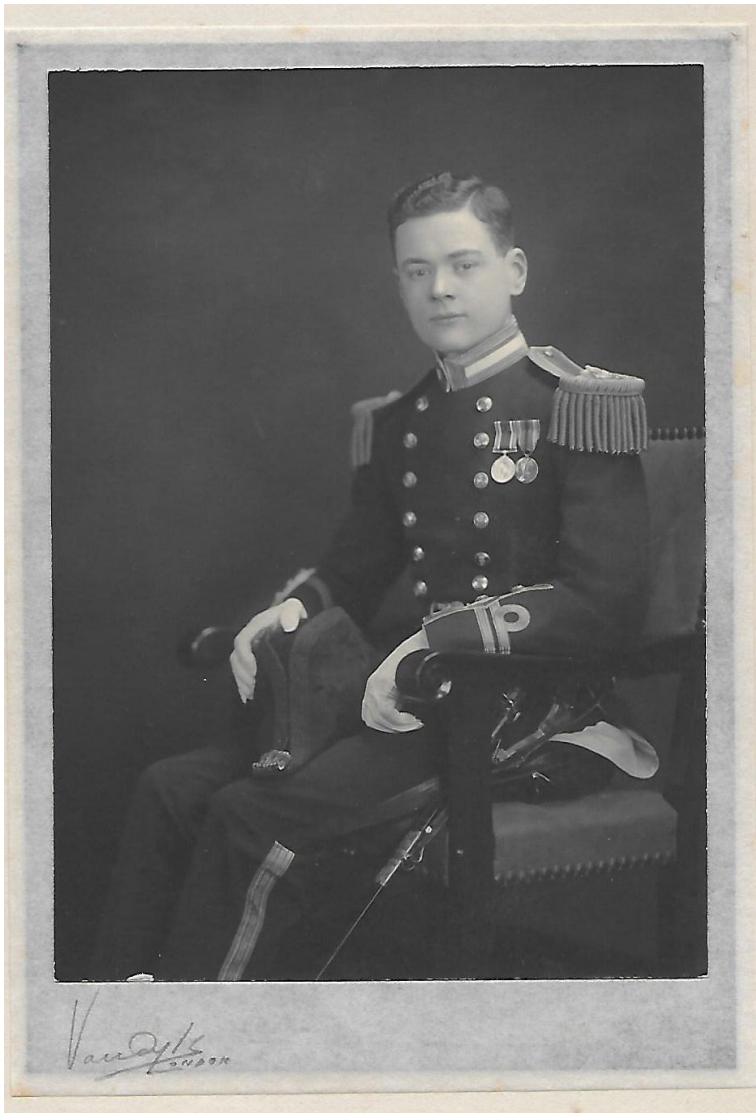
HMS Ramillies

1923-24. Gunnery Long Course, Royal Naval College Greenwich. Joined the United Service Club.

1925 May. Junior Staff, Devonport Gunnery School.

1926 May. HMS Ramillies, Atlantic Fleet as 2nd Gunnery Officer. Liverpool for General Strike. Guardship at Cowes Regatta.

1927 February. HMS Bruce, as Gunnery Officer, 8th Destroyer Flotilla, China Station. In 1928 Philip's sister Lesley came out to Hong Kong for almost a year.



Philip in court dress for Levee at St.James' Palace, 1924.



Philip not in court dress, 1924

1928 July. Promoted to Lieutenant Commander.

1929 June. Leaves HMS Bruce and returns home in HMS Cleopatra.

1929 September. Appointed to HMS Norfolk, building at Fairfields Yard, Govan, Glasgow.

1930 April. Commissioned HMS Norfolk, 2nd Cruiser Squadron Atlantic Fleet. Pulling regatta at Scapa Flow whilst working up. No success. Squadron visit to Antwerp.

1930 November. Philip's father Arthur dies.

1931 February. Spring cruise to the West Indies visiting St.Kitts, Nevis, Trinidad, Dominica.

1931 May. Won the 2nd CS pulling regatta at Scapa Flow, commemorated with silver cock trophy. Also won Cruiser gunnery competition.

1931 June. Baltic Cruise to Kiel canal, Kiel, Stockholm.

1931 September. Invergordon Mutiny. Described in Stephen Roskill's Naval Policy between the Wars Vol II 1930-39 pages 89-133. Leaders in the Norfolk were Wincott and Fred Copeman (subsequently OBE).

The 1931 Invergordon mutiny was provoked by a Government decision to cut naval pay, with the largest cuts falling on the most junior. It came as a complete surprise when newspapers were read throughout the ships, indicating that in most cases the lower ranks would lose more than the senior ranks. The actual pay reductions were: Admiral, 7 per cent; Lieut. Commander., 3.7 per cent; Chief Petty Officer, 11.8 per cent; and Able Seaman, 23 per cent.

1932 February to July. West Indies spring cruise. Second in 2nd CS pulling regatta. Norfolk paid off at Devonport and re-commissioned as Flagship in the West Indies. Reid family moved to 46 Tedworth Square, London SW3.

1933 July. HMS Sussex, Mediterranean Fleet. Travelled overland to Ancona.

1934 autumn and winter. Malta. Philip's mother and both sisters visited him there.

1934 July. HMS Sussex paid off at Chatham. Re-commissioned to take the Duke of Gloucester to Australia.

1934 August. Appointed to Devonport Gunnery School as First Lieutenant.

1935 May. Jubilee Review in London.

1935 June. Philip missed final chance of promotion to Commander.



Philip & Louisa wedding December 1937



Family at Philip & Louisa's wedding. Philip's mother, Louisa's mother, her sister Catherine, Philip's uncle Arthur Beadon, Philip's sister Hilda and his aunt Nini.

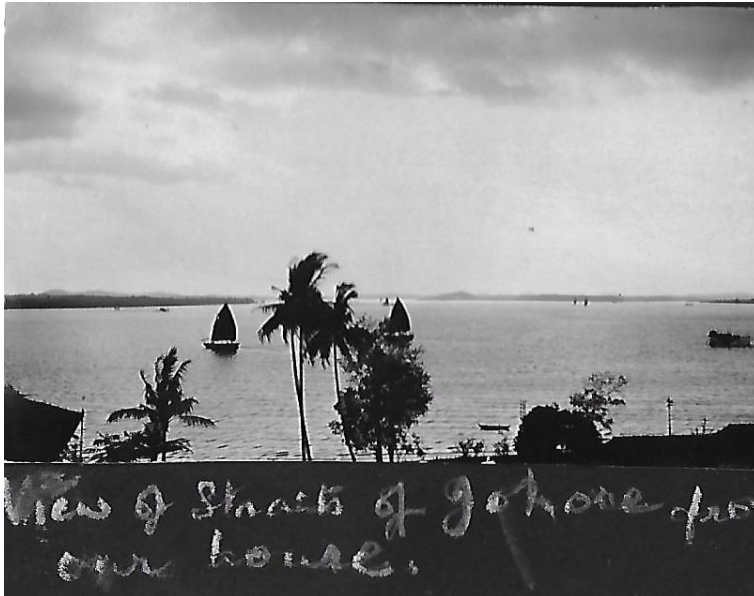
1936 January. Appointed as gunnery officer to staff of Rear Admiral Alexandria. Colleagues included John Creswell.

1936 June. Joined Naval Ordnance Inspection Department at Woolwich.

1937 June. Engaged to be married to Louisa Luttrell. Married at Chelsea Old Church on December 3rd.

1938 January. Appointed to Plymouth. First child, Mary Griselda, born 13th March at Church Cottage, Yealmpton.

1939 June. Appointed to Singapore.



Philip & Louisa's home in Johore Bahru had a view of the straits.

1939 December. Louisa and Griselda arrive in Singapore. Alexander born 11th January 1941.

1939 September 3rd. World War II declared. Promoted to Commander.

1939 September 3rd. World War II declared. Promoted to Commander.

1939 December. Louisa and Griselda arrive in Singapore. Alexander born 11th January 1941.

1941 7th December. Japanese war begins.

1941 31st December. Louisa, Griselda and Alex leave Singapore for Cape Town.

1942 16th February. Philip taken prisoner by the Japanese.

---

## 8. Second World War

Philip spent the whole of the Second World War as a Japanese prisoner of war. He wrote in 1948 the following account of his experiences, which he published anonymously in the Naval Ordnance Inspection Department Journal of March 1948.

*'Black object on the port beam!' yelled the coxswain. Philip, who had been looking at the chart in the cabin, rushed up to the wheelhouse. He saw, hove to within hailing distance, a blacked-out warship that must have been Japanese. They crept past, as it were on tip-toe, expecting every moment to be held in a searchlight's glare.*

*Next morning at dawn they rounded the headland into Muntok Bay, to find it full of Japanese transports. The Banka Strait, the only way to Java, had been occupied from the south. Presently they saw ships all round them. Chased by patrol boat, and under fire from two sides, they scuttled away until their engines seized. An enemy destroyer sidled up; Philip could see down the muzzles of all her guns, and surrendered with alacrity.*

*A fortnight before this, the Japanese, after fighting down Malaya, had reached the Johore Straits opposite the Naval Base, where Philip was staying with two doctors. He came back one evening to find that his friends had sailed for Ceylon at short notice. The servants were gone, and the bungalow was deserted. It was queer to see the flowers in the vases, the cupboards full of linen and stores, drinks and cigarettes set out ready, two shiny cars in the garage – all just as though the owners were away for half-an-hour. He learnt that the Base had been abandoned to an Indian Army division. Not a soul was in the Armament Depot next day – like a Bank Holiday, but with no police, and everything unlocked ready for demolition. One could have helped oneself to anything from the neatly tallied racks and bins.*

*For a few days Philip was attached in the Army. Their surrender was decided upon, and all the Navy tried to move to Java in any craft that they could find. Philip took charge of an RAF motorboat. As many Army and Air Force personnel and civilians as possible were embarked. Through a long afternoon and night, some seventy ships, from Yangtse gunboats and coasting steamers to small launches, were packed with refugees, men, women and children, many of whose names were never recorded. Movement was constantly interrupted by mortar fire and bombing, whilst leaping fires in the rubber godowns intermittently lighted the place like day. Philip set out hopefully with three Naval ratings, some British soldiers, and a dozen Indian headquarter clerks. Most of the craft were sunk during the next two days, and only one is known to have reached Batavia.*

*'England was once our ally. You and I wear the same medal ribbon. Why are you so unfriendly to us?'*

*The senior British officers, prisoners of war, were being interrogated by the Japanese Army Commander. This was the first of many wearisome sessions. They always talked politics, when what one wanted was to ask for rice and bandages. The interpreter was always frightened and unreliable.*

*'That is a political matter, decided by our Government. Our duty is to obey the Government. We are not allowed political opinions'.*

*'If your government was so bad, why did you not arrange a military coup and overthrow it?'*

*Here was a poser; luckily someone mentioned Lord Lytton, and the captors occupied themselves in abusing his Manchurian decision. This distinguished man's name often served as a lightning conductor; one hoped that he would not mind.*

*This interview had an awkward opening; the British did not bow. Japanese bow incessantly to each other, and an early order was that all prisoners of war must bow at all times to Japanese officers and armed sentries. Sentries took pleasure in strolling through the rooms at meal times, and in visiting the officers' bathing-well. The regulation bowing angle is fifteen degrees.*

*They were kept for a fortnight on Banka Island, where all the pepper comes from. Castaways from sunken ships arrived almost naked. Philip had too much luggage, and gave his dinner jacket suit to a man who used it as pyjamas, and found it good mosquito protection.*

*All prisoners of war were then moved to Palembang, an oil refiner town in a delta, fifty miles from the sea. Here, the first six months were spent in a muddle, with all Nationalities and ranks – British, Australian, New Zealand, Dutch, Free French, Indian, Chinese, and Malay – packed into two Chinese schools. Fit men did very hard coolie work, enlarging the aerodrome. Food was short, but treatment reasonably good; the 'Nips' were in triumphant, careless mood. The worst of the wounded and sick could be sent to a Dutch hospital, through which there was contact with the civilian camps.*

*The civilian internees comprised Dutch rounded up in south Sumatra, with the surviving British from Singapore. Those whose ships had been sunk had lost everything – from families and homes to spectacles and false teeth. There were bedridden old people, whose chances of surviving and long spell of hardship were nil.*

*Women and children were in matsheds, under native conditions – digging trenches and carrying sacks of rice. The men, including several dockyard officers, were in the Asiatic gaol; this was Tokyo policy, followed everywhere, because Japanese internees had been gaoled in Singapore when the Far Eastern war began. Civilians fared worse than prisoners of war. They received no pay and had more dissension, with no seniority list.*

*In August 1942 officers senior to Lieutenant Colonel were moved to Japan, and the regular prisoner of war command took over – 'dug out' officers, Japanese NCOs and Korean guards. Under this regime the British made a truly unpromising start; Colonel Matsudaira brought with him a stack of green parole forms which they refused to sign. Rations were drastically cut, and the senior officers were put in cells. After a fortnight everyone signed under duress. The affair passed off well; it would have been different under later Commandants. British officers had a difficult time on this occasion; hotheads were for no surrender, and others were for a quiet*



*life. It was a relief to find, years later, that similar action had been taken in Singapore.*

*Most of the Korean guards were uneducated peasants, brutalised by their military training, and hard to reason with.*

*For a year the Koreans were supplemented by renegade Sikhs – prisoners of war from Malaya, who had joined the ‘Indian National Army’ under varied amount of third degree pressure. Their embarrassment vis-à-vis the British Indian Army Officers in the camps was clear to see.*

*During 1943 most of the officers were in a separate camp. Philip was among those who were left with the men at the working camp in Chung Kwa Chinese School. Here life was tolerable, although the surroundings were squalid and the verminous rooms so overcrowded that there was barely room for the men to lie down. Able Seaman Baker, whose job it was, caught thirteen hundred rats in a year.*

*This was the best time. Some Red Cross food arrived and supplemented the rice for three months. Without it, the diet was desperately dull, and not enough for a heavy worker. Someone calculated, after three years, that he had eaten off his chipped enamel plate, eight hundred-weight of rice in steadily diminishing daily allowance.*

*Daily the men went out to work with an officer in charge of each party. The usual jobs were unloading cargoes and stacking timber – terribly hard going for an undernourished man. The weekly holiday was often cancelled and working hours prolonged when a ship had to be cleared. Philip has seen an exhausted, rain-soaked man get back late at night, find his supper already eaten through some mistake, and burst into tears.*

*The Japanese required the prisoner-of-war offices to administer the camps, but without recognising their authority in disciplinary matters. It was out of the question to report the few ‘bad hats’ to the captors, for the latter’s reaction was unpredictable. They might give an offender a savage mauling or a cigarette. Threats of ‘after the war’ kept the kleptomaniacs and the one suspected traitor in reasonably good order.*

*Inter-Service questions were settled without any printed regulations. Who can say, from memory, the relative standing a Chief Petty Officer (Gunner’s Mate) and an Army Warrant Officer, 3rd Class? The matter looked large when the right to a bed was in question, and the officers’ memories tended to favour their own flock.*

*‘Beating up’ was a trouble that got steadily worse. It might be a slap across the face, which is the normal Japanese military mild reproof, experienced by nearly all prisoners of war, or a swinging blow that sometimes broke jaw or eardrum, or the occasion a full-scale affair that resulted in a hospital case. Japanese officers could never understand the British view, and the last Commander, in particular, did nothing to stop it, in spite of many complaints.*

*Philip was present when a Japanese officer drove past a sentry, who did not salute sufficiently smartly. The officer stopped the car, got out, walked back, hit the man across the face, and proceeded with never a word said. When two Naval ratings ran*

*away from the camp in very early days, the Japanese then in charge had his face smacked by the General – a formal reprimand.*

*One was always on weak ground in making requests. No one could tell whether the translation had been correct. The Japanese had never subscribed to the Geneva Protocol so anything they did was an act of grace, they said. They added, as a rule, that they themselves never surrendered and they could feel no consideration for people who did.*

*It was a godsend to have reliable news. Sergeant Chisholm, AIF, slipped away from the aerodrome working party, stayed out all night, stole a wireless set from a wrecked aircraft, and smuggled it into camp in bits. He hid it in the woodwork of his bed, and used it for about two years. When the set wore out, and could not receive speech, he taught himself to read commercial Morse.*

*In camps without electric power, they had to rely on rumour, which was always over optimistic. It was easy to foretell the course of events; one heard of the great doings some time before they happened. There were few books. After a couple of years one had read them all, and the leaves of the more popular were like worn grey blotting paper. Many pages were missing, since cigarette paper was scarce.*



This nautical chess set, made in 1943 in the Palembang camp by Capt R S Herring MC as a gift to Philip. The bishop is an octopus, the queen a mermaid, and the pawns fishes. My most precious possession.

*In peace-time, iron-hooped bales of unsold American daily papers had been exported to the East Indies for wrapping bazaar purchases. The kitchens were supplied with some of these as kindling, and they were read – every word. Mostly Los Angeles journals, dated 1940, they mingled city politics and war news, with news of the Stars and Society gossip. A ‘shower’ is a pre-wedding tea party, at which the bride receives useful gifts. ‘Pourers were Mesdames So-and-so’. The*

*Malayan planters said that they would need a season of heaven 'showers' on return to looted bungalows.*

*At Chung Kwa School concerts and games were allowed. There were net-ball matches on the cemented playground, with the Argylls as the champions.*

*The Japanese Army did not play games – at any rate in wartime. They took their exercise on the road, doubling along in column of fours, shouting patriotic songs, rifles at the slope.*

*It was possible to hold some evening debates, and after hearing the troops; views, the Labour Government's advent came as no surprise. The officers had a periodical 'brains trust' session. They sat around in the dark, slapping the mosquitoes off their ankles, whilst Malayan Civil Servants argued the point, as in old Oxford Union days.*

*Later, the Japanese became suspicious of plots, and broke up any camp meeting.*

*Early in 1944 there was another move. Working parties cleared a site in jungle scrub, two miles outside the town, and helped to build a hutted camp for everyone, including the sick. The Dutch hospital had been closed in 1943. The huts were palm-thatched, with bamboo framework. Three of them blew down one night in rain-sodden heaps. The floors were bare earth. Water was from shallow wells that the prisoners dug. In the dry season one bathed under the eaves of the hut, if there was a shower. No artificial lighting was allowed.*

*Officers and men were all together, about half British and half Dutch, totalling some twelve hundred. Most of the Dutch other ranks were elderly Eurasian militiamen from Java. They included highly educated men with courtly Continental manners, speaking elaborate English.*

*It was difficult to prevent international friction. Once some 'jungly' Dutch cooked and ate the British Army's unlucky black cat. In gloomy moments one wondered whether similar troubles were occurring between the Allies outside – if so, the party would be prolonged for an unnecessary year or two.*

*The prisoner of war conventions smack too much of the Middle Ages, when the knight was feasted and held to ransom, but the poor 'foot' got no quarter. Officers draw a substantial money allowance against their pay, and should not be made to work; the men have to slave for miserable 'working pay' – sixpence a day, when a smuggled duck-egg was costing three or four shillings.*

*Officers subscribed largely to the hospital, and to men's messing, but there was always jealousy.*

*The Japanese never issued bedding, mosquito nets, or messing utensils. Men wrapped themselves in sacks stolen from the godowns and periodically confiscated. They ate and drank from coconut shells and empty tins. Clothing was very scarce, and working parties marched bare foot through the town. Hunger was partly to blame for this – anything saleable was 'flogged' to buy food.*

*Black marketing was conducted by rival gangs of Koreans, with interminable whispered bargaining and night, and perilous expeditions out under the wire.*

*The hospital was a dreadful place, in leaky huts infested with bugs and lice (as was the rest of the camp). There were few medical supplies; the dressing for all the big tropical sores was banana leaf stuck on with latex. With no separate place for the lunatics, they had to be tied down to their beds. Everything was lacking, except grand courage and cheerfulness.*

*As one walked down the gangway between the bamboo sleeping platforms, in which the sick were packed in rows, their reply to a question was 'Musn't grumble', always followed by 'How long do you think it will be?'. One did not like to give a true reply.*

*In 1945 the rice stocks were dwindling, with rations very small, and no fish or meat. Everyone was rationed according to the work that they did. Heavy workers got insufficient, and the sick were on a starvation scale; it was astonishing that men could lose so much weight. There were so many deaths that it was difficult to keep pace, digging graves.*

*The Dutch death-rate was higher than that of the British. Without a word of news of their families and little Java plantations, they despaired. Most of the British were young. The Glasgow and Notting Hill Gate boys, children of the depression, were sometimes a trial, with their racketeering and trouble-making, but they knew that they were going to win, and nothing ever got them down.*

*The Australians fared the best – a resourceful party, mostly used to rough conditions, governing themselves, and taking care of each other. One soon learnt that a Dominion must be treated as an equal partner. To impress this on his British Army colleagues and amusing himself by getting a never-failing rise out of them, the Major from Sydney would sometimes say that Australia should now conclude a separate peace.*

*The last of the Commandants was often drunk, and the guards did what they liked. British raids on Palembang from the big carriers and the whole trend of war, cheered the prisoners immensely but made the Japanese revengeful. They accepted the prospect of death in battle as a certainty, and had no fear of retribution.*

*Philip would much rather not dwell on bad times, but a light account without the dark background would be misleading. It is enough to say that all the Japanese officers and NCOs from the Palembang camps, and several of the Korean guards, were hanged in Singapore in 1946.*

*Allied invasion after the monsoon was expected, so in June Colonels and Majors were removed to Singapore. The Japanese never bothered with our Navy and Air Force ranks – a Commander was 'Navy Colonel'. After deck passage in a collier – five days on an unsheltered cargo hatch, without room to lie down, they found the great camp at Changi delightfully well ordered and quiet. Philip was on the sick list and spent the last impatient weeks lying down, with secret wireless news provided twice a day, and lots to read.*

*One afternoon his siesta was interrupted. 'Wake up, old boy! The verandah is full of Admirals!' Philip opened his eyes to find three of them at the door. 'Hello Philip!' came in Sir Arthur Power's cheery voice – and that was the end of the chapter.*

---

## 9. After the War



The Reids' 6 years in Bath were spent in a top floor rented flat in the Royal Crescent.

**LOOK!**

*that's a*  
**LANCHESTER** FOURTEEN *Roadrider*

It's exciting to see a Lanchester Roadrider but it's the people *inside* who get the most out of this superb engineering achievement. They get the thrill of balance, springing, weight distribution and Daimler fluid flywheel transmission harmonised into swift-flowing, road-holding comfort. Get inside a

Lanchester and feel what it's like—smoother, softer, steadier—the new rhythmic motoring that never leaves you tired. The local dealer will give you a trial run. Ask him *today*. And write to the address below for illustrated catalogue of this stimulating new Lanchester.

**£525**  
TAX £10 10s.

**FEEL HOW SHE HOLDS THE ROAD**

**SPORTS SALOON £340**

DAIMLER FLUID FLYWHEEL TRANSMISSION BUY A CAR MADE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM  
The Lanchester Motor Co. Ltd., 25 Bank Lane, Coventry.

The Reid's car in Bath was a black pre-war Lanchester.

The following description of Philip's post-war years in the Royal Navy comes from an article 'Naval Gunnery Life 1917-1960' published in The Naval Review in July 1980:

*Back in England I was at Portsmouth, and then for six years in Admiralty, Bath. The work was mainly to do with the inspection and sentencing of big stocks of ammunition, from improvised storage abroad. It was difficult to catch up again, after missing six years of new developments; I remember being asked to inspect proximity fuzes, without having heard of them.*

*There followed an extremely pleasant job – Superintendent of a gun proof range at Inchterf, on the Clyde-Forth canal. We tested new guns and batches of propellant, for acceptance, by firing into sand butts. It was an unusual position to hold – sole Naval person, in charge of a staff half Royal Artillery and half civilian. There was scope for mishaps – mounting and dismounting guns, usually in bad weather – taking and recording accurate measurements, during monotonous series of firings. The range was on a wide expanse of moorland, its perimeter vulnerable to the Glasgow IRA. We were luck, and had no troubles. At a farewell party in the Warrant Officers' Mess, its President, our storekeeping officer, said that I was the easiest CO that he had ever had. I have sometimes wondered what were the implications of this.*

*I was next appointed to the Ordnance Board, a combined services institution very much older than the Ministry of Defence. We arranged trials of new designs of weapons and ammunition and made recommendations about their suitability for service. The Presidents were Rear Admiral, Major General, and Air Vice Marshal in rotation. The offices were in Kensington; we had our own printing press and published lots of Proceedings. We travelled to watch trials; I was lucky to have a fortnight in Australia.*

*Interest was shifting from guns to guided weapons, but efforts to improve the accuracy of Naval gunnery were still being made. I suggested that the project might be phased out; this upset the Superintendent of Applied Ballistics, whose section had lived with the mater for many years – 'Most shocking thing that I ever heard in my life!'. It was easy to reply that he must have had a sheltered life.*

*My final work was at Woolwich, revising the inspection manual and doing some teaching. By then I was considerably older than the other officers. One day someone spoke of 'the war' and I unintentionally caused amusement by asking – 'Which war?' It was time to pack up.*

---

## 10. Retirement



Templeknowe, St. Boswells.

In 1953, a few years before he retired, Philip inherited from his childless cousin Herbert Eckford a fine property called Templeknowe near St. Boswells in the Scottish borders. We made some use of it as family, particularly while Philip was serving at Inchterf, near Glasgow. Herbert Eckford emigrated from Scotland to Manitoba, Canada, in 1884, at the age of 17. He arrived at High River in 1887 after serving as a scout and freighting supplies for the armed forces dealing with the North-West Rebellion. During this time he travelled 200 miles across hostile country, sleeping under wagons, and lived on salt bacon and ships' biscuits.

Arriving with a wagon, a rake, and a mower, he built up a successful ranch breeding horses for the British Army and the Royal North Western Mounted Police. His ranch, and other business ventures, prospered and he returned to his native Scotland as a wealthy man, acquiring Templeknowe as his base. He remained a keen rider and hunter, and the stables could accommodate 12 horses.



Greenhill, Thorncombe, Dorset.





Philip, Louisa and their dog Pippa at Greenhill



Philip with his grandson Philip at Lopen. His seven grandchildren are Griselda's Harry, Theo and Fred, and Alex's Anna, Kate, Philip and Lizzie.

But Templeknowe, in St.Boswells, Scotland, was far from Philip's and Louisa's friends and family, and they decided to sell it in 1956, using the proceeds to buy their retirement home, Greenhill, in the Dorset village of Thorncombe. It was

described in the sale brochure as a superb country house with two cottages, stables, and wonderful views.

Philip and Louisa lived out their retirement at Greenhill, and then (after a brief time in Cheltenham – attracted there by the local croquet club) in a smaller house in Lopen, Somerset.

Louisa was an avid gardener, as well as a prolific writer of magazine articles on gardening. Philip lost much of his eyesight in his later years, but made good use of the radio and of talking books.



Philip, aged 88, and Louisa at Lopen in 1989. The white bench had travelled with them all the way from their allotment at the Royal Crescent, Bath, forty years before.

Philip died quietly on 20th October 1993, a much loved husband, father, grandfather and friend.

---

# 11. Tributes

When Philip died some of the people who had been prisoners of war with him were still alive, having been younger than him. Several sent my mother moving letters of condolence, remarking on his calm bravery and kindness during that terrible time.

David Copley wrote: Commander Reid was a brave man. I can think of him on various occasions bravely taking the punishment on behalf of all of us. And he was a person of great humility, so that men of all ranks felt they could approach him and get a sympathetic hearing and words of good advice.

Frank Bullivant wrote: I was merely a unit of RAF personnel, thrust into a predominantly Naval camp by circumstances. But detached as one might be, one could not fail to notice this gentle unassuming man. Frequently without shirt or hat (displaying no badge of rank) he would intercede, utterly regardless for his own safety in any physical beating that might develop from the most trivial of reasons.

Ray Stubbs wrote: The phrase 'An Officer and a Gentleman' could not have been better portrayed than by your dear husband. His life, and his great discipline and tremendous courage, particularly during the dark days in Sumatra, were models to follow, when life itself was chaos, and even hope for the future was at a low ebb. We have much to be thankful for, in that we had Philip as a leader in those times.

Rex Spencer wrote: I would very much like to attend the memorial service on Thursday to pay my respects to the bravest man I have ever met.

---

15.10.2019