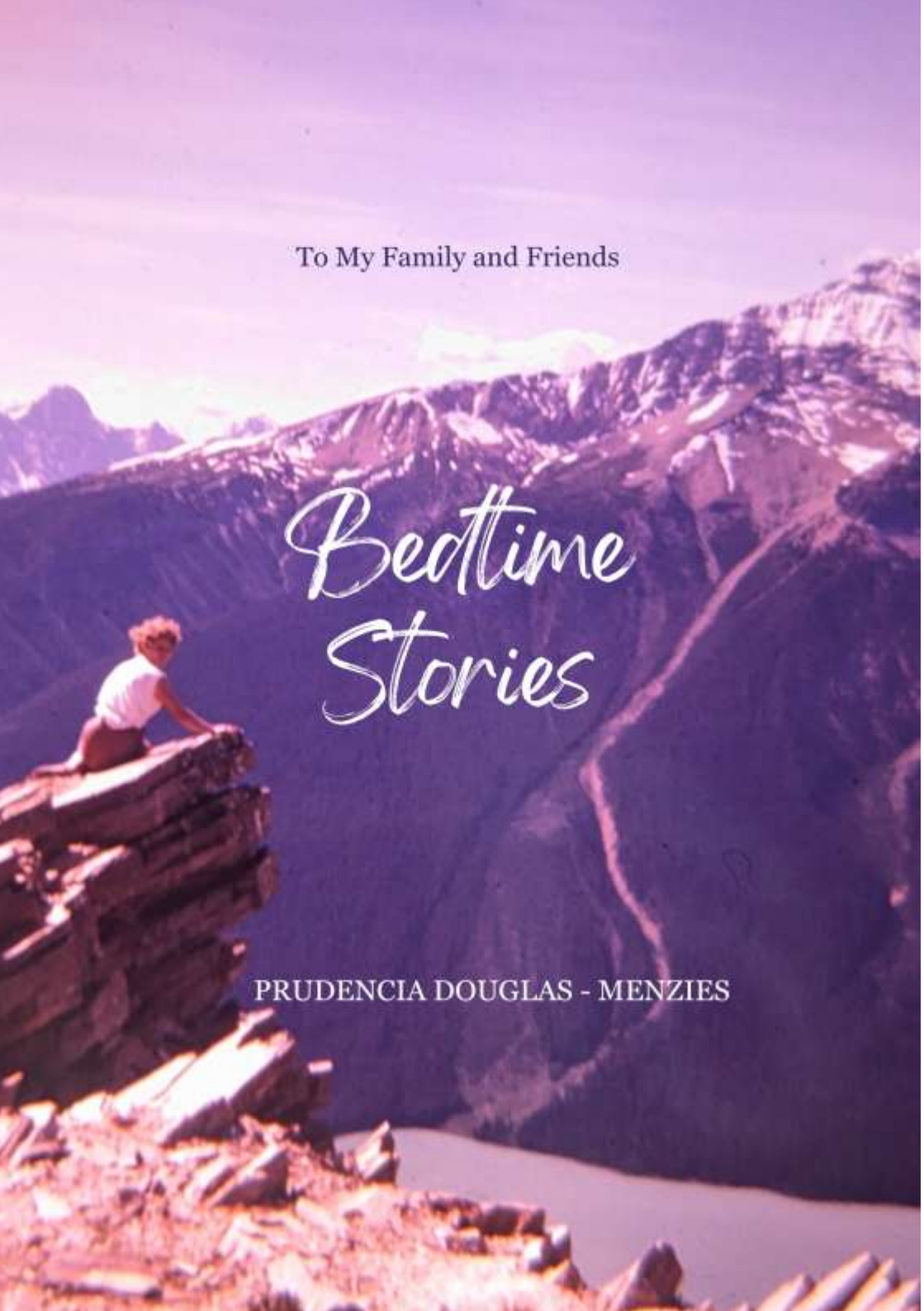


A photograph of a person with curly hair, wearing a white tank top and dark pants, sitting on the edge of a rocky cliff. They are looking out over a vast, deep valley with steep, rugged mountains. The mountains are covered in patches of snow and have a reddish-brown soil. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall tone of the image is nostalgic and serene.

To My Family and Friends

Bedtime Stories

PRUDENCIA DOUGLAS - MENZIES

Memoirs by Prue Douglas-Menzies
Cadboll Cottage, 2025

Published by Webpublish CO UK
Tain

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BEDTIME STORIES

Early Memories 1936-1937

We lived at Roddens, Ballywalter, Country Down. Grandfather "Flath", Richard Blakiston Houston, Lived at Orangefield, Dundonald, Belfast. I do not remember him as he died in 1935. We never lived there as it was already being built over as Belfast expanded east. Granny Lillian had been left Finlaystone in Renfrewshire in Scotland where her family the Kidstons came from as she was the only member of her family who wanted it. I believe my grandfather used to spend a lot of time on the Glasgow boat going back and forth to Orangefield east of Belfast.

There were four children. My Father, John Matthew was the eldest, then George, Marion and Elizabeth Agnes (Buster).

I was born in a Nursing Home in Belfast on July 27th, 1936. The third daughter to Johnny and Lettice Blakiston Houston.

My earliest Memories are sitting in my pram watching my older sister Anne being taught to ride a fairy bike and being held up by Ina the Nursery Maid.

Grandfather Harry Stobart and Granny Bee must have come to stay when we were quite small. The bedtime stories were memorable and not at all to encourage sleep.

There was a lot of travelling to Canada and Railways as he owned the model of the Stockton to Darlington Rocket and had a large gold medal which he kept on his watch chain which gave him access to travelling on the railways free.

Granny had been born in Winnipeg when there was a stockade round about six or seven houses, in those early days while the railway was being made. Her mother was Nina Allan whose family had been responsible for building

the harbour at Montreal for the ships of the Allan Line. She had been married to Jack Mackenzie who was not only an alcoholic but also a manic depressive which of course would not have been given a name in the 19th century. It gives more reason for our mutual great Grandmother Nina to have left him for a much happier marriage to Freddy Brydges.

Joan's mother Elspeth Dawes was Nina's granddaughter by Jack Mackenzie and her sister Geraldine Sutherland they were both born Patterson, and their cousin Robert Patterson died 2018 having been very important in the Royal Bank of Canada. I knew him in London.

My grandmother Betty Bridges had a sister Letitia married to Pease and had two children Rosalind and Frederick whom we met in New York.

Before the war

My sister Elizabeth was born on the last day of 1939. I first remember her as a tiny girl on my father's knee when he came on leave to visit us, whilst staying with his mother at Finlaystone in Renfrewshire. I remember him in his dress uniform, looking very handsome but rather pensive. Elizabeth was the fourth daughter and Daddy was going off to fight in the war.

Our house in Co Down, Roddens, had recently burnt down, not completely but enough for us to have to stay at Finlaystone until the farmhouse could have two additional rooms built on. Roddens farm was a lovely place to grow up, it was about a mile from the sea on the Ards Peninsula, and there was a dairy farm with Ayrshire cows and at least one fierce bull, who was not to be trusted having gored one of the men on the farm.

Bertie Grey was a very kind man. He took the milk round the houses in the countryside and sold it straight from the churn with a long-handled measure and then poured it into the customers' small milk cans. Bertie was a member

of the Orange Order and was senior to our father, who had been made a member at the age of nine so he could march in Edward Carson's army. Bertie took us with him to ride on the hay buggy when the haystacks were ready to be brought home to the stack yard. We had three Clydesdale horses as there was no petrol during the war, although we got a tractor later.

Fred Davidson was a lovely man. He looked after the pack of hounds and the horses. He was a kennel huntsman and had come over from England with my mother when she got married. Davidson had been in the veterinary corps in the 1st World War and had been wounded pretty badly as his face was badly disfigured – and he had been gased. He was wonderful with horses and handled them so well they hardly needed breaking in. All the mares were put to stud during the war, and the polo ponies to steeplechase horses, and we also had young Clydesdales that Davidson broke in to pull chains with logs on behind until they were strong enough to pull a cart or a plough. I used to go riding with Davidson to exercise the hounds – I had a little black pony and one day pulled up a bean while riding. The pony took off at a great rate and galloped round the 60-acre field twice before Davidson could stop laughing enough to tell me to throw down the bean – it was taller than the pony, so it thought he was going to get a beating. I knew all the hounds by name and could call them in my wee high-pitched voice “Come along, kurp, kurp”.

The dairy cows were milked in the byre right behind the farmhouse and we sometimes had fun milking and seeing which of us three girls could get the biggest froth in the bucket. Mary had very strong hands and was given the most difficult cow, or the one that kicked, Anne was not so strong, but her cow was known to put her foot in the bucket just when she had nearly finished. I was given the easiest cow and sometimes aimed the milk straight into my mouth – we loved warm milk straight from the cow! Some of the milk was put to settle in large flat pans so that the cream would come to the

top, this would then be skimmed off and put into the butter churn to be made into butter. Salt was added and then the handle turned until the cream turned into butter, then water was added to wash out the salt before it was turned out and patted with butter pats to shape it into blocks weighing about a pound each.

My eldest sister, Mary, had a friend called Caroline Blackwood. The two of them would climb out of a downstairs window to go and help with the milking at 4.00 am, and I remember thinking this was very daring. Another of her friends was Henry Mulholland, who was an only child and had a very strict nanny. He had his clothes changed several times a day but when he came over to play with us, he would love to climb up onto the roof of our garden playhouse, which had a stove in it, and clean the chimney and so getting extremely grubby. I think our Nanny Aida Redshaw and his nanny used to “have words over it”. I was Nanny’s first baby, and so we had a rather special relationship, and she taught me to say my prayers, kneeling at her knee to learn Our Father, and to say God bless Mummy and Daddy along with all the other people, ending with Please God bless Nanny and God bless me and make me good.

Roddens House Accident 1939

In 1939 Roddens House was burnt due to an accident while workmen were putting in new Nurseries. I think we were all staying at Finlaystone, Renfrewshire in Scotland when this happened. Our cousins, George, John and Judy MacMillan, were rather older than me but Mary and Anne, my two elder sisters, enjoyed their company and I loved playing with Judy.

Elizabeth was born on 31st December 1939, and I remember her appearing to be rather small on my father’s knee. My father, Johnny Blakiston

Houston, was dressed in the 11th Hussars mess kit uniform, and always wore the “cherry picker” trousers in the evening for the rest of his life.

Lord Dunleath was the only person of whom Daddy was in awe as he had been his Commanding Officer in the 11th Hussars, and when going to dine there he told me to make sure I was on time. As we arrived, there was our host standing on the front doorstep with a stopwatch saying, “two minutes late, Johnny, two minutes late”! The house was lovely, Palladian, with a sweeping staircase, and I was told that before the War there was a page boy behind each chair at dinner, wearing knee breeches and white stockings. This vivid picture of the colourful dining room and the liveried footman remains strong

I remember my grandmother, at that time at Finlaystone, often writing letters at her desk in the beautiful drawing room, and another time drying her long hair in front of the fire wearing a red dressing gown. Her hair was white and almost reached her waist, but of course she wore it piled up as was the fashion before and during the war.

We used to sit in the windows of the dining room and watch the shipping going up and down the Clyde. If one of the Clyde shipping Company tugs or puffers came into view, we would all sing with delight “Daddy’s gone a-hunting, a-hunting, a-hunting” as that was us children’s way of welcoming those tugs that made my great-grandfather wealthy.

Back at Roddens, County Down. Northern Ireland 1940

The Second World War made a big difference to the lives of everyone. We had a motorcar that was serviced by a young man called Harry Ferguson who had a bicycle shop in Belfast and would bicycle the 22 miles to Roddens so as to keep the car on the road. He would stay in the groom's room before

bicycling back the next day, but the car was put up on blocks for the duration of the war as petrol rationing meant we had to resort to Nora the pony and the pony trap.

That young man who serviced Grandfather's motorcar was the same person who invented the little Grey Fergy and also hydraulics which revolutionised



Roddens Farm House where I spent the war years until my Mother bought Beltrim

farming.

Roddens Farmhouse.

We were unable to get building materials to renovate Roddens House but somehow my mother managed to put on two rooms in Roddens farmhouse where we lived for the next eight years. There was a summerhouse in the garden and the hens would sometimes come into the house, one little black hen went upstairs and laid an egg on Nanny's pillow - or so she said. Then there was Flossie, the goat, who pulled a little cart and had a proper harness with a bit and bridle, and Mary and Anne would ride in the cart down to the

seashore while Elizabeth and I were pushed in prams by Nanny and Inna the nursery maid. I remember being amazed watching them walking in step as we went the mile down to the shore. There was a bathing hut there where Nanny would put on her sand shoes to paddle but she thought the sea was far too cold for us until September. One day Nanny and Inna did a big washing of lots of woollen jerseys and hung them out on the washing line to dry. Flossie came and stood up on her hind legs so that she was able to reach the arms of the jerseys. From then on, we must have had short sleeved jerseys! Flossie went to live elsewhere, and we heard that she had produced four kids all at once! We had the harness for the goat and the little cart for many years and played with it, us being the goat but sadly it got burnt in a fire in the tack room at Beltrim years later.

Nanny's War Work

Another thing we used to do was to go to Kircubbin with Nanny driving Nora the pony in the trap to collect National Savings Stamps from the post office to sell to the people round the countryside. The post mistress was my oldest friend, Mrs Iliff. She had a son, Billy, who must have been away at the war. Maybe she was a widow from WW1, but she was a great friend of my granny at Finlaystone, and they used to get people in Kircubbin to embroider hankies with the names of the people to whom they were to be given. I still have some of these embroidered with Lettice, my mother. Kathline, my mother-in-law, who was a first cousin of my father and one every year from my Aunt Marian MacMillan as she was also my godmother.

Billy Iliff, Mrs Iliff's son was about six months older than my father but at the end of the war my father came home to manage the farm, and Billy Iliff went on to become Vice-Chairman of the World Bank and I went to stay with him - by which time, 1959, Sir William Iliff was in Washington DC.

While we were at Roddens, Raymond came from Switzerland to be governess to Mary and Anne. She was very pretty and had long red fingernails. I think she came over on the last Liverpool boat to arrive in Belfast before the war started so she could not leave. I used to sit under the table while my two elder sisters were doing their lessons and remember learning “The friendly cow, all black and white, I love with all my heart; she gives me cream from morning till night to eat with apple tart”. Raymond



My Teddy was loved as much as Cloy my black dole Daddy brought me from Africa

was pretty and intelligent and soon my mother noticed staff cars coming to take her out or bring her back from the RAF

Ballyhalbert aerodrome. She got a job priming aeroplane crews as to where they were going to bomb that sortie – a most responsible job, and she had to see that the crews were up to doing

the flight before she told them where they were going. One of the reasons Raymond got the job was because she was Swiss and so from a neutral country

Mary and Anne went to do lessons with the Percival-Maxwell family on the other side of Strangford Lough, as they had two governesses. Miss Ludgate was a retired missionary and a lovely, kind person with a humpback. Robin Percival-Maxwell was my godfather and sadly was killed in the war, but I do

remember him when I was about 6. He was a very special person, and I loved him and prayed for him on Remembrance Sundays.

After some time doing lessons with the wife of someone in the RAF bicycling down to the shore with Nanny every day, eventually I was sent to join Anne at Finnebrogue.

My special friend was Marylou Stewart who eventually married James Pooler, a lovely gentle giant who was a farm student with us at Beltrim – Marylou is still my friend, and her daughter Caroline is my goddaughter – and she is now a granny! Mary Lou and I used to ride our ponies and search for German spies in the dismally dilapidated stables. We thought we found some blood and for weeks we were sure that someone was taking refuge there.

When the Americans joined the war against Germany they arrived with great gusto and on July 4, Independence Day, they had a party. There were things there we had never seen – such as pineapple rings in beakers, an iced cake that was such a novelty with creamy icing that I asked the chef what it was and whether it was ice-cream – that caused some embarrassment as they must have realised that we had been living with strict food rationing – 2oz of butter a week and sugar was so scarce that even the elderflower jam we made had no sugar in it – it was disgusting! The rationing made little difference to us on the farm except sugar. And a lot of people kept Bees so that they could get extra sugar for them.

Finnebrogue was a lovely refuge for us and at the beginning of term I would ride Nora the pony over with Davidson on Mantis or Honesty. We had to take the ferry across Strangford Lough as we lived on the Ards Peninsula and Finnebrogue was near Downpatrick. The ferry went from Portaferry to Strangford and the tide race was about 8 knots. I think the ferry had a chain

so it would not be swept out to sea. Cattle were often transported on the ferry as well as pedestrians.

We had a lovely maid who looked after us and would arrive to wake us up



Fred Davidson The groom whom Mum had brought with her from Yorkshire

with brass cans of hot water, which was poured into a large basin, and then the dirty water emptied into a slop bucket. We also had a bath and that kind, long-suffering person would wash us and get us to bed, she always dressed in a black dress with a white cap and apron.

Some of the large houses had telephones on each floor so that one did not have to call the maid and there were bells in each room so that the housekeeper could be called but all those people who would come running to assist went to work in the factories during the war or became Land girls to work on the farms.

War Watch 1940's

I was Nanny's first baby, so I always felt she was mine and very special. She never smacked me and was never cross but looked after us with loving care and taught me how to pray at her knee.

We had a telescope set up in the porch at Roddens Farmhouse and watched the Convoys of ships going up and down the Irish Sea. We could see the Sailors on board and sometimes some would come for a day off. We did not see much of our mother during the war as she joined the Women's Voluntary Services which was started by Lady Reading to help out where needed, and I remember her arriving home one evening and saying to Nanny "don't let the children run near me until I have had a bath". She had been in Belfast helping people who had been bombed and who had nowhere to go. They were often traumatised, frightened and had nothing. This is where the WVS could help organise shelter and food, and refugees were taken into other people's houses to be looked after. Mummy never told us much about it, but we got the gist of the children peeing in a drawer etc. Belfast was 22 miles away, but we could sometimes hear the bombs going off over the docks and then the air raid sirens.

Sometimes sailors or airmen would come to have a day's leave. Cyril Swire, who was a cousin of Daddy's, used to come when he had a day off. He wore a moustache, and I used to sit on his knee and pull it. Mary and Anne were horrified and said I was very naughty! He had two children Humphrey and Annett whom we got to know years later. Sadly, he did not survive the war.

We used to listen to the wireless or radio every day to hear the news and the reader was a friend of the family called Edward Ward. His family lived at Castle Ward in County Down. His Mother Was Lady Bangor and his sister



Prue and Elizabeth bone Dec 31 1939

Helen was a good friend of my mothers and later had a soft furnishing shop in London. Some of the materials that we bought from Miss Ward's shop are still hanging as our curtains at Cadboll Cottage where we live now.

In 1944 Victoria was born and Nanny must have been feeling the strain of another new baby. The baby was called Patience for the first few years until she was old enough to say that she did not like the name and preferred Victoria, so we eventually compromised and called her Tory. Elizabeth had found it difficult to say her name and so called herself Wibbabet which ended up as Wibet - I was just Prue except when visiting Ballywalter Park where Lady Dunleath, who was rather old fashioned, always called me Prudence.

The time when we had Mummy to ourselves was after tea when Nanny would have us dressed nicely and go down to the drawing room and play with the glass beads. As we got older, we played cards, Racing Demon, Canasta, Rummy and games like Snakes & Ladders. It was always fun, but Mummy was quite competitive and difficult to beat.

Because of the work with the WVS Mummy had a car and so had access to petrol which was rationed.

The Ballyhalbert RAF aerodrome was very close, one of the runways came into one of the fields on Roddens farm, and the other Royal Navy airfield was at Ballywalter, about 4 miles away. They had arranged to have a mock battle and Mummy, who was very sporting, thought it would be fun to be a spy. She took me with her, and we drove onto the Ballyhalbert runway – you could see they did not like that as they started shooting at us! Luckily the rubber bullets only dented the car but made us beat a hasty retreat, so we climbed up the silage tower and watched from the top through a pair of binoculars. The silage was to feed the cattle, and some enormous bullocks lived in the sheds round the back of the house, and the silage was thrown down to be carted out to them.

There were also Ayrshire cows, and we used to have competitions to see which one of us three elder girls could get the biggest froth on the bucket of milk as cows were all hand-milked in those days. Mary was the best as she had very strong hands and even though she was given the cow that kicked she always managed to get the best froth.

Mary was friendly with Caroline Blackwood from Clandeboye and the two of them would escape through the downstairs lavatory window to go to early morning milking at about 4.00 a.m. The milk was put into very large pans and left for the cream to rise to the top, which was then scooped off with a big flattish spoon. We would make butter in a churn, adding salt and

then washing the salt out by adding water. The butter was made into large pats of about a pound each. We had a horse and cart to take the milk to sell around the cottages. The large churns were put in the back of the milk “float” and people would come out of their houses with small tin cans to get them filled up with a long-handled ladle.



Gradually there was a little more petrol, and we got invited to stay at Rademon, a lovely house near Downpatrick, owned by Lady Reid, a widow. Nanny would take Elizabeth and me, and Nanny would always wear her white uniform. There were so many lovely things in that house – I remember a whole set of glass door stoppers with flowers inside, and also beautiful China. Lady Reid gave me the little white China pig, which sadly now has a broken ear.

There was a weeping ash tree in the garden, and a pond. We played fairies under that tree and thought it magical. There were two Pekingese dogs, rather fat and lazy, and to give them some exercise we had to carry them down to the pond and let them gallop up the hill home.

Beltrim 1945

In 1943 my mother heard that Beltrim was coming on the market, and she sent a telegram to Daddy somewhere in Africa to ask if she should put in a bid. With the house full of



My Mother on the show at Reddons 1939

American army officers, I do not think there would have been many bidders. It consisted of a long farmhouse with an added 18th century wing and could sleep at least 17. It was in a beautiful, wooded valley overlooking the Owenkillew river, in Co Tyrone. The farm was about 300 acres but the shooting rights over 29,000 acres, and 7-8 miles of fishing. My mother knew Daddy wanted to own a sporting estate and so bought it. We could not go and live there until the army had left and even then, there was much to do to make it habitable, and no way of getting building

materials with so much war damage. We also inherited two wonderful people – Molly Devlin who cooked for us, and Johnny Morris who was the

gamekeeper. The biggest problem with Beltrim was that it had been built on a sandbank and the army had let the pipes burst. The water had run down the bank so that we could not get in the back door – a 75’ drop made the whole house very precarious. Molly lived in the flat at the back and had to get in and out through the window! We used to go to Beltrim for short holidays until the bank was propped up with wooden staves and a path remade to support the house.



Gardener

Beltrim was a magical place with lovely woods, mature beech trees and several Abies Grandis firs. The river, the Owenkillew, with fishing for trout and salmon for about seven miles. We could ride our ponies for miles on unsealed roads, and over the holidays would try and go a different way each day, though of course we had to retrace our steps to get home.

Miss Weld, our governess, was a delight, she was a true country person who had taught every child in Ireland who ever had a governess. When concentration became difficult, Miss Weld would stop trying and sit down at the piano to play a song. We learnt a lot of Negro spirituals and also 30's favourites, and then back to work. Norris Percival Maxwell came to do lessons with me, and I think she got on well, but I was no good, and Miss Weld would read to us for hours, all the classics and children's books such as *The Water babies*, *King Solomon's Mines*, and the *Arthur Ransom* books. We loved the game of "What is it and Where is it", which was the

way to learn geography. We would compete against each other to see who would win, e.g. yellow? Sea- China; Lake Titicaca – South America. Our afternoons were taken up with riding. Davidson would take us on a different ride each day and sometimes Daddy came with us and made a game of military training, such as “Form Fours, Dismount!” One person must hold the horses and then we would hold up the traffic in the Gortin Gap! There were very few cars – only 7 in the whole Gortin area, so the exercise was soon over with no prisoners.

Johnny Morris was another larger-than-life character at Beltrim. He was the gamekeeper and when we arrived told us that during the war Beltrim had the American army billeted there, as he used to say: “there were Indians, and Niggers and all sorts”. Johnny had been a member of the IRA and had a khaki bicycle. He used to tell us stories of what he did but in such a way that we never heard the end of the stories as he would be laughing so much, and we would laugh too.

Grandfathers’ (Mother’s father, Stobart) Stories About the Two Kinds of Indians (1946) in Canada

When he was travelling on his horse to visit a family who he knew that they lived near a river. As he was riding along, his horse got very agitated, he dismounted and listened to the ground through a stick as the Indians do, rather like a telephone. He could hear a rumbling and indeed eventually could see the dust, an oncoming buffalo stampede. He turned his horse round in the same direction as the buffalo. His horse panicked and was not going to save him from being trampled underfoot so he edged his horse alongside a big bull buffalo and grandfather leapt onto his back leaving his horse and all his gear to fend for himself. “Do you remember that little blunt pen knife?” Well, he still had that with him and stuck the blade into the

jugular vein of the bull buffalo, the loss of blood weakened him, and he managed to edge him away from the herd and so save his life.

Another sleepless night for us children as we thought about the hair-raising tale of how grandfather found his way to his friends he was supposed to be meeting. He had no horse, no gear and only that little blunt pen knife as a survival kit. Eventually he came to a river and knowing that his friends lived downstream of that river, as he was walking along, he heard dogs barking. Well, dogs meant one thing, Indians, “now there were two sorts of Indians, honest Indians and dishonest Indians”. He found a log to sit on and pushed it down to the river so that he could float downstream past the Indian with his head beside the log so the Indians could not see him. Down off the log and just kept an arm round it for support and speed as the log floated downstream keeping his head down. As luck would have it the people, he was on his way to visit were out with their guns and let off a few shots to frighten off the Indians and they rescued grandfather from a watery grave.

It was because of these stories that I wanted to go to Canada in 1958 and at 22 years old eventually went off on a cargo boat from Dublin with two other girls also bent on Montreal as our destination.

I had saved £200 from picking snowdrops at Beltrim so as to prove myself that I could do it on my own but not taking into account all the help I got along the way from so many wonderful people who helped smooth my path and make the trip so memorable.

More Of Grandfather Stories 1946

Harry and Betty Stobart came to stay with us from Yorkshire and as always, we looked forward to their visits with delight and anticipation – what stories would grandfather tell us this time and were they really true? His years in

Canada were no doubt due to his interest in railways and adventurous spirit and encouraged me to travel and find out whether the stories really happened!

When high on a rocky trail one grizzly bear approached him from the front and another came from behind, no way to get past either and as the one in front stood up, Grandfather decided the bear was a soft landing as the one in front was bigger and heavier than him and would probably fall over first if they went over the edge together. They got into a bear hug, and he kicked the rocks so they both went over the edge. Well, here he was telling us the tale so it must have worked.

On another occasion whilst out hunting for grizzly with a friend and an Indian guide, the friend aimed his gun at a grizzly and the shot ricocheted off the rocks and killed his friend by his own bullet. Grandfather stayed behind to look after the remains which were secured in a tree while the



Grandfather Stobart

Indian guide returned to camp for help. As night was approaching grandfather had to find somewhere safe until help arrived the next morning. As it was some way from camp, he eventually found a hollow tree which he climbed into and fell somewhat deeper than he expected, wondering if he ever could get out. During the night there was a scrunch scrunch noise as a black bear descended down backwards on top of grandfather.

Do you remember that blunt little pen knife mentioned before, well, the black bear has a convenient short black tail, with one hand he held onto it and with the other gave the bear a jab, so he came out of the tree far quicker than he went in.

Grandfathers' stories were exciting and normally ended with "Do you remember that little blunt pen knife?"

One day Grandfather was riding his horse along a stretch of the prairies on his way to stay with friends. His horse became very nervous, and he dismounted and took a stick to listen to the ground as the Red Indians do. He could hear a rumbling sound and realised that there was a Buffalo stampede coming. The horse was very nervous and as the herd came nearer, he managed to get close up to a very large bull buffalo and jumped on to it, leaving his horse and all his kit but saving his life. "Well do you remember that little blunt pen knife?" He managed to stick it in the jugular vein and got it to the edge of the herd.

Grandfather played tennis with us at Beltrim and had us running round the court like mad as he stood hardly needing to move his feet. He would play his ball behind his back, through his legs and use both right and left hands. We were running everywhere trying to return the ball and laughing so much. The best thing was the bedtime stories about his time in Canada and it was because of those stories that I decided to go there to find out whether they were true.

Quote from Joan Bourne letter, 1983, Joan's mother Elspeth Dore was Nina's granddaughter by Jack Mackenzie and her sister Geraldine Sutherland, they were both born Patterson, and their cousin Robert Patterson died in 2018, having been very important in the Royal Bank of Canada, I knew him in London.

My grandmother Betty Brydges has a sister Letticia, she married A. Pease and had two children Rosalind and Frederick whom we met in New York.

Harry Stobart, our grandfather, came to stay at Beltrim with Granny. Granny had given me my first little trowel and fork for gardening which made me feel very grown up. Grandfather played tennis with us at Beltrim and had us running round the court like mad as he stood hardly needing to move his feet. He would play the ball behind his back through his legs and used both right and left hands. We were running everywhere trying to return the ball and laughing so much.

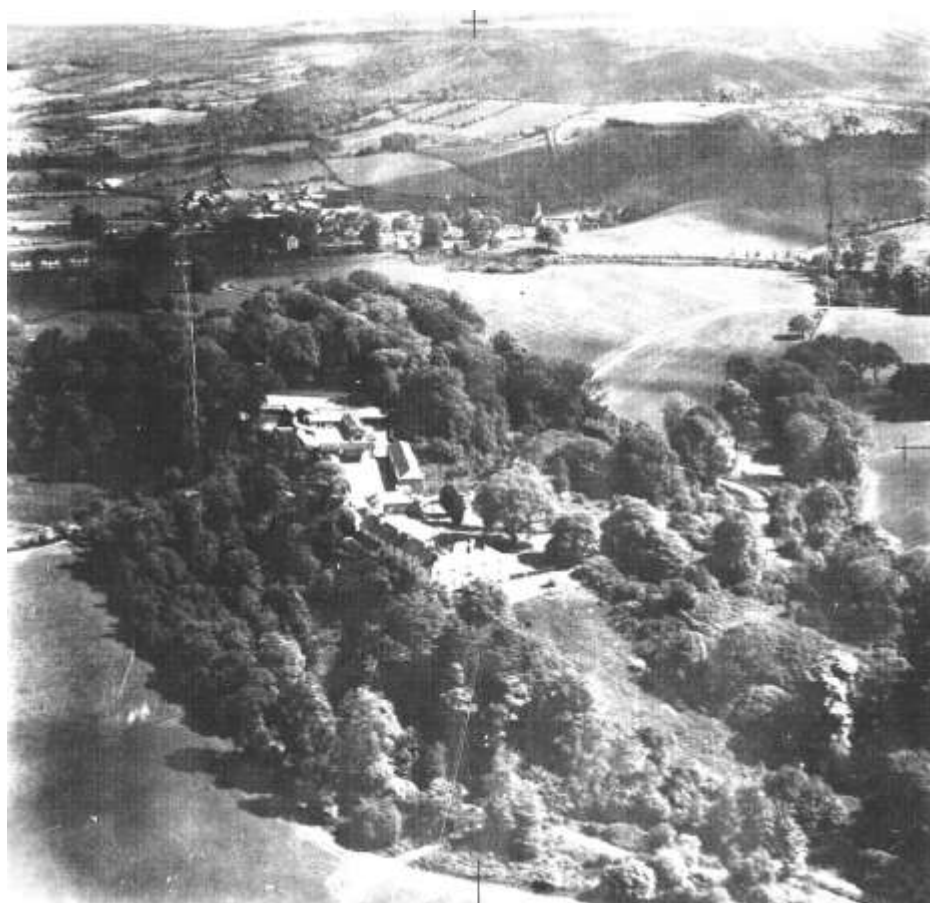
After the War 1946

When they were a little older and the war was over, Mary and Anne both went up to Carrowreagh, the farm off the Newtownards Road near Belfast and went on the milk round with Jim Crawford, the milkman. Each person had different ways of indicating how many bottles of milk they wanted. Jim would tell them "Look in the kitchen window and see what the clock says, if it says 3 o'clock leave 3 bottles". At the next house he would say "look in the basket at the back door and count how many clothes pegs there are and leave the same number of bottles". The milk bottles had written on them "You can whip our cream, but you can't beat our milk". It was Grade A milk with a high fat content, unpasteurised, and with a gold bottle top. Sadly, the lovely Ayrshires cows got a disease from the herd of cattle in the next farm, which was run by Greenmount Agricultural College. Their herd got

brucellosis and passed it onto our Ayrshires, so the inevitable happened and we had to restock with Friesians, which were not so attractive but easier to handle. The Ayrshire bulls could be tricky, and I think one hurt someone at Roddens when Sam Priestley was farm manager, or land steward. In those days, the bulls were kept in small, confined pens which I always thought were unnatural and cruel. One Sunday morning, Sam came to my mother who was running the farm while Daddy was away at the war. He sat down twiddling his hat in his hand and said “Mrs Houston, it’s a terrible thing to say on the Sabbath but the bull’s no good!” My mother almost laughed as the poor man was so embarrassed to have to deal with a woman about such matters.

Fred Davidson was my special friend. He came with my mother from Yorkshire when my parents got married and remained with us until he died. He had been in the first world war veterinary corps and worked with Hobday, who taught him how to “hobday a horse” with broken wind – by making a hole in its neck to help it breathe. He did it to one of our horses, and it was able to hunt afterwards for years. He had been gazetted in the First World War, which badly affected his breathing.

Before the war we had a pack of harriers, the East Down Harriers, and Davidson was the kennel huntsman. Of course, he knew them all by name and taught me to call them “come along yurp yurp yurp come along”. I had a little black pony, and we would take them out for exercise round the 60-acre field. One day, I pulled up a broad bean which was growing in the field – well, my pony took off round the field with me on top, unable to stop him. Davidson laughed so much he was unable to speak but at last got out “throw down the bean”. The pony stopped as I suppose he thought I was going to beat him with the bean.



Beltrim 1947

Davidsons war work was to drive the Talbot car with a dickie seat on the back to collect the swill from the RAF camp to cook up for the pigs. I sometimes went with him, which was very exciting as we had to go into the camp. The not so exciting bit was sorting out the swill to remove any bacon rind, forks or other nasty things that might harm the pigs, not an easy job and eventually they did get swine fever, probably from eating bacon rind.

We also used to grow vegetables for the RAF camp – parsnips, cabbages, carrots and beetroot. I remember Elizabeth being pushed in the pram to collect some vegetables for ourselves, and on arrival back at Roddens farmhouse her whole face was red as if she had cut herself, but she had been teething on a beetroot! I loved to eat the parsnips, especially when they were young.

We used to go to church with the pony and trap, Nora the pony was very good and did not mind being left tied to the railing outside while we were in church. I remember having to wear a white berry and little white net gloves. We had our own pew with a door, I think it was a Presbyterian church as later on when we got more petrol, especially for going to church, we would go to Ballywalter to the Church of Ireland where Mr Jackson was the clergyman. He had a son, Tim, who became a great friend of Elizabeth. Mr Jackson was very like King George VI and even had a stammer like the king. We thought he could have been his double.

Early Days at Beltrim. Gortin, Co Tyrone 1947

Victoria, our youngest sister was born in August 1944 and Mummy got a lovely person named Jose Gascon from Neuchâtel in Switzerland to come to look after her after Nanny retired.

In 1947 the war well and truly ended so more thoughts of travel.

Jose wanted to go home to see her family for Christmas so on December 18th, 1947, she took Mary and I with her to stay with her delightful family. We were given large lumps of sugar with the essence of mint to stop us feeling sick on the very rough crossing from Dover to Calais.

We stayed the night in a hotel in Paris and as our normal Sunday best dress were Saffron Kilts we felt that the other guests were staring at us. They were

certainly a very practical form of dress for children as they were hung from a bodice with buttons which could be let down as one grew taller.

The next experience was travelling on a train with wooden seats crammed up close to a French man who chewed Garlic! An unforgettable experience.

The Gascon family were delightful. There were four of them in the family. Rene the oldest then Nelda and Jose and the youngest was George Andre who was always known as Pipo.

They were truly country folk who knew all the ways of the birds and animals in the forest where they lived high up in the wooded hills above Neuchâtel.

Madame Gascon collected fungi from the Forest and dried them above the wood stove on strings to be used in cooking their traditional recipes. The Christmas dinner was a young deer haunch which had been marinated in lots of herbs from the Forest and cut with the traditional knife and fork on a special board.

BELTRIM 1947, Johnny Morris

When we arrived at Beltrim after the war there was no one living in the house except Molly Devlin who was the cook, housekeeper who had a flat at the back door with her husband Johnny Devlin, a quiet and gentle person.

The main spark of the place was Johnny Morris who was gamekeeper and general factotum. He was a character and full of funny stories, no doubt embellished. Johnny had been a member of the IRA and had a khaki bicycle to prove it. He had been keeper at Beltrim for some years, I think, for he



Johnny Morris

spoke of the previous owners. A Mr Forrister, who had acquired the place in a bad debt from the Cole Hamilton's, the original owners, who had built it around the 1600 during the plantation of Ulster when the occupiers were obliged to have a castle with either a moat or a boune. Beltrim had both as it was perched high up on a sandbank overlooking the Owenkillev surrounded by a natural born - or dry-stone dyke.

During the war the American troops were stationed at Beltrim, the soldiers in Nissan huts under the trees up the drive and the officers billeted in the house. Johnny Morris said that there were niggers and Indians and all sorts.

The water pipes had burst when the

Americans left and caused the bank to give way under the old part of the house, where once a carriage could go right round the house, now no-one could go in or out of the back door, and Johnny Morris had to creep in through Mollie and Johnny Devlin's window to get access.

My mother heard that Beltrim was on the market in 1943 when the owners wanted to sell it. Not a good time to sell as during wartime no-one wanted to buy estates, or a house precariously balanced on a sandbank seventy-five feet high with a farm of about 240 acres and rough shooting, 29,000 acres and seven miles of riverbank for fishing.

However, my mother was sure that my father would love it — maybe they had stayed there in the past. So, she telegraphed Daddy who was, I think, in Rhodesia running the Southern Rhodesian Armed Car Regiment, to tell him that Beltrim was on the market, and should she buy it for £8,000, I believe, which even in those days must have been a good deal. Clapped out yes, but a sporting estate which gave us all lots of entertainment.

When we eventually came to live at Beltrim in 1946 we thought it was fairyland. A long rambling house or an elongated farmhouse with a Georgian wing added later, adding a long drawing room, dining room, hall and smoking room made it spacious which of course included the extra bedrooms upstairs.

We reckoned we could sleep seventeen and we did so on many occasions. There were six children in the family and with Nanny and various girls to help; we still managed to have lots of people to stay.

The woods at Beltrim were magical to me and the freedom they gave us after living at Roddens Farmhouse was glorious. We would ride our ponies down to the river and know every road around the valley, all gravel except the ones out of the village of Gortin. There were only seven cars in the whole valley as it was still unusual to own a car so quite a novelty.

Beltrim continued

For about nine months I went to Manor House School in the County of Armagh but being dyslexic I was very slow at reading, and no-one had any idea how to help me. At last Miss Weld was taken on as my governess and Norris Percival-Maxwell came to do lessons with me. Miss Weld was lovely and a real country person. She was old, having been governess to every family in Ireland who could afford one and we were the last of the line.



When our concentration went Miss Weld would let us sing songs while she played the piano. Irish songs, Negro spirituals and American westerns. She would read to us for hours all those beautiful books that we could not read to ourselves. *Black Beauty*, *the Secret Garden*, *Swallows and Amazons* and *Louisa A Alcott's Little Women*, *the Jungle Book* and *King Solomon's Mines*. She was a saint but still told my mother that I was unteachable.

My brother Richard Patrick was born at Beltrim on July 25th, 1948. What celebrations! IT'S A BOY! A large archway of flowers was placed over the top of the drive by the village of Gortin to welcome my mother home with the baby boy. After five girls it was truly something to celebrate. I remember running up to tell Davidson the great news even before I had not even brushed my hair. We were all so excited and indeed relieved for my mother as she had tried so hard as in those days a son and heir were what was expected.

My Father was so delighted that he rang up one of the housemasters at Eton to book the baby into his old school!

Gil Geunot came from Neuchatel to look after the baby and turned out to be a brilliant seamstress. Poor Dick got rather the short straw when all five of us girls needed dresses made and my mother had many dresses, blouses and suits made by Gill. I have just mended a blouse made for my mother by Gill.

Gil Guenot came to look after my brother Dick when he was about two years old. Before that we had Jose Gascon. Both Gil and she came from Neuchatel in Switzerland. Gil was a police man's daughter with no fear or perhaps just amazingly self-assured and focused. She told us of when she



My sister Anne

was a child, she was tobogganing down the steep road, outside where she lived, when she saw a lorry parked in the middle of the single-track road — there was no way she could stop or divert, so flattened herself down and went clean under the lorry. She never told her father.

Gil was a remarkable person in many ways and especially skilled with her needle, making clothes for my mother and all five of use girls from a ball gown for

Mary, made of grouse feathers all over the bodice, and a smarter dress for me with swan's feathers for my presentation dress to the Queen Charlotte Ball at Grosvenor House in London.

Mary's dress was, I think, especially for a Georgian Ball somewhere in the south of Ireland. Most of the girls had their hair powdered for the occasion

but Mary's red hair was so beautiful that it was considered an indignity to spoil it and anyway it went with the beautifully fitted bodice of her dress made of grouse feathers. We were all expected to hold the pins for the fittings of the dresses and learn a great deal from Gil's expert ways with the lovely material. One dress I well remember the material being bought in Dublin for though we still had strict rationing in the north of Ireland, Dublin being the capital of South Ireland, was exempt. That dress was hand painted pale-yellow silk and was made into a lovely cocktail dress for my "coming out" parties in London. Gil also made curtains; even the spare room beds were hammered together by Gil and then the back and valances created by her most ingenious hands.



Clover Mary horse

We had a dance at Beltrim in the big drawing room and all the decorations were thought up and arranged by Gil. The cellar was turned into a nightclub and the whole ceiling covered with spruce and holly. I had to hand up the alternative branches which she hammered onto the rafters of the floor above. It looked fantastic!

My poor little brother Dick was looked after by the dog a great deal of the time. He would be put out on the lawn in his pram below the nursery window and Jock would lie beside the pram. On one occasion Dick rocked the pram so violently that it fell forward onto its handle and poor Dick was almost throttled by the straps. However, the faithful Jock barked so hard that Gil went and rescued the unfortunate child. The trouble was Jock would not allow anyone except Gil to go near Dick and there was a time later when Dick fell off his tricycle in the yard and screamed so that everyone within hearing rushed to help — but no, Jock would not allow anyone near until Gil came to the rescue!

Mary being the eldest was respected by Anne and me. She had the strongest hands for milking and the froth on the bucket of milk was always the best. Mary's hands could also hold us down when we were raging! I remember a small chest of drawers Mary was given - with named blown bird eggs so that we could learn who had laid them. Mary also knew the bird songs and from her I learnt to love these things.

My favourite program on the wireless when we were still small was Romney on the BBC, all about the countryside and especially not to touch birds or feed the babies. He had been followed by some wagtails and them thinking he was their parent because they had seen him when newly hatched. Mr Romney died, and I remember crying for him.

Mary and Anne both went and did lessons at Finnebrogue with Selina Percival-Maxwell whose parents had two governesses and about nine

children of different ages. Later after the war ended, they went over to England. Penny Chichester Clark was one of the eldest and helped the younger ones with the long arduous journey to North Foreland Lodge, which at the time was in Gloucestershire, and had then to be transferred to a large house near Basingstoke in Hampshire where I eventually went.

We had Chapel services twice a day and in due course I became head Sacristan at North Foreland Lodge School. We were prepared for Confirmation by Bishop Corfield, a retired Bishop of the United Church of South India with whom we studied St Paul's teaching in depth. Christianity became an important part of my life.

Anne had very bad eyesight and had to have several operations for stigmatism and a squint, I think. She wore a patch over one eye, but it never seemed to put her off making things — mud pies, I remember her squatting down with her knees up to her ears making pots and always busy. Poor Anne had to have at least two operations for her eyes and do lots of remedials which must have been very tedious for her.

When we lived at Beltrim Anne was allowed to turn the room above the stables into a special place where she made the most marvellous toys, puzzles, wooden houses and was constantly creating. I was down below with the horses and ponies or the dogs.

I went to Manor House School for nine months but being dyslexic, it did not work and once we were living at Beltrim a governess came called Miss Weld. I shared her with Norris Perceval Maxwell from County Down and we both loved the wonderful woods, large garden and the Sperrin Mountains that surrounded the river valley of the Owenkillew.

Each afternoon we would be taken riding on our ponies by Fred Davidson, most of the roads were unsealed with grass in the centre which we could

ride along. We would pass Flax Dams where bundles of flax would be seeping in order to rot the fibre on the outside that would then be taken to the scutch mills where it would be removed.

The Flax was a very valuable product which was made into Linen at the mills across the North of Ireland. I am still using the sheets made for us as Wedding presents from my mother in 1964.

St. Patrick's Day 1947

The winter had been extremely cold, snow drifts and icy roads meant that riding the horses was difficult, but that memorable day was the first Point-to-point to be held after the war at Strabane on the border with Donegal. My Mother was determined to get fit to ride in the Members race as by then she was a member of the Strabane Hunt. She walked her horse Clover up and down through the snow drifts as there was no way one could get into a gallop. My Father, only newly back from being a soldier, had far too much to do with the farm, so his horse Mantis was not as fit. They both went in for the members race and my mother came 1st and my father 3rd! Great excitement by us girls especially when a man was heard to remark to Daddy while leaning on the rails “you know, your wife is a better man than you”.

Foreign travel 1947

We were sent abroad to learn different languages and I went to France to the De Varreu family who lived not far from Paris at St Germain en Leye, Seine et Ouse. Madame De Varreu had done an exchange with Mummy's youngest sister Sheila Monckton, so it was carrying on a tradition and our outgrown clothes and shoes were passed on to the De Varreu children of which there were six. They had suffered a great deal more than we had during the War and it being another very cold winter they had an old lady

living in their cellar. There was a very respected Priest who persuaded any householder who had room to give lodgings to an old person and feed them. I never met the old lady; she was just known as La Vielle.

Madame De Varreu took me with her when she went shopping and would have the stall holder cut an orange in half to see how thick the skin was and how juicy. She would turn the cheeses out of their boxes and test how ripe they were and told me to always buy extra so that you have enough to start the beginning of the next meal...

Philippe, the eldest who was studying for his final exams, came to stay at Beltrim to learn English and became a constant visitor as my mother lent him her 20-bore gun and he became a very good shot. He was heard to say. "I missed one" having shot five snipes out of six. Poor Philippe had to buy his own cartridges and that made him very accurate.

Some years later when Philippe was staying with us Daddy got an invitation to shoot geese on the Downpatrick Marshes. I went with them. We had to be there at 5am with our waders, as it was before the Marshes were drained. There were narrow dikes to walk along and, in the half, dark wearing waders we came upon another guest Lord Wakehurst, the Governor of the North of Ireland; Daddy whispered over his shoulder "remember to curtsy" as, being the Queen's representative, one was supposed to curtsy when first meeting in the morning. Quite a difficult thing to do at the best of times without the waders, in the half dark.

Geese were still flying low over the marshes when we went in search of Philippe and found him crouched in his but with his hands over his eyes so as not to see the geese flying over his head. He had run out of cartridges.

Both Mary and Anne did exchanges with young people from France, Switzerland, Spain and Italy so there was a constant supply of young people and no chance of us becoming parochial by living in Northern Ireland.

Dyslexia: it's problems 1948

While I had a Governess, Miss Weld at Beltrim, a great deal of what I learnt was from listening, as reading was so difficult. I got fed up with reading "The Cat sat on that mat and was better at memorising". Spelling, another sore point so learning by ear was the only option. Not that my fingers were any good at all.

For three years I was taught by the long-suffering Miss Weld and was sent down to the village school to do Algebra and Geometry with other children in and around Gortin.

The best bit of it was meeting the other children and as the little ones were too small to walk the three miles to Glen Macaffer where there was a Catholic school, so we got to know each other at the Gortin National School which was Protestant.

Miss Weld was a Saint and read to us many lovely books but after three years she went to my mother and said, "Prue is unteachable".

I was sent with my sisters Mary and Anne to North Foreland Lodge in Hampshire. A school run by Miss Fenella Gammell who was a cousin of my mothers'. The Gam! A wonderful person who would say to me at every moment that I was not in a lesson "Prue go into the library and read". Eventually at about age 13 I think I could read.

To get to school at North Foreland Lodge in Hampshire England we would leave Belfast docks on the Heysham ferry and hopefully have a berth on the

boat, but we would arrive in Heysham at about 5.00 a.m. and had to be ready to drag our heavy suitcases across the railway lines to get on the London train. There were porters, but with £3.00 in our pocket – which had to last until the beginning of the next term – we just lugged our cases, no doubt helped by the other girls. Once at school we would leave most of the clothes we needed there, and Matron (Francis) would go through these and mend and wash them. The girls from Ireland always had 24 hours extra holidays because of the time it took us to get to school, and the Scottish girls were always envious as some came from Skye, like the MacDonalds who still remember the injustice!

Miss Gammell, our headmistress, was a most wonderful person, and for many years later we would sing her praises as to how she coped with 80 or more girls and a staff who were less than half her stature, in our estimation. The girls largely ran the school, when a new girl arrived, she was put in charge of an older girl known as a “shepherd”, and the new girl was the “lamb”. For the first three weeks the shepherd took the blame, and all rules had to be learnt fast, there was then a “de-lambing” ceremony which terrified the new girls, but nothing much happened as I cannot even remember it. Each Form was responsible for the Form below them and so discipline was not a problem. I do remember a time when some sweets had disappeared from someone’s locker and a huge rumpus ensued as dishonesty was simply not acceptable. Small dishes of smarties were put on windowsills and places where we passed frequently, and they were counted daily until someone admitted to being the thief. I do not know if anyone actually did own up but that did not matter as we all learn the meaning of honesty!

North Foreland Lodge was known by other schools as “the little Green Housemaids” as our uniform was green frills or skirts and green jerseys. We did all the washing up (week on for a week, in rotation). Our bedrooms were

judged by Frances, The Matron as to how clean even behind the taps – I believe it was because of this strict discipline that in later life I was confident in running our home as a Wolsey Lodge, whose motto was “Your Best is only Just Good Enough”

The Best of Sport! At Beltrim 1948

On shooting days across the mountains at Beltrim, we children would beat to get the grouse to fly, but on occasions the guns were facing the wrong way and then Johnny Morris was heard to say, “It takes a lot to get the Colonel sensed into anything”. On one occasion, the bag was 44 grouse and Daddy got so excited that he asked all his more important friends to come to shoot at Beltrim, Lord Brookbrough the Prime Minister, Lord Wakehurst the Governor. were among the party and of course had to bring their sleuths with them, which meant they wanted to be near their bosses and not sent to sleep down the nursery passage – what a conundrum.

On My Return Home

My father liked to ride before breakfast to look round the cattle, and as Davidson got sick it became my job to get up early, catch William the pony and prepare him for the 7.00 am start. Breakfast was at 8.45AM so all animals had to be dealt with by then. Davidson had taught me all things to do with looking after horses from mucking them out and putting a pitchfork on the ground at the door of the box so as to roll the straw of the new bedding into a military precision finish; cleaning the tack immediately after we finished using it and dealing with feeding and watering the horses before ourselves.

When We Moved to Live at Beltrim 1948

Getting to know the local people was very much encouraged by both our parents and Mummy chaired the Mothers Union. She told us not to do what she had done while speaking in public: pulling the zip of her skirt up and down which caused the audience to wait for her skirt to descend to the floor.

Daddy had started the white fish organisation while we lived at Roddens, so proudly said he was a trade unionist!

When we moved to Beltrim in 1947 at last our grandparents from Yorkshire were able to come to stay. We had missed out on the bedtime stories but now got them to frighten us into the sleepless nights.

The Health Service was started in Great Britain and Northern Ireland so families from the South of Ireland came pouring in from the North to get the benefit of the new Health Service. Housing was in short supply, and we had several girls to help in the house no doubt partly to help out with the overcrowding. I remember admiring Mrs McCristel's family of redheads saying what beautiful children they were. "Yes" said Mother "Thirteen and three dead". We had two of the older girls working in the house and one day Mummy rang the little bell on the dining room table. Veronica put her head round the door and when asked to bring some bread brought the loaf and plonked it on the table, no bread board, no knife!

When the IRA bombs went off at the Trinamadan Bridge, the girls were terrified and jumped into bed with Mary or Anne – of course they were used to sharing a bed as there were only two rooms in the little house in Pig Lane in Gortin.

There was one time when I saw one of the girls crying into the washing up water and when I asked what was wrong was told “Mummy is having another baby”.

I think our mother tried hard to help these people and employed both protestant and catholic people to help in the house. I remember once we had people with Mary in their name. Mary Houston, Mary McKinnon, another two with Mary in their name and Mary my eldest sister. Mummy kept hens and there was also John James Patterson who came first to clean the eggs before school and came back in the evening to collect more. His mother had nine children though they were protestant. Mrs Paterson was a lifelong friend of Mollie Devlin the cook and Johnie James lived in Mollies house for many years helping round the house and garden.

Johnny Morris was the Game Keeper; he travelled round the whole Valley on his bicycle which had been issued to him by the IRA and no fox was safe. Later on, Johnny got a motorbike and IU used to ride pillion behind him to be his assistant he taught me to make little whistles out of elder sticks hollowing out the pilth in the centre and inserting a grass which with the right tension could call a sparrow hawk back to her nest and then Johnny would shoot it.

1948 Onwards. Snowdrops

Beltrim had snowdrops growing on the steep banks around the house thousands of them and picking them or pulling them was a major operation during January and February each year. We arrived to live at Beltrim in 1947 and found that the snowdrops were growing there in great profusion. They were bunched into 6p worth, a rubber band put round them and in the evening an ivy leaf added to set them off. The bunches were then placed in large bowls of water and left overnight to drink up as much as they could

take before being packed into large cardboard boxes and sent by air to Bradford and Leeds, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, London. There must have been a very good distribution there as we sent thousands, and it was all hands on. Not just any available daughter but Molly the cook and various maids were asked to pick snowdrops.

My mother was quite commercial minded and found that the money was useful not only for school fees but when I said that I wished to go to Canada so as to find out whether the stories grandfather had told us were true, I was told that I could pick snowdrops to pay for my journey to get there – the snowdrops were free I just had to pay the postage. I made £200 and the journey to get there was about £22.

Some of my local friends stood out as special Mrs Gormley who lived at Culiverhalan was one. A very good looking old lady who lived on her own in a wee one room house with a box bed and the light which hung in her window. I could see the light from my bedroom across the other side of the Valley. I got to know her as Maggie Rowe as she had red hair as a girl Ruabini, Irish for red and she was extremely good looking. One day she invited me to tea which consisted of cooked ham and the rest. I still wonder how she had got it as her house must have been about 3 miles from Gortin.

One day a very large car was seen on the road below the house. Her son had come to visit Maggie from America, a senator at the White House.

After leaving school I spent some time at home looking after the horses as Fred Davidson was not well so took on a lot of his workload. It also meant that after an early start- of catching, grooming and saddling up Daddy's horse or pony for him before his breakfast ride round the cattle. I also had my lot to count, sometimes on the other side of the valley but that would be done after breakfast. In the meantime, I would read Tolstoy, the Kon-

Tiki expedition, The Marsh Arabs by Wilfred Thesiger – I wanted to catch up and had a long way to go.

Antonio Garagees Walker came from Madrid to do an exchange with Mary, who went to stay with his family to learn Spanish. He was a very good



Mrs Gormley Maggie Rowe and her son who was a senator at the White House

football player and after joining the Gortin team put them to the top of the table!

Francheskie Colachikie did an exchange with Anne who went to stay in Florence. He was an artist and his father responsible for a lot of Artefacts in Florence which got badly damaged by flooding as they were located in cellars.

Gil Attinger came from Neuchatel in Switzerland to learn English and eventually I went to stay with his family to learn French.

I joined the Young Farmers club in Gortin where as long as one was under 25 all were welcome. It was non-Sectarian and we went to the Parochial Hall. We had an excellent teacher who came to give us lessons in public speaking and our team became first in Northern Ireland. We had one dance each year and at the end of the evening the first verse of the National Anthem was sung as it was at the end of any public function in theatres or cinemas all over Britain. That first time at the end of the social evening I must have gone home early, anyway I did not notice that Nationalists disliked this practice and said the following year that they would not come if we had to stand up for the Queen. I suggested we sing Auld Lang Signe but that would not do, they wanted the South Irish National Anthem and of course the protestants did not agree to that!



Dick and Romemary Davidson next to old dog kennel which they used as their Cubbie house

In August that year of 1958 I emigrated to Canada and left that to someone else.

Beltrim in the 1950's

Dick was looked after by Jock the Collie dog who would sit under the pram and on one occasion Dick rocked his pram so much that it tipped up and the poor child was hanging by the stripes, but Jock saved the day by barking in alarm.

Parties, parties, parties — we were young teenagers and ready to enjoy all that was fun. Walking up grouse with cousins George and John MacMillan — very few grouse but we walked for miles and so exhausted that we got a ride home with George Pentland who owned the garage in Gortin and had



George John Mary Anne 1946 Beltrim

one of the few cars. We stood on the running board and managed a lift somehow. Anne could drive and we used to go to dances at Drinagh with the McCauslands. Marcus was a lovely person who was always the life and soul of all parties: full of charm and came to a tragic end trying to bring both sides together of the political divide. He was murdered for his pains and was the first of many. It shocked us all and saddened us greatly that our greatest friend should come to such a shocking and terrible end.

Our great uncle, Jim Blakiston Houston, had started the B Specials, a police organisation well known in the North of Ireland and on these drives across the moors we would sometimes have to stop when a swinging red light warned that there was a hold up. We were always nervous that it might be the IRA but usually it was the police who would ask, "What's your name and what's your business?" Our name was well known because of great uncle Jim so then a long discussion would take place as to how we were related to such a well-known character. He had started the B specials to help the police.

Anne could not see very well, and it was quite scary driving with her. I would keep a good look out as in those days cattle would be put out on the road to eat the "long acre", and the cattle were predominately black as they were ever easier to smuggle across the Border to collect the subsidy in the North of Ireland. There were many other tails of smuggling; the keg of butter that went back and forth collecting the subsidy until the thing went rancid, or the man smuggling diamonds. He went on the train from Dublin to Belfast and at Dundalk would be taken off the train to be searched. By that time, he would be enjoying his pint of Guinness at the bar and tell the barman he would return later to finish it. The diamonds were left in the Guinness to be collected later once the search was completed!

We also were not above going down to Dublin and buying material for dresses to be made up by Gil especially when I was preparing to be taken by Mummy to be presented at Court and attending parties and dances in order to meet other young people.

My mother took a flat in Onslow Gardens and sent out invitations to other girls of my age, the daughters of my mother's friends from Yorkshire, Verena Dawney and Virginia Callie, whose mother had seven daughters and no son to inherit the Barronsay. The last time

Lady Callie was expecting she had twin daughters, and my mother had Dick, still the friendship remained.



Dick aged 2 Tory 6

The Onslow Gardens flat was not large and one time we had invited twenty girls to come for lunch. We had a delightful Argentinian girl staying at Beltrim who had been asked to come with a fresh salmon to feed us all and we tried to make mayonnaise — oh dear! Three times it curdled as Mummy had always relied on Molly the cook and only when Hydie Sauverion turned up with the salmon luckily, she knew how to make mayonnaise and did it in a minute. What a relief! We all sat on the floor to enjoy the feast!

I went to a big charity party, Queen Charlotte's Ball at Grosvenor House where for a no doubt large price, we were expected to curtsy low to a cake. All the girls who were “coming out” wore white dresses and mine had swan

feathers around the bodice and some sweeping down the skirt, no doubt lovely. I was also taken to Buckingham Palace to be presented at Court with lots of other girls of my age. The thing I remember most was that my shoes were so uncomfortable that I removed them under a table and then found it difficult to retrieve them and put them back on!

I did get invitations to go to other girls' balls or dances and one memorable one was at Petworth for Caroline and Melissa Windham Quin. We dined with Mrs Sydney Hankey in Tite Street, and I was driven down to Petworth by a young man who never spoke to me the whole way - said he could not concentrate if he talked. Fair enough, but neither did he dance with me when we got there. Mary and Anne had both been invited so I was OK. Mummy had told us to look at the pictures, but I don't think I did that either.

Elizabeth Able-Smith came to stay at Beltrim and seemed to have a huge amount of energy. I must have been busy elsewhere when Elizabeth wanted to go down to the river Owenkillew to see some of our guests fishing. Off she went on her own and returned hours later having been as far as Newton Stewart, seven miles downstream — we could hardly believe it as she seemed quite unfazed. On leaving Beltrim to return home my mother took her to put her on the train and while getting into the carriage she dropped her umbrella onto the railway line below. The station master was asked to find a solution to the problem, so the train was shunted out of the station and then returned to the platform once the offending umbrella had been retrieved!

Everyone aboard; the whistle was blown and the train proceeded to shunt out of the station. Just at that moment a mother with seven children came hurrying down the platform; the whistle was blown again so the train was backed once again into the station so that the family could join the last



1: Patrick Alexander Prue George Eart and Anne 2: Elizabeth my sister Philipe de Vareaux: Elian deJen with Dick 3: Elain deJen Elizabeth knitting 4: The eldest sister Mary got engaged to Gavin Rowan Hamilton 5: Dick was sent to Headford school 6: Me and a French girl Elein de Jen

carriage. My mother asked the station master, “Does this happen often?” “Well”, he said, “that woman has to go a long way, she has to go to Armagh”. My friend Elizabeth was catching the boat to England!

Whilst staying at Beltrim Elizabeth had tried to persuade me to travel round Ireland with a gypsy caravan. We talked about it happily, but I was never enthusiastic and thought I did not equal her enthusiasm. It never happened thank goodness.

One day we were together in London and

Elizabeth said, “must go to see granny — please stay in the car, I won't be long”. Granny was the Duchess of Connaught living in an apartment at Kensington Palace.

1952-53

Mummy had about 200 hens and the eggs were specially bred for Chunky Chicks. These were birds which put on weight very quickly so at six weeks were ready for the table. Mummy could pluck a hen in 3 minutes.

Anne was put on a tractor in the Home, a big flat field with a set of harrows behind to flatten out the Plough to prepare for sowing. At lunch time someone went down to ask Anne if she did not want lunch “Yes but how do I turn the tractor off?”

Gil Geunot stayed with us for ten years originally to look after my little brother Dick. She was an amazing seamstress and had made me some beautiful dresses with material we had bought in Dublin. One made of hand painted silk which was lovely and a white evening dress with swan’s feathers cascading down the skirt to be worn at the Presentation “Queen Charlotte's Ball”. I was also taken to Buckingham Palace to be presented at court, an uncomfortable experience as my beautiful Court shoes were too tight and on removing them under the tablecloth found it difficult to put them on again.



Bridget Pat MacSwiggan outside her house at Glen Macoffa



Nichol Attinger

My Life in Switzerland. 1953

We had a wonderful month with the Gascon family and after I left school seven years later, I returned to Neuchâtel and stayed with their cousins the Attinger family who also lived in the town of Neuchâtel so that I could attend the University to learn French.

The Attinger family, with whom I stayed when I next went to Neuchatel, were also delightful and very clever. Pierre Attinger was a printer and “the best in Europe” at that time. The photos of Neuchatel in the books he printed I still have, and years later he reproduced the Shah of Persia’s collection of rugs, and I have a copy of this given to me by his granddaughter Valerie, who stayed with us at Mounteagle.

When Valerie first arrived to stay, she said she needed a job, so I asked her to help turn sheets sides to middle – she was doing it inch by inch and I was not aware that she had been preparing the prints for the Shah of Persia rugs book. Madame Attinger was a very kind person and talented in many ways. She made gloves of leather and string between the fingers. I still have a crocheted wrap and once had a waistcoat crocheted by her. She also taught herself Arabic when her husband Pierre was doing the Shah’s book, which was written in both Arabic and English. Claude, their eldest daughter, was

an interpreter in English, French and Arabic for the United Nations in Geneva, I think.

The term started in October and after the first few days I had the courage to ask the professor whether I might be allowed to go with the other members of the family to pick grapes. The vendage was late that year owing to bad weather and some of the grapes had mould on them, but it did not worry us. The girls did the picking into buckets and the boys came up behind us with large baskets strapped to their backs into which we emptied our buckets. The boys were known as the “brondier” and because we started in the vineyard at 7.15 AM they did not shave. When looking for any bunch of grapes that we might have missed, if they found one, we had to pay for it with a kiss. That was not so bad to begin with but as the week progressed their beards got prickly and that was not so nice!

We had a lot of fun at the end of each day while the grapes were being pressed and sampling the unfermented juice being squished from the press. It certainly had a good deal of alcoholic content and Miriam the other girl lodging with the Attingers got very merry! We would sing songs, and it did my French no end of good.

I joined the association of Christian Students which was run by a Lutheran Priest M. Boreal and we met in a cellar every Wednesday to eat our sandwiches and make decisions about Christianity or listen to classical music. It was very stimulating and very good to meet likeminded people as well as being good for my French. A week’s skiing was organised by M. Boreal, which I looked forward to.

I was very spoiled by so many people while in Neuchatel the Gascon family were very good to me, especially Pipo who took me to the theatre frequently and paid for my tickets up in the cheap seats. He had a special seat near the orchestra as his back had been damaged when he had Polio as a child. He

would say “your French is improving; I could hear you laughing at the jokes”.

Another day Pipo took me in his car to see over the wall of the outdoor prison. There was a farm on the other side of the wall and if we stood on the dashboard of the car, we could see teams of oxen ploughing the fields. What a great idea as the prisoners were having a good, fulfilling life with no way of escape, the oxen being too slow to gallop! The lake of Neuchâtel was very long and froze over in winter when the dear devil Pipo would enjoy a terrifying sport of sailing on ice skates in the dark. I asked him how he managed not to break the ice and go under, but his reply was that he could hear the waves breaking at the edge of the ice and turn round.

Angel Quadrory, who was a friend of Gil Geunot taught me dressmaking in the afternoons after being at the university during the mornings and Verginy Grosenbacher, my mother’s old governess lived not far away, and we would talk about the family.

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth 2nd 1953

My Mothers youngest sister Sheila Monckton and her husband Uncle Regie invited me to join them to watch from seats in The Mall. We had to be there very early and eventually had a wonderful view of all the carriages with so many heads of state from around the world. It was a wonderful experience, and I especially remember the Queen of Tonga who was a very large lady sharing a carriage with Haile Selassie from Ethiopia who was very small.

The Moncktons took me with their son Alan to see the Silver Vaults in the Tower of London which was a very privileged thing to do but the best part of it was the small tray for early morning tea set ready for Lady Howe, the wife of the Governor of the Tower.

Olympic Hopes at Stockholm 1956

Daddy said that I must go to learn how to ride properly and sent me to Joe Dudgeon's Riding School outside Dublin. I stayed with Miss Fitzgerald as a paying guest and there met Mime Magee and Nancy Patterson from California USA. They had come to learn how to ride in a European saddle and were good fun. They were about 24 so quite a lot more experienced of life than I and as Miss Fitzgerald was very mean about hot water for baths, the two older girls taught me to drink hot rum in the bath so as to get some inner warmth at the same time. I think they went to bed wearing their Jodhpurs under their night gear. Mr MacMasters was in charge of teaching us how to ride and as soon as he heard my name, he said he was going to give me a hard time as my Great Uncle Jack had given him when he was Commandant at the Equitation school, Weedon and Inspector of Cavalry. I was made to ride round that arena with no strips for what seemed like hours on end until I got "down in the saddle." Oh, dear was I not sore, and I think I ended up in tears, but for all that he was a good Sargeant and did a good job.

I had already had a lot of training from Fred Davidson in Stable Management so when asked to help look after two horses for The Honi



Riding school Dublin

John Brooke who had been selected to try for the British Olympics to be held in Helsinki in 1956, I agreed as at the time I was at a dressmaking school which I hated.

John and Rosemary Brooke were lovely people. She was Rosemary Chichester and had been at North Foreland Lodge School with Mary, my eldest sister, so it was through Mary that I got the job.

We were based at the Royal Stables at Ascot thanks to the Queen.

That job was the best thing I ever did as I had had a very privileged background and benefited hugely from working with the tapestry of different people who made up the team of riders and grooms.

I was extremely lucky to have been lent a little Ford Motor car by Mimi Magee whom I had met when at Dugon's riding school so was able to take about seven of my fellow grooms to Slough where Slim Whitman was singing western songs. We had a great evening and still managed to be up at 6am to strap the horses and feed them before our bosses arrived to ride.

The living quarters at the stables were very basic and to have a bath the stove had to be lit and stoked with one's hands where apron smoke poured out of its belly and soot settled on the water so that to get out of the bath one had to scrape the soot aside and jump out before being coated once again.

My aunt, Buster Hughes Young, lived at the Red House, Englefield Green, which was not far away, and as I had been lent a car by Mimi Magee, I was well off and took my towel to have a bath there.

It was an early start at the stables, 6.00 am to "strap" the horses I had to look after as John rode November's Eve and Rosemary rode quite a mad

filly whose name I have forgotten. She was fine in the box but quite spooked on coming out of the loose box and when being ridden. Rosemary told me not to ride her, but I did once in Windsor Park where she went straight for a low branch of one of those enormous old oak trees and pulled me off. I never rode her again and when she got back eventually to Coalbrooke in Co Fermanagh she stood in a river and would not come out- her groom said she committed suicide. Poor thing – it was probably caused by a tumour on the brain.

November's Eve, on the other hand, was lovely to work with but sadly went lame and I was told to take her to Newmarket, where she was put on “the box” – a form of healing - but this did not work and eventually we returned to Ireland together.

The horse box in which we were transported to Newmarket was an enormous Lambourne and seemingly quite a bit beyond the means of the little man who drove it, and indeed owned it. I asked him how he had acquired such an expensive box, and he told me that he had started life in a Moscow Circus. Like all circus people he travelled from place to place, and no doubt picked up tricks. At one time he was asked to swap two similar horses before a race, “not difficult as they were both chestnuts and had white blazes”, and a lot of money had been made on the winning horse – I think it made headline news.

Two of the other horses at the Olympic trials were memorable – Craven A was in the next-door horse box. She was owned by Pat Smythe and had originally come from a milk float in Belfast. The continual “hammer, hammer, hammer” on the hard high roads had made her legs in good condition for the jumping arena, and she could stand the hours of training.

The other noteworthy horse was a remount from the German army called Foxhunter. Owned by Lt Colonel Llewelyn. He had a German groom who

was very amused when I produced a half-bottle of poteen, illicit Irish whiskey, which had been given to me by Johnny Morris. He put some into a spoon and put a match to it, whereupon it exploded.

Sadly, the whole experience of trying to get November's Eve into the British Olympic team was useless as she went lame and was still lame after expert treatment from vets at Newmarket, the top racing stables.

I was asked to accompany the two horses home to Northern Ireland. We went by train in a horsebox with a small compartment for me in the front where I could sit or sleep. I woke up in Crewe in a maze of railway lines and no-one in sight. At last, at about 4.00 am in the morning I saw someone walking with a lantern swinging in his hand and called to ask if I was to be left there all night. He was from Poland, and kind, and took me to the bothy where other railwaymen were having a cup of tea. At last, one engine driver said he would take me on to Heysham to catch the boat to Belfast. It was quite an uneventful journey until we got to Morecambe Bay in Lancashire where we stopped for another cup of tea, and I thought I would try my luck in the engine. My father had once said to me "Prue, you would try anything, even driving a train" so I thought this was my chance. Sadly, the station master turned up and said "back to your place Miss" so my only chance to prove my father right was lost.

Home again, Home again, gileged gig ! 1957

Daddy's regiment the 11th Hussars also came to Omagh for a spell, and we got to know some of them quite well but when it came to Hunting, they thought that they got better sport in the South of Ireland, so we hardly saw them. The best Cavalry regiment were the 15th 19th Hussars from the North of England, they were great fun and luckily for us were allowed to spend quite a lot of their free time Hunting, Shooting and Fishing at Beltrim.

We had a Dance at Beltrim to celebrate 21st and 18th Birthdays and that helped to get to know some of the young officers.

Gil Geunot transformed the cellar into a nightclub. I was helping her, and she would say “Sapin, Holly, Sapin, Holly” , nailing them to the rafters above, so that the caller was transformed into a forest. We had a memorable party and danced till dawn.

The Dublin Horse show took place at Ballsbridge in Dublin during the first week of August every year. We stayed in the Anchor Hotel and danced every night at the Hunt Balls held at the large Hotels. Returning back at 4am we would see the green post vans drawn by two horses starting on their rounds. One early morning while we were leaving to go home, we saw a small boy selling newspapers, he had no shoes and a large number of unsold papers. I was with Ion Montgomery who bought the lot and sent the wee boy home.

Another dance we went to was at Howth Castle overlooking Dublin Bay; it belonged to the Gaisford-St Lawrence family and Christopher, their son, had asked us to attend. It was the most beautiful setting of any party I had been to. I will never forget watching the sun rising over the sea from the battlements of the Castle while a pipe band played below. The pipers were all dressed in white kilts.

August 1958

The best and most adventurous way of getting to Canada was by Cargo Boat and because of the family connections with the Clyde Shipping Company my parents knew Sir Walter Edmondson of the Head Line – the Clyde SC shipping company boats were only coasters and did not cross the Atlantic.

We were booked to go on the Roanagh Head to Dalhousie to pick up paper for the Irish Independent.

I left Beltrim with Winny Devlin who had a sister in Montreal. We were feeling numb with sleep after Elizabeth, my younger sister, coming out dance. We felt as if we were just leaving home for a weekend as we travelled to Dublin by train and got on the Roanagh Head to be met by Nemonie Loring who was also bent on a bit of fun across the water.

I had met Nemonie at the Governor's School of Cooking in Mount Street Mayfair. She was the daughter of one of the Queens doctors and very artistic



1 My sister Anne with Lucky the dog

– we had to make and ice a Christmas Cake for an end of term exam and having made my cake and put on the beautiful white icing I asked Nemonie to do some illustrations on top to make it more interesting – she iced on a man playing a flute under a street lamp and the thinking it still looked somewhat dull she iced a terrier lifting its leg against the lamp post! We almost got the sack but being the end of term, we were forgiven.

Nemonie arrived at the docks in Dublin wearing a fisherman's jersey down to the knees of her jeans and waving a long cigarette holder with a cigarette on the end. A totally attractive Bohemian and so different to Winny Devlin who had never been away from Gortin, Co. Tyrone. I thought the two would never get on, but after a few days they did.

We were met by Captain Black who told us that supper was at 6:30 after which he took us to the cinema in Dublin as we were not sailing until the morrow.

Our ten days on the Roanagh Head were entertaining and spoiling. Only 12 passengers as were the norm with cargo ships as otherwise they were obliged to carry a ship's doctor. We had the best cabin which had a bathroom with a bath where hot and cold water but had added sea water which was a luxury.

We sat at the captain's table and found he had a good sense of humour. Feeling very prim the first evening when he asked us what our favourite fruit would be if on a desert island. My answer was "Oh I think an apple a day" whereupon his reply was "I like a date with a peach" and kicked me under the table making us laugh and breaking the ice of wondering how we would manage ten days of travelling across the Atlantic with this old bachelor! Nemonie noticed that the names on the lifeboats needed painting and soon had the Bosson looking out paint and brushes for her. I found a listing for passenger Mr. Shinder who had written and illustrated books about the schooners on the Great Lakes in Canada.

The captain told me to go up to the bridge to get my first lesson in steering. Great fun only that I was left for 10 minutes by myself and made rather a wiggledly course. A school of porpoises has just passed us. I wished they would come alongside.

The Atlantic is like a lake today and yet we were nearly thrown out of our bunks on the last night. Down in the hold, up to the crow's nest or spending time at the bridge talking to the other passengers and generally enjoying being on board a 10000-tonne ship. We went to have a drink with the navigator, tall, dark and handsome, the other officers were there to bring along their tooth mugs for us as they drank out of tins. As the radar is not working and visibility was only a few hundred yards, we had to practically stop for a few hours.

It finished up a wonderful week. We were looked after so well by Captain Black, playing scrabble with him each evening in his cabin, listening to the stories and creasing ourselves laughing at his everlasting jokes.

One day we saw an enormous iceberg. Captain went very close to it so that we could take photographs. It became very cold. By then we were nearing Canada via the Belle Isle straits where we saw whales spouting.



Mimi Magee a Wonderful Friend 1959

Mimi had lent me her Ford car when she returned to the States and said to give it back to Bob McCreary, her cousin, for his “quick getaways!” Bob’s brother, Dick McCreary, had won the Grand National and was rather bad-tempered as he was always dieting in order to try and keep his weight down as a jockey. They were the grandsons of General McCreary, who had three

daughters, Helen, Lettice and Lucy, and were known as Hell Let Loose! when Daddy was serving in Cairo.

Mimi bought the antlers of an ancient Irish elk from Sir Shane Leslie at Glasslock, Co Monaghan. They were enormously long, and she bought a long-base Land Rover and put them on the roof to ship back to the USA – she said they would be presented to a museum.

Mimi had created mosaics to cover the side of a building (possibly the airport) in San Jose, south of San Francisco. We drove past it when staying with her in her aunt's apartment in San Francisco in 1959 – it was an amazing creation.

Montreal, PQ Canada April 6th, 1959

The last day of a 7 month stay and meeting a great many very kind people. Went to tea with Barbara Kemp at the Victoria Hospital – she worked there as Administrator, and during my stay with the Dawes at Cedar Avenue, Barbara had been very kind in taking me skiing in the Laurentian mountains, and having me to stay at her tiny farmhouse, which was very basic and memorable as the last thing at night one had to prepare for the last visit to the outside “dunny” by getting dressed up on a reindeer jacket, which went down as far as the loo seat so one did not freeze to death.

Barbara was a true country lover, and our skiing was never on piste but rather through the trees, perhaps following the tracks of a snowshoe rabbit. In the autumn we had gone to the local farmer and helped milk his cows, and as a thank you he gave us some sweetcorn straight from the field and we had run all the way back to the cottage to boil them for our supper, and they were sweet and juicy!

Barbara's parents were extremely kind to many of us expats – Mr Kemp was English, and he and his wife held an open house on Sunday evenings for young British people who were returning from skiing tired but very hungry. Barbara did the cooking while Mr Kemp plied us with margaritas, a very intoxicating drink which went straight to the head after a long day in the open air. Dinner seemed to take ages as we were always so hungry. It was always the same – a huge pan of scrambled eggs stirred very slowly and carefully in a figure of eight and cooked in an enormous frying pan. More people might arrive until maybe a dozen of us would sit down to devour this long-awaited feast, followed by delicious fruit cake. In return for this kindness, I was asked to organise a rota for manning the charity shop in the Victoria Hospital at weekend, and as I got to know people it was fairly easy to second them for a couple of hours at a weekend, also good for organisation and persuasive skills. We also went and had a drink with Miss Harrison, who had us to stay as paying guests when Naomi Loring and I first came off the Roonagh Head, the ship we had sailed in from Dublin in August.

Highlights. Montreal

We spent several days walking the streets looking for work and even went to the Job Centre downtown which was somewhat frightening as the area was run down and mostly French speaking.

My sister Anne had read me a book called “London After Dark” in which there was a description of girls being inoculated with something that made one of them faint and then the person who had inflicted the problem suggesting he should help as his friend had a car and could take the unconscious girl to the Hospital – never to be seen again – the white slave trade. The book had made a real impact on me as the Job Centre was on the upper floor of that rather rundown area and my companions would talk

with loud English accents. I was sure the only other person in the lift - a shallow black fellow would no doubt take advantage. Nothing happened: we descended again to the pavement with no incident and no jobs.

My mother's cousin Mrs Sydney Dawes rang up to ask Nemonie and I down to stay at Murra Bay on the St. Lawrence where she and her husband Sydney Dawes had a summer house. On arrival I recognized Elspeth Dawes as she made me think of my granny ... Betty (Brydges) who of course was a half-sister though I did not know that at the time. Their daughter Joan Borne had a house next door and was married to Johnny Borne. They had two children Johnny and Elspeth.

To entertain us the Dowes asked various people to meet us, Brian Buchanan was a relation of two sisters I knew from Omagh and Rory MacDonald was another of the people whom Aunt Elspeth had been asked "to be kind to".



As time approached towards Christmas we were paired up with Brian and Rory to make up a party for the St. Andrews Ball in Montreal.

We were taken to the Frantrack hotel in Quebec to see an exhibition of Audubon pictures of birds which was most remarkable. Sydney Dawes was the curator of a Gallery which specialised in Canadian paintings and their houses at Murray Bay and at Cider Avenue in Montreal

were crammed with pictures of Canadian artists.

My Grandmother Betty Brydges JP OBE was a lovely person. She not only gave me my first trowel and hand fork for gardening but also was a great beekeeper and when she lived in Yorkshire became known as the Queen Bee of the North! That was an influence which I admired and wished to emulate.

My grandfather Henry Gervas Stobart married Betty Brydges on 19 April 1897 and a family of six was brought up in Durham and North Yorkshire. They seemed to live in various houses: Beedale Hall, Pepper Aden, Thornton, The Old Hall, Scarborag where some of them and the children were encouraged to run around the chimney pots to stimulate good balance. My mother was the fifth child Lettice Arden born in 1905 and married in July 1931 to Capt. John Blakiston Houston of Roddens Co: Down and Finlaystone Renfrewshire.

Even in his later years grandfather Stobart went shooting grouse at Beltrim and because he was old and frail he lay on his back to shoot. I don't remember whether he got any but then there were very few grouse anyway.

Toronto April 9th, 1959

I first met Jane Friedberger at Beltrim in about 1957. She was a friend of my elder sister Anne and had come to stay for ten days. It was quite usual for someone to stay for that length of time if they had come any distance. Time to fall out with them and then renew friendships.

Jane and I just hit it off. She was very religious, and I was also very drawn to her for her sincerity. We were both going to Canada at the same time and decided to meet up and travel to the States together and on down to Mexico.



Jane and Brian Bassett with JOB

The five months staying with the Dawes had been wonderful. They had been so kind, and Aunt Elspeth had given us many introductions for our further travels. My Aunt Marion MacMillan had also given us several introductions and one was to Sir Neil and Lady Ritchey

who had us to lunch at the Toronto Yacht Club where they introduced us to Brian Basset who had an aeroplane and took us to Boston.

Jane had been in Toronto for several months and had a lot of friends: Heather Burns was one and we had been invited to have dinner with her parents when we reached Boston. I went to the cinema with Heather and before the film started there was always a newsreel. We saw her friend Kate Worsley getting married to the Duke of Kent. I still remember her astonishment as she had shared a flat/apartment with Kate and said she knew nothing of the romance.

I went with a group of friends to the Toronto Art Gallery where Barry Farnham's Tintoretto was hanging while the Torontonians tried to collect enough money to buy it. Funds were for Barry's wedding. Barry Farnham had just come to Beltrim some years before from County Cavan with Simon Maxwell, his brother. Barry had gone fishing in the Owen Kellow and



Gascon family

caught, I think, two salmon having never fished before. He threw the rod down and said, "That's too easy, I'm not doing that again!" I met him again about forty years later and asked if he had ever fished again and he said, "No!"

The Gascon family had a paint factory and Pipo also supported a hospital in the old part

of Neuchâtel, where he eventually died in the 1960's. One of his helpers were ringing wild birds that came to his bird table, with a trap door that shut when he saw a bird with a ring on, or indeed without a ring so that he could duly ring it. In this way he could track the migratory birds and see their movements. Pipo would lie down on a chaise lounge in his sitting room and pull a string to release the trap door.

1948 or thereabout was when my mother sent Mary and I to Switzerland with Josie Gascon, who had come to look after Patience Victoria, my youngest sister. My mother had had a Swiss governess, Virginia, with whom she had kept in touch, and so had been responsible for Raymond coming to teach Mary and Anne on the last ferry to cross the Irish Sea in 1939. War intervened but the Swiss connection was strong so when Josie wanted to go home for Christmas Mary, and I went with her. Our Sunday best was our saffron kilts, which were hung on bodices so as to be able to let them down

as we grew taller, and I remember spending the night in a hotel in Paris where we were definitely different and stared at by the other guests. Christmas with the Gascon family in their chalet on the mountain behind Neuchatel was very special and was truly traditional down to the carving knife and fork used for cutting up the meat for Christmas dinner. There were three children in the family – Rene, the eldest, who became Professor of Natural History at the University of Neuchatel, then Josie who was outgoing and fun and eventually married someone with whom they ran a children's home, though they never had a family of their own, and then Pipo who was considerably disabled having had polio, I think, and died quite young. Pipo was my friend and took me to see the roe deer jumping down over a big boulder in the forest, having told me to stand in a place below in order to watch this remarkable performance of a one-man drive, aided by his cocker spaniel. Pipo was really good to me when I returned to stay with the Attainge family some years later. He would take me to the theatre and buy me a seat in "The Gods". He had a special chair because of his disabilities down next to the orchestra and after the performance would say 'your French is improving, I heard you laughing at the jokes'. One day Pipo said he had a friend who could read handwriting, and he wanted me to write something in French so as his friend could read my writing – I did so with some difficulty as although my speaking French had improved, I had no confidence in writing either French or English. A while later, Pipo told me that his friend had said that I was very like my mother. He did not know my mother, nor had he ever met me, but as the years pass, I am frequently told how like my mother I am.

CANADA /USA/MEXICO TRIP DIARY

Monday April 6th, 1959

The last day of a wonderful seven month stay and meeting a great many very kind people.

Spent most of the day packing enough clothes for 6 months into a suitcase I could carry, also the thought of going from the bitter cold to the great heat of summer in the Southern States and Mexico, and back again to the cold of evenings in the Rocky Mountains.

Went to have tea with Barbara Kemp in the hospital, a drink with Mrs Harrison and another at the Ritz with Donald McGreager, dinner at home with uncle Sidney Aunt Elspeth and Prue Fife. Journey first started in Toronto. Going round the world in search of a husband - she found him in Hong Kong.

Tuesday April 7th, 1959

Could hardly carry my bags, too many clothes and too much good living with the Ches Dawes; I had to send some back. Talked to Heather Burnes for a long time we are going to dinner with her parents in Boston. Went downtown for lunch with Jane ficed and up about our bus tickets and visit to Mexico. Got my hair done and went with Mrs W C Douglas to the African Ballet. Most amusing and a great many broad hints about the Girls wearing brassiere which they were doing because of the puritan outlook of Ontario.

April 8 Toronto Ontario. Weather: warm

I spent most of the morning chatting with Heather. Angela Piper (from Kent) came by, and we had a nice conversation. We visited the Toronto Art

Gallery, where Barry Farnham's picture by Tintoretto was on display while the locals were trying to raise funds to purchase it—apparently, the funds are for his wedding!

Afterward, I had lunch with Angela and made my way back via the museum, where I saw a fascinating collection of stones and other exhibits. I spent the evening with Jane, trying to decide what I could do without in terms of luggage. Mollie Armstrong, who also lives in the apartment, went to see the



Brian Bassett and his Cessna

African Ballet with Tim Renton. Meanwhile, Rufus the dog returned from the vet smelling lovely after an anti-suma bath.

April 9th Thursday. 50 Walmer Road Toronto

Started the day late, as usual here, and picked up tonic water for the party we were hosting tonight. Went out to lunch with Sir Neil and Lady Ritchy at the Yacht Club, where Brian Bassett was also invited. He seemed very nice and owns a private aeroplane. We spent much of the time talking about family and friends. I also wrote to Phillips de V. and Barbara Kemp.

We had a fantastic party in the evening, with an all-English crowd. Henry Montgomery, Brian Bassett, and David Spicer attended, as well as the Ranhems, the Pipers, Rosemary and Christopher Taylor Young, Peter Stormolth Darling, and Oliver Foxpill. Eva Walbott, who is Hungarian and a cousin of Jean Mosie Winklène, was very nice and invited me to visit them the next time I'm here.

Friday April 10th Toronto

Brian Bassett invited me to lunch at the Winston to meet Alex Rankin, whom I hadn't met before. I had met Sue just last night. We had an excellent lunch, and then Brian offered us a free trip to Boston in his plane tomorrow morning. I had already planned to visit Henry Montgowie and go riding, so there was great excitement as we rearranged everything for the flight over Niagara—far more thrilling than taking the bus!

Later, I visited Molly at the Imperial Oil Building, which has a stunning view from the top. In the evening, Tim Renton hosted a cocktail party, and I met Peter Stormolth Darling and Oliver Foxpill. Afterward, I went out to dinner

with Henry Montgowrie at his charming little house, where we made scrambled eggs and had a wonderful time.

Saturday April 11, Toronto to Albany

Jane (Friedbuger) and I started on our way to Boston from the Toronto Iskernel airport in Brian's plain Cessna 180 J.O.B. We had a terrific send off by Tim Renton who drove us down with Mollie Heather Roesse Patterson and Peter Darling. Most thrilling trip stopped at Watertown just in the USA, because of bad weather then Syracuse and ended in Albany N.Y. where Brian took us to the Sheraton, the best hotel here watching television having eaten an enormous and excellent dinner, feel really rather tight. (seem to continually be cauling Brian, Henry). Tired, but feel I just have to keep awake in case I miss something out of life!

April 12th Sunday Albany NY Wouster Mass Boston-Marblehead

A beautiful day started us off for another 30 minutes flight at 7500 feet. Flew over the Hudson River. So sad when Brian at last left us at Waterston airport and flew off to Northampton. We took a Greyhound bus to Boston and being the only passengers got dropped at YWCA - Rang Mrs Burns who we were to dine with. Heathers sister Judy took us for a drive round Marblehead where there are an amazing amount of beautiful houses from 1629 onward lots of exciting stories of the clipper days and slave trade. The Burns were delightful, and we ate an excellent dinner in the modern and lovely house on the edge of a bird sanctuary.

Boston April 13th. Beautiful, warm and sunny.

We went out to see Harvard university, which is very lovely. Also, the library and collection of a glass flower escepiken which was made by a father and son, quite wonderful. Mr Burns met us and took us for a conducted tour round Boston. Just fascinating, very old, then lunch at “Jimmies”. A fish from a restaurant – delicious food and very picturesque.

Collett Flynn asked us to have a drink – turned out for dinner as well, a very old-fashioned house in Joy Street, charmingly Victorian and every photo was some or other European princess who she knew. I was horribly ill, possibly because of the fish at “Jimmys”.

We both truly enjoyed Boston.

April 14th Tuesday. Boston-Providence-New York. Lovely weather.

Collett Flynn showed us around the Museum of Fine Arts where she works. Lovely things in it, especially the rooms of different ages and epochs. We had lunch in the garden and ate submarine sandwiches – enormous and succulent. Took a bus to New York via Providence – some lovely country, enormous turnpikes and lots of toll gates. Met by second cousin Frieddy Pease who took Jane to her house and brought me onto 107 Waverly PI in Branoge village – apparently rather bohemian. Met a delightful Colombian who teaches dancing Federica MacMaster. His great grandfather came from Scotland. Jean is just dear. We all went on to have a drink after an excellent dinner. Hilarious laughter!

April 15 Wednesday. New York. Rather too warm, beautiful weather!

Wrote letters until 11:00 went and met Jane at the Frick Collection, amazed at the number of beautiful things. Had lunch in the Metropolis Museum watching the fountains and tried to look at the paintings but was too tired. Went and met Spring in Central Park. Walked down 5th avenue and collected tickets for my Fair Lady tomorrow. Saw the Stubean glass exhibition. Jane came back with us as we were being taken to the Radio City Music Hall. Dinner here. The Music Hall was terrific, rather a poor film with it – then on to the Stork club for a drink and feeling rather merry drove home in the white Oldsmobile convertible with the roof down. Broadway at night.

April 16th Thursday. New York. Lovely and warm.

I rang Pat Millar whom I met with Biddy K at the Dublin show. She shows people around the stock exchange so we went on a conducted tour with her. She asked us to go to the Theatre tomorrow night, having seen whilst we took a trip in a boat to the Statue of Liberty and then went round the United Nations building which is beautiful and amazingly decorated mostly by Scandinavian countries.

We had dinner with Annie Steinert who I had met at Dublin and had introduced us to Collett Flynn. Uncle Sydney had got us two tickets for “My Fair Lady” which was a marvellous thing in N.Y. Jane had seen it twice in London but liked it much better here and I just loved every moment of it even though I knew the music so well.

April 17th 1959. New York.

The Empire State building was one first effort, staying there for ages writing postcards to lots of friends. It is 123? Feet high but as high as Mulagha mountain near Gortin above the sea. Had lunch with Roana Coomr who had been living with Diana Child in London. Bought a hat and a bag. Went to Pat Millan's apartment, she took us to dinner at the Trader Vic's and on Rashomon, a wonderful Japanese play, then snooped around Times square looking at all the side shows.

The 666 room was where we ended drinking Champagne cocktails. It was a wonderful evening, and Pat is a terrifically kind person.

Jane met me here with a suitcase and we went to meet Joan Hunter at Henry St Settlement at the better end of the island. Went round it, mostly puertoricans live there and nigros plus a few jews. Fascinating and made the other half of N.Y. come alive to us. We took a train to Greenage, Connelecut, where Joan had asked us to stay the night with her family. Her father runs the mission settlement or something. We went to a party given by some delightful people called Baker who live in a very modern house. The food was delicious. Then back to the end of a progressive party at the Hunters. All church or mission people but surprisingly gay.

Sunday. Greenage. Connecticut and Long Island, N.Y.

Started early to Loatonse Valley Oyster Bay where Bruce Reed was preaching a sermon to some of rich and apparently God seeking people who had paid his way to come from England to help them. It was a lovely little church and good sermon. We went on to have lunch at Elenor Whitney's. Beautiful house, pictures of Grace Kelly's wedding, love to Elenor on home etc. Whitney Atwood was Jane's friend as to why we were there. We went

to see a baseball game (children's) at Meg Antonny's house. Jane stayed with Peggy Taliaferro for the night as she wanted to see Bruce Joan drive me back to N.Y. Federica MacMaster took me to Regina, an American opera based on the play "The Little Foxes". Had drinks at Trader Vic's with Freddy and Jean Pease.

Monday 20th April 1959. New York – Philadelphia P.A. Rain in A.M. Spring everywhere.

It took me most of the morning to get organised, pack, etc. I went and bought a car coat at Klines with Jean who just loves shopping.

We took a bus to Philadelphia to stay with George and Francies Bernard – he was stationed at Beltrim during the war and we spent a delightful evening looking at photos of Beltrim Mummy and Daddy etc. which they had taken last spring while visiting. Also, lots taken 17 years ago when he was at Beltrim, one of rams tied in front of Mr. Develin's house on a fair day in Gortin.

The fish in Owenkilwee and lots of other photos of Ireland. It all made me feel so funny seeing them. Mrs Bernard knew Joan Born! Joan is the daughter of Sidney and Elspeth Dawes, with whom I had spent the last 5 months in Montreal.

Tuesday 21st April. 11 State Road Gladwyne Pennsylvania. Beautiful weather.

Francies Bernard had a day of sightseeing. Planned for us and Mrs Page came with us. We went first to visit Volky Forge, the winter encampment of Washington 1777, very interesting and lovely as it is a national park with places of interest preserved and mapped planes and forests alike and old

English print. We had lunch at Longwood motel and then went to the Longwood gardens kept by the DuPont family and for public pleasure miles of greenhouses full of azaleas orchids roses and such things as banana trees. Miles of walks with fountains and waves of spring flowers. We went to see Mr and Mrs Kurtz who showed us slides of Mexico. They lent us a book about it. To Return.

Wednesday 22nd

Our excursion today took us into Philadelphia plus Mrs Knight and Mrs Leiche. We went to lots of historical things such as Independence Hall – saw the Liberty Bell. The first or second Bank in the U.S. Betzy Ross house who made the first flag – Carpenter’s Hall and Elfreths alley which is just lovely also the Philadelphia Museum where we only had time to look at the Pen: Dutch furniture and costumes (Grace Kelly wedding dress). We had lunch at the Barclay Hotel where there was a fashion show. Back to tea with Jane Wittlesay Mr. Barnards sister and met her two daughters Jullie and Ruth, also Jane Fersler. We had a lovely evening. Lester Lanin records all the time, must take some home.

Thursday 23rd April. Washington D.C. Weather: overcast

Left Philadelphia early and headed by bus to Washington. The Iliffs who I am staying with live right amongst all the embassies on Mars Avenue in a lovely little house. He is the Vice Chairman of the World Bank. Jane was staying in Georgetown (Chelsea). Tiger skins on the walls, Japanese art and the occasional mask! A very nice person who keeps a shop.

We spent the afternoon at Dunvegan Oaks which is the Museum of Byzantine art and has a lovely garden. The Iliffs had a dinner party – all Bank people old, but most amusing – suggestions of going to the Marrilon

Hunt Cup or a Rolls-Royce rally with a friend of Moscow Stamps. Guy and Mrs Martin suggested the Hunt as they were going.

Friday 24th April. Washington, 2444 Mars Avenue. Very hot at 80 deg.

Jane made letter writing first thing and then we went to the Capitol where during the conducted tour we met Mr Nixon – the Senate was in session which was fascinating and we were very impressed with the whole thing. The National gallery came next, we spent four hours, Jane taught me a great deal on Italian art.

Exhausted, arrived home in time to change for cocktail party at the Canadians which we left early to go and have a drink with Mase Stamp as he had Martin Mays-Smith, the owner of the Rolls-Royce there – took rather a poor view of him at first but seemed to bring me round to saying I would go with him and Russel Carver and Martin and more came back for dinner.

Saturday 25th April. Washington D.C. to Natural Bridge Virginia. Very hot.

Started at 5.30 am in this lovely car with Martin May-Smyth and Russell Carver. Drove through the beautiful country of Virginia to the Natural Bridge in the Blue Mountains the Rally amounted to some sixteen old models of Rolls-Royce and we spent some hours inspecting bodywork and engines! Then a mystery tour up the mountains to a lovely river. Evening entertainment consisted of a cocktail party, dinner, slides (all Rolls-Royce) and then two parties with some other people. The Thomas Craven's were very nice. Martin and Russell were so nice to me, lots of teasing going on and never stopped laughing. It really was the most enjoyable day.

Sunday 26th April 1959. Natural Bridge Virginia. Lovely and hot weather.

We got up at a very leisurely hour and went to have a swim before leaving. There was a hot swimming pool, lots of ducking and a beautiful, fresh feeling afterwards. We came back over the Blue Ridge drive right on top of the mountain after we got through the park which must be at least 80 miles long. Got back at 7.30 and Mrs Iliff asked both Martin and Russell back for dinner. Tory the dog had a combing by Martin while we did washing up – but jokes were less and less forthcoming as the evening drew to a close and I think we were all truly sorry that the weekend had finished. Certainly, I was, we laughed so much, and they both teased me.

Monday 27th April 1959. Washington D.C., Richmond V.A. Very hot and damp overcast weather.

Jane has stayed at a school overnight having been with Bruce Reed. Got back about 10.00 so I went round to the shop which is kept by Mrs. Lee Smith. All Mexican things and we gained some addresses in Mot city. Went and had a not very happy time with Martin M.S. for lunch. That man gets in my hair. Then the archives The Declaration of Independence. Too exhausted so went back to pack. Came onto Richmond where we saw restaurants for coloured people. Terrible to have to make a conscious effort as to where one is allowed to go and remember what colour one's skin is. Staying at an ancient YW with battered looking inhabitants.

Tuesday April 28th. Williamsburg, Virginia. Clouds and Thunder.

Starting early from Richmond. We went by bus to Williamsburg which is completely 18 century and taught me a great deal about American history Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry all week so much more. The governor's palace, the Rasley Tavern Bruton church and many other places such as masses of shops and taverns were to be seen. The craftsmen and guilds all dress in the costume of the day. It was founded in 1690, but with time had been to all appearances lost until 1929 when the prior priest of that time and Mr. Rockefeller got together and restored it. We even were given a lift by the "Chief Geolen" in his car to the scene of the mustering of the Merliskin on the green in front of the armoury. Here he Trudged off to get his gun (musket) and with the other men and boys of the village all in equally gay clothes the Merliskers were marched up and down to the beating of drums by the sergeant, the local blacksmith. We had lunch at a tavern.

Aunt Elspeth had rung the YWCA while we were out, so I rang her and she told me to ring the Bartons who lived in Richmond as she had informed Mrs Barton of our existence. They have a house in Marry Bay where I stayed with Sidney and Elspeth Dawes when first arriving in Quebec.

Wednesday. Richmond, Virginia. Very warm

We rang Mrs Barton who very kindly asked us to stay the night even though she was full of Garden Club activities. She told us what we should see in Richmond - we went to the Capitol, Confederate Museum, Valentine Museum, St. Paul's church, learned a lot about Robert Edward Lee and President Davis who lived there. The Bartons had a lovely house about 5 miles from the centre of Richmond yet quite in the country, lots of lovely books, delicious food, his father fought in the Civil War which made it come

very much alive for us. There were three black servants who incidentally owned their own cars and had their petrol paid for.

Thursday 30th April. Richmond – Lexington Va. Beautifully hot.

We spent the morning drinking Coca-Cola like real American girls. Also driving round with Mrs Barton seeing the most attractive suburbs. Took the Greyhound bus at Richmond for Lexington, a lovely drive the best bit in the mountains. We booked a room at Lexington and went off to see the Natural Bridge which we hadn't seen because of the price being \$1.20 (on Sun Last) . It is certainly a beautiful and impressive thing, but we did not like the way all the music performances were done. We went back to Lexington and stayed at a good house belonging to Mrs Reese, nice old girl.

Friday May 1st Place Lexington VA - Louisville Kentucky. Weather Foggy - and bright

We had decided to try and make it to the Kentucky Derby so it started at 4:50 AM. for Charleston W.va. There was fog which was a great pity because the mountains are beautiful. Hantington was nice in Ohio. Then Ashton arrived in Lexington and rang Harriet Korfhage who Russell Carver had given me the name of. This was because a very nice Professor on the bus had told us Louisville was a Hopeless bet on the eve of Derby Day. Harriet told us to come and stay! So we went on through the Bluegrass Country (unfortunately dark) and arrived in Louisville to find very hospitable people to welcome us for the race meeting.

**Saturday May 2nd 1959. Place Louisville. Weather 94 deg.
Very hot.**

The Korfhages took us to the Derby. That is Harriet and her mother (a remarkable person having had eleven children, and varicose veins). There were 9 races all told and started at 11:30 some people arrived at 8.00 to get in a good position. We had a lovely place next to the rails where the fountain garden surrounding the finish was. Beautiful horses in all the races Tommy Lee won The Derby and was decked in flowers. The excitement was really intense.

The Cause had to be seen to be behind - the two towers overlooking the 100,000 people dressed in there very gayest colours... hats were being sold to keep the very hot sun from burning; and cold drinks - the race course was also made even more gay by stands of souvenir sellers who sold feathers on hats and fluffy witty dolls on sticks among other gay odds and ends. People were really sweltering in the heat. Many men had no shirts on and people lay on the grass regardless of the milling crowd, some playing dice or cards while waiting for the next race.

We were given tickets to go round to the Club house by someone we met from the Press. Here people were obviously rather more uncomfortable, men wearing Jackets, and girls in very high heels. The flowers were beautiful and the stand was bigger than I have ever seen before.

**Sunday May 3rd 1959. Louisville Kentucky. Weather again
very hot.**

We had waffles for breakfast and talked about Harriet's Trip to Alaska, Russell going round the world trip and all eleven Korfhage children and their children.

Harriet took us for a ride in the car to see the banks of the Ohio river, Horse farms and the Gold Vault at Fort Knox. There is beginning to be a marked segregation between blacks and whites.

Got on the bus for Memphis that evening but missed seeing any more of Kentucky. We have missed it all on account of time and having to travel at night.

Monday 4th May 1959. Tennessee, Mississippi & New Orleans LA. Weather 87° but nice & cool on the bus. We travelled all night leaving Kentucky and I woke up in Jackson Tennessee. The horse country had disappeared and mules were everywhere. Also, the grass had been replaced by shoots of young Cotton plants. a somewhat poorer land stacks everywhere and coloured people very prominent. Even the scarecrows had black faces. Mississippi is full of cotton fields. It must be lovely in the fall when being picked. I had a bit of an argument with a white couple as they said I had broken the law sitting next a black man on the bus as no one else would sit with them and rather stood. I am afraid I got in a rage but cooled down enough to talk about her grandchildren before she got off. Everyone on the bus talked a lot more today and in telling an old Couple in front of us that I came from Ireland we got an invitation to stay the night by a man who had an Irish wife, Charles Churchevell. His wife, his Child and his home are all really hospitable, delightful and completely relaxed.

Louisiana is the most incredible state. Tropical looking, swamp, thick undergrowth palm leaves and bind weed making it dense. Storks at the roadside and apparently Alligators and snakes, though we saw none. New Orleans looks Spanish rather than French.

Tuesday, Metairie New Orleans. Weather Very Hot.

When we had finished an excellent night's sleep we went to New Orleans with Charles who showed us around the Vieux Carre in the car telling us a few of the things to see. It was fascinating. We got a guide with a car to take us round telling the history and showing us where Pirates, Slaves and Creole used to live and their habits. We went to the Cemetery where people are buried above the ground because of the flooding of "Old Man River", a house - The oldest in N.O. where pirates would meet in The Cellar. Another which has been a monastery for over 200 years where Louis XV sent young girls to N.O... to marry the townsmen.

The oldest Pharmacy in the USA and here in the Patio we sat and wrote letters being kept cool by waving banana leaves. The flowers were lovely. We went into a great many patio's one, finding ourselves in a garden with a lawn and sweet peas. A man with a long beard told us we could pick some. Another was wonderful as all the old slave quarters were turned into studios richly decorated walls and doors with pictures. We met The Churchwells at 5.00 and picked up Charlina. They took us to a fabulous beach to bathe. It was dark and the water was about 68 deg. quite lovely and great fun. We came back and ate watermelon.

Wednesday May 6th. New Orleans LA into Texas.

We started again on the watermelons sitting in the garden at 8.00 sunning ourselves. Charles came and collected us, taking us into New Orleans and leaving us at the Bus station. We spent the few hours before the bus left going round more Patios writing letters and P.C. and having lunch in a Frenchie restaurant. We left. at 3.45 for St Antonio on our way to Mexico City. The first part to Baton Rouge was mostly sugar cane and rarely rather thick big Oak trees with Spanish moss still hanging from each branch and

oleander flowers everywhere, also cascades of roses. The country got rather flatter as we got towards the Texas border.

Thursday May 7th. Texas, North Mexico

We stopped at Houston for about 10 minutes, enough time to write a P.C To Daddy Telling him that I had actually made "the Pilgrimage". San Antonio at 7 am where we changed buses and went straight on to Laredo on the Texas Mexican border.

Texas was surprisingly green, very flat and one could permanently see for miles. Lots of cattle herefords, mostly we saw some oil pumps working which were not very big. Spent an amusing time on the border. Everyone already spoke Spanish - we had a disgusting Mexican lunch and then spent most of the afternoon in a park square under the palm trees and listening to the very strange birds.

We took a direct bus to Mexico City but even though we started at the right time it took us a good hour to get through the Customs having our fingerprints taken was minor to what the Customs men had to do in looking through all the numerous enormous paper bags belonging to our Mexican companions. As soon as we crossed the Rio Grande the country became extremely arid: small Trees and little scrub grass. I hardly remember the journey though. It is apparently interesting we had a stop in a little village that was very poor. An old blind man in a large sombrero played a guitar with his back against a tree and little barefooted and very dirty boys ran around trying to sell gum. We had a cup of coffee finding the word Negro difficult to say after being in Luisiana.

Friday 8th May 1959. Mexico, Mexico City.

Certainly, that northern country is very poor, miles of flatland with very stunted bushes which in time give way to cactus. The Nopales which are grown for the juice made into a drink.

The houses were at first miles apart, if one could call them houses - mere dwellings the occasional cow told of people who generally seemed to be sitting for no specific purpose on the road side.

Later on, the mountains came into view and we began to see oxen drawing ploughs of the most primitive sort. Also, occasionally black skinny goats and donkeys cruelly tethered so even when standing only on three legs. Swine with long black hair on them. The people looked very poor, their houses low and of sun-baked bricks, we went through one dead village with only half a dozen houses where people were still living. The Church battered and worn and a graveyard some distance from the dilapidated was. The only sign of life were the yellow flowers on the cactus plants. Then in other villages were men lunged in doorways, large hats shading the sun from their Mongolian shaped eyes. The women come carrying baskets to market and all even the youngest little girls with large black head scarfs and bare feet. We arrived at Las Amigos in a city which seemed totally unaware of the poverty so few miles to its North.

Patrick Triton working at the British Chamber of Commerce was not in the telephone book so we went round to see him. I met him at Cambridge two years ago when he told me he was going to the Argentine - he went there but, on the way, stayed a week in Mexico and never got any further. He has been here for 18 months. Russell Carver told me he was here.

We went and had dinner with him. Went out to dinner with other people staying here - they are from Ontic College in Ohio. We hope to see them on Thursday at the village where they are studying.

Saturday 9 May. Mexico City D.F.

Two of the American boys from Los Amigos took us down to see the Aztec Archaeology and took us to the Museum. They had to go back to their village so they left us to learn about the Aztec Mayans and other Indian civilizations which made up the Mexican people before Cortes arrived in 1521 with his 400 men and 16 horses to conquer the whole of Mexico. We also saw the Cathedral built on the site of the Aztec temple by Cortes. It took 800 years to Complete and is now already in a precarious state because of earthquakes. We went to tea with Mrs Manice, sister of Mrs Kurtz. We met with the Bernards at Cledwin; he took us round Coyoacar out to a new village built on lava and the university.

Sunday 10 May. Xochimilco. Weather fine with thunder Claps in PM.

After a great deal of painful Arguing with a taxi driver we got on the bus to Xochimilco. A young boy asked us if we wanted help in finding the bus and from then on appointed himself our personal guide. It was 17 miles and cost 75 cents. About 6 days of a gay journey overflowing with gay people celebrating Mother's Day.

We went to the Canals, which are numerous and were transferred to a boat bedecked with flowers which had an Indian poleman. Hundreds of other boats flocked the waters, mostly Indian Mexican families but the occasional boat load of pale Americans festooned with cameras. water peddlars eager to sell us masses of beautiful scarves, rugs, jewellery, wood carvings, flowers,

food & drink. The odd boat-load full of musicians in large sombreros, their music mingling with the Mass which was in continual session from the bank. Our guide friend found us sitting in the shade with some Indian women and took us off to the market. where people cooked, ate, slept and breast-fed their Children all in the street; children trying to sell cooked fish or clay toys, women making maze flat cakes, roasting corn and even pork where masses of dogs seem to be enjoying odd bones. The church was full of old frescos and abundant with people - even here mothers fed their babies. A crowded bus brought us back to Mexico.

**Monday 11 May 1959. Teotihuacán (The Pyramids).
Weather Sunny, thunderclaps in the evening.**

We set off for Teotihuacan in an already crowded bus filled with very Smelly people and masses of people got on and off trying to sell sweets, ices and even cooked food for the first five miles. We went through very poor parts: masses of people on the bus with no room for the men who went on the roof hanging on behind - everyone gives the impression of going somewhere. One village we went through was just like crowds of colourful people calling to each other paper sellers shouting the news and the one or two in the crowd buying it if they knew how to read. Two Lieutenants of the Army who were sitting in the seat behind started trying to practise the English and we thought we had seen the last of them at Teotihuacan village and the barracks but they turned up at the Pyramids soon after us in a car and joined us to take us round all there was to see - we climbed to the top taking our photographs. The small Mexican came on with "say cheese" when pressing the trigger.

We saw the Pyramids of The Sun and the moon and the temple of Quetzalcoatl (The plumed serpent) and lots of old frescoes. We saw the natural caves. By this Time Raoul and Essillia were taking us in their car



which saved us from the hot sun. They then took us to see a friend of theirs in a real colonial house a Spaniard, Louis Foje we learned he speaks French which was better than the very little understanding that we had with our Mexican friends - the Patio was beautiful a pond with an island Spanish moss hanging from the trees - a well with Clear water (other than for The Asses jaw bone at the bottom Very nice) at a stone table sat with some Americans one of which turned out to be our host - Duddley Gunn.

We sat drinking Rum and Pepsi Cola. The American, even after 21 years still unable to speak Spanish, always spoke to us in French. Our two friends, unable to speak anything but Spanish were kept informed of the Conversation by Louis. Keath, a young Italian, who seemed to be staying spoke English and Jane and I we felt nearly off the map in that garden - about 5.00 we were asked to have Lunch so stayed and eat black bean soup

with fried bread fried kidneys onions omelette- tortilla & potato Cakes finishing with watermelon. Louis wore an Emerald Green Jacket and looked as a picture of the Spanish Colonial as he held the plate of omelette. The most picturesque and amusing day yet spent, Duddley had to go back to town to see the Belgian Ambassador about some Tapestries he was giving to Mexico, so we went with them all in a taxi all the way hearing about Duddley's life. The most amusing and eventful he has done a great deal for Mexico. I find he knows Mimi!

Tuesday 12. Mexico City

Going to Tex, US tomorrow and tickets for going North Thursday. Everything like that takes ages here as the clocks are apt to be playing a game of dice at the same time as writing a ticket. We went out to lunch with Mr Bannister, an uncle of Robin Celton. The house was at Vella Obregon, the old village South of the city. It is beautiful with a garden and cascades of flowers, a water lily pond and orchids on the trees of which he gave us each some plants. His son Kennett and daughter Mary were then with Chris Kinez her husband - all the children live on the campus. Mr Bannister took us round the university city before he went back to his cement factory at about 4.30, sending us to see the frescoes in the National Palace. These told the whole story of Mexico history and were interesting and very well done.

Patrick Trilton took us to the Hotel - Cassino where we met Tommy Pilkington for a drink before going onto the game of Pelota at the Fronton. Very exciting, especially the betting. Dinner afterwards at El Paseo most amazing - excellent food and conversation, mostly gossip about these left behinds in the South of Ireland. Practically impossible to realise one was in Mexico City.

Wednesday May 13th. Texas. Weather warm.

It takes four hours in the bus to get to Texas going up to about 10000 feet twice and being swept hair raising hairpin bends at tremendous speed. The great rice field turns brown and barren, cactus and scrub become magnolia and on reaching the highest-level Scotch furs with long rank grass makes it hard to remember the tropics. Cuernavaca was our only stop. Tulip trees and bougainvillea made tremendous splashes of colour. Flocks of sheep and goats, hairy pigs, donkey ponies and the occasional mule, oxen ploughed The fields. The ponies all seem to stand saddled under trees waiting for the end of the day & water.

Taxco - a village Clinging to the side of the hill, a Cathedral near the top and all the roads of painted cobblestones (sometimes arranged in mosaic) running like a rabbit winding down to the market. People sitting everywhere selling colourful wears, peppers, fruit, cloth pelts etc. Taxco is famous for its jewellery silver mines founded by Boras in the 16th century. We went round the factory where these beautiful things were made. The workers stripped to the waist: we had a little boy "Mike" with us all day. Aged about 12 and fluent in English - he must be half American, even recognised by us as being English rather. Then Americans had lunch in a lovely restaurant overlooking the Cathedral. The most charming village I have ever been in.

May 16, Thursday. Mexico City, Guanajuato. It rained a bit on the journey

Having talked long over breakfast which seemed always necessary we went out. Posted about 30 postcards and then went shopping in the village silver shops. It seemed to be cheap. A very nice pair of earrings for 15 pesos. \$1.20 bought lots of things. Got on the bus for Guanajuato with hopes of staying with the American girls who we met on arriving in Mexico. They are

studying there. Eight and a half hours by bus over rich farming land and some lovely towns where we longed to stop. We were met by four of the girls: Ethal Hutchins, Barbara Best, Carol Dian wonderfully as we did not think anyone would meet us. They took us to Bashara's Senoria's house where we were greeted by Senoria and her widowed daughter on a lovely very Spanish house patio in the centre. We talked for a little while and went off to see the Jardin Seninada. The square has a band stand and while the music plays the girls walk round the centre under the trees while the boys walk on the outside in the opposite direction. The habit being if one wants to get to know a boy just smile, - about the third time round he turns around and walks with you, every girl slings arms and men always walk in twos or threes. This event happens two or three times a week, especially Sundays, which is also market day and everyone goes to the Theatre or something. This town is charming, not a tourist anywhere and no foreigners other than the seven girls and five American boys. Ethel took us to her Senora to spend the night - an enormous house with a vast patio or rather garden and a delightful motherly Sinerja who set before us hot chocolate and cookies. We have rooms with walls in the lovely pastel colours which are so common here, mine in the red Jans green yellow and the third the room bright blue. Sinerja immediately put drops in my eyes which have caught Jane's infection and are rather painful. I have to wear dark glasses.

Sinerja speaks not a word of English. We both feel very ashamed not knowing Spanish and would really love to.

May 17 Sunday. Mexico, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona

Travelled north all night, all day seeing a herd of horses as we got further north. I bought bum brears in a village and Jane another Mexican basket. Reached the border at about 4.00 am and started again from El Paso as the sun was rising - the state was at first a great disappointment and we had to

force ourselves with regret to forget about Mexico. It was the last few miles of the road up to the flag of Arizona which did it. There were beautiful windy roads, mountains with snow on the top and pine trees. Seeing herds of hearifords and the occasional deer. We stayed in the motel next to the bus station. Very thankful for the shower.

Monday May 18th The Grand Canyon National Park.

Weather windy

We found that it was a two-day trip going down to the bottom of the Canyon on a mule so we spent our day casually studying Geology, natural life and seeing a film about two brothers who went down the Colorado river in boats, a tremendous feat. Otherwise, we sat in the sun gazing over the edge of this extraordinary abyss and talking a great deal. It was the first day for over a month that we hadn't done something special and a real relief to have a rest from our holiday!

Tuesday May 19th 1959. The Grand Canyon Arizona.

Weather Lovely, not too warm

We were in the third party of mules to leave the Carol and make our way down to the Point, from where below one can see the Colorado river taking thousand tons of silt every 24 hours. That was an amazing sight. The cactus flowers were lovely and we saw some strange vast lizards under the cotton trees before making the three-hour journey back up the mile high mountain. 7000 ft high at the top these rocks rose on each side of the river whose tanning waters split the rock as it rose out of the earth.

Wednesday 20th May Flagstaff Az. Pasadena Calif

A very dreary bus ride took us over the deserts of south Arizona, the only relief being the Colorado River. One of our bus drivers and a few of the passengers made the trip livelier. At the riverside we rang Mrs Simpson Mas Korphagis's daughter. She asked us to Come and stay with her - she has had Fenella Nicholson Angela Hurst Robin & Russell Carver Mary Delaware and a mass of other people. Her Husband Douglas is a government inspector for war weapons(?) She told us about her mother whose father was a brilliant architect and whose daughters were all brilliant - Mrs Korphage is no exception. We were very surprised as she looked just everything of a comfortable mother of eleven children.

Thursday 21st May 1959. Peradeniya Los Angeles Beverly Hills, Hollywood

We went to Knott's Berry Farm with Mrs Simpson. A farm started 50 years ago on the Devert and the selling of berries turned into a large establishment of a village of the past, run by students from the Local people. Disney Land where we went down the tropical river animals rising from each side of the bank. Storybook Land another boat ride taking us through the wind in the willows. Pinocchio, Snow White and Alice in Wonderland where one rides in tea Cups. The Matterhorn has just been raised from the ground. We were taken to see Long Beach, the Pacific first oil wells and then beautiful houses lining the banks.

May 22. Peradeniya, Beverly Hills Hollywood

We spent the morning gossiping (Mary Defemier etc.) then enjoyed ourselves highly in Bullocks where Mrs Simpson gave us lunch where we

saw a fashion show. During the afternoon we went to the Huntington Museum. Douglas, her husband, Louisa and Jamie and Dick joined us going round in a cart to see Beverly Hills and Hollywood beautiful houses.

May 23rd. Pasadena. Los Angeles-Frisco. Sunny afternoon.

We were put on the bus by Mrs Simpson and Jamey for an 8-hour ride north stopping two hours at Santa Barbara so as to see the Mission. It was lovely, we were taken round by a monk. The architecture was Spanish like the other 14 in California. The hills here are wonderful, brown and burnt but solid and look to be made of wood.

We had to wait for Mimi for one hour on the doorstep in my Sombrero, she turned up with Alfonsio and announced that there was no water in her house, so took us to aunt Jo McCreary's here we settled down in a beautiful apartment all to ourselves plus everything overlooking Frisco.

May 24 Sunday, San Francisco, The Grant Ranch. Weather superb.

Life is Heaven! We woke up to find ourselves punched over San Francisco, The whole city in the most beautiful apartment - our own patio running round the edge and the bay, the Golden bridge in the distance. Church bells were singing but our intentions were put off till tomorrow when Jane rang today that Aunt Joe at the Grant Ranch had asked us to lunch and stay the night. We were both loath to leave our beautiful new apartment plus T.V. lovely kitchen pink & white bathroom and enormous window which stretched all one wall. It was two hours to the ranch right among the hills of the SE. Ant Joe met us at the lovely white Ranch house in among the valley trees grassland and deer which were everywhere. We spent the day around the pool sunbathing. Lots of people seemed to be there. Jo, a

photographer Dr Sheldon and people called Knight. Mimi went back to work on her Moseah taking Jo and having us come tomorrow with her aunt. We went for a walk over the hill before dinner. Bob McCreary and his wife have just been here for their honeymoon. Now listening to western cowboy songs and Oklahoma we sit writing in a room full of books, orchids, pictures of horses (roping cattle, playing polo, etc.) and photos of masses of the McCreary family.



May 25 Monday. Grant Ranch, San Francisco.

It was lovely waking up at the ranch seeing the Swinging pool out of the windows and the forested and grass covered mountains beyond. We had a delicious breakfast with the Austrian butter making our toast, then drove to San Francisco with Mrs McCreary in the ranch truck. She told us of her

experiences as a sheriff over the past 24 years and other stories of her father & Grandfather when San Francisco was young and they had arrived in the Gold Rush. We had our haircuts both being extremely shaggy and spent all day in Macy's, a good cheap shop where I bought a bathing suit and pair of shorts - and Jane a dress and some slackers came back to our cosy apartment and cooked dinner.

May 26 Tuesday. 359 Green Street San Francisco. Sunny.

It was midday before we tore ourselves from our letter writing to go to Mimi's apartment. She took us in the car across the enormous and wonderful Golden Gate bridge. Her mosaics were the object of her tour and we saw a very handsome one on an airport not far from the sight of



where they were starting on the pump house of a vast project of what seems like a new tour. Mimi is designing and setting 144 mosaics being the fronts of some 12 buildings 20ft by 30ft or so. She certainly is extremely Clever. We went round the Island Belvedere where beautiful houses overlooked the lagoon and bay.

Had lunch at a restaurant where large boats lined up rather than cars. On the way back Mimi dropped us at Fisherman's wharf, we sat on some ropes beside the Coast-Guard boat in the sun and were asked in by the sailors who spent two hours amusing us and dicing us around the town. When they got off duty, we took a cable car home and then went round to Mimi's. John Magee, John Wee Knight and Alphonso came. We drank for hours prior to a delicious and exciting dinner at a Japanese restaurant sitting on the floor. The Beatrich town came to life especially where we drank coffee later two.

Wednesday May 27 1959. San Francisco.

A lovely morning, in which we took great advantage, sitting on the veranda of our lovely apartment in the hot sun with bathing suits to try and get ourselves less white. We went to meet Rose Nicholson & Kate Londen who live and work here. Jane knew Rose before and was full of gossip and very pleased to see each other. They are thinking of returning to England via Montreal and I am thinking of joining them (end of September). We came back via The White House where Jane bought a bathing suit. Came home to read aloud to Jane the *Fantastic City* by Neville.

Date Thursday May 28. Green Street, weather lovely again.

We went to early service at the Cathedral having missed Church for about three weeks while travelling, returning to the apartment for a large breakfast in the sun. Sunbathed again, reading the book about San Francisco. Edith and Gus Hemenway came for us at 12.30 to take us out to lunch. They are friends of Paddy's and also know Simon Fipps who also stayed with them when they are going to England with their six children where Guss wants to have a parish for a while. We had lunch at a lovely place called Sasileato(?) at a beautiful restaurant overlooking the bay and perched on the mountainside. We went back to the house and took two of the children to

the Japanese Gardens. Nora, Wendy, Gus, Michael, Peter and Senha were the children. They brought us back here where we spent a very pleasant evening eating supper and watching television. The evening sky is so lovely from this window.

Friday, Green Street San Francisco. Weather: beautiful.

A wonderful lazy day sitting on the veranda and Sunbathing. Jane took her hair out of pins at 3.30! When we went down to Magie's to get our photography (which they had only half of them printed) and wandered blissfully round looking at beautiful things. Jane went and had dinner with Rose Nicholson & Kate Loudan and joined me later at an opening of a Flenico restaurant with Mimi Lemonds, Ronny John Willwrite, Joe Alfonso Pardiñas and many others who were enthusiastic helpers at the opening. The place was very crowded but we had an excellent dinner and good wine, then the proprietor played the guitar quite beautifully. One of the waiters, a young Mexican joined him in the next piece who was next to take the floor but a girl Flamenco dancer then a singer (live Spanish all this) and finally a man dancing Flamenco - there was some two hours between this performance and the next but sherry & coffee kept us awake. We were introduced to the "best Bohemian in town" Charles, and (opera) singer plus beard.

Saturday May 30, San Francisco-Crescent City. Weather is lovely.

It was so very sad to leave Frisco, our beautiful apartment, Mimi and all the other funny people. Mimi & Alfonso turned up to take us to the bus and dear Mimi sent us off with presents: Jane a bracelet and I a pair of earrings. On the way to the bus, we went to see the Byzantine mosaics which Alfonso

does, it was very impressive though I like Mimi's work better. We took the road through the Redwood forests. The biggest and oldest trees in the world are enormous. The mountains and trees stretched for miles; a long road wound its way beside the river beds.

We arrived at Crescent City and spent the remainder of the night in a hotel.

Sunday May 31 - June 1st. Place Crescent City Oregon.

We woke with a lazy feeling which seemed to go with Crescent City, who seems to be a city only in name and has given up the attempt of trying to over-estimate itself. It has as many as 15 Churches and it took us all our time to find an Anglican one even without having breakfast. A long journey north past Coos bay, a beautiful road (101) winding with the contours of the many mountains which (some) has snow on the peaks and fell away into the sea below us - Grant Rock jutted straight out of the water and pierced the mist which hung some 50 feet above it, this was on account of the warm current or something anyway the sea felt about 80 degrees.

Oregon is a really beautiful state. Wild flowers are a main feature blooming by the acer rather than by the bush rhododendrons and azalea - purple vetch and the trees also oncoming out of the redwoods were incredibly like Ireland. We were travelling all night, but had about three quarters of an hour in Portland at 2am. When we had a very lively conversation with two deft and dumb men who made known such things as that Latin was a favourite Language at school and asked Jane if she spoke it! It all passed the time very quickly and we hardly started on our bus to Seattle before it started to get light. A beautiful dawn and far too excited about the possibility of seeing Mummy & Daddy. Great interest in passing the Boeing Airplane factory as one has taken a mere 9 hours and a half to come back from London to Seattle.

We were there for only three quarters of an hour before starting for Victoria on a Steamer, a lovely fast boat. The view other than the water seemed to start half way up the sky as the mountains of the Olimpia suddenly appeared over the top of the sea. We rushed through the customs and rang up aunt Lettie who told us Mummy and Daddy were there so rang them in a fit of excitement. Such a wonderful journey as this. They both came down to collect us with the Campbells (Ros & Clive) who took us back to their house, where we all were photographed by a ghastly little man for some press - we then came home to a lovely little apartment. right next door to Aunt Lettie who we went to have tea with. I did like meeting her, having been getting such things and a lovely little hanky last Christmas which she sent me.

Our already very good spirits were replenished by long bourbons at a cocktail party given by some people called Frazer who were very nice. the party seemed to consist of many relations of and lots of Frasor's plus a late arrival of a daughter & son who had been playing tennis - a most beautiful view from their window looked out on a low and beflowered garden which ran down to the water edge, many islands and those same snowy mountains of the Olimpie range were edged with sunlight on the peaks above their shirt of fog.

An early start - was the forecast for tomorrow, and my one hour of sleep the previous night was beginning to show.

Tuesday June 2nd. 1266 Newport Ave Victoria B.C.

We Shuffled into place in the apartment- slipping around each other and over Suitcases in our hurry to feel organised over bathroom and breakfast- as well as an early start. Our day was organised by Clive Campbell to go and see Mr. Wellbern at an enormous logging camp near Duncan.

We drove up past Cowecagon Bay, very lovely, resembling a Norwegian fjord. At Dearborn their house both Mr & Mrs Wellbern took the five of us round a part of his 100 sq. miles of forestry along a very dusty road which reminded me very much of forests at home. We were shown many very interesting things plus a Douglas Fir probably the oldest in Canada and another which was probably the tallest, the oldest was a reading around 640 A.D. and was a very handsome size in King Alfred's time. The foresters were drawing and logging timber about 60 tonnes to the truck with great ease, enormous machines with hand-like ends which made the heavy work seem almost graceful. We ended by having tea with Mrs Wellbern who has a great personality both her and her husband. Having tremendous vitality, she being also a scientific gardener and he a collector of ancient-conveniences and also a famous stamp collector. We talked to a very interesting logger on the way home while he stood on a rolling log in bad water among many others.

The evening was spent reading Jane's diary to aunt Lettie, Mummy and Daddy while J showed the photographs and picture postcards. A very happy last evening of the official trip.

Wednesday, Vancouver.

We spent the morning looking at houses in the buildings learning about construction, damp courses, drainage and wall consistency. Jane was very impressed at how Mummy & Daddy work as a team. She left for Vancouver later to get a job and start savin more dollars for Calgary!

Clive took Mummy and Daddy and I to see a British Columbian forest production. They were making plywood - unrolling great tree trunks as if it was paper cutting then up even darning holes where huets happen. The all-weather proof glue and pressing all done by

the most fascinating enormous machines. Cutting boards was done in another branch and they used all the bash for fuel. We went to dinner at a Chinese restaurant eating an enormous meal and went back to read some of this little book to aunt Betty. She is such a nice person and just loves hearing all the most fussy pieces of our trip.

Thursday 5 June. Very wet.

An unattractive morning of wet weather. We spent most of it in the Co Pilot looking at the archives which are very interesting, then after lunch at home we went with Clive to see Mrs Wooward, head of the Safeway Stores who has a herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle. A lovely lot and one very nice yearling bull. Daddy was, and has been rather silenced in his thoughts of promoting sales from Mother Ireland as they seem to have such a good stock here but was interested in the Machinery. We went for a drink with Mrs Crabtree & her husband. They had an eleven-year-old daughter Diana. Very nice, an enormous pile of food followed so we could hardly sleep on our way up to Nanaimo. We called in at a carnival night - the person who ran it came from Belfast and she showed us all round.

We went to see Dr Tully who is an expert on fisheries and the effect chemicals from the industry has on them. This time the interest was centred around the possibility of a paper mill in Southern Rhodesia - no hope, because of polluting the water with sulphur but he suggested piping the chips to the coast - in our case at least 500 miles through Portuguese East Africa. Dr Tully was very interesting. Our last evening was spent with Clive & Ras who gave yet another party for us with all the people we had met. The Frasers, the Scots and the Crabtrees. Clive showed some slides he had taken of British Columbia.

Saturday June 6th 1959. Victoria to Vancouver B.C. Quite nice weather.

Was quite early when we were hustled into two cars to be taken to the Airport. Aunt Letty came and Lucky the dog with Douglas. A twenty-minute flight took us to Vancouver where Philip Percival met us, taking us to our hotel "The Angelions" and then onto his and Irene's one room apartment in west Vancouver.

We had a Sandwich lunch here and were later taken out for a lovely drive sight up the Fraser Valley to where Philip hoped to buy some land. We went home along the US border and met Jane for supper. She has already got a job as secretary and a room for me. Went to our first drive-in Cinema, The Pajama Game.

Sunday 7th June. Vancouver B.C.

We all Philip Irine Jane Mummy Daddy and I went off to the Airport for Mummy and Daddy departure home. A very sad moment, it was so lovely having them here. They fly via Edmonton.

Philip & Irine took us to see some friends of theirs Pauline and Ted who live in a split-level home. We came back to the hotel and packed up my luggage. Bring it to suite 7 1260 Bankly where Jane and J are staying wilt Gill Atkns and Jill Moor. Went out to tea with Minia Stephens and at last met Aksemond Crockslarh who has done the same trip as us three weeks ahead. So nice seeing them again, we went to Evensong and back to meet our hostesses plus boyfriends.

Monday 8th June, Vancouver

It was lovely to stay in bed till about 11 am. Penny Moor Jill's sister who looks after horses was here for her day off. I had lunch with Ian Campbell in "the Bay" and took yet more photos to be developed.

After supper Jill and Penny's uncle arrived for the evening. Harry Wilson also Sam, her boyfriend and a cousin Denice Fairwollen. Rodger was also here as he eats with the girls. We went to see Sam's motor boat, which he had made. Denice took me in his car and then took me on to see the sunken gardens on the little mountain, in a thunderstorm.

Tuesday June 9th 1959. 1260 Berkley Street

Went shopping in the Hudson's Bay Company and had lunch there where I met John Young and a friend Vincent, an artist. John had been to San Francisco with a friend and was now job hunting - they had both been selling soap and were tired of it. Went and had tea with Philip. I had rung a friend of Aunt Elspeth's, Mrs Rodgers who asked me to dinner. An excellent one cooked by a Chinese man. Her niece Bonny took me round Stanley Park in her aunt's car and back to drink coffee and talk to lots of mutual friends. They asked us for the weekend but Jane had already arranged sowing with Gills.

Wednesday June 10. Vancouver, British Columbia

I went over to the Spanish bank to see Denice. It is a quiet country and very nice being the sea - he is a life saver. Spent some time in the Public Library learning about the Indians. Jane and I both went out to dinner with Philip and Treane - a very good meal and they took us for a lovely drive later around west Vancouver where there are beautiful homes, as far along the

coast as Horseshoe bay and up along the new road cut out of the mountain, a beautiful drive ending with going to the bottom of the chair lift on Grouse mountain and drinking cups of coffee with overlooking Vancouver below, reflected in The Bay.

Thursday June 11. 1260 Barkly Street

I made the big decision and booked my passage home on the Harmeric the Home Line taking on October 5 arriving Southampton October 11. Had lunch with Ian who is in good form and came home early to cook supper. There were just the five of us. Gill, Albin, Jane & I went out to coffee with Merign Malermson who I had known at Katinka years ago. Maryan was also there, talking a great deal and Jane Creag who is extremely amusing. We had a high old time living up our past & everyone else's!

Friday June 12. Vancouver, British Columbia. Weather: damp

Got a lot of letters written before going out and having Lunch with Philip Percival and then went quite mad and bought a dress to work at Emerald and a Cashmere Cardigan-no regrets! A few people came in after supper Alisemond Cruickshank, John Youvel, John Van Oss, Colin Cuts, Menyn Malcomson. We played bridge and Vinyl-El-un, drank coffee & talked a great deal. Six of us are going up Grouse Mountain tomorrow.

Saturday 13 June, Vancouver. Weather: Cloudy, rain.

Scrubbed the floors in this apartment and had a lovely time Collecting quantities of dust. Jane and I went to see Minna Stephens who had been sick for a week with flu and then went up Grouse Mountain with Gill

Atkins, Rodger, Jane, George Adams, Ros Frazer and his girlfriend Elizabeth. There's a beautiful log house where Redger has a room during winter for Skiing. It overlooks Vancouver. We saw two bears. Had an excellent dinner and danced. The best part was Coming down in the chair lift when it was dark, the snow white on the ground at the top. The pine trees slotted against the background of the lights.

Sunday 14 June. Place Vancouver - Squamish. Weather Cloudy

Jane & I went to Church in the Cathedral. A very nice service with an excellent sermon. Colin Greig, an old boyfriend of Jill, asked me to go for a drive to Squamish. We set off not quite knowing what to say to each other but got better as the day went on. We saw a river of green water and an enormous waterfall all in a beautiful forested country with the snow-capped mountains behind. Colin took me to see some friends of his who lived in West Vancouver's British Properties. We saw HMS Olympia taking her last voyage before being broken up. Went home and played bridge till we could see no more.

Date June 15, Monday. Vancouver. Journey to Field

Very sunny morning trying to fit my clothes and all the acquired lot into my suitcase. And having received yet another invitation to go driving with Colin. Went with Jill and Penny More for a drive round the University. Very nice but not at all impressive. Had tea and lots of talk with John Young who is still out of a job.

Jane was dreadfully tired after a horrid day with her disagreeable boss but we felt better after a drink at the Ritz with Philip and Irene and I stood them

dinner at Henrie's where we ate as much as we could before I got on the C.P.R. Train for Field and Emerald Lake.

June 16, Tuesday. North Bend, Kamloops, Field. Sunny all day.

A most beautiful trip up to the Field I hardly went to sleep at all for looking at it. It was a desperately arid country before reaching Kamloops and sprinklers were working, but the further East the more trees deciduous as well as fur. The enormous Fraser River was left behind at Albert Canyon. The Columbia River took over the frenzied rush until we went through Kicking Horse pass. When arriving at Field we saw three Grabs grazing and were quite tame. The road to the Hotel was overrun by bulldozers. There were five of us by this time and we arrived to find a beautiful green lake or Turquoise. Everyone seems really nice. I have a room to myself and am able to unpack completely for the first time in two months. Barney Jenk, a friend of John Barton, is very kind to me.

June 17 1959. Emerald Lake Chalet Field B.C. Weather: Rained all day

Breakfast at 7.30 until we start officially on the 20th, about 36 or more staff sit round three tables and as far as I can see very few people bother to make any conversation. I spent the rest of the morning with Mr. Craque having a long and perhaps overdue interview. He is nice and of a steady understanding character, but the boss Mr Chadwick is not to be tampered with - when working he is very exact and strict, changing moods in a flash from a charming smile to a short sharp shock - in fact he reminds me of the bears. Don't tempt him or one runs into difficulties.

The night clerk Ronsie Le Blanc is French speaking Canadian, a little guy and amusing we see eye to eye which became evident as he took me round the chalets in the afternoon - 44 rooms to be learnt their names, whether they have tub or showers and if they are double or single, also which way they are facing what views etc.

Bonny Jenkins Mary and Jan, the three maids are very nice, I think. Bonny Mary and I got a lift in the evening to Field with two of the painters so as to have a milkshake and see the Stragoly village a little. Later Bill Garlick, chef steward, showed slides of Rocky Mountains.

June 20. Emerald Lake. Weather beautiful

We worked very hard doing all that there was to do, receiving guests making out their bills and keeping them up to date which entails a mass of pieces of paper to be filled out at each opportunity also the news stand where we have films, sweets chocolates petite pocket objects, souvenirs china and postcards.

Friday was the same - a mess of learning and decorating the front office until after ten at night. It has taken me quite a time to get into the way of calling Mr Chadwick and Mr Argue "Sir", but it seems a good thing as they seem very nice and I might forget I was doing a job.

Saturday & Sunday June 21. Emerald Lake Chalet. Beautiful weather

We opened the doors to the Public at noon on Saturday and immediately people streamed in for lunch, to buy postcards and also to stay. Lots of work but finished about four and went round the lake. It is beautiful. I saw

many strange birds and some flowers, including an Elk cow, and walked over the top of the glacier.

Some people went to Summit Lake today. It is still frozen on the first day of summer. Barbie Dobson and I talked about Summer Barb for a long time on the flat rock across the lake and had the very good luck to see a moose standing in the water and coming within ten yards of us.

July 10 1959. Emerald Lake Chalet Field B.C.



Although we are cut off from the outside world to a certain extent, I find again as I did in Eastern Quebec that Canadians seem to have a wonderful ability for amusing themselves - never does one hear of someone being bored or lonely. It is naturally due to having each other but mostly to the fact that people who come here have initiative.

This evening, I came back from riding to the glacier and found the chalet where the staff live full of song. There must have been a dozen people in one of those tiny rooms making as much noise as they could. Last night they played bridge a craze which now seems to have developed in the older staff. Perhaps it is stupid of me not to want to be with these people more and also make my part of the community spirit. It is probably more selfish than anything as knowing

it's there I enjoy it without trying to help make it. Instead, I spent the evening with Tom McIvor who is looking after Johnny's horses while he is in hospital. The poor man was thrown from a horse last week spraining a few muscles and hurting his head. It was certainly a pleasant ride, to the flat pasture land at the far end of the lake where a mass of wild flowers has appeared in the last week. Then up a steep trail into the forest with an amazing drop down thousands of feet to a rushing torrent of water. We went as far as the snow line and where ground was too stoney for the horses' shoeless feet. On returning I was given a little four-year-old filly to "Jangle" the horses out to the feeding greens. I went in front and Jon came behind with the sixteen loose horses between us. And later we sat in their log cabin drinking coffee till dark. The cabin must be dreadful when it rains as there is not even moss between the logs, though the roof is good. Nowhere to wash except the burn and a stove with a good fire. The lamp and hot coffee gave the horse talk the right surroundings.

As for being a front office assistant, it has turned out that Jane now is the only girl, as Ireane Rrembrin, who was supposed to be with me, was sick and did not arrive until after they had had to get someone else. A boy called John Vincent from England who seemed very nice. He had to start right into work as Renie got ill and had to take a rest and that day I had to stay on till 8.30 by which time I was at the end of my tether and started crying for as good as no reason at all. Mr Chatwin and Mr Argue were very kind and gentle and let me stop right away - I guess thirteen hours was a bit long and I wouldn't have been any good anyway. Even the long walk did not do me any good and I only slept for about an hour the whole night.

Ronie is now better and things are also going better with me as anyway did today. I don't know why I always seem to be so concerned over myself as Mr Chatwin and Mr Argue seem to work till about 1.0 AM every night and never complain and they never get a full day's rest.

August 14 1959. Emerald Lake Chalet, Field.

It has been over a month since my last entry and my views about the people have hardly changed at all. I still get on quite well with Mr Argue but never speak to Chatwin unless I have to; for one thing he seems the stupidest man I have met and does nothing except make himself unpleasant. CPR is trying to sell this place - a pity as with a manager who could manage it it would be wonderful.

The Staff are still certainly very nice and kind -I have no particular friend but I am made welcome everywhere and the two boys I work with are extremely kind and helpful. Rène pets me and John teases me and both help me with the accounts.

One of the best things about this place is the way my friends have come to see me. The first was Hariet Korfage even before the place was open, then a family Called Witelsey who we had tea with outside Philadelphia. Jane came to stay for two days and we went. to the Calgary Stampede. We met Jill Atkins & Jill Moor there and they came back to stay for two days later that week, also Brian Bassett came for lunch with a girlfriend, but I had 250 Frenchmen to serve that day and couldn't do any talking. Livenia Wilbraham came for the night on her way home to England and today Mrs Chatman who shared an apartment with Ruth Lithger came in for a few hours. Mimi promises to come up but no sign yet.

The next best thing is the wonderful country. We have hitchhiked all-round the place getting as far as Radian Hot Springs, The Columbia Icefields and last week to Lake O'Hara perhaps the most beautiful yet. Far from the beaten track and then over a light pass of about 8000 ft. where snow lays below and trees don't grow, there were Alpine meadows, smell delicious and masses of strange animals sitting up. We saw Harie Marmet and Rock rabbits as well as innumerable goffers. If only I didn't get so very tired by

evening, I might go out by myself more but I just can't do it. In fact, I seem to be getting into the habit of crying every time I can't do anything, but I suppose I am just not made to concentrate for 9 or 10 hours at a stretch.

September 14th, Ottawa Ontario



My round trip ends tomorrow when I get back to Montreal and thirteen months since I left home. It is good to be alive and certainly life has treated me very well as well as teaching me many things, some of it I hope I never have to re-live, such as the last two week where my undecided mind had no rest weather I should stay at the Twin Falls cabin seven miles from a road and at the tree line were snow

is already thick, or come East: Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, or - anyway [...] was the easiest and for the first 30m I was still ready to fling myself in the river with depression. In fact, I was standing by the Canal wondering what to do for an hour, a week and even for my life when a Hungarian girl came and spoke to me. We have spent the last three days in each other's company and I stayed right here in this beautiful and peaceful city learning the History and enjoying the miles of parks and Gardens. We went on two tours, a boat tour and a bus tour.

On Sunday Morning I went to Holy Communion and it made such a wonderful difference I was given a special blessing for myself as well as the service.

But now I understand homesickness, Loneliness, despair, hunger and what it is to be on the last dwindling dollar.

It seems ages since I wrote the last page in a great fit of depression or perhaps having just come through it.

I spent ten days in Montreal staying once again with the Dawies who were very pleased to see me and met quite a few friends. I had a wonderful weekend at Nunkin staying with the Dunfords, sailing in a "Sabot" and canoeing which was great fun. The leaves were just beginning to turn. Barbara Kemp took me to the Lake of two mountains race meeting where we cooked ham-burgers for all hungry beings for who came along - met a great many acquaintances and a few friends but even after six months found it very hard to remember who they all were. Elizabeth Ballentine, Mog Malcorne, Kum Mekim, Tony Bagart, Sue Underwood, Happy Jackson, The Staires, The Hunters (Bob and Hope) Joan & Johnny Boarme, Dinie Appellon, Robin Walker with lots of girls up from the States and Micheal Riddle who gave me a big kiss!

September 25 Friday Mondial in RMS Saxonia Cunard Line, beautiful weather

Aunt Elspeth took me to the boat and I could not believe that I was sailing so far away. My three other send offs were Brian Buchana who had come to a dinner party given in my honour at the Ritz the night before. Donald McGregor who had been very kind, giving me meals and drinks and fiscing me up with a nice berth on the boat and dear Auntie who made my cabin

into a hot house with all the fruit and flowers that came on board even as far as Quebec.

BACK HOME

1959-60 After returning from Canada, USA etc.

Wonderful to be home and time to catch up - reading books - relaxing! My Mother took me to a meeting in Omagh where the speaker was The Revenant Arthur Morton - the head of the National Society of the prevention of Cruelty to Children. I told my Mother I want to work for that organisation.

A few weeks later when in London I went to a telephone box and rang the society for an interview. Mr Morton sent me to see the head of the League of Pity, the Junior branch of the NSPCC, a fund-raising branch of the Society. On arrival at the office, I was directed to the office of the League of Pity, the fund-raising department for younger people.

I was asked to tell a story ...any story ... well, I had done that to my sister Victoria every morning when sharing the room. In those days it was always the same one – “the three little pigs” and if I went wrong by one word Tory would correct me as she knew it by heart. Well, I got the job and went to learn about the Society with an inspector in the East End of London.

The first house we called at the inspector said “I hope you are wearing a hard hat today - the last time I came here I was nearly hit over the head with a milk bottle” – luckily the gentleman concerned was not in, but that warning stayed with me. Another warning was people trying to get money from the society – a family had come to the inspector and said that grandfather had died in Liverpool and that they needed money for the train journey to go to the funeral. Sometime later the inspector was moved to High Wycombe and the family came and asked him the same question: could they please have money to go to Liverpool to bury their father. Because of the uniform they did not recognize the inspector as being the same person from whom they had asked for money before. A tall story not to be repeated.

I also accompanied a woman to see a family of nine Children. The eldest girl was making Jam having got the rest of the family ready for School. The father was a milkman so away early. The woman visitor called quite early to see that they were OK!

Southern Rhodesia 1961

The first time Daddy took me with him to Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) we had a lovely time staying with some of the subalterns he had had in the Southern Rhodesian Armoured Car Regiment, which he had started during the war – being on the old side to serve in the 2nd World War the 11th Hussars had told him to go to Kenya and get some NCOs to start a regiment in Rhodesia.

Daddy had been friendly with Charles and William Hanmer, who together had accrued about 90,000 acres along the Gairezi River, known as Gairezi Ranch (private) Limited. It ran along the eastern borders of Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa, Mozambique. The Hanmer brothers had split the operation – Charles had Troutbeck to the north and William had the Gairezi Ranch to the south and east, which was 9,000 feet high where they had built a two-storey house, making their own bricks. The land went down to 3,000 feet where the agricultural district had crops such as maize and eventually avocado and castor oil plants. There was a school for the children of the families who lived and worked on the farm, and each family had 12 cattle.

William taught the boys to swim in the river one day a week, and the girls on another day. Mrs Peggy Hanmer taught the girls how to sew with a Singer sewing machine. William always kept a box of various medicines under the front seat of his truck and would help any sick person with these. The girls loved to get their chests rubbed with Vick. The farm was 20 miles long and

there was only one dormitory at the school for the boys, so only boys could attend the school. At home, at Beltrim, we used to collect our pocket money for providing them with slates and pencils, and they were given uniforms.

The trees which grew at 9,000 ft were pine and wattle (mimosa) which had to have fire through it to germinate the seed. The teachers and boys thinned the trees instead of playing games and in exchange were given free education, though the teachers were paid.

Webster – who had an agricultural degree, looked after the agricultural district, but was sadly murdered.

The Gairezi river was such pure water that it could be put directly into a car battery. It was lovely to swim in, though not very big. We went down to Rusape where Ken Davie lived. He had been the regimental doctor for the Southern Rhodesian Armoured Car Regiment (that my Father had started during the war). He had a hospital there and his wife, who was also a medic, had four clinics. As we arrived, Ken met us with “Come here Johnny, come and look at this” – no preamble of “how do you do and did you have a nice flight?” but straight into the hospital where one of his patients was in bed sitting up on his elbow talking to his friends and relations, with a bandage covering most of his head. Ken explained that the beer party the night before had got a bit out of hand, and someone had cut his scalp open! “What could I do – I just put his brains back in and bandaged his cut – if that had been a white man he would have died of shock by now”.

We also went to stay with Dick Powell, who was a lifelong friend of my father, and they corresponded all their lives. Dick was in charge of an African reserve at Plumtree near Bulawayo on the western side of Zimbabwe. He took us down to see the fort on the Bechuanaland border and we had a guide with us who could speak to the bushmen and was indigenous to that area. The fort was just a circle of stones and trees to make

a sort of roof. Apparently, there was an old lady who had been born there and she was called Cecil John Rhodes. Her mother was pregnant when the great man stayed at the fort and said to her “Call the baby after me”, which they did! She was still living in Plumtree at the ripe old age of 90 when we visited in 1961.

The African reserve that Dick Powell was looking after had both Nkomo and Mugabe under house arrest, and Dick told us that a female journalist from The Times had come to try and interview Mugabe but luckily, he had been forewarned and sent a sergeant to take Mugabe to a distant part of the reserve. He was young and fit in those days and ran to the road where he knew the car would pass on the way to his house. As the driver passed the waving figure the journalist saw him, but the driver had been told that on no account was he to allow them to meet. This year, at last Mugabe has resigned after 37 years of horrendous rule bringing the country to its knees.

The Zebra Club 1961

My father went home and taking him to the airport was a problem as he became totally bamboozled by being in the southern hemisphere and he nearly missed the plane.

I was joined by Lavinia Bootle Wilbraham who had been travelling in South Africa, and we stayed with her sister, Mrs Losley Williams, who was living in Harare, and from there we went east through Mozambique to the coast. It was surprising to see how integrated the Portuguese were with the local people, such as sharing tables in restaurants. At the coast we stayed with a couple of friends of Lavinia's, who were expecting twins and had a large boxer puppy. We went out in a dugout canoe with the owner standing in the stern with a single long pole. Leeway was minimal when their boxer thought he was being abandoned on shore so swam out to join us. We were

very overcrowded already and there was no room for him, but he put his foot on a sea urchin and howled so hard he had to be dragged on board and the canoe nearly went under, but we reached land with about 1” of leeway.

We had decided to go up the coast by P&O boat which we found at Beria, Dar-es-Salaam. Zanzibar and Mombasa smelt wonderfully of cloves stuck in oranges, spices and colourful souqs. Lavinia was determined to buy paw paws to eat when we were in our cabins and they were delicious, a fruit new to me, and eaten with lime juice and sugar. As we journeyed up the coast, we became friendly with two of the sailors who were very happy to show us around Dar-es-Salaam, and we would never have seen half as much without these escorts. They took us to a dance which was held on a roof as all houses had flat roofs for entertainment and to catch the evening breeze. The women all wore yashmaks with only their eyes visible. We were a bit apprehensive about joining in, but it was an experience not to be forgotten.

On arriving at our destination, we decided to make our way back north-west to Nairobi by bus – that was an experience as usually white people did not travel by bus. It was a long way and inevitably we needed to go to the loo, which had to be explained to the driver, then find a suitable place and eventually he pulled up behind a yard, nothing in it except a hole in the middle and that was it! I don’t remember any white people being on the bus, but the other passengers were a colourful crowd and included a number of Masai dressed in nothing but colourful blankets, and they stood at the front of the bus. We reached Nairobi without mishap and went to stay with Derek Erskine, who had been one of my father’s officers in the Southern Rhodesian Armed Car Regiment. He was known as the Galloping Grocer as he had been a polo player and also owned a large grocery store. The Erskine’s house had been the Spanish Embassy and was palatial. I had been there before with my father and on that occasion a black girl, aged about 12, had opened the door for us and said, “I am not one of the servants, I

am Jomo Kenyatta's daughter". She was being looked after while Kenyatta was imprisoned. There was a bit of excitement going on as the Erskines had two ostriches and these had escaped into Nairobi the night before and while being chased managed to cause havoc by kicking the cars.

We were shown round the grocery store and met some of the staff, but sadly Derek could not trust the Kikuyus he employed and so running a business was very difficult.

We went on up to the North Kimankop to stay with Mervin Rae, who was related to my father in some way, and was also a lifelong friend of his. His daughter, Billy and her husband Ted Nightingale were still in the area and their children were fun to play with. We were both surprised that the children had never been into the forest, which was only about 100 metres away, but apparently it was because of the MaoMao, who were still a sore subject and a great danger. Ven Fay, who was closely connected to the family, had been very instrumental in seeking out the MaoMao with the help of a tracker, and had been so successful in tracking the infiltrators that he was honoured with a medal from the Queen. The only difficulty was they had to get him shoes to go to Buckingham Palace and he had never worn any before.

We also stayed with Ion Montgomery from Benvarden, Londonderry, who was working for the American Tobacco Co in Salisbury (Harare). He took us to the tobacco auctions, and I experienced the pulse of the auction language as I walked between the bales of tobacco behind Ion. At the end he said, "I have sold you". The sale language was so strange that unless working with it constantly no outsider could understand. Like the Stock Exchange when anyone outside the market would be totally unaware of the gist or what was happening.

Lavinia and I caught a ship aeroplane home but, on the way, had to stop and refuel at Benghazi in Liberia. As we were coming into land, we saw camels with their calves and we decided to spend the two hours stop over, while the plane was being refuelled, going to see them. We managed to get quite close but then a jeep appeared with two soldiers armed with guns who told us to get in as this was not allowed. I was quite scared. We offered the soldiers chocolates but then had to apologise for that too as I had given them liqueur chocolates forgetting they did not use alcohol – they ate them anyway!

We landed next in Rome and at last reached London – poor Lavinia had a cold and was in terrible pain on landing and departing as there was no air pressure in the plane, and she landed up in hospital with burst eardrums.

Martin Kenyon 1962

While staying in Pricilla Goode Adam's flat in Jubilee Place, Chelsea I was asked by Martin if I would like to attend The Anglo Libra Society dinner. President Tubman of Liberia was to be attending so it would be a colourful evening. Martin was paid by big firms like BP and Shell to help young people from African countries integrate into our culture and tell them “The difference between a bluebell and an asparagus, not to wear shorts at breakfast” but trousers were preferable for the landlady's sake. He had started the “Zebra Club” and one of the perks was to be invited to this most colourful dinner — would I come with him?

There was a party we attended at which I met Nick Baring, a banker. I asked him whether anyone ever entertained black people along with white and he said, “come and have dinner with us tonight”.

I had recently been to a May ball with Martin Kenyon, who had a job designed by the Zebra Club, which had been set up by Shell and BP to help foreigners integrate with Europeans. Martin had taken me to a ball at Trinity College, Cambridge, as a guest of David Rubbendarie, who was the second master of a secondary school in Nyasaland. He was allowed two years to do his 3-year course, at Cambridge thanks to Dr Banda, the prime minister of Nyasaland, who wanted David to become Minister of Education. The poor man did not want to go into politics as he wanted to remain a schoolmaster.

I accepted the invitation to dinner with Nick Baring as my father had an invitation elsewhere. The other guests were a lovely couple – he was head of Adult Education at Salisbury University, and she had been at college with David Rubbendarie's wife and knew them well. I asked if they knew what had happened since David had returned home from Cambridge and was told that sadly they had had to leave the country (Nyasaland/Malawi) due to Dr Banda's insistence on his going into politics.

Years later, when we were doing Wolsey Lodge at Mounteagle, we had Mr Ralph Hunt to stay. He was the Minister of the Interior for Australia and told us that Dr Hastings Banda was being very difficult at a Commonwealth Conference and refusing to comply with the wishes of the majority. Ralph took him aside and reminded Hastings Banda that he had been brought up on a Presbyterian Mission and asked him as one Presbyterian to another to please comply with their requests – and he did!

It was a memorable evening. The ladies were dressed in the most wonderful colourful dresses and sort of turbans on the heads, one more magnificent than the next. Mr Tubman, the President, made a speech after dinner and started off by saying that his antecedents came from Northern Ireland! I think making the barrels for beer. Interesting!

There was another Irishman at our table, a young Roman Catholic Priest who was the Vatican's representative to Liberia. He said he knew no-one in London and would I allow him to come to see me the next day.

The poor fellow arrived in Jubilee Place in a serious shower of rain with only a tropical weight suit which was soaked through. He proceeded to have a bout of malaria and was shaking so much that I got him to change into a pair of my jeans and lie down on the sofa. He was only twenty-eight but every now and again I would refer to him as "Father"!

Africa Again! 1963

My father took me with him a second time on one of his Gairezi Ranch trips. He did not make any money out of the company but charged them his airfare every two years, and Mummy kindly said that the heat of Africa made her ankles swell so she preferred to stay at home. I was lucky to be chosen to accompany my father again and though I was working for the NSPCC by then, they kindly let me go.

In Kenya we went to stay with Nancy and David Cole, whose father died while we were there, and so he inherited the title of Lord Enniskillen. They had a lovely property and though we could see no cattle the game had to be seen to be believed, especially at night when with a strong light we could see hundreds of eyes but no cattle even though we travelled 10 miles. At one place we stopped at a billabong, or dam, and a swarm of bees came past. David told us to stand quite still but if they attack you jump right in the water. In those days African killer bees were well known for their ferocity and had been known to kill people. It happened when two different species amalgamated and escaped into the wild from a testing station.

We also stayed with Miss Pam Montague Douglas Scott, who ran her farm herself. We were taken on a tour of her farm, and she was incensed by seeing some 16-year-old boys who should have been in school. On questioning them they said the teachers were not turning up, or not good enough, and they were on strike. We were impressed that Pam knew every boy's name and was determined to sort out the situation for these young Kikuyu.

We went with Nancy Cole to the Legislative Council to meet up with David and were sitting waiting for him when a very black gentle giant came and said "Mrs Cole, come and have a drink in the members bar while you are waiting for David". His name was Moe, and he had been working as a clerk in David's farm office. He soon became President Moe after Kenyatta. I saw Jomo Kenyatta that day and he had the great presence of a strong leader, waving his horse hair fly switch – I was duly impressed.

My father took me to the Muthaiga Club in Nairobi, Kenya where, by chance, we met Sir Ian and Lady Forbes-Leith – they had booked a small aeroplane to take them to the Queen Elizabeth Game Reserve in Uganda with her brother, John Barnett and his wife, but the harvest was not finished so they were unable to leave. "Would we like to go with them?" – Of course, nothing could have been better but sadly my father was not feeling well and decided to stay with his kinsman Mervin Rae, on the North Kinancop but he suggested I should go. I had never met the Forbes-Leiths before, but they were friends of my parents, especially Sir Ian with Uncle Bill Logan, as they had been at Eton together, as well as the Macmillan's as Judy had done lessons with Mary Forbes-Leith, now McGowan.

We flew to Entebbe, the capital of Uganda, in a small plane and then onto the Queen Elisabeth game reserve, where we were allocated rondavals – round straw huts with long reeds for the roof. It started to rain in true tropical fashion, and on the first evening we went in a bang/boat where we

saw lots of elephants enjoying the rain and making a lot of noise, so much so that the staff were unable to cross the causeway onto the island to cook our dinner – I thought it was funny but was duly told by a member of staff that it was not a bit funny and that elephants can be really dangerous when in that mood.

During the night I woke up to complete blackness at my windows, and then the stars appeared again, and I realised that an elephant was moving past my window and stopping to eat the leaves of the roof on my rondaval. I was pretty frightened but not so much that I put on my dressing gown and went out onto the veranda saying “shoo, shoo” to stop it being so destructive, then calling to Sir Ian that the elephants were eating the canna lilies in the garden. Sir Ian was a very tall man, about 6’9” and had a very deep voice. My high-pitched voice only just got to him, and he emerged from the next-door hut asking what I wanted. I complained about the predators, but I don’t think he believed me – until in the morning he found a very large heap of dung left by the elephant and saw the damage to the roof.

At breakfast I found the Forbes-Leiths preparing puffed wheat as a present for the ants or perhaps a handicap. They had emerged in force with the rain that had fallen and, on the way to breakfast they had prepared a steeplechase course so that when the ants were carrying the puffed wheat they could not see where they were going. The Forbes-Leiths were truly delightful and very funny, and I later watched these two very tall grown-ups playing like children with the ants, building Beecher’s Brook, the water jumps and other obstacles as if the ants were running the Grand National, with the added handicap of the puffed wheat. As this was going on, Ladyship – as Lady Forbes-Leith was called by all the family, and asked me if I knew Corbie Douglas-Menzies, and when I said I knew Jimmy but not Corbie she must have decided that we should meet. It was not long after that my parents were invited to stay with them at their home, Fyvie Castle in Aberdeenshire,

and Corbie was bidden down to meet them. He was already a good friend of their son, Andrew, who later married Jane McColl-McGowan, mother to Miranda, Louise, George and John Forbes-Leith.

New to London

My sister, Anne Hallifax, was always my great friend, supporter and mentor. It was she who read me *London After Dark* to try and prepare me for the big outside world, took me to London to school, showed me traffic lights for the first time and the Underground. One day we went to Piccadilly Circus and Anne said she would meet me in Leicester Square in half an hour. Being me, I got onto the Circle line going the wrong way, and 1.5 hours later I met up with Anne, who was understandably in a bit of a panic!

Anne was staying with Mrs Unwin when I first joined her in London. She was Sarah Unwin's mother, and a widow, and took us in as paying guests but only for 3 weeks as she was going away – I remember Anne cutting the tiny lawn with the kitchen scissors. Anne then went to stay with Anna Buxton (Myreden-Evans), and I was on the street! At 6pm I called at Lady Starkey's at 51 Onslow Gardens as she took in lodgers. She was on the telephone when I arrived but soon grasped that I had nowhere to sleep that night. As I was standing in the hall Diana Child came wafting down the stairs looking very elegant and already to go to a cocktail party – I knew Diana a little as we were the same age and had been debutants the same year. Lady Starkey asked Diana if I could share a room as her sister was away, and after agreeing to this I was in bed and asleep before she returned. Diana was lovely, my blond bombshell and a good friend. We had been to some of the same parties that year when my mother had kindly taken a flat in Onslow Gardens for “the season” so we could go to dances and other social events to meet people and finishing with Queen Charlotte's Ball, a charitable event, and then being presented at court at Buckingham Palace.

In preparation for all these social engagements a great deal of sewing was required to make enough evening dresses, cocktail dresses etc for both myself and my mother and this went on at Beltrim by Gil Geunot from Switzerland, who had come to Beltrim to look after my brother Dick, born in 1948. Gil was a wonder with her needle and taught us to help her with the clothes she made for all five of us, and also my mother. She had a Volkswagen car and once pulled the bus out of a snowdrift on the Gortin Gap on the way to Omagh. She also had a violet motor scooter and took Elizabeth to Switzerland on the back when she was only 11 years old, with Elizabeth wrapped up in a down suit strapped in between specially constructed luggage containers – but that is Elizabeth’s story. Once we had all left home Gill stayed on in Gortin as she had become great friends with Winnie Devlin, with whom I had travelled to Canada in 1958. Winnie had got a bad attack of rheumatoid arthritis and had left Canada to go to Gill’s in Switzerland to try and find a cure, but sadly was unable to do so. They had set up a sewing business together in Omagh. Gill had also made a henhouse out of scutch from the scutch mill on Paddy Clark’s land on the east end of Gortin. It was an amazing construction of wire netting packed with scutch, the fibre of flax once it had been beaten free of the fibre that was made into linen. The roof of the henhouse was thatch, and I think she had 200 hens in it. Sometimes in the evening we would help clean the eggs in Paddy Clark’s old shop and he would brew us up ta – this was a delicious brew cooked over an open turf fire on a trivet with a tin hanging from it. Paddy would put in the tea leaves and cold water with sugar and boil it up over the turf fire, once it had brewed for a while we would drink it, and he would add more cold water, tea leaves and sugar to start again. It was very stimulating!

The forge at the top end of Gortin was owned by the Hemptons where we would take the horses to get shod. I loved doing this and often helped to pull the bellows to keep the fire red hot in order to form the shoes, which

were then put on an anvil and hammered into shape and pressed into the horses' hooves so as to get the right fit. The dogs loved to chew the bits of hoof cut off the horses' hooves – I had a terrier called Paddy Hicklers, and also a red setter which was a bit mad.

Mary had done an exchange with a Spanish girl and her brother Antonio Garrigues, came to Beltrim in return. He was an exceptionally good football player, only 19, but had already played in the Madrid Royal Junior Team, and when he started playing in Gortin they went right up to the top of the table. Antonio was very attractive and played tango music on the gramophone while I was doing the ironing or sewing, and he told me I would have to turn catholic so he could marry me! Some years later I went to his home in Madrid and visited his father's office. There was a crucifix on the wall which was about 5' high, and lecterns with religious books open on them. There were ornately carved straight backed chairs around a large dining table that seemed to date from Philip II. His father had apparently had a walkout with Jackie Onassis after John Kennedy had been assassinated. We sent Andrew to stay with this family years later, and he did an exchange with Antonio Garrigues Maranda. He was an exceptional tennis player and had played at Junior Wimbledon. By that time the tennis court at Beltrim had been turned into a silage pit so we never had the indignity of being beaten by him.

Another of the families with whom we did foreign exchanges with was the DeVareaus. Phillipe was about my age and his mother had done an exchange with my mother's sister, Sheila Monckton. There were seven DeVareaus children and we used to send them shoes at the end of the war when they still had very little, and we had enough to spare. We used to cut the toes off our sandals when our feet got too big, but still they were worth sending on to the smaller DeVareaus.

My mother had a friend, Claude, who used to visit occasionally from Paris, and he would return home to France armed with masses of soap, which they could not get in France for quite a long time after the war. I went to stay with the DeVareaus to learn French. They lived at St Germain en Leye, quite near Paris, and there was a castle there and a forest. It had been a cold winter and every family who had room was encouraged to take in the poor or destitute, and the DeVareaus also had an old woman living in the cellar. I never saw her, but she was fed and kept warm and generally looked after by the family. Madame used to take me shopping with her, which was fun, and I was rather embarrassed when in the market she would take the Camembert cheeses out of their boxes, turn them upside down and squeeze them to see if they were ripe, and when buying oranges would get the vendor to cut one in half to inspect the juiciness, or the thickness of the skins.

M Pierre DeVareaus worked at SHAPE and years later when it moved to Belgium, he did not stay with them, and Phillipe, who also worked at SHAPE, also left. By that time, he had married Nickie, and they went to Ireland to County Clare.

He was a very good “shot” and when at Beltrim had borrowed my mother’s gun and became an expert. One day he came back and said, “Madame I have missed one”, “What have you missed?” asked my mother, “A snipe”, said Phillipe – he had got five out of six cartridges, and as he had to buy his own, he became amazingly accurate.

Years later we went to the Agricultural Show near Versailles with my parents and had lunch with Mrs DeVareaus, who said “All my children live round me in St Germain except Phillipe, who lives in Co Clare in the South of Ireland – where you occasionally see one bicycle going not very quickly”.

He had been captivated by Ireland and even now has a small cottage with a turf fire and an olde worlde atmosphere, which Nickie and he love.

We used to go to the Dublin Horse Show every year and stay in the Anchor Hotel, Parnell Square. We would drive down by car and Daddy's cousin, Jock Swire, would come with us taking up the front passenger seat. He always seemed to wear the same rather greasy raincoat, and we children had to gaze down the collar. I don't remember where he stayed but every year he seemed to need a lift to the horse show. His mother was Aunt Eddie, a sister of Lillian (Kidston), my grandmother and Aunt Aida, Corbie's grandmother. There were another Kidston's – Daisy Curtis, Aileen Smith, Eleanor Nancy Coteral – Glen Kidston, Mrs Tig Portal, John Kidston, Archie Kidston, Betty Swire Jock's sister, was a lovely person and would tell stories about herself. One was when she was taking some hen food in a wheelbarrow and had to go via the road. She was dressed on one of her husband Jock's old mackintoshes. A car stopped to ask the way – Americans; she overheard two ladies in the back saying "a lady tramp, you don't see many of them these days!" She was the daughter of the Swire who started the Cathay Pacific Swire Shipping & airlines so not exactly a pauper.

Traniker Slot Langland in the Baltic

Daddy had asked Lord Antrim for an introduction to the Count and Countess Alafell who lived in this 11th century castle, and they kindly invited us to stay. I think the reason was trees. My father was always wanting to find out about new things to do at Beltrim and Beech Trees was a speciality at Traniker Slot. They harvested the beech masts from the very straightest of beech trees and sewed them like carrots in lines. Then, when they had two leaves the very straightest were transplanted to be grown on. Their rotational crop was 150 years, and the very best straightest trees were in the park on the other side of the Moat which surrounded the castle.

We met one of the daughters years later who said that a big storm had devastated the beautiful park trees and that some had been put in the Moat in order not to let them dry out too quickly. The market was already over supplied with fallen trees.

It was intriguing staying with the Alafells. They had three grown up sons who at the end of a meal lined up and gave a little bow to their mother to thank her for the meal, almost clicking their heels. The countess sat in a wingback chair in their drawing room with two lights clasped to the wings in order to see the intricate sewing she was doing on a small evening bag. Gold thread on silk! “For a friend” she said: I suspect the friend was the Queen of Denmark.

We also had pigs, and Daddy went to a lecture about pigs in Progeny testing station in Denmark. It was given by Professor Clauson from Denmark at Queen’s university in Belfast. Dick, a young schoolboy at the time, said the professor laughed like a pig.

Daddy thought it would be a great idea to do that and asked the professor to come and stay at Beltrim for the week and the Professor said on the Sunday morning “You go to church, and I will draw you a progeny testing station” which he did. Daddy arranged to go to Denmark to visit Professor Clauson and asked me to go with him. I suppose Mummy was too busy with children and hens.

The Clausons were very kind and took us to see the little mermaid bronze statue in Copenhagen and we had an enormous dinner starting with Snogasbong which Mummy had warned me not to eat too much as that is only the starter before the main meal. Mrs. Clauson smoked a clay pipe as a lot of the Danish women did.

Nationalist feelings

When nationalist feelings ran high my father used to go to see the local priest and Johnny Morris was a useful informer as to who to go to talk to so as to calm things down. There was a time when Daddy was sent a letter bomb through a post. My Father always opened his letters at breakfast and on this occasion, there were bits of wire sticking out of this not very sophisticated bomb.

“I think I have been sent a letter bomb” - my Father said – “put it outside” said my mother, then it started to rain so she lifted it up with the garden spade and put it in the tower where the garden tools were kept, thinking it should be kept dry.

They were going off to the races and Daddy rang the police to ask them to collect the suspect: “Please come soon as we are off to the races” The reply to this was: “we’ll see as you are passing the door could you not bring it with you”. So, they did and when detonated it exploded but probably made in the science lab at the high school!

Winnipeg

Granny had been born in Winnipeg when there was a stockade round about six or seven houses in those early days (keeping out the Indians I suppose or was it the buffalo?) while the railway was being made. Her mother was Nina Allan who had been married to Jack Mackenzie who was not only an alcoholic but also a manic depressive which of course would not have been given a name in the 19th century. It gives more reason for our mutual great grandmother, Nina, to have left him for the much happier marriage to Mr. Freddie Brydges.

The Indian chief was kept behind bars, but Betty, my grandmother and her sister Letty would be taken for walks and used to go to see him as I remember her saying “ A nice old man”.

Their father Freddie Brydges was working on the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada with his father who was the president. My great grandmother was Nina who had been an Allan her father was one of the family who had built the port of Montreal for the shipping line the Allan line. They were also famous for starting the Telegraph link between Montreal and Liverpool. Nina had been married to William Mackenzie, but the poor man was manic depressive and an alcoholic and was constantly being brought home so drunk that his friend Alfred Brydges eventually ran off together and married in Vancouver before going to live in Winnipeg while building the Grand Trunk Railway.

My grandmother Betty and her sister Letty were both born there.

Uganda

The elephants in Uganda or should I say especially the ones in Queen Elizabeth National Park seemed to think they had right of way – as indeed they had for every so often one would come across this. Perhaps these wise animals can read, for one evening as we looked out towards the “Mountains of the Moon” we saw two of them chasing two Africans who were trying to shoo them off the road. Nothing would make them move and the two boys had to wait a quarter of an hour before the elephants would be done to move. In fact, they were amazingly unafraid of human beings. We had a terrible thunderstorm early in the evening after which the elephants, finding themselves already wet, decided to go swimming - I counted 25 altogether but certainly could not count them when in the water as they often became completely submerged except for their trunks which they used as

periscopes. Unfortunately, it was very late in the evening and already getting dark. I could not get a photograph.

That night I woke up at around 3:00 to hear the lovely Canna lilies being eaten off the end of the veranda and on looking on saw two of those enormous elephants being completely unafraid. Half asleep I gave chase to shoo them off the flowers. However, I had only gone about 30 yards before I found myself covered by safari ants and went back to my room as fast as I could but being in the middle of the bush there was no electric light at night and it took me a good five minutes to capture these horrid ants which had run right up into my hair.

Animals amounted everywhere, and hippopotamus were in abundance – enormous seemingly useless animals with the biggest set of dentures donated to any grass eating animal. They seemed to have a very lazy life and spent the daytime partly submerged in muddy water – only once did I see one bestir himself to give chase and that was when a boat had gone over the top of his back when he had hidden under the water.

Buffalos were another animal which was very plentiful in those parts. Mostly in great herds of two or three hundred. These are supposed to be the most dangerous of all the animals but though I was longing to see one charging they apparently only do this when one is on one's feet. As it was one of the Game Parks strict rules never to go out of one's car, we never gave them the opportunity.

While we were in Kenya, we stayed with European farmers who farm on long tracts of land in what is known as the White Highlands. There is sometimes very little rainfall and wells have to be such so that the cattle can get water. Each cow is entitled to drink up six to ten gallons a day which is a great problem where rains run dry for months of the year. Luckily, there are two rains in November-December and April-May.

The first place we stayed was nearly 9000 feet up in the Aberdare mountains and though only about a dozen miles south of the Equator it was quite cold in the evening.

Our friends had a lovely garden and during the winter they sent the Anemone flowers to Covent-Garden, the flower market in London.

This farm was right on the edge of the forest where rebels known as Mau Mau had their hideouts ten years earlier. They did dreadful things to the law-abiding local population and the shepherd guarding the sheep at that time had been found killed and his body scattered over an acre of land. This is one of the places in which they hid ten years underneath a waterfall well over 14000 feet up in the mountains.

On the other side of these mountains the country was quite different. The farm or ranch was 100 square miles and had 7000 cattle on it. These had to be driven to the dips twice a week to be dipped against ticks.

The great distances are one of the things which most impresses one about Africa and if given only a short time, such as I was, one is obliged to fly. We flew from Nairobi, the capital of Kenya 1200 miles south over Tanganyika North Rhodesia, to Salisbury the capital of South Rhodesia. We then drove by car for nearly 300 miles into the Inyanga Downs right on the border of Portuguese East Africa.

We stayed again on a farm which borders Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa) for over 20 miles and on all that land there was only one store where the Africans could buy things. Here was a woman on her way to sell her bananas, mangos and sweet corn or what is known as maize. We bought some off her at 3p each which made me aware that it was far from a profitable journey. The roads were practically impassable after the rainy season and were so steep in some places that no ordinary car could possibly

have got up or down, but our old Jeep managed at last to make the 20 miles though it took five and a half hours. Admittedly, we were stopped frequently by Africans who came running when they heard the noise of the engine looking for free medicine which the boss always carried with him, or to get a ride in the back. These people lived in family groups sometimes miles from each other, but the families are large as each man has several wives and when his children marry their families live there too. These people grow their own crops of sweetcorn and sudsa from which they make a sort of beer. They also have up to 20 cattle for each family man. Schooling cost each pupil 52 shillings a year.

We went up to the Victoria Falls at the Zambezi River and then down to stay on an African reserve in the Southwestern part of the country right on the Becuana Land border.

For those people that say Africans are given no opportunity by the white man should go to the Reserve where over a hundred Africans have farms up to 400 acres and have gone as far as building their own dams, helped by money from the government.

It is a very arid part of the country and is virtually on the edge of the Kalahari Desert. The rivers run dry about 3 weeks after the end of rains and the animals are obliged to dig down into the sand of the riverbed to find a trickle of water below. However, it is an excellent country for cattle, and we went to several sales where each African man selling one or sometimes two cattle, would get about £35 each and that incidentally is the price they pay for their wives. It is a strange country with the most extraordinary formations of rocks, and this was the part of the place through which the white settlers passed when they came north from the Transvaal and German southwest Africa. In 1891 only 73 years ago there are people still living who can remember that time and the ox wagon carts which they came into the

country was full of savage warriors but the king of the Matabele tribe kept them from killing the white man at first – they thought these people with white skins had some sort of magic attached to them. However, the white invaders took precautions and built themselves makeshift forts so they could give battle if attacked. There are two old ladies still alive who saw the first light of day in this place continually passing to the glories of the pioneering days.

Fishing. Back to Beltrim

When Corbie and I first met his main entertainment was fishing and though we lived at Beltrim where there was seven miles of river to be fished, I had never caught a salmon.

Paddy Clark, the doctor's son, used to take me out after sea trout (white trout) after dark.

Quite a lot of preparation was needed and time to prepare. First one of my mother's hens — a dead one, was procured to be buried in the manure heap so that good fat maggots could be used as bait. Then the unpleasant business of removing them into a jam jar or tin to be taken to the river and secured onto a naked hook. They smelt horrid and wriggled so this was tricky and it was especially not to get one's fingers impaled on the hook in the dark.

We would dress in dark clothes so as not to be seen by the fish and stealthily creep down to the selected pool. It worked - not that the fish could see at that time of night, but they could certainly smell the bait. It was not until I had known Corbie for some months that I finally caught a salmon and rang him up to say I had qualified!

Fishing was his great love and living in the north of Scotland we often had invitations to fish the Carron by kind people like Wuzz Pollock McCall and Mrs Kemmis at Gruinards and the kind Admiral Sir Geoffrey Robson at Amat who was our host, when I eventually landed the salmon in the Park Pool.

The Helmsdale

We were first invited to fish the River Helmsdale thanks to Roderick Stirling who had been invited by Sir Adair Wigan but already had a previous invitation to go stalking at Letterewe. Sir Adair was kind but not altogether like other people and sadly did not know many people to ask to fish. He had been kept in the background and only taught how to fish by Johnny Sutherland (Hardy) who had fished down every pool of that river behind Sir Adair's mother old Lady Wigan and was so kind to Adair, who by the time we knew him was already fairly frail and needing his socks put on for him by Michael his nephew.

We were invited to spend the night at Borrobol and a memorable night that was. Every time we tried to get to sleep, we both ended up in the middle of this huge double bed which was like a hammock. Eventually we put the mattress on the floor and were called by the housekeeper the next morning who just put her hands on her hips and laughed and laughed!

After breakfast we were sent off by Sir Adair to meet Johnny "Hardy" above the bridge which crossed the river, "and to do exactly what Johnny tells you".

The river was rising, and heavy showers of rain were continuous through the day, between sunshine and rainbows causing me to wonder at one point how some salmon had landed on the shingle: it seemed to totally transform

the landscape so that I could not recognise that it was a pool I had fished only half an hour before and left my catch to be collected later. Helmsdale was the pool of gold.

Poor Johnny had put us to fish on different banks of the river at the Bridge Pool and was forced to run from one bank to the other by crossing the bridge in order to net our salmon — they were coming thick and fast. We caught twelve each I think and the next day on Beat four above was worse as the Beat wanders for miles across the moors and poor Johnny had to carry our fish on his back to get them back to the car. Another twelve each and not a word about putting them back in those days. Also, it was September, so the salmon were somewhat coloured, but everyone was sent off to be smoked for the London market except one for us.

Alastair MacCorquodale was the chairman of the Helmsdale River Board, and he asked Corbie to become manager in about 1984. Nothing could have pleased Corbie more and for a while he also managed the Naver River but that did not last long as some of the proprietors wanted to change the rules which had been laid down by the original owner, the Duke of Sutherland.

Corbie also managed the River Lochy from Spean Bridge to the sea at Fort William. There was a lot of poaching going on, so bailiffs had to be tough, and the job was definitely a challenge. But he loved wildlife, fishing and being involved with people brought out the best in him.

A great deal of travelling meant that he knew the north of Scotland very well and as he was also working as the Highland Agent for Christies, he was virtually never off the road.

Dublin Horse Show Week

The Dublin Horse Show was the first week of August and a very exciting week it was for all of us. We travelled down by car, the Austin Princess, with daddy driving and Jock Swire, daddy's first cousin sitting in the front seat. We sat in the back and had Memories of having to look at Jock's greasy Burberry Macintosh collar all the way. We thought he could not afford a new Mac and in those days the Swire Empire would have meant nothing to us. We stayed in the Anchor Hotel in Parnell Square, and I always remember the breakfast S which were not just eggs and bacon but kidneys, mushrooms and even a lamb chop, I think, if you wanted one.

We would also be going to the Hunt Balls that took place at the Sheraton Hotel or one of the other big hotels every night that week and did not finish until about 4am. I remember coming out of one of them with Ian Montgomery who was wearing a pink tail hunting coat and finding a small boy squatting outside selling newspapers. Ian bought the lot and sent the child home with the money. The post vans were horse drawn; green vans pulled by two horses.

The show was very exciting, looking at beautiful horses for style and appearance. The Hunter class and Daddy's cousin, Brian Fowler, Frizz saying, "Very plain, very plain", about what I thought to be a very good-looking animal. He was a great judge of a horse.

We would meet other friends at twelve o'clock under the clock and join together for lunch or go to watch the show jumping together. I worked as a groom for Brooks, John and Rosemary, when John was chosen to try for the British Olympic team to be held at Helsinki in 1956. He never made it, as the horse, November's Eve, went lame.

Joe Dudgeon Riding School near Dublin was where I was sent by my father to learn how to ride. Not that I had not been riding since I was three years old, but still this was the proper stuff where we had a retired sergeant major

to put us through our paces and give us a thorough military basic training. Mr MacMaster had been at Weedon, the military school, under my great uncle Jack Blakiston Houston — commonly known as, “Bloody Mike” — as soon as Mr MacMaster heard my name, he said he would give me a hard time, “Just like your great uncle gave me”.

Round that arena he would make us trot with no stirrups to get us down into the saddle. We had to get the horse to go the way we wanted with our knees. I was in tears with the pain but no letting up. Two of the girls with whom I was with, Mimi Magee and Nancy Patterson, both from California in the States, were there to learn how to ride in a European saddle instead of the Western or Cowboy type saddle. Both girls were about twenty-four and I was seventeen. Mimi, Nancy and I were all staying with a Miss Fitzgerald and though I was prepared to put up with a certain amount of discomfort, the American girls were not. Miss Fitzgerald was very mean with the hot water and the minimum was allowed. After a long day in the saddle, we were stiff and tired as well as being cold so the bath in the evening was something to look forward to; but not in that house where the minimum was allowed. Mimi decided the best thing to do was to drink hot rum while having a bath so as to warm oneself inside and out! The two Americans were twenty-four so had a good head on creature comforts and how to enjoy life. Mimi had a guitar and used to sit cross-legged with her hair stuck out in short pigtails strumming this thing and singing the most outrageous songs or so they seemed to my young ears. Nancy Patterson was Mimi's foil and friend always known as, “Red Red”. Perhaps it was because she was dark and looked a bit Red Indian but being one of the Jardine Patterson's seemed unlikely. The other ploy was to go to bed in their jodhpurs with the pyjamas underneath to try to keep warm. Poor girls were not used to the damp Irish climate.

My next part of being educated was to be sent off to Katinkers Sewing School which I did not like as we had to do a lot of mathematics — not my strong point. Making patterns a quarter the size and drawing them out correctly and putting in zips in clothes in seven different ways. I hated it and told Mary my sister, who then asked if I would like to work for John and Rosemary Brook looking after their horse, Novembers Eve, at the Royal Stables at Ascot.

John Brooke had done very well at the Dublin Horse Show riding Novembers Eve (who actually belonged to a Mrs Gardener) over the jumps, and he had been put forward to represent Britain in the Olympics to be held in Sweden in 1956. I was delighted to do this outdoor job even though it was very hard work.

Starting at 6 am we had to “strap” the horses and have them ready and fed and groomed before breakfast. I had two to look after. Rosemary also had a filly that, though good in the box, was definitely a problem on leaving it and seemed to have an extremely nervous disposition. I was not allowed to ride her although I once did, and she took me off by galloping straight for a giant oak tree in Windsor Park with a low branch to take me off her back.

It was a big learning curve for me working with all those horsey people and their grooms. If you did not have a sense of humour you landed up in the water jump. I had had a very sheltered upbringing, so it did me no end of good and am truly grateful for having had the experience.

Pat Smyth's horse was stabled next to Novembers Eve and Paul Robison's “Craven A”, on the other side. She was out of a milk “float” cart in Belfast and so had the strongest legs for jumping. The hammer, hammer on the hard ground never put her wrong.

Another horse, Foxhunter, belonged to Harry Llewellyn was from the German Army and had a German groom. He was highly amused that I had a half bottle of pot 'team given to me by Johnny Morris, the gamekeeper at Beltrim. Frank poured some into a teaspoon, lit it and it blew up!

During my time at Ascot Mimi Magee had lent me her little Ford Motor car which was a huge asset. Though small we managed to cram in about seven people to go off to Slough to hear Slim Whitman singing Western songs. We all loved it — a grand night out. Mimi in the meantime had acquired a long-based Land Rover and had brought the horns of an ancient Irish Elk from Sir Schane Lesley at Lockvey in Co. Monahan took it back to California to put in a museum. I don't know how she got permission to leave Ireland, but Sir Shane needed the money I suppose. He was a colourful person, a Catholic who in his Irish Saffron kilt. He was a cousin of Sir Winston Churchill, sharing it with grandmother.

Mimi told me, "When you have finished with Fordie, the little car, give it to Bob McCreary for his quick getaways". Bob was a cousin of Mimi's, and his brother Dick had I think, ridden in the National. The McCreary's were a colourful family. General McCreary married Mimi's aunt, and they had a beautiful ranch in California. She was tiny but was a sheriff and had her badge of office in her handbag along with a small revolver with which she went to shooting practice with the State Police. I stayed with them in 1959.

Travelling

Both my parents loved travelling and had planned to try and go abroad once a year. My mother had had a Swiss governess who must have been responsible for getting Jose Gascon to come to us to look after Victoria when she was born in 1948. The Gascons were a lovely family, and Jose took Mary and me to stay with her family in Switzerland. It was the French speaking part of the Jura Mountains and Neuchatel was the nearest big town. Their chalet was up the mountain overlooking the Lake of Neuchatel.

It was hard to get clothes during and after the war, but we had saffron Kilts held up on a bodice with buttons. Starting under our armpits they were let down as we grew taller, a most practical form of dress and I remember being



stared at when we stayed the night in a hotel in Paris; perhaps it was they thought we were terrorists as Eire was not in the war. It was hard to get a seat on the trains. They were wooden and no sleeper so to get a seat was a bonus. I found myself having to wrap my coat around my head in order to breathe as the man next to me had been eating raw garlic — not a smell I had come across and did it not smell — I can still remember it.

Mrs Grieve and Mouteagle

Mrs Isabella Grieve was married to Dave Grieve who was the cattleman at Mouteagle, a lovely, kind couple. They had no children having lost a baby girl to meningitis when only a few months old.

When I first went to live at Mouteagle after our marriage in 1964 Mrs Grieve was the housekeeper and was lovely to me like a mother and taught me a lot of plain cooking. Marmalade was the best and she used to make a great deal of it to send up to Syre Lodge on the river Naver as Mr Midwood owned both Syre and Mouteagle before Corbie bought Mouteagle in 1957. I still use “Grieves” recipes for marmalade, oxtail and stews and some rich puddings. Johnny, Andrew and James eventually all had the benefit of Grieve as she would kindly look after them if Corbie and I ever went away for a few days.

Both Johnny and Andrew were at Blairmore School in Aberdeenshire by the time that George Kidston asked me to fish on the Naver for a week every year.

Corbie was busy farming so Grieve looked after James who was still at Fearn School, and I think she spoiled him, giving him breakfast in bed and other unheard-of indulgences.

When James eventually joined Andrew at Blairmore he returned home one-half term on holiday and said to Mrs Grieve, "Hello Grieve, how is so and so's pregnancies getting on?" Grieve always watched Coronation Street so of course they both watched together when left on their own.

I was sure Mrs Grieve spoiled the children and I was firmly told by no less than Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, when we were invited to meet her at Foulis by the Munros that, "No, you can't spoil children". I did not agree but it gave me time to pause and reflect as to whether it altogether mattered.

Another great person in our lives when the children were young was Nanny Gaddie.

Nanny had first come to be with us when Johnny was born as looking after a newborn baby was daunting and I felt I needed support. Nanny was wonderful, kind, tender and firm with both mother and child. The first time I met Nanny she was looking after David Stewart Menzies Robert, who was premature, and Nanny was sitting beside the cot in front of an open window. She said as long as it is not foggy, and the baby needs lots of fresh air, the fact that there was snow lying on the ground made no difference.

Some years later, when I had three little boys who had been suffering from measles, they had improved but I succumbed and rang up Nanny. She said, "That's alright, I will be on the train arriving at Fearn at 6 o'clock in time to put the children to bed". A week later Nanny brought two of the little boys into my room and said, 'I have never looked after such naughty children in the sixty-four years in the nursery! I must admit it just made me laugh as I had not heard a word and the care and attention that Nanny had given us was memorable.

When Andrew & James went to school at Loretto they were delighted to find that Nanny had a flat in Musselburgh. The boys were so excited and told us we must go and see Nanny.

James was “off games” with a bad knee so used to go and cut kindlers for Nanny or do small jobs which we thought was kind of him but as we were leaving Nanny said, “It's very nice for James having tea here on a Wednesday!”

One thing Nanny told me which I found very helpful was that she had once been looking after a little girl in Palermo in Sicily who ate so little that one wondered how she could have survived; about half a fish finger a day and still she thrived. The lesson being one should not force children to eat - they will take what they need.

Another of Nanny's wisdoms was that she was asked by a man in his second marriage how to get his children to behave at table. Nanny said, “Always sit down and chat with them”.

My Sister Anne

We were very close. Anne looked after me and I was very blessed by having such a kind and patient sister.

My first memories at Roddens were Anne on her hunkers making mud pies, wearing a pair of corduroy shorts, her knees well above her ears and with a shock of red hair and glasses which had a black patch over the left eye. Poor Anne was born with astigmatism and a squint. She had at least two operations to rectify that and still had to do exercises to correct her vision. Still, it never impaired her creativity and amazing skill in being able to use her hands making toys from wood and eventually becoming a potter.



Anne and Prue 1938 at Reddons

When I first went to London it was Anne who taught me road awareness, the red, yellow and green traffic lights and that dreadful day when she said she would meet me at Leicester Square, third door on the left coming off the underground station — in half an hour. We had set off together from Piccadilly station only one stop away on the underground railway and about three hours later I eventually arrived having travelled right round London in the opposite direction. She was amazingly patient!

We had been at school at North Foreland Lodge and Sarha Unwin was in Anne's class. Her widowed mother, Mrs Unwin took in Anne as a lodger and kindly let me stay for a little while until I found somewhere else. The house was in Chelsea and had a tiny garden with a small lawn in the centre: no room for a lawn mower, so Anne again on her hunkers cut the lawn with the kitchen scissors.

One of Anne's French boyfriends was Phillipe de 'Turkine; tall and extremely good looking and Anne had been asked to go skiing with him and an equally tall friend, Francois Le Ministrell. She asked me to go with her and Christopher Naylor was also with us. The French boys had made no plans like booking seats on the over-crowded trains, so they slept lying along the passages so that the conductors could not walk down to check tickets

and when we got to our journey's end, they had made no provision to stay anywhere — I can't remember now how we survived but we did and had fun.

Anne and I had another invitation to join an English group staying to ski in the same place but had to wait a few days until the next party arrived. We rented a room over a chemist shop which had two beds but only a gas ring to cook on and we both got extremely hungry with the minimum of food and almost no money. I think we almost fell out then but still we survived until her friends arrived. Andrew Watson was the ringleader about six feet seven inches, David Foster equally tall, Kit Ord-Portlet, Rupert Bolby, Prescelle Coode-Adams.



Mary Prue Anne

About the last day skiing I fell while following a doctor far too fast and hit my head. I had to be taken down the mountain on the “Blood Wagon” stretcher and went to hospital at the Crancon House Hospital in Davos Platz.

Poor Anne, what a mishap! — She would not leave me — all the other members of our party went home, and I was in the hospital. I was put in a room with Jane Darwin whose brother Philip I think I knew. Jane

would not stop talking as she only had a broken leg or something, but my head was broken and all I wanted was quiet. She never stopped talking!

Poor Anne had to work very hard trying to get “a pickup” to give her dinner as she had no money left — I was well looked after in hospital. Eventually Mummy sent us some money to get us home but in those days, one was only allowed fifty pounds for travelling abroad and even then, that did not go far with skiing, accommodation, food and travelling expenses.

Anne worked for a well-known antique dealing firm in Hans Crescent behind Harrods, Norman Adams, 18th and 19th century furniture and they had a stand at the antique dealers’ fair held at Grosvenor House each year. When Anne went back home to Beltrim she said to Mummy, “You know Mummy you have some very nice furniture”.

In 1956 my Aunt Buster Hughes Young, my father's sister, got sick, and Anne went to look after her. There were five children in the family, Paddy, Rory, Henrietta, Salena and Louisa and of course Nanny who looked after them with great devotion, Uncle Michael was standing for Parliament for the Conservatives at Wandsworth, southwest London and with the help of the girls he won the seat from the Labour party. I was working for John and Rosemary Brooke at the time.

Spring 1963

A very cold winter: freezing temperatures. I was working for the NSPCC and had a car to travel my patch which went from Potters Bar just north of London where the office was with Miss Barbara Kemp, my boss in Fund Raising for the Society. Her area went north up to Leicestershire east to the borders of Lincolnshire and west to Oxfordshire, Berkshire to the edge of Hampshire in the south.

My job was to talk to schools about the Society and of course the most challenging was to persuade the Heads of schools that I could have time in their well-ordered curriculum for me to talk to the pupils and indeed some of the staff who might then be enthusiastic enough to encourage the pupils to fundraise for the Society.

I had a twenty-minute film which helped fill the forty-minute normal lesson period, but I had no projector so had to get the loan of the school projector, if they had one and someone to work it.

During my training I had been taken by an Inspector of the NSPCC into the homes of the families that needed help. One could tell from a distance which they were for the gardens, if they had one, strewn with toys, old mattresses or just shambolic — a cry for help.

The first time I was informed by the Inspector that he hoped I had brought a tin helmet as the last time he had visited there he had nearly been, “hit over the head with a milk bottle”. Luckily her man was not in but seven children were peeping behind the curtain which divided up the prefab house as it was a day off school and all the family were at home.

The mother was heavily pregnant wearing an overcoat and told us that she was hoping to get re- housed when she had another baby.

There were also women visitors who helped out such families, teaching them how to cook and budget but people lose heart very quickly when stressed and sometimes the floors may have looked clean but behind the sofas were piles of rubbish.

Being only twenty-two I was not eligible to become a woman visitor for which I was very grateful as I had had a very sheltered life and really had little idea how the other half lived. We had girls from Gortin coming to

work for us at Beltrim and I once went to see Mrs McChristie who had a two-room house. I said what lovely children she had and the reply, “thirteen and the three dead”.

These were Catholic families who came up from the South of Ireland but were frowned on by the housing authorities in the North and they tried to dissuade them from coming North and taking the Welfare State money, which had started in 1948. My mother had two girls from that family living with us and helping out with the housework — during the Troubles the bombs went off down at the Trinamadan Bridge and they got into bed beside Mary or Anne as they were frightened and being used to lots of them in one bed. I certainly did not relate this to wanting to work for the Society but by chance my mother took me to a meeting in Omagh where the Reverend Arthur Morton, who was head of the NSPCC, was speaking. From then on, I wanted to work for the Society and when next in London rang up from a telephone box to get an interview for a job.

As I had no qualifications other than being able to speak French, I can't think why I thought there was a chance of being employed. However, I was sent to see the person in charge of the League of Pity, the junior part of the fundraising for the Society. The interview went like this — “Can you tell me a story?” So, I did. I had had years of practice telling stories to my youngest sister Victoria whom I looked after when our brother Dick was born. It was always the same story as I would ask her what story you want and the reply was always the same, “The three little pigs”.

I did not tell that story to the head of the department for fundraising but anyway he took me on, and I was working for the Society for four and a half years. By that time, I was heartily sick of it and having returned to a school that I had visited two years previously was asked by a child, “Please

Miss, what happened to wee Mary?” “I was just about to tell you that”, I replied and knew it was time to move on!

The Journey to Leicester 1963

The Society gave me a small Ford car but 1963 was a very cold year and one occasion the Car was frozen into its garage as the hydraulics were frozen and the lift at the garage could not get it down. I had to go by train to Lester from London. I headed for Marylebone Station to try and catch a train to Leicester where I was to address a school — most of the trains had been sent to get coal for the old people so only a few trains were running partly because the diesel was freezing in the diesel engines.

As I was hurrying up the platform to catch a train already well loaded with passengers, I saw an old porter and asked if there was any chance of a seat as I was going all the way to Leicester. He looked me up and down and said, “Come with me Miss”. We went to the guard’s van at the back of the train, and he offered me his seat, a revolving stool. There was no heating as the diesel was frozen, but I was lucky to have a seat and what's more it turned out that my host, the guard, was an opera singer!

He had been wounded during the war in his pleura so was unable to continue in what he had been trained to do at La Scala in Milan and so had swapped his hobby for his job and joined the railways.

He had done every job in the railways and now a guard but still retained his wonderful ability to sing! I was blessed to be entertained with arias all the way to Leicester.

At 3pm I decided to make for the station hoping to get back to London - it was snowing, and I had an invitation to go out to dinner. As I arrived at the station, I saw a train going out of the station and felt sure that was probably

my last chance of getting back to London. However, the train slowed down, and a hand came out of the back guiding the train back into the station - it was my friend, the guard, who had seen me coming onto the platform just too late. He came back for me! The Station Master was not too pleased but my kind new friend, who was on his way back from Rugby, told the Station Master that he knew that I had a very important engagement that evening in London. I had told him that I wanted to go out with my current boyfriend.

The return journey was in a carriage and the heating had come on also there were others; railway workers, one was a keen ornithologist and other knew my area around Gortin having been in the Army and shot on the Gortin shooting range. A few more arias hastened our way home where we parted the best of friends.

These journeys in freezing conditions were sometimes without incident. One very early start I had an accident when one of those electric milk vans came along very quietly and I went straight into it - not a good moment as the poor milkman was also carrying eggs in the van and the mess was unimaginable! For my part I was down to one head lamp or side lamp but went on undeterred as I had been promised a day's hunting in Yorkshire by my Aunt Jean Stancliffe - I don't think I had any idea how far north Yorkshire was - admittedly I had started at 4am as I had to do a meeting in Leicestershire on the way north. It was a Friday, so I thought the weekend was mine to use it as I liked having done my duty for the "Society".

As usual I stopped in time to have ten minutes of prayer before the meeting. I could never have done it without asking for help each time a school was addressed whether it was a class of twenty children or a whole school of say five hundred. I was not my own master.

Because of my not having the full quota of lights on my car I thought it prudent to continue my journey by train once the meeting was over and went to a quiet station yard where I left the car and caught the train to Scarborough.

My days hunting on a hireling horse was less than comfortable and the many ploughed fields we had to negotiate was less than satisfying after the wonderful experiences of hunting in Co Meath in Eire.

My boss found me eventually on the telephone to ask if I was OK. My car had been stolen and had been found by the police in the back streets of Birmingham — was I alright and where was I? A big rap over the knuckles was on its way mostly because Barbara was worried for my safety! She had located me through Sir Charles and Lady Buchanan, whose daughter I had been sharing a flat with, and Barbara luckily knew about this. I think I had spent the night with them on my way north as I often stayed with friends when going a long way from London. Luckily, all was well though I got an awful wiggling and my poor car, when I got it back, stank of stale sweat or fear. Whoever had stolen it had been through all my files and reports, no doubt looking for money. Luckily, I had none.

One time on returning back to London after a day working in the north of my area the snow was coming down so hard that it was a whiteout and only by following the red lights of the car or lorry in front could one find the way.

During that journey I came across three men standing beside their lorry which had gone into the ditch having skidded off the road. There was no way they were going to get home so I gave them a lift. I was glad of the company and the extra ballast to keep the little Ford car on the road — we made it but with difficulty as it was necessary to keep close enough to the

lorry in front to be able to see its lights, which was, I remember, about ten yards.

As I remember that evening I was invited out and before even sitting down to dinner, I had to retire to the ladies to be very sick — I think it was the reaction of that hair raising journey.

Time to follow a Christian way of life was what I learnt first from my Nanny. I never remember her being cross and she never smacked me though I have no doubt there were occasions she must have wished to do so. Nanny was a true Christian and loved us and taught us how to pray.

My bedroom at Roddens farmhouse was a little room at the back with a little window and it was there that I first felt the presence of Jesus. I was about eight years old, and that memory has stayed with me for the rest of my life. I am now eighty and still have this knowledge that Christ Jesus is there supporting and loving so that if a letter had to be written which might be difficult, I ask for help and then relax in His grace to get on with it.

I had difficulty reading as a child, but my father gave me a King James Bible when I was twelve and I still have it. We learnt a lot of passages by heart just in case some day we might not have a Bible so we had to rely on memory to keep in touch with the word of God.

When I went to do lessons at Finnebrogue with the Percival Maxwell family one of the two teachers was a retired missionary and a lovely person. She was a hunchback, but it never worried us children.

We were taken to Downpatrick Cathedral (to the Installation of a new Bishop of Down I suppose).

At North Foreland Lodge where we all went to school in Hampshire, the head mistress, Miss Gamwell was a cousin of my mother's and a wonderfully Christian person. We had chapel before school and again in the evening and I eventually became Chief Sacristans preparing and tidying away before and after the services. We were prepared for Confirmation by Bishop Cawfield who was a retired Bishop from India United Church. A lovely man who prepared us through the writings of St Paul.

When I went to Switzerland to learn French it was wonderful to be able to join the Student Christian Union and the meetings every Wednesday lunch time in a cellar where Pastor Borrel would instruct us in the Christian faith were a great pleasure. We would take our sandwiches and listen to M Borrel or discuss bits of the Bible.

Sometimes we just listened to classical music, but it was a time for reflection and peace which I certainly looked forward to each week and CP7' course was a meeting place for other likeminded young people.

We had a week skiing with L'Arc where every other evening we had free time to make igloos in the snow but the discussions on the interim evening were directed by M Borrel.

I remember well the wonderful sound of being woken in the mornings, by one student who was at the Academy of Music and learning the flute. She played most beautifully as the sun rose across the snow-covered Alps, memorable moments.

It was very cold, about eleven degrees below zero and no hot water to wash in, so no hot water for the boys to shave, even though us girls tried to encourage them to do so by heating some water up for them. There were about twenty-five of us all French speaking which was why I was pleased to join them because I was there to learn French.

Arnos Vale, November 1964

The love of my life, John Douglas-Menzies and I got married at Lower Badoney Church of Ireland in Gortin, Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland on 14th November 1964. We had bridesmaids Emma Windham, Catherine Rowan Hamilton and Amanda Eliot-Cohen.



My mother had said that she thought engagements should only be two months long, but we did have to extend that to three months as Corbie (John) had told me firmly that he would marry me, “after he had lifted the tatties”, an important milestone in his year as seed potatoes were his main source of income.

We waited; the beautiful autumn colouring on the azaleas came and went. The sun shone beautifully all the way through September and October and

by November the rain came down and kept coming. Our wedding day was wet and the man taking the photographs from “The Tyrone Constitution” newspaper in Omagh never thought to wipe the lens of his camera so the photographs to prove our nuptials are still stuck in a bottom drawer. The marriage has lasted 60 years this year, 2024. So far!

My mother and father were always most hospitable and every one of the



Aunt Jean Mummy and Sue Fleming at Mary wedding Aug 56

people invited were to come to Beltrim for a meal at some stage over the weekend, that is the people staying in hotels or house parties.

Corbie and I on the other hand were sent off on our honeymoon in the old-fashioned conventional style so missed the parties.



We went to the airport at Nutts Corner near Belfast and saw a number of our guests also waiting to return to England or Scotland but soon we went to London where kind Anna Buxton whose flat I had been sharing allowed us to stay there the night before flying on to New York where we stayed with Sarah Paul (Blundell) on arrival and then onto Tobago in the West Indies, Our destination was Amos Vale a lovely small hotel on the sea with a main building for reception and dining room

and individual rondaval type houses for the guests where we were looked after by teams of beautiful girls wearing flowers in their hair.

I think our luggage was minimal, one suitcase had nothing in it except a bottle of champagne and a dressing gown cord — Andrew Forbes-Leith had seen fit to send this with us to encourage submission!

Corbie soon found out that the local people went fishing in the early mornings before the sun got too hot and we joined a fisherman by the name

of Euric in his small boat at 5am. We fished with either very short rods or hand lines with bait stuck on to hooks. Corbie caught a small fish which was duly cut up and put on to my hook where upon I caught a 29 lb beautiful dolphin fish which glistened with phosphorescent colours of blues, gold and green but sadly went quite dark and unattractive when dead — we had it for the fish course at dinner in the hotel - there were only about sixteen people, so everyone got a wee bit.

We went out several times with Euric.

Sea Tale of the Park Pool and Gardner's Run 9th June 1979



My father's cousin, George Kidston Montgomery was kind in asking me to fish the Naver every year and for a week as the rules of the river implied that a man and a woman should fish together — never two men. Lidia, his wife, was by then too frail to be his fishing partner.



His granddaughter in law, (Miss South Africa) Mark Swire's wife became his fishing partner. George took two beats so that his good long standing friend Sir Richard Keen could be his other guest, and I would partner him on the river.

Richard and George had been together in the war and was known by George as, “Kean but idle!” Many stories were bartered between them, and one was when George was commanding his regiment and saw Richard sitting in a deck chair on top of his tank reading a novel.

Incensed by this idleness he signalled to tell him to demolish an Italian fort which had been obstructing his continuation of the war effort for some time. Richard closed his book, put away the deckchair and proceeded to demolish the offending fort. One shot. Done that. Out came the chair, the book and peace reigned.

Richard asked me once whether I had seen George's back. I said no I had not. Apparently, it was so damaged that he wondered how he stood. George had had three tanks blown up or burnt under him in one day alone.

George Kidston was incredibly brave and an amazing “leader of men”. In his obituary it mentions about ten regiments with which he was involved from adjutant to commanding officer. He was Colonel of the Queens' Royal Irish Hussars and also had the rare destination of being a member both of the Royal Company of Archers (the Queen's bodyguard for Scotland) and the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms.

George Kidston-Montgomerie transformed sport into an art, knowing that manners and style were essential. His knowledge of salmon pools and the countryside was legendary. His adaptability stayed with him throughout his life. Recently, soon after suffering a stroke, he caught fourteen salmon in rapid succession. A true Christian he would unobtrusively help those in difficulties.

I was extremely privileged to be invited to fish the Naver by George. We stayed at Syre Lodge — the radiators had burst on the upstairs landing the first year we were there, and we had to jump across a pool of water before

descending the stairs. I remember taking a long break for lunch and lying among the daffodils waiting for the salmon to also finish their siestas. There was also a golden moment in the evening at 8.45 pm on the Marie Pool which was the perfect moment to catch fish. George certainly had fishing down to a fine art, resting the pools was part of that art which I never managed to learn being far too keen to get to the next pool and try hard again to catch a fish.

My fishing partner was Sir Richard Keane from Cappoquin in the county of Wicklow in the south of Ireland. He and Olivia, his wife, came to stay with us when we were staying at Gruinards on the Carron to fish. Olivia was an artist and said, "Never ask us in July, the trees are all too green".

Richard was a great friend of Sir Fitzroy Maclean. They had both been dropped in Yugoslavia during the war two hundred miles to the wrong side of enemy lines and had a very bad time. The lack of salt was a big problem which affected him badly. However, he was an amusing companion full of stories and had been editor of the Sunday Times or Telegraph.

We had Mary Prickett for a drink one evening at Gruinards and she brought Dorothy Herdman from Sion Mills in Co. Tyrone. When Richard heard that Dorothy Herdman was coming, he said, "She used to go dancing with my father!" His father had said to his mother, "Darling the cook gets Thursday off doesn't she?" "Yes", said his mother. "Well then", father asked, "Can I have Wednesday off," and he would take Dorothy to dance in Dublin. When Dorothy and Mary arrived, Richard was out of the door like a shot and said, "You used to go dancing with my father" whereupon Dorothy said, "You'll do!". He was a lovely man and died aged 102 years old.

It Is Jimmy and Corbie's Birthday in Two Days 2014

The twins will be 86, and we have been married for 51 years. Rosemary took us to Hexham to see *The Nutcracker* performed by the Bolshoi Ballet. It was an amazing production, beautifully danced and unbelievably transposed onto an enormous screen, straight from Moscow. What a change when I think back to the early 1960s when I was taken to Covent Garden to see some Russians who had been invited to come and look at Covent Garden in the hope they would bring the Bolshoi Ballet to perform there. Sadly, they said the stage was too small, and I could certainly see now how much room they needed for that unique performance. My host on that memorable evening was Lord Wakehurst, who was a governor of Covent Garden. He was also the Governor of Northern Ireland at the time and my sister Anne was working for him and Lady Wakehurst as a sort of stooge, or lady in waiting. After the Russians had departed, I was then taken on a tour of that amazing building, including the Royal Box where the Royal Family sit to see performances. This also included a viewing of the lavatories! They were certainly unique as the pans were painted blue with green dragons with open mouths.

The amazing changes in technology remind me of the first time I remember the wireless, when as a child of 3, Mr Chamberlain announced the start of the Second World War. At the end there was an explosion in the Bakelite radio and the proverbial nasty blue flash. We used to listen to the news regularly and my parents knew the newsreader that was called Edward Ward, whose family lived in Co. Down in a lovely house, Castle Ward, now National Trust. Lady Bangor, his mother, had two daughters, Mary who married Wetherby and was famous for registering all thoroughbred horses, and her daughter Juliet who was my friend – and one time we thought it would be funny to dress up as gipsies. We put elderflowers in our hair to resemble nits and went down to the bottom of the drive to the village where

the first house we called at had a notice saying, “Beware of the Dog”, we thought gipsies could not read, as nor could I. The owner of the house came out with a big stick and shouted at us “Can ye not read” so we ran all the way up the drive in terror – never to be repeated. Juliet and I went to Finnebrogue where a kind family called Percival-Maxwell lived, near Downpatrick. They had two kind ladies to teach about a dozen of us, and we were allowed to take our ponies to stay during the term. Robin Percival-Maxwell was my godfather, he was the eldest of five and so just old enough to be called up to serve in the war. Very sadly, he was killed when only 26 years old. I was very fond of him, although I hardly knew him, and he was very fond of me. I still think of him every Armistice Day.

To get to Finnebrogue with Nora the pony I had to ride her, and Davidson the groom came with me on Mantis. We would ride down to Portaferry from Roddens and onto the flat-bottomed ferry which took us across Strangford Lough to Strangford. The tide was very strong and was about 8 knots. Nora was a lovely pony and also good at pulling the trap. Nanny used to drive, and we would often go to see Mrs Iliffe, who ran the post office in Portavogie and buy National Savings stamps to sell to people every week. Nanny called this her war work! Mrs Iliffe was a lovely person, and I think arranged for a lot of people in the area to do embroidery. She was a friend of my grandmother and her son Billy, and my father were only 6 months apart in age. The handkerchiefs that we were sent for years by my Aunt Marian had “Prue” embroidered on a corner, and she was also my godmother and kindly gave me one every year.

Billy Iliffe was a very clever person and went on to be Vice-Chairman of the World Bank. I stayed with him and Lady Iliffe during my visit to Washington in 1959.

April 29th, 2016

Corbie and I have been travelling in New South Wales and have just reached Melbourne on the last leg of our journey before flying home to Scotland.

We are staying at the Windsor Hotel in Spring Street, right opposite Government House where my father was an ADC to the Governor - General in about 1930. We are here for a party that is being given for Nene Pollard, Corbie's first cousin, who is 102 1/2. He has just gone off to buy her some flowers, helped by the Concierge dressed in purple uniform with a top hat.

Wednesday 22nd March 2017 6:30 am

We arrived in Sydney – no wheelchair for a short walk with a bit of concern as our flight to Armidale was due at 8am. Found the wheelchair but was abandoned as our helper had called another tall, elegant lady with a lovely face – a nun; I thought as she wore a cross on her lapel. She got into her wheelchair and initially was unable to move forward or back owing to a bag containing two bottles getting wedged between the chain and the wheels. Eventually two bottles were extracted from the bag, the culprits of the hold up, they both contained what looked like a stimulating beverage. We had to leave the nun there as we hurried to go through customs, and it put me in mind of the woman who arrived at the customs in Dublin with a small bottle in her hand luggage. “What is this?” Asked the customs. “Ah well this is just a wee bottle of holy water from Lourdes” replied the woman. “May I open it?” asked the Customs man as he unscrewed the top and sniffed. “Madam, that is alcohol” “Oh sure, is that not a miracle?” replied the woman. I wondered if the occupant of the other wheelchair was just returning from retreat in France where miracles happen!

A wonderful reception at Armadale airport: Jock, Shara with no children as Henry is now at school in Sydney and Archie was at school. Andrew Cathrine with Fergus and Lilla and James with George Will who all three came to lunch at Coningdale later on.

We were taken to Ramah yesterday by Jock and Shara and driven by Sharpie.



As we left Sydney Airport last year on our way to see Nene Payne in Melbourne, we had a telephone call from Jock to say that he had just bought Ramah, a beautiful property about 40 minutes' drive north of Garo because of the good rainfall and plenty of keep for cattle. Coningdale had had no measurable rain for months and Jock had to either sell his cattle or buy somewhere for them to stay until the weather pattern changed.

Now, one year later it is raining in Coningdale, and the grass is growing green. Jock has been considering buying Achill West, which is an adjoining property to Coningdale and in order to do that must sell Ramah. We had a wonderful day there, first mustering some cows and the calves which were to be weaned and brought back to Coningdale along with three bulls.

We then went for a drive round to see this vast beautiful property – the views were magnificent with large trees and permanent water – real bush country at the bottom end and only good for the feral pigs and goats of which we only saw one but the high ground you could not find better and Sharpie and Jock had put in a lane way and Bock Packers had been staying in the house so as to spray the Blackberries so the place had been improved considerably over the past year.

The young weaners were being kept in the yards for a few days to get rid of any seeds of weeds and also given some grain for the feral time to teach them how to feed from troughs along with Luccun tray. We also went up to Longhun to move some weaners that had been sent down from Ramah last week all looking well.

Raining, so back for morning tea!

The Last Bit

Before ending this story, I want to remember Sir Ian & Lady Forbes-Leitt for what they did for us: that is my husband John Douglas Menzies and I. For though we had never met, they apparently thought we should. So, on our return to Scotland and Ireland respectively This kind pair invited us to Come to stay at Fyrie Castle in Aberdeenshire.

So, we met and an invitation to come to join us at Dublin for the week of the Dublin Stow - He arrived in his tackety boots: all ready for outdoor pursuits.

Eventually when I was back working for Children 1st from London a letter came asking me to fly to Paris for the evening - I had to get permission from my boss. I said I would meet him at London airport and his answer was "Don't be late!"

John asked me to marry him while we were on a bridge over the Seine and I had to be sure he meant it so asked him to ask me again. My Headmistress had told us that any husband should ask you to marry him twice- Luckily, he then said "I will marry you after I have lifted the tatties".

Thanks to the wonderful kindness. of the Forbes-Leiths who introduced us and even went so far as to tell us where to go for our honeymoon (Armas Vale in Tobago in the West Indies). It worked and without the aid of the added assistance of the rope to tie me down provided by Andrew Forbes Leith in the extra suitcase.