

PMH Reminiscences:

1886 to 1928

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PMH – Reminiscences

1886 to 1902

In response to requests from various family sources, I will try and write some reminiscences of my life for the possible interest of future generations. I have not got the pen of a particularly “ready writer”, but will do my best.

It began – my life – on February 24th 1886, at Ethane Cottage, Darling Point, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, my father having been appointed to superintend the fortifications of Sydney Harbour. He was Cooper Penrose (then a Captain and Brevet (?) Major, Royal Engineers), the third son of the Revd John Penrose and his wife Harriet Susan (Hardy) of Woodhill, Co Cork, Ireland. Mother was Sylvia Alice Greene, second daughter of Thomas and Sylvia Greene (nee Coghill) of 49 St Stephen’s Green and Avonmore, Killiney, Co Dublin.

Of my first three years in Australia I remember nothing, nor of the voyage home, I regret to say. My mother brought me, and my sister Sylvia, home in 1889 to await the birth of her third daughter – Monica, which took place at 49 St Stephen’s Green on February 15th that year. Of that period I also remember nothing – except being brought down to the drawing room to say goodnight to my grandfather (“Grappy Greene”).

I was a very solemn child, so I have been told, with a deep, sepulchral voice, and had a habit there of informing all and sundry that “I’m going to Londin”. Grappy, who evidently through this a gem of wit, asked me one evening, before some visitors, “Well, Phyllis, are you going to Londin?” I was just going to bed, and replied in a really snubbing manner, “No, I’m going to bed” – horrid child!

Later that year my father was sent to the War Office, and we all migrated from Dublin to Blackheath where, somehow or other, a house had been procured – 16 Craigerue Road. Here we lived from 1889 for the next 6 years, my father going up to the War Office by train every morning. I remember us all seeing him off, in frock coat and black top hat – no uniform, and being much impressed by the way he produced the shine on the hat by rubbing it round and round on his coat sleeve.

Here appeared, for me, my first signs of a ruling passion in my life, my love of animals, chiefly dogs, which is with me to this day. Our first dog was a stone-deaf white bulldog called Pompey. I quickly adopted

him, and he was our inseparable companion till one unforgettable Sunday morning. We were out for a walk with our nurse, and Pompey, when we met his worst enemy, a collie, which lived nearby. In an instant they were at each other's throats, and we children in tears. Passersby urged our nurse to take us home, as the collie hadn't a chance (bulldogs *never* let go of a victim till it dies). The sequel to that episode was that Pompey had to go – and I underwent the first heartbreak of my life! I remember looking from our nursery window, and seeing him driven away in a four-wheeler cab (called a “growler” for some reason), after which I retired under the table, quite inconsolable. We had no more dogs there.

At this period of our lives, we had a nurse and under-nurse, and I suppose there were other maids as well, cooks and housemaids and parlour-maids – as I remember, we had frequent changes of these! We were promoted to governesses when, I suppose, I was about six and Sylvia five, and very quickly learnt to read even before this. We had very little *to* read though, and I well remember how we were reduced, at times, to reading the newspaper linings to the shelves and drawers! Later we became acquainted with ‘Little Folks’ and ‘Chatterbox’ and other children's classics – notably of course ‘Alice in Wonderland’ and ‘In the Looking Glass’ which my mother read to us over and over again.

About this time my mother became a very efficient golfer, a game just coming into vogue for women. We children did not really see very much of her after this, as she became Captain of the Blackheath Ladies Golf Club. One morning when I was about seven, I suppose, she decided to try and teach me the swing of an iron club, so we walked to the links and she began to address the ball, having stationed me ‘in a safe spot’ in front of her. I, however, decided to myself that I should see better from her *other* side, and unseen by her I ran round behind her, to be met by the upswing of her iron on my left eye! I well remember the consternation that followed – little fool that I was! Blood streaming from my face, miles from [?], Mother in a flat spin of course. Somehow we got to the road, and a welcome bus picked us up. Mother had no money and didn't know of a doctor. However a good Samaritan on the bus produced half a crown (we never saw him again so he never got repaid), and knew of a doctor in Montpelier Road. We were admitted but the doctor was out. So we sat down to wait. As if in answer to prayer the doctor returned practically at once for something he had forgotten, and quickly put in 5 or 6 stitches in the cut – remarking that $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch one way would have

blinded me, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch the other way killed me! Very gratifying for Mother! I decided after that that I didn't much care for golf!

Two outstanding events remain in my memory from this period. One was being taken by my father – I suppose Mother couldn't go – to the almost first performance of 'HMS Pinafore' at the New Concert Hall in Blackheath, and how absolutely enthralled I was, and returning home singing 'Buttercup' till everyone could have screamed! The other outstanding event was being taken by both parents to the Queen's Hall in London to hear a violin recital by Tivardar Nachez. I can't have been more than eight, if that, and the train journey by night and return ditto, and the long performance, stuck in my mind and I have never forgotten it.

About this time I started to learn the violin, an enterprise which was to result, several years later, in my bad spinal curvature. Mother was a brilliant pianist and my father very musical too. We were brought up on Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt, Schubert, Handel, and all the Classical Masters, which was extremely lucky for us. There were frequent musical parties, to some of which Harry Plunket Greene, a cousin, used to come and sing. On these occasions the refreshments were brought down by van from London, and we children were given any of the broken pieces, very much appreciated.

About 1895 we left Blackheath and spent the summer in Ireland at Killiney Avonmore, and I think digs at Shauganach Terrace. Then back to England, and a house at Surbiton, Surrey, 'Corrin', Hook Road. We had a new governess, a Miss Forrest, who was with us for years. Here we all learnt the new art of 'cycling', which was just coming into fashion. We only had one bicycle between us, a green bone-shaker called 'Marguerite'. On this we all learnt very quickly. Everyone had bicycles and used to bring them when they came to stay. We all had an eye to the main chance – and quickly formed a firm which we called "The Eronep [?] Bicycle Cleaning Company", and made quite a good thing out of cleaning the visitors' bicycles! Here we were given our second dog, to my great delight, an Irish terrier called Paddy. He was of course a fighter, they nearly all are, and after only a very short stay he had to be given away – more heartbreak!

One Sunday a very rare occurrence took place in Church. We three had gone to Church with Miss Forrest, and when the Parson, a Mr Clode, began to read out the Banns of Marriage, a woman got up at the back of the Church, and called out in a stentorian voice, "I forbid the Banns!" The poor little parson was so taken aback, that for a time

he was quite silent, and then murmured, "Come and see me in the vestry after the service." Miss Forrest adjured us all never to forget that we had heard the Banns forbidden, as it was such an almost unheard-of event, and we never have!

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria happened in 1897 while we were at Corrin, and made a great excitement of course. We did not go to London for it, but I think my people did, as my Father had an office overlooking the route of the Procession. But next day we were all taken to Windsor, where some friends of the family had rooms in the Castle. They were Sir Fleetwood and Lady Edwards, and he was Keeper of the Privy Purse to the Queen. We all three had new addresses, and felt very grand, and on this occasion I committed my historic solecism! We were having lunch in this castle dining room, waited on by a couple of, or at any rate one, footman, who stood almost at attention during the meal. We had had among other things some lovely green peas. These were handed a second time to the grown-ups, but we children were omitted. Thinking this was accidental, and wishing for some more green peas, but not liking to bother the austere looking footman, I got down from my chair with my plate, stalked over to the sideboard and helped myself! My mother's scandalized face and murmur of "Phyllis!" can be better imagined than described! Lady Edwards, as if it was the most usual thing, smoothed it over by saying "Quite right, Phyllis, very sensible to help yourself", but you may imagine I got properly told off when we got home! After lunch we were taken to see all the Jubilee Presents, which were still on view, waiting to be packed away, or re-arranged. Rooms full of wonderful gifts from all over the Empire, and also the famous gold plate – a most overpowering experience for three children. We were taken into the throne room, and all three sat on the throne in turns, and tried to imagine ourselves as Queen.

I think it was next year, 1898, that we went to live at Chester, No 2 King's Buildings, as my Father had some post there, preparatory to being sent to China – to fortify Wei-Hai-Wei. We had a holiday in Ireland first, at Avonmore, with Miss Forrest. The Chester house was a lovely old one, and looking back on it now, we are all quite sure it was haunted. Miss Forrest said she saw things, and it transpired that – though none of us owned to it at the time – we all hated going through one of the bedrooms, which one had to do, to get to the bathroom – it was this room which was supposed to be haunted.

We were only there about 6 months before my father went to China, and I was still having violin lessons from masters. While we were in Dublin, during the months before Mother went to join my father in

China it was discovered that I had a pronounced lateral spinal curvature! This was a first class family shock, and a family doctor called Philip Snugly was called in. It was put down to my violin playing – hours of practicing, a lot of thick hair down my back, and growing very quickly.

From now on my adolescence and youth were largely spoiled and warped. They did what I suppose they thought was best for me, but couldn't have been worse or more mistaken – put me into a sort of porous plaster jacket from my shoulders to my hips, thus reducing my muscles to a sort of flabby jelly! This was strapped across my chest by webbing straps, and was hot and uncomfortable to a degree. I had to give up the violin at once, but did not really mind – no more practicing in cold rooms before breakfast, with blue cold fingers!

We spent the winter of 1898-9 in Dublin (28, I think, Adelaide Road) while my mother was preparing to join my father in China, an almost unheard of adventure in those days. I remember we were dreadfully bored there, with our governess, Miss Forrest.

Bright spots were the dancing class at Mr Leggett-Byrnes next door, and a roller skating rink somewhere. For the first time in my life, here I had a bedroom to myself. *How* I appreciated it! From it I could see into the windows of the dancing school, and spent a long time watching!

It was the only accomplishment I was ever any good at, and in after years, though I says it, I was really a very beautiful dancer according to my partners – my father, a very good dancer himself, said ti was like dancing with a feather.

Mother went off to China (Wei-Hai-Wei) in the early spring of 1899 – and we girls and Miss Forrest were dispatched on a round of visits to relations in Co Cork. The Thorneycrofts, Aunt Fan and her two wonderfully handsome sons, Ralph and Gerald, a few years older than we were. They lived at Glenmore, near Cork. Then on to Middleton, the Grange, to Uncle Jim and Aunt Lou Penrose-Fitzgerald.

After this my memory is very vague, but we went back to Chester, to lodgings where we were very uncomfortable, and eventually left them, as somehow or other Miss Forrest found a semi-detached furnished house at Hoole, or Hoole Park, and we moved in there with two maids!

Here we spent the next two years, my back not getting any better. I spent hours lying on a back-board, and the doctor who had been put

in charge of us, Dr Archer, took me several times to a specialist in Liverpool – which jaunts I quite enjoyed!

They did away with my odious hot thick jacket which I had had to wear next to my skin, but gave me an even more uncomfortable affair of steel and webbing straps to support my left shoulder. Nothing could have been worse for it!

While here we were visited and asked out by some very nice friends of the family I suppose – a Mr Howson and his sister, Miss Howson. The Archers were friends of ours too from the King's Buildings days – and a first cousin of Mother's Geoffrey Greene, who worked in the Railway offices at Crewe, used to come and see us. He was 6 ft 6 inches tall and always called 'Goffer' for some reason – a brother of Harry Plunket Greene the singer, and of Conyngham Greene, Diplomatic Corps.

Anyway, Geoffrey did his best to look after us – had us all and Miss Forrest to a Pantomime (our first) in Liverpool, and on an occasion when Queen Victoria was travelling back to London from Scotland, and stopping at Chester he got us all good seats to watch the arrival and departure.

During this time the Boxer Riots in China were at their height, and my father, on a survey in the interior, was set on by a horde of them, knocked down and stabbed again and again with a bayonet. He had a guard of the Chinese Regiment, but they were all taken by surprise, and when the attack came the Guard behaved splendidly, mowing down their own countrymen without a qualm, and my father and his party were taken back to Wei-Hai-Wei. He was badly wounded and had a long convalescence, but recovered, and he and Mother went on a month's leave to Japan.

While at Hoole park the Dreyfus case was on, and we three and Miss Forrest were some of his keenest partisans, and read every word of the trial. When he was found guilty we were all really upset, and we girls made a small French flag, and with great ceremony dug a grave and buried it upside down!

Mother returned from China at the end of 1900, I think, just after the old Queen's death [*Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901*]. We heard that she was returning one afternoon when we were all resting on our beds, and I was so excited I remember banging my feet on the window-pane, with the result that one foot went right through the glass and had a long, deep jagged cut, streaming with blood. Poor Miss Forrest, no telephone in those days and Dr Archer quite a long way away! I think one of the maids had a bicycle and was sent off hell for

leather, as nothing would stop the bleeding, through a thick black stocking too. I kept my foot high up on the bed rail, and eventually he came, shook his head, probed here and there, and then put in several stitches – cat gut – without even a local anesthetic. Never shall I forget it; I was not at all brave, and cried like anything! This kept me off my feet for weeks and I had to go to Christmas dinner with the Howsons (kind of them to bother with us) with my foot all bandaged up.

Mother's return was of course a red letter day and event. Poor thing, she arrived with bronchitis, though we didn't know it, and could hardly eat any of the gala meal Miss Forrest had prepared for her. This was the historic occasion when, Mother having said something to Miss Forrest in French, Monica said to her reproachfully, "We're not very well up in the Chinese language, Mother!" She was about eleven, I suppose.

Our next move, though I don't remember much about it, was to London, 26 Norland Square. We all thought it was marvelous to live in such an exciting place. The square itself had several tennis courts laid out, and we made the acquaintance of several other residents and played a lot. A family of girls called Vidal, a Mr Spencer and a Mr Croushay, very nice young man and somewhat attracted to Sylvia we used to think. Also friends of ours at this time were relations of Miss Forrest, called Richards living near – three girls of our own ages, Kitty, Dorothy and Myfanwy.

With these 3 we started a society called "The Ladies Society for the Advancement of Literature" or for short "LAFAL" which met once a week in our dining room. We all took pseudonyms & wrote poems, essays etc, under those names. I took Lewis Carroll! Sylvia I think was Walter Scott, & Monica

I remember being very worried in case nobody came to call on Mother! She was then only 34! and had had a very good time as one of the few white women at Wei-Hai-Wei, and more than a few admirers I'm sure.

We were only 6 months, as far as I remember, at Norland Square, & it was here that Miss Forrest left us - having looked after us splendidly through all our growing up time - I only hope she was properly recompensed by my Mother!

From here we went over to Ireland to spend the summer with my maternal grandparents at a house they had taken for the summer Granite Hall, Kingstown, a big house near the sea, & with a large garden full of fruit trees, strawberries etc to which we did full justice!

We were here at the time of my Father's return from China, and shortly after that he was appointed C.R.E. Gosport, and we settled down to a 4-year stay at the C.R.E. Quarters, a charming house & garden - Alvercliffe, Alverstoke. Here, a new governess was installed a Miss Zimmerman (a German spy?) and we also acquired a white fox terrier - "Spider".

I quickly annexed him, the others not being quite so animal-minded as I was!
 One day he disappeared, while we were walking in a field belonging to the house, and no amount of calling produced him, so all was misery.

I went out day after day, seeking & calling, as I feared he might have gone down a rabbit hole of which there were many.
 One day, quite 4 days after his disappearance, I heard a faint whimper coming from under the boundary hedge!

Imagine my delight! After saying a few encouraging words to him I flew for the gardener - Bucksey - and my father, & they arrived with spades and dug him out! He was twisted round and under the roots of the hedge, & could not stand properly for quite a long time, but I was triumphant as may be imagined.

After about a year of Miss Zimmerman my father rebelled, & said "No more governesses", so exit Jimmie and we went off to school!

1903

We were sent to Farlington House Haywards Heath, kept by two sisters - Miss Moberlys, daughters of the Bishop of Salisbury, and very nice they were. I didn't want to go at all, as it meant leaving my beloved dog but it had to be!

Monica could not come with us, as she was in hospital with diphtheria so Sylvia and I went together. I was there for only 4 terms, and I thoroughly enjoyed them. I was still having treatment for my back, as Mother had discovered a Danish specialist in Cromwell Rd. a Dr. Conn, who took me in hand.

I had to do all manner of exercises, morning & evening, rather exhausting. I remember, lie down a lot, and was only allowed to do a certain amount of work! This suited me splendidly, and I dropped all the subjects I didn't like, and played up my curvature for all I was worth!

I made some nice friends there, one of whom was anything but a good influence, and turned out to be a

thoroughly "bad hat", but we were very fond of each other, and I was a bridesmaid, later, at her wedding.

We made several faux pas on first arrival at school! inevitable really with nobody to put us wise! One system was going for walks in a croc. it was the custom to ask people to "walk with one" on certain days of the week. Our head girl was Dorothea Mitchell very nice and I decided I would ask her to walk with me one afternoon. This I did! and she accepted!

Another girl, Violet Lees, commonly called "Fleas", asked me casually, who I was walking with that day, + I said Dorothea. "I say" said "Fleas", "how ripping of her to ask you" - "Oh" said I calmly, "she didn't ask me, I asked her"! Tableau "Phyllis, how could you! You a miserable next girl, asked the Head Girl to walk with you"! Go and apologise at once"! Off I went of course, simply grovelling as may be imagined, but of course she realised the situation and was very nice, saying she was sorry she couldn't walk with me after all as she had to play hockey!

1904

So the situation was, very tactfully, sided I left school, very regretfully, after the Easter term, as I was to "come out" that year! I hated leaving but again of course it had to be.

I approached my emergence into "so-
-ciety" with a pronounced Superiority
Complex". I was not pretty, good at
games, clever, or attractive in any way
or so I thought, and there was
always my wretched curvature!

However, early in the summer, a very
attractive young man appeared on
the scene, & to my astonishment
appeared to like me very much!
He was a naval sub. lieutenant, exactly
my own age, a beautiful dancer
(my only accomplishment) very
good-looking, brilliantly clever
but, alas, no money, & was
rather frowned on by my parents!

I remember being so surprised, to
receive a telegram from him one day
asking me to play golf with him
next Sat. & meet ~~me~~ ^{him} at the Club-
-house at a certain time!
My morale was now completely
restored! So off I went!

I was hopeless at golf, and all games
but it was fun all the same, and I
quickly got to know his family, who
lived quite near, and they made me
welcome, and have become lifelong
friends.

We were very fond of each other, and
set a ball at Greenwich, to which
he had asked me, he danced up to
me & my partner, whispered "Can I
have all the extras"? I nodded
as the "extras" were some of the best
times for dancing - not so crowded.

Alas, there were no extras, and he told me, years afterwards, that he was going to have proposed to me during those extras! But it was not to be! He afterwards married a childhood friend, a very pretty girl.

My coming-out dance was given by a very kind, rich couple, brewers called Blake, who gave it for 17 of us girls, at the Thurgate Hall, Gosport. Myself, Nellie Andrews, Marjorie Greenfell and Phyllis Seely. My uncle Herbert gave me my first evening dress, he was my godfather and so kind. It was a very elaborate one - satin + chiffon, made in Southsea.

1906

In those days one always had ones dresses made for one, there was no such thing as "stripping a peg" or "readymade" clothes!

Early in 1906 my father's time at Gosport came to an end, and he went on $\frac{1}{2}$ pay, I think, till October. We left Abberstone, and went to live at S. Farnborough near Aldershot for 6 months where he had quite a lot of work.

About now was broached the plan of my going to India! Imagine my thrill at the suggestion that when my aunt & cousin, the Thurstons, went out to join my uncle Vernon at Pooree, I should go with them!

It was a good plan, as Sylvia was due to "come out" the next year, and Monica shortly afterwards, so I should be safely out of their way!
 However when my father was appointed G.O.C. Southern Command, with a mar-
 -vellow Quarter at Portsmouth, I could not help envying S. and M. going to live in such an interesting place, and would willingly have given up the trip to India? Very stupid, but understand-
 -able I think.

Portsmouth and India, 1906

We settled in to Pavilion House early in October 1906, but after about a week I was off to India.
 My father took me up to London - to the Hotel Metropole, we went to a theatre that night and he took me down to Tilbury next day, where my aunt n cousin met us on the ship, S.S. Moldavia. He then said goodbye & faded away.
 I was pretty low at the time, after 2 or three very gratifying letters from my naval "boy-friend"! However once out of "the Bay" and nearing Gibraltar, life took on a more "rosate hue" and a lovely 2 or 3 weeks ensued!

at Jib. was stationed the father of an Alverstoke friend of mine, Dorothy Eberton. She knew our ship was to call there and the date, and hardly had we tied up to the dock, when a sparkling green pinnace, flying an Admiral's flag drew up alongside, a smart young officer ran up the steps and ushered my Aunt, cousin & self down to the pinnace, and eventually to Admiralty House. Interested passengers watching over the rails, thinking we must be V. I. P.'s

This happened again at Port Said! At Alverstoke I had made friends with a youth who had an "impediment" in his speech & couldn't talk or hear properly. His father was a shipping magnate at Port Said, and he had asked me the name of our ship & the scheduled date of arrival, and as we tied up at P. S., a cable was handed to me, saying Cyril Broatch was coming aboard & wished us all to go ashore with him & be shown around!

More V. I. P. Treatment, as; Very soon a smart white boat came alongside rowed by 6 men in white with Red Fez-es, and off we set. More thrill for the watching passengers!

My cousin and I made some very good friends on board, Australians as the *Mohavia* was on the Australian run, but we had to change ships at Aden also, for the Indian run. It was sad to leave our "gang" and I don't remember much of the last week to Bombay, beyond the general interest of life at sea.

India, 1906 to 1907

I suppose we must have reached Bombay early in November 1906. Tremendous interest of course, as everything was new to us, and the weather, marvellous, the 'cold weather' as the winter months are called there. From Bombay it is about a 3-day train journey, and I don't remember there being a restaurant car on the train at that time.

We had to leave the train at various stations & have our meals in the Station Refreshment Rooms as far as I can remember.

Uncle V. had sent Teku Din to Bombay (Mr. Beaver) to help with the luggage etc - an absolutely invaluable servant so we had a very comfortable journey.

Life at No 10 Cantonments, Roorkee was a long lovely holiday and thoroughly enjoyed from start to finish! We rode, drove in Aunt B's smart buggy, had picnics, concerts dances countless dinner-parties, camps elephant expeditions, a visit to Agra to Uncle V's niece, to see the Taj, to Delhi to see the mutiny places, and in the hot weather, went up to Mussoorie for several months.

India and Home, 1907 to 1908

On this journey - no railway after Dehra Dun, we were carried up the mountain roads in "dandies", sort of canvas cradles with 2 long poles, slung onto the shoulders of 4 coolies, who marched out-of-step, so that the dandy didn't develop too much of a swing.

I didn't enjoy Mussoorie very much, the rains were on, and everything was saturated + mouldy + had to be hung out to dry whenever the rain let up, + the sun came out, also, the riding terrified me, I was always afraid Joan - my horse, would slip over + down the Khud!

We went down to Roorkee again about early October I think, glorious weather, and I became embroiled in what promised to be a real romance! Everybody thought so, including myself, but alas it all fizzled out, and I returned to England a sadder + wiser person, with a badly cracked - if not broken - heart!

However on the ship S.S. Castalia
 anchor line, there was another morale
 raiser, a Major Walker Indian Army
 who speedily attached himself to
 me and I had a very pleasant voy-
 -age home
 He came to see me several times

Portsmouth and Salisbury, 1908 to 1910

at Ravelin House after we got home,
 but, after an affecting farewell scene
 in the dining room where I had to sing
 him the song I sang a lot on board
 (Schubert's Serenade), he left, and
 had to go back to India
 I never saw him again, & think he was
 killed in the first war,

We were at Rav. till 1910, and life
 was most luxurious, and lazy!
 We went to most marvellous
 Balls, dances, picnics, and lovely
 winter holidays in Switzerland,
 twice to Chateau-d'Ax - (once Villars
 where Sylvia met her future husband)
 and once Istiad, glorious experiences

My father was appointed to Salisbury
 as G.O.C. - he was now a Brigadier
 somewhat of a comedown after
 Portsmouth and our lovely house.
 We had quite a nice villa-type house
 St. Marks, Bourne Avenue) and
 from here, in 1911, Sylvia & Bertie
 were married on May 6th in
 the Cathedral! A lovely wedding
 the first, and far the best of any
 shows owing to the war,
 Mousie went out to stay with
 them later on.

Salisbury and London, 1911 to 1912

31
 1911-12 - Salisbury
 while at Salisbury London
 my father suffered an eye fatality
 a "slipped retina" and though
 he had an operation + long convalescence
 it was not a success, so he retired.

We then went up to London and
 took rooms, at the Naval + Military
 Hotel, Harrowton Rd. S. Kensington
 where we (self and parents) were for
 a good long time.
 My father was awarded the C.M.G.
 at this time.

while in London we met + renewed
 acquaintance with a subaltern we
 had known at Portsmouth, and whom
 I subsequently married.
 He was recovering from a breakdown
 and didn't know many people, so
 we saw a great deal of each other
 and he took me about all over the
 place + eventually asked me to
 marry him - in the rain, sitting
 under an umbrella under a haw-
 thorn tree in the Green Park!!

We then moved on to lunch at
 Hatchetts, Piccadilly, where I found I
 couldn't eat anything owing to nerves

London and San Remo, 1912 to 1913

I suppose! after thinking it over for about a week (I was very much attached to somebody else at the time, as A. knew) I decided it would be the best thing all round, so wrote & said I would.

He had already applied to go out to East Africa & join the K. A. R. (King's African Rifles, to make some money (he only had a subaltern's pay) and after we had been engaged for about a month, he sailed for Nairobi.

He had been down to Nainby, near Louth in Lincolnshire, to stay with his people at the Rectory, and also with his sister Frances Staniland at Wyberton House Boston, and liked them all very much.

Plans had been made for a long time for my parents & my sister Monica & self to spend the winter months at San Remo. Coming with us was a cousin of Mother's Alice Riddell, her daughter Sybil, for some reason called Ray, and Alice's maid Mary Anne!

We sailed in a Dutch liner, I can't remember the name, and never have I known such a voyage! a full gale was blowing & during the hours in the Bay, the Captain told us he had given up all hope of saving the ship! Very pleasant!

San Remo and Alverstoke, 1913 to 1915

We were all so seasick however, that I don't think we should have muddled! We landed at Geneva and went straight on by train to San Remo.

We spent the winter months at San Remo quite happily, Monica and I joining the church choir, which we enjoyed very much on occasions each of us singing solos, and also duets at the services.

We sang "I waited for the Lord" together, I sang "He was despised, and rejected of men" and also Gounod's "There is a Green Hill Far away" on Good Friday, 1913 as solos, and Gounod's Ave Maria.

In the spring my Father + Mother moved to Hyères, and Monica and I returned to London with a lady who was also going, a Mrs Waters.

My people had recently bought a house in Alverstoke, Holt Corner where we spent the next few years. M. went out to India to Sylvia again, and came home with her and Bertie on the outbreak of war in 1914.

This was an agonising time of course during the first 6 months of it 6 of our favourite 1st cousins were killed - Ralph and Gerald Winercroft Cooper and Maurice Pentrose - Fitzgerald, Bob Ingham & Ted Pentrose

War, Wedding and Married Life, 1913 to 1915

Sylvia came to live in Alverstoke with John and various nurses for him, and M. & I did what war-work we could long over to Portsmouth for lectures, Red Cross classes etc, mother ditto. My father was called up and given a responsible munitions job in Sheffield.

My fiancé, Arthur Hall, was still out in East Africa but early in 1915 he was invalided home with a bad heart due to sunstroke and heat-stroke. We were married at Alverstoke on June 9th 1915, and went to the Coburg (now Comnaught) Hotel for the start of our honeymoon, going on to the Torr Hotel at Lynmouth, Dorset later.

From there we were recalled after a week to return & see A's brother-in-law, Meaburn Staniland before he went overseas on active Service. We stayed at Manly Rectory and all saw him off at Boston Station. He was killed shortly afterwards & buried at Deauville, Belgium. His brother, Geoffrey, was also killed.

Arthur was still C₃, though improv-
ing, and was eventually called up to join a 6th Battalion, Dorsets, at

War, 1915 to 1916

Weymouth. We lived in digs at a village near -> Wyke Regis, for a time, but he was not sent on active service till May, 1916.

At the previous winter my elder son Geoffrey was on the way. We had taken a small furnished house nearer to Weymouth than Wyke Regis, and were settled in it, with all wedding presents (not very many owing to the war!) a maid, and his batman, and were very happy, & I never felt sick or sorry!

This only lasted a short time however as A. was recalled to Aldershot "preparatory to active service", so off he went next day, leaving me & Kate and the house to pack up, a major operation, especially under the circumstances!

A. quickly found a furnished house in Faruhay, & wired to me to come, so I sublet Reabourne, against the orders of the landlord, and packed up everything again, & Kate and I journeyed to Faruhay, where A. was able to join us and cycle over there (to Aldershot every day). All this time I was making no preparations whatever for my baby's arrival, nobody seemed to bother or

War, Farnham, 1916

or advise me, until Sylvia came
 live with me at Farnham about 7th
 I was very well, but could not thin
 beyond May 6th the date A's battal
 was due for active Service.

This date was also Monica's Weddin
 -day! On the ship coming home w
 Sylvia from India, she had met a
 Junior officer, Jordanne Cave. Bigley
 and they became engaged, and
 were married at St. Mary Abbot
 on the day after the 6th Bn. went over

Going up to London for M's wedding
 train stopped at Farnborough stati
 and the Bn was all collected the
 including Arthur, who just had to
 to spot me looking out of the window
 we had a hasty kiss & few words,
 that was our farewell!

My recollections of M's wedding
 very vague - I was pre-occupied,
 naturally, & neither looking nor
 feeling my best! and went back
 Farnham as soon as possible.
 I had to stop at Farnborough, dr
 to Aldershot, collect all Arthur's
 baggage, gear of every kind, and
 on to Farnham - Taxi of course!

I forgot to say that during the Farnham period, we acquired our first car! A heavy 2-seater with boot, a Bedford-Buick!

A. arrived one day and said "I've bought a car", just like that! No license, no driving-test, no lessons no nothing!

A. sergeant "knew something about cars" and A. went out with him once or twice, and, deciding that he now knew quite enough about it, we set off one morning in April, to drive down to Plymouth! Several hundred miles. For him to say Goodbye to his elder sister, Hilda Hutton.

We were lighthearted on starting, a fine spring morning, but things soon began to go wrong! A. knew nothing about the engines of cars, nor I, and she kept stopping, had to be wound up by hand - no self-starters then! and we had several punctures as well, the engine boiled time after time, and eventually, it got dark & the oil-lamps had to be lit. Such a trip! We got there eventually, safe & sound, our guardian angels having done their job well and proper, & I was none the

War, Farnham and Huntingdon, 1916

worse, in spite of countless descents & ascents in & out of the car, helping change wheels, remove tyres and all sort of effort, still, we got there and also back to Farnham without mishap!

When Bertie had gone overseas Sylvia John, Patricia - born at Alverstoke in 1915 - came to live at Farnham with me, and Sylvia and I got down to house-hunting for somewhere for me to have my baby, due towards the end of July. We went, ~~by bus~~, to several houses we saw advertised, none of them suitable so eventually I wrote to a friend of ours, Dorothy Sumner, a Naval Captain's wife, to ask if she could help us to find somewhere to go!!

She answered with a marvellous offer; they had a country place near Chichester, Sussex, which was empty at the time, and would be for 6 months, & she would let it to us! Imagine the relief all round, as it was big enough to take us all, and a pretty large party we were! Sylvia, John, Pat, nurse self, Kate who stuck to us splendidly & stayed till after Geoff's birth.

War, Huntingdon, 1916

It was a darling place, cottage, lovely garden, a quiet village and very peaceful.

We had various friends to stay, and early in July my monthly nurse came, to my great relief.

She was a marvel, did half the work of the house, walked in to see the doctor about me, as, owing to my spinal curvature, she was worried about possibilities!

These worries turned out to be justified as I was told afterwards.

Things started about 10 o'clock P.M. on the 18th July, very protracted, and at mid-day 19th nurse rang up Dr. Smart & said he must come. He was in the middle of an operation, but handed over to someone, and came, but without an anaesthetist!

Telephoned back for one, and in the meantime asked where my people were, as it was unlikely I would survive, and almost impossible for the baby to!

However his fears were not realised for G. was born, with much difficulty I believe, at 3 o'clock on July 19th, a four-foot baby, not red or wrinkled, but

was. 1916 - Guattington. 40

but as skin like a bisuit - thing doll was I proud! I had hoped it would be a boy, and never visualised or thought of a girl!
 He weighed 3 lbs. 3 ozs. not very much, but put on weight at an enormous rate, and really was a perfect beauty.

Nurse Hodgson stayed for about 6 weeks - I was not allowed up for 4 solid weeks, & was delighted to be the centre of interest all that time. Nurse H. only charged £2-2- a week! More than of course, but considering she usually charged £10-10- or more she was awfully good to us!

Various relations came to stay - my father for a bit, A's father too, Miss Forrest, then mother, and except that the Battle of the Somme was dragging & A. in it I was quite content.

Septoria left Guattington as autumn came on, and A. came on leave for a fortnight in October.

We still had the car, and we arranged for Geoff to be christened by uncle Jack Teurose, at Mr. Petworth church. So A. drove me & baby, and a nurse I had just engaged (£24 - 4 yers!)

War, Huntingdon and London, 1916

over to Petworth for the ceremony. (41)
 We had not decided on his first name, but I wanted Fenrose and all the Halls had to have Dickinson so I wanted one for evereday we as it were and we wavered between Guy, Desmond, Geoffrey, Derek + could not decide - Aunt Annie Fenrose was going to be godmother, and on entering the church she said to me 'call him Geoffrey' so we did!

He flourished most satisfactorily, and was a bouncing 3-months old before A. came on 10 days leave and saw him for the first time!

It was during this leave we were able to drive over to Petworth for his christening. Geoffrey Fenrose Dickinson.

Sylvia left Huntingdon in November and I followed shortly afterwards as we had only taken it for 6 months. Self, nurse and Baby made for the Naval + Military Hotel once more and were there till A. was invalided home with trench fever and bad heart.

Later he re-joined the 6th Bn. at Weymouth and we all lived in digs on the front, very comfortably. But we had a bad time there too

War, 1916 to 1917

I developed measles. Geoff caught it from me & it turned to broncho-pneumonia and he was quite bad, while I recovered quickly!

It was here that I realised that my 2nd baby was on the way! something of a shock, but a very "glad" one, though it meant a good deal of planning and future arrangements.

after A. went back to France, Hilda asked me up to Manby, so we left Weymouth and kind Mrs Abbott & journeyed up to Lincolnshire.

This must have been about May or June, and the new baby was due in August, and no arrangements made again!

Impossible to remain at Manby I know, so rather a worry all round till an angelic connection of the Halls offered us the loan of her house for 2 months, to see me over the event.

So I once again was lucky enough to find Nurse Hodgson could come and nurse, Geoff and I moved in to Abbey House, South early in July, with 2 maids - sisters - and were very happy & comfortable.

Here Roger was born on Aug. 12th and Geoff had his 1st birthday, July 19th.

War, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincs, 1917 to 1918

Arthur came on leave again, arriving one evening unexpectedly, & as our 2 month tenancy was up, we took rooms at Sutton, partly because the Huttons were already there, and sea-air was needed for the babies, and a jaded man from the trenches!

Here the boys, nurse & I stayed for nearly 2 years, and enjoyed a very happy time at Seabank House with the 2 nice Miss Walkingtons who couldn't have been nicer or more welcoming.

We lived very cheaply, the place was full of troops, and mild gaiety and the boys flourished.

They really were pictures, with real golden hair, curls in Geoff's case, & a nice little wave in Roger's and were admired by everybody.

I considered them quite outstanding!!

Towards the autumn of 1918 I had a wire from A., saying he was coming on 4 days leave, & to meet him at the Grosvenor Hotel, London on a certain date! So I got a new dress, had a hair-do engaged a room & went off to town!

War. 1917-1918 = Sutton,

Settled into our room, and met every train at Victoria for 2 days, but A. never came. Then I saw on a poster "41st Division Heavily engaged", realised this was A's division, so knew he couldn't be coming, packed up, paid my bill (they only charged me a single room price, very nice of them!) and back I went to Sutton!

There was a wire waiting for me saying he was unable to come, and that was the last I heard from him for a fortnight! and then at last a field postcard, to say he was O.K!

Later, he was recalled home, and appointed I.S.O. 2. to General Hackett-Pain in Belfast! So we were faced with a major upheaval packing up cots, pram, trunks and the accumulation of 2 years.

A. went on ahead to try & find accommodation, & self & party were invited to stay at an aunt's flat in Kensington till a certain date after which it was wanted for someone else. We did not like London life after Sutton! & were glad when it was time

War and Peace, London and Belfast, 1918 to 1919

to leave. But as our zero hour at the flat approached, so did a transport strike in London, and on the day we were to leave not a bus, a cab, nor a taxi were to be seen or had! I was desperate, as we had to leave, because of the incoming visitors!

So I rang up some influential friends of ours - good angels indeed - explained the situation, and in no time at all round came a small private bus took us and all our gear to Euston, where the friends (George and Olive Burt) were waiting for us, with our trunks!!

You may imagine I embraced them both I was so relieved.

It was a night journey for us, up to Stranraer in Scotland, from where we were to cross to Larne in Co. Antrim. I was not at all well, now, worry and the strenuous packing, uncertainty, & so on, + was nervous of the crossing as the Leinster, sister ship of the one we were to go in, had been sunk the previous week, with great loss of life!

We all had to wear life-jackets and it was a very anxious couple of hours till we arrived at Larne! all was well though, + A. met us at Belfast!

War and Peace, Cliftonville Avenue, Belfast, 1918 to 1919

A had taken rooms for us at a hotel but could only take them for one week the place was so crowded! We all had a touch of flu on arrival but I had to go out + house-hunt or even dogs-hunt, for somewhere to go.

Nobody would have me with the 2 boys! and I got more + more desperate as time went on, and eventually poured out my troubles to the cashier who was cashing a cheque for me at Lloyds Bank!

"Do you, by any chance, know of any -where we could go, even temporarily next Monday, preferably for rather a long time"?

I was nearly at the end of my tether by now, and he must have realised that I think, and he said "Well, Mr Hall, I may be able to help you, as one of our clients has just been knocked down by a taxi and killed, and they may be wanting to let the house, in Cliftonville Avenue, off the Antrim Road"!!

I nearly kissed him on the spot! and he found out all the details for us and it was fixed up for us to take it on a certain date, leaving us about a week to put in some where!

Peace, Cliftonville Avenue, Belfast, 1919

Well, I eventually found somewhere where they would take nurse & the boys for the interim time, and A's landlady said I could come & join him in her lodgings house over the week-end, so that was that - much relief.

But, on waking up on the Monday morning we were to move, I felt like death, and shortly after getting out of bed I vomited up what must have been a gastric ulcer! Horrible consequences - A. rushed for the landlady, she rushed to the tele-
-phone, the doctor came, also a nurse from a Nurse's home opposite! and I had to go back to bed where I remained for a month!

This must have been the direct consequence of all the accumulated worry and strain of the last months. A. was not able to help very much as he was very busy with his General. I think he must have moved out of his room by now - am a bit vague - & moved into Cliftonville Avenue house with nurse & the boys.

The landlady was very kind & nice, & I quickly recovered, with good nursing & freedom from worry, though that occurred later!

McGorran's Farm, Ballykinlar, 1919

McGorran's Farm, Ballykinlar - 1919.
 We had to leave C. Avenue in the summer of this year, and took rooms in a farmhouse near the military camp at Ballykinlar, by an arm of the sea, + nice countryside. but before this, after my ulcer episode A. took some leave and we went up into Co. Donegal for a holiday, very nice.

at Ballyk. the boys and I had a nice peaceful time at first with an elderly countrywoman to help me look after them, as nurse went home for a fortnight's holiday to England. A. was practically busy, preparing for a major occasion and celebration in Belfast in July.

This was the tracing + tracking of elderly disabled or retired members of the Ulster Division, to give a huge function March Past, lunch, meals all day + a general ovation to Sir John French - and A. had been specially seconded and detailed to run the whole show so we hardly saw him at Ballyk!

I was still uncertain, + so were 2 doctors I saw in Belfast, as to whether I was to have a 3rd baby or not. However this was speedily decided for me, as, on the very morning of the big Belfast Ceremony, to which I was to go, and all arrangements made; I had a miscarriage!

Ballykinlar, Belfast, 1919 to 1920

Nurse was back luckily, and coped with the boys, and Mrs McG, sent for the local doctor, a typical old Irish peasant-type, who clumped up the stairs in fiddle boots & old suit, and said "you can get up tomorrow" and went away again!

I was not bed at all, rather relieved really, and managed somehow to convey to Arthur, by telegram, that I was "unable come today, writing" that something had happened, as the next day a smart Staff car arrived, with 3 red-tabbed officers including A., and I was removed from Ballyk. & the farm, the boys and nurse, and spent the next fortnight as guest of a charming couple, a Major & Mrs Page.

Various doctors, overhauling etc, but a lovely peaceful time. I was devastated at having had to miss the big Belfast function, and A. leading the procession, & he told me the whole affair was a tremendous success, & he received much kudos on recovering, we had another week leave, & on return took a house from a Marvellous Mrs McCalmont, at Greenisland, outside Belfast, on the Long.

Waterside, Greenisland, Co Down, 1919 to 1920

Waterside - Greenisland - Co. Down. (31)
 919 she was a friend of some old Irish friends (from Lismore) of the family - a Sir George + Lady Richardson, and I think they must have fixed up the house for us, at £ only 10 a month!
 A lovely place, garden going right down to a beach, and the tidal lough.

I had many heart-burnings over the nearness to the water & put nurse on her honour never to let the boys now 3 and 2, down to the beach alone. However they managed to evade her sometimes, as I came home one day from Belfast, to be told that they had thrown all their available toys into the lough, and they were never seen again!! the toys, I mean.

On another occasion while I was out Roger had climbed up under a small wooden pier, on the beach, stuck his head through a hole in the flooring & couldn't get it back! Geoff, in floods of tears, had rushed to the house to fetch nurse, leaving R. dangling by his head under the pier! His 2nd narrow escape, the first one being the farm cart wheel, which fell over him at Ballykiladar, weighing, the farmer told me several cwt. as the hub alone weighed over 2, being of solid iron!

Greenisland, Plymouth, 1919 to 1920

1920-21. Greenisland - Plymouth. (52)

We lived at Greenisland till early 1921, when A. was ordered to Plymouth on a staff job. He left first, as usual! - to find us accommodation, so nurse and I once more had to pack up the house, arrange the route home, and eventually leave Ireland. Very sorry to do so!!

We had been very happy here, and with old Maggie (from Ballykinnear) as cook, A's Batman Wilking I think as parlourman, and nurse, had quite a staff!

As far as I can remember we went from Belfast straight to Plymouth where A. had found a house at Stoke and once more unpacked and settled down!

Finances were rather short by now, A. was a major, but pay was very bad and A. hankered after the West African Frontier Force, based on Lagos with better pay! He was passed fit and all arrangements made for us to sail on a certain date, and we were offered the lease of a villa at Wimereux, by my aunt, Muriel Greene!

The boys were now 4 and 5, and nurse had left! so I had to start looking for someone to help me with them.

Plymouth, Wimereux, Sutton, Instow, 1919 to 1920

Plymouth - Wimereux - Sutton - Instow!
 53
 They really were rather an outstanding couple, & people used to turn a look at them in the street, to my pride & pleasure. We used to keep them in woolly jerseys knitted by me, in various colours, and nurse, & later Ethel, made their shorts at this stage in corduroy velvet to match the jerseys, primrose, camel blue etc, & they did look nice!

In the Belfast days I heard someone say to her companion "to look at them would do you as much good as a week at the sea!"

After much searching & some failures I engaged a very nice girl, Ethel — as Mother's help, and we all became great friends.

By now A. had been struck down by a bad case of lumbago & could hardly move, had to go to hospital and miss his passage to Lagos!

I had booked passages for Ethel, the boys and myself in a Dutch ship, the Ryndam sailing direct from Plymouth to Boulogne, only a mile or two from Wimereux. Ethel was uncertain, at first, at coming to France with us, but, said she'd come for 2 months, to settle us in, & eventually stayed 54 years!

Wimereux, 1920 to 1921

The journey to W. was very successful, none of us was seasick, & having left Plymouth (C. being still in hospital.) at 9.30 P.M. we arrived at Boulogne about 11.30 A.M. next day, to Hotel for the first few days, looking round, engaging a cook - Augustine - shopping etc and we eventually moved into Casa Verde & settled down.

It was a very ramshackle, tumbledown place, plumbing hopeless, hardly any furniture and not worth the rent we were asked to pay.

But the exchange was good at the time, the weather fine, I made some friends, & the boys flourished, so we made the best of it!

Here Roger had another - his 3rd - near escape from disaster!

They were sailing boats in the little river that flows into the sea at W.

Quite a fast stream.

Ethel was sewing, when Geoff ran her up crying, & pointing to the River where R.'s head was just visible, floating downstream towards the sea!

Ethel coped very well - it wasn't deep and a bedraggled, weeping little party staggered up to the house, Geoff still weeping!

I never felt very well there, & we put it

Wimereux, Sutton, 1922

Wimereux - Sutton - 1923

down to the drains! Reggie Windle, an R.A.M.C. cousin of the mother's, and his wife lived near, and he came to give me the 'once over', had a look at the drains, & ordered an immediate return to England!

The Huttons were staying with us now and I know Hilda & her nurse were thankful to leave, and so was I, and engaged rooms again at Sutton. Mother came out & stayed with us too but not for very long!

So off we all went again, this time from Boulogne to Folkestone as far as I can remember. A night at a hotel in London and up into Lincolnshire next day by the 4 train!

H. & party left the train at Wilton & the boys & I went on to Sutton once more to Seabank House and the kind Miss Walkinot's.

We spent the winter of 1922 here with a.m. West Africa, and in March '23 we took rooms at Instow, North Devon where the Lowe's & Sigley's already there.

Shortly before leaving Sutton for Instow, both boys developed whooping-cough, caught from a fellow-lodger!

I wrote to the Instow landlady

Instow, 1922 to 1923

asking what I should do, and she like a saint, said she didn't mind a bit and we were to come as arranged! So off we went plastered the railway carriage with disinfectant, kept all newcomers at bay, & had a most comfortable journey!

● No 3. Marine Parade - Mrs & Miss Hare was a very nice, and happy home from home, and we all flourished there, living on the beach after the whooping-cough was over, and the boys made the acquaintance of their Howley & Bigley cousins.

Arthur's cousin, Monty Hall, late of Whetton Manor, Notts. had recently sold it, & bought Willesleigh House near Barnstaple, only a few miles from Instow, so I took the boys over there once or twice, & they were much impressed! I was ever much addicted to "furnish" & on noticing 2 framed coats-of-arms with the Hall motto Persevere in large letters, in the dining room, exclaimed, "oh, I should have called one of the boys Percy & the other Vere."

Instow, Seacroft, Yelverton, 1922 to 1923

1922-5 Instow (Seacroft) Yelverton
 they "were not amused" and
 no wonder!! Page 57

Arthur was due home on leave
 from West Africa soon so we
 moved to lodgings at Yelverton
 N. of Plymouth where we stayed
 over Xmas/22, and A. joined us.
 The boys started school there,
 a mixed "dame-school" affair, &
 went every morning.

After Xmas, we packed up once more
 & went off to Skegness, taking a fer-
 -rished house, Dunceathra - Seacroft.

This was right on the golf-links &
 very nice, but too expensive for long.
 So we set about looking for a smaller
 place, & were lucky to find a brand
 new one, the first concrete house in
 the place - Tarrawarra, Albert Avenue.
 In we took, on a longish basis, and
 moved from Dunceathra, and had a
 happy & peaceful time there.
 The boys went to another small school
 every day, & each week I was sent their
 reports. Noticing that both of them were
 always 1st or 2nd in class, I felt rather
 smug, until told that they were the
 only 2 in the class!!

Seacroft, 1923 to 1924

We had entered both boys at a prep school near Market Harborough, where A's nephew Dick Hutton already was, or just going, and also the son of great friends, Capt. + Mrs. Cameron. They were entered for 1925, and a friend of ours - Mary Wright, a heroine, who brought up Arthur's 4 Staniland boys after their parents' deaths during the war)

advised us to send them first to a boys play school at Skegness, the "orient College" to accustom them to boys only. This we did, and off they used to go on their bicycles recently acquired, in the College uniforms. They remained here until 1925, when they went to Nevill Hold.

All these early 20's at Seacroft were very happy years for me, and I think, the boys. A. came home on leave twice, and for good in 1926. I made some very nice friends, and the local "society" was all very kind to me, and asked me out to Bridge Parties, which ~~was~~ "the thing" there "were"

Seacroft, 1923 to 1925

and which I very much enjoyed, and joined their Bridge Club, but only as a Reserve.

A. joined the Golf Club and played when he was on leave, and for me as a non-playing member, so that I could walk on the links + use the club house + so on.

While here - actually at Dunearth before taking Tarrawarra, Monica + Jordayne were going off to Africa, W. Africa + trying to find somewhere to leave Peter, their son, now about 4 I suppose.

One day a reply-paid wire arrived asking if we would have him! We were going away ourselves somewhere next day, so no time to discuss anything, so we wired back saying we would, & all was well,

when we got back - I can't remember where from, possibly Newmarket there was Peter ensconced, Monica having brought him + left him, as they were sailing next day!

I felt v. sorry for them, but he was quite happy, & fitted in very well. We acquired another maid, a daily called Rose, who looked after all 3

Seacroft 1923-5-5

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Boys on the beach, took them for walks, etc. as Ethel did the cooking, & I the catering & so on.

One night occurred what easily might have been, a fatal mishap to both boys!

They had bad coughs & colds, and I had bought some Cresoline mixture for burning over a candle - or small lamp it may have been.

I had put a drop or two of Friars Balsam into the little saucer as well and left it in a basin out of harm's way. I was having my supper in the sitting room downstairs, when I suddenly, smelt a strong whiff of Friars Balsam, rushed out of the room, hall full of fog & fumes, dashed upstairs boys room thick fog of fumes, rushed to open the windows, yelling at the boys! They didn't respond at first & I nearly panicked, shook them hard and gradually they woke up, it was partly sleep I think, but if I hadn't smelt the F.B. & taken action, I'm sure they'd have been suffocated!

One more narrow escape for R.!
cart-wheel - River at Wimerens, and

61 Seacroft - 1924

one at Tenlee Cottage, Stoke in 1921 which I forgot to mention, but do so now! On a wall by the staircase, were hanging 3 or 4 large oil portraits, in heavy old-fashioned gilt frames, life-size. We were all going up after lunch for the boys to have their rest, & Roger came last, dawdling along; he had just left the place immediately below the largest & heaviest picture, when the cords broke, & it clattered down on to the stairs he had only just left. A charmed life indeed.

1925 was a very bad year for me. B. & J. were to go to boarding-school, & I could hardly bear to think of it, knowing that I should have lost them altogether. Early in the year the boys caught mumps, which I caught from them on the very last day of their quarantine! I was very bad, & had a fortnight in bed - should have been back up the house!

Also, we had rather a domestic shock, one of my 2 maids was discovered to be in the family way, quite unknown to me! She left to go to friends, & the baby was born next day. Eventually she came back with the baby, & she had it adopted when it was about 2 months old, poor girl.

Seacroft, Belton, 1925

There was trouble at my departure from Tarrawarra, as I was sent a huge bill for damages: a man I had never seen came & looked all round & then sent the bill.

I then decided to have an independent damage assessor, and employed the actual builder of the house, who had shown me round originally, and on whose advice I had taken it. His bill was less than half of the owner's agent, so I paid it, and heard no more!

As far as I remember we left Seacroft, very reluctantly, about the end of May, as the boys were to start boarding school at the summer term, and my sister-in-law had kindly asked us to stay at Belton, Uppingham until then.

I remember very little of that time, except the penumbra of "school" hanging over me, and reducing me to a real state of nerves! - Anyhow they started at Key St Holt, near Market Harborough, Summer term 1925.

Belton, Alverstoke, Lee, 1925

under a Mr Boulker, and went with their cousin Dick Hutton another friend, Charlie Cameron was also there, and the matron Kitty Popillon was a family friend. These facts largely influenced us in the choice of a prep. school.

Now started a period of anxiety! Geoffrey developed pneumonia, Roger, "middle-ear", and after a birthday picnic I developed tonsillitis! Just at the start of the summer holidays!

I could only stay at Belton till the Huttons came back from school, although I was nothing like free of the tonsillitis, but had to get up, and meet the boys at Market Harborough Station!

They were both seedy too, and my mother, who met us in London, was horrified to see what she described as "3 pallid wraiths" emerging from the train!

Some kind friends, the Camerons, had asked us for the first fortnight of the holidays, to the old Horder's home, Bury House, Alverstoke.

Alverstoke, Lee, Oxford, 1925 to 1926

1925 - 26 - Alverstoke, Lee, Oxford 64
 and we duly arrived, I feeling
 like nothing on earth, really ill
 and next day had the doctor, who
 diagnosed "nervous prostration"
 and I remained in bed for a
 fortnight! Recovering!

What a quest! The boys enjoyed
 being with the 5th Cameron children
 and everyone was charming &
 kind to us all.

When I was convalescent, I took
 rooms at the Victoria Hotel, Lee-
 on-the-Solent, for some sea-air
 for us all!

I was still a "poor thing" with
 very bad rheumatism in my arms
 and legs, for which the doctor
 gave me injections, which largely
 cleared it up.

I am vague about the rest of those
 holidays, but think we went to
 lodgings at Exmouth, near my
 father & mother, & where my
 husband joined us, on leave
 from W. Africa.

After term began, I moved into
 No 3 Trefusis Terrace which my
 parents had just bought, and had
 another spell of bed!

Exmouth, London, 1925 to 1926

1925 - 26. Exmouth - London.

Early in 1926 Arthur came home from W. Africa for good, and in due course was appointed to the 12th Bn. Dorset Regt. - the 39th, as 2nd in Command.

They were, at the time, in Malta, so we were faced with school + holiday problems for the boys, as with many other parents!

Our 2 families, Halls + Penroses were all marvellous! volunteering to have Geoffrey + Roger for any, or all of them, and I don't think they missed us at all!

Besides the family (Lowsley, Bigley Huttons) we had some old family friends from our school-days.

One of these, the eldest son, George Burt by name, later Sir G. Burt the owner I believe, or high up member of Mowlem + Burt, big contractors + builders, and very well-off.

They, George & his wife were most awfully kind to all of us. I had recently married, and they had one son, who was to be the only child.

Therefore they asked us if we would allow G. + R. to go to them often, for any holidays, to be a companion for Gordon.

London, Voyage, Malta, 1926

London - Voyage - Malta 1926

This seemed to us a very handsome offer, and we gratefully accepted putting our various family parties in touch with them, although they were already acquainted, and leaving them to arrange between themselves about where the boys were to go to whom!!

I know at the B.'s they were lapped in luxury, which was the only hesitation we had, fearing the life would give them a "champagne Standard" of living! A couple of Rolls cars and that kind of thing!

They were kindness itself to the boys, and I don't think the luxury had any lasting effect on them.

In ~~July~~^{April} 1926 occurred the General strike, transport of all kinds ~~was~~ everything! which made our preparations for departure for Malta extremely difficult!

We had already been allotted our passages in a P. & O. name forgotten and our heavy luggage was on

board "NOT WANTED ON VOYAGE", and we were to sail from Tuburay, so stayed at the Naval & Military Hotel, S. Kensington.

Shortly before our sailing date was due the whole thing was cancelled! We were transferred to another ship, and were to sail from Plymouth a few days earlier!!

Loading our heavy stuff still on board the original ship! to be delivered at Malta later!!

So we set off from Liverpool St. late one evening, dead tired from having had to do all shopping & everything in London on foot - no taxis, cabs or anything, except if one was lucky a lift in somebody's private car! a bit risky if one thinks of it!

It took that train about 7 hours to get to Plymouth, manned by volunteers I suppose, and there was not enough food on board for all the travellers! I know we had nothing to eat!

However we had a very pleasant voyage as far as I remember, all rather vague in my mind and arrived at the Grand Harbour, Valetta on the scheduled date.

Malta, 1926

From now on, till Dec, 7th I think, we had a wholly enjoyable time, and, once I had got used to being so far from the boys, I settled down very happily, to being "senior lady" in the barracks! Our Colonel was not married, at least there was no Mrs Herbert, so as my husband was 2nd in Command I stood in the C.O.'s wife's place, as far as regimental duties were concerned, and very much I enjoyed them!

Colonel H. came to see me after we were settled in our quarters. No 3 officers' Quarters, St. Andrews Barracks. He told me what he wanted me to do, chief among the "duties" was, 'to visit all the married families.'

Now, that was what I had been warned against by the other officers' wives - Majors, & Captains!

They had said "don't you do it Mrs Hall! they don't like it, they think you are "district visiting", & so on, so there I was, having assented, as a matter of course, to the Colonel's orders, and looking on that duty as an obvious one, so it was rather awkward for me when I told them all I was going to visit all 40 of the soldiers' wives!

Malta, May to December 1926

1926 - May - Dec. Malta
 My husband got the R.S.M. - Sgt. Edwards, very nice, to produce a list of all these families, names, number of children etc, and I was told the best times to visit them was between 11.30. and 12.30. in the morning. So, armed with the list, off I used to go each morning, rather in fear and trembling, after what I'd been told! They were all, with no exception, simply delighted to see me! far from being -senting it, they all said "now we can feel that someone is taking an interest in us, & in how we are getting on" and all implored me to come again, so proud to show off their babies, and children, & we became really quite fond of each other and I made some real good friends. My first few weeks were poisoned by the vicious onslaughts of sand-flies! in spite of mosquito nets round our beds, they seemed to pervade space, & nothing would keep them off, & I was nearly got laid low with sandy fever. However they eventually left me alone and I took to bathing!

St Andrews Barracks, Malta, 1926

1926. St. Andrews Barracks - Malta
 The other Regiment in St. Andrews Bay
 the Gloucesters, I think, offered the
 ladies of their regiment, and ours,
 the use of a room in the officers quar-
 -ters of St. George's Barracks, as a
 dressing room, in the mornings
 and how I used to enjoy that heavenly
 bathing!

The walk down to St. George's Bay,
 where the Barracks were, was quite
 a way, I was always alone, none
 of the other wives ever came, to my
 knowledge. = quite incomprehensible!

Clear, blue water, quite warm
 really, cloudless sky, water so
 full of salt you couldn't sink, + I
 got quite proficient at various
 forms of swimming, + passed
 the test that all the soldiers had to,
 and one day my husband and I
 swam across the Bay and back!
 quite an achievement!

We had our small Standard car
 out there with us, and used to take our
 loads of friends out at week-ends
 to bathe at St. Pauls Bay, Sandy Bay
 & so on, and have picnic tea, and
 sometimes lunch, but we didn't go
 in for a "social" life at all, no

Malta, 1926

1926 - Malta.

Winter is the social season there as the Navy all leave on manoeuvres, + when it heats up, a lot of people go home, but we just stayed put + led a quiet life!

The Regt. was ordered to India late in the year + the question was whether to home fresh + say good-bye to family + friends again, or not to!

We decided not to. However 2 or 3 days before our sailing date (12 Dec) we got a cable from my sister - "Infantile Paralysis at School gates. Cannot take Responsibility, please return."

Disturbing, to put it mildly! All our friends advised us not to go and, as all our luggage + stuff was now on board the "Message" a time expired old trooper, who I'd been taking all responsibility, and sailed with the Regiment, and all was well!

The ship was on her last legs! This voyage to Bombay turned out to be her last, as after it she was "condemned" falling to bits she was! We were very formal and

Malta, India, 1926

1926 - Malta, India. 72

"regimental on this voyage! Full evening dress for ladies, and Mess Dress for officers, and played in to dinner by the Band to "The Roast Beef of Old England!" My husband and I were the only couple to have a cabin together! The ship was too small and it was Men one side, Women the other. Weren't we lucky? If we had been the C.O.'s cabin, I don't know. We had quite a good voyage, calling at the usual places, and reached Bombay on Dec 20th. Measles had broken out among the Married families - whose quarters were very bad, and many of them had to go in to a quarantine camp outside Bombay. I had a doctor cousin living there, Conyngham Thornton and he called at the Taj Mahal Hotel where we were all having breakfast, & being very good-looking and distinguished made quite a sensation among the officers' wives, & my stock went up!!

No 3, BI Lines, 1927

1927 - No. 3. B.I. Lines
 After breakfast, the troop ^{merit}
 train started off on its 3 day journey
 through the ghats and plains ^{to}
 merit, United Provinces, where
 the military broke out in May 1857.

Here, on arrival, it transpired that
 the Worcesters, the Regt. the Dorsets
 were relieving, had not yet
 left, and for my husband, as 2nd
 in command and myself, there
 was no quarters available!

This difficulty was soon overcome by
 the erection of a huge Shamianas,
 complete with 2 bathrooms and
 kitchens, and full complement of
 servants, which were put up in
 the garden of the Wheeler Club
 and we lived there until after
 Christmas - 1926.

Now the custom of the Regiment
 at Xmas times in the past, had been
 for the married officers to entertain
 between them, all the bachelor officers
 and very nice too.

However, this year none of the
 senior, or married officers were
 as much as unpacked! let alone
 organized or ready to entertain

No 3, BI Lines, Meerut, 1927

1927 - No 3. B.I. Lines Meerut
 so I held a meeting of the wives in our tent, and we all decided that it was an absolute impossibility for us to have a series of Xmas dinners this year, so we would issue no invitations, but wait for the bachelors to ask us!

To dine in the Mess which was organized and a running show and the obvious thing for them to do!

Xmas Day came, Parade Service of course, but no dinner invitation appeared until 2 o'clock, for dinner in the mess at 8 o'clock!

The bachelors had left the invitations till the last minute! obviously but all the same we had a very good dinner and a pleasant evening!

————— 1927 —————

Our Bungalow, usually the Colonel's of the B.I. Battalion, but now allocated to my husband as 2nd in Command, (our Colonel - Herbert, not being married) was a very nice one, next door to the Mess. It was one of the old "mutiny" bungalows very large, with a thatched roof, huge rooms and beautifully cool.

7⁵
 No 3 B.I. Lines - Meerut, 1927.
 We were speedily fixed up with a team of servants, headed by our Bearer, an invaluable Head servant, ours, a Hindoo called Dachman, was with us all the 3 years of our tour and was devoted to us, and we to him.

He travelled with us extensively, was as honest as the day and kept the others in good order.

There were Wazir Khan, a splendid looking Sikh (I think) our Butler or Khitmagar, a Bhisti or water-carrier as there was no running water at that time in Meerut.

So the Bhisti's job was to keep all receptacles full of clean fresh water carried in goat skins, and provide boiling hot baths, with water delivered in a series of petrol tins. Each bedroom had its own bathroom with long tin bath, a wash basin etc, and very comfortable it all was.

53, BI Lines, Meerut, 1927

53 B. I. Lines Meerut. 1927

Lachman, Wazir Khan, Bhisti, cook ("Kansamah") and 2 helpers, 2 men to help the Butler, 3 gardeners, a Syce or groom, the watchman or "chow-kidar", dhobi or laundry man, and the sweeper, who swept the rooms and kept the bathrooms clean, 13 servants in all!

These years were very happy ones. We both enjoyed Indian life and set out to see as much of the country as we could. We bought a new Morris Oxford and went all over the place, at week-ends, and on long leaves.

One year, 1927, we spent our long hot weather leave driving from Meerut through the U.P. to Kashmir a wonderfully organized journey by Arthur, including several weeks in a houseboat on the Dal Lake and the Jhelum River - unforgettable!

Next year, 1928, we spent B's long leave in a camp on the Banks

53, BI Lines, Meerut, UP India, 1928

1928. 53 B.I. Lines. Meerut. U.P. India.

of a rushing great River, Arthur's organization of it was perfect! On our arrival at the small village at which we had to leave the car, & walk to the camp site, we found 9 large shamanas, bath rooms, cook

house, laundry etc all in situ, our stores ordered from Bombay weeks ago, all opened and ready to be checked & counted, and on these, re-inforced by A's provisions with the salmon-rod, we proceeded to live for about 6 weeks, a lovely lazy life for me, & enjoyable, I know for A. too.

The weather was cool, woolly clothes needed in fact, we had our Siamese cat, Susan & her illegitimate offspring with us! (She never defaulted on the journey through India quite a week, because of the kitten she was tending, you see, and a horrid little creature it was too, an extra toe on each foot gave it a most ungainly appearance!

The last link with civilization we had, before settling into camp, was a Rest-house at Railhead, a place called Jokinadanagar! Here we spent

Leave from Meerut etc., April to June 1928

1928 April-June - leave from⁷⁸
Meerut etc.

also in the Rest House was staying a solitary white "sahib" & of course we soon made contact & found he was an Irishman from Dismore, Co. Waterford, and his sister had just married one of my 1st cousins, Evelyn Fenrose of Dismore!! His name I believe was Terence Tower.

Well, he was on his way down again to the Plains, & having asked me what I was going to do while I, fished, & told "try some sketching" he very handsomely walked from the Rest House to our camp, & left me a present of all his sketching materials! Paper, paints, brushes, tubes of every sort & kind! We were out unfortunately, so never saw him to thank

But a marvellously friendly gesture, wasn't it?

Following weeks were peaceful fine, as far as I remember, and we were "blackened out" several times by dense swarms of locusts! Most disconcerting, & I used to see Susan and the kitten, retire into the tents

Kulu Valley, Leave from Meerut, April to June 1928

1928 = Kulu Valley leave - April-June
from Meerut

and pull down the "chick's",
the last week of leave before
starting the journey, by car,
down to the Plains, was spent
at a rest house at Thandi, as
we both wanted to see if we
could climb part of a mountain
to some Pass, & look over into
Tibet!!

Some hope! We were already
more than 8,000 ft up, but our
bearer, the invaluable Lachman
found out that the pass was
"quite near", a "good road" so
we decided to have a smack at
it - "try anything once, sort of
thing!" & started one dark morning
and never shall I forget it!

I was terrified, and Ar didn't
much like it either, nor Lachman.

I was wearing canvas rubber-
-soled shoes! most inadequate
and became more & more tired
as we progressed & no sign
of Pass, Tibet or anything

Kulu Leave, Mandi, Journey back to Plains via Amritsar, Delhi, Meerut, June 1928

1928 Kulu leave - Mandi, Journey
back to Plains, via Amritsar
Delhi - Meerut = June 17th!!

else! A terrific cold, icy wind was now howling in our faces, sun burning us all over, I had an ordinary small solar topse + a military one, which had already been blown away twice! As I was becoming more & more frightened, I decided we'd had enough, and called out "Arthur, let's go back"! to which, much relieved, he at once agreed.

So much for that expedition! We found our way back largely by luck, unmade country roads look strangely different - but the other way on!

But when we saw our little Road-House of last night, with the motor parked outside it, I heaved a genuine sigh of relief!

By this time my feet & ankles had swelled up to such an extent that A. decided to leave at once for Mandi, have 2 days there to rest, & then Kulu!

This we did, and left our lovely camp after a lengthy hunt for Susan! in the early evening of June 17th - I think about the hottest time of the year to travel. Thick dust in the air, a wind-storm at Salkot Club, where we spent 1st night & all covered with the dust!

Journey down from Kulu to Meerut via Sialkot, Delhi etc., 1938

1938 Journey down from Kulu to Meerut, via Sialkot, Delhi etc. (8)

Susan was wretched, and none of us liked it much, but pushed on during the night, & pulled up at Maudie's Hotel Delhi, about 9 o'clock next day, almost unrecognisable under our thick coating of red & yellow dust! Bed & Bath first thing of course, alas cold water taps full of red hot water - hottest day of the hot weather. Bitter disappointment!

Left early evening for Meerut, only 40 odd miles away, but we had to be back, because an English Sahib had died, & we had to be at the funeral early. Thus ended our wholly delightful summer leave 1938 & it was finished by 3 months in a bungalow at Panikhet, this was duty as well of course.

Back to Meerut in October, another long cross-India drive next month to Bombay, as I was sailing for home in the Kaiser-i-Hind, with the Matthews early in December.

Christmas, 1928

1928. }
XMAS } - ?

82.

Left the ship at Marseilles, where mother met me, having come over from Menton. Was stayed that night in a small hotel in the Rue Cannebière, & on to Menton next day.

Afterthoughts (written in 1968)

Afterthoughts.

Before I go, I want to stress, and place on record, what a very happy life I have had, and how very much I have enjoyed it!

As a girl my fortune was told and said it would be a long one, nothing very spectacular or startling in it, but no failure, which was, I suppose as much as anyone could expect!

Anyhow if a very happy home life as a child, reasonable health many friends, quite a number of admirers and "boy friends" all through it charming parents and sisters, the kindest and best of husbands, 2 magnificent sons, delightful daughter-in-law and ³ outstandingly satisfactory and ¹ successful grand-children don't give one cause for gratitude, I don't know what can!

In fact, in the immortal words
of "Mat Hannigan" (see Den
Fenrose, what more can the gals
want!!)

Of course it has had its ups and
downs, what life has not? but
looking back over 82 years, I can
state emphatically, that I would, very
willingly live it over again.

A friend once said to me "Phyllis
you are one of the lucky ones" and
I consider it is true, and am
very grateful.

Philip (Hogden R.N.) first romance,
 wonderful dancing partner for
 years. Eventually married + re-
 tired as Captain, died of angina 1940.

Hugh (Ellis R.F.) 2nd swain, India, 1st
 class dancer etc - rode away with
 romance at its height, married 2
 sisters in quick succession, ret. as
 full General + died in '39.

Walter (Walker) Indian Army, sealed to me on
 voyage home from India with badly
 cracked heart: could not respond to
 his request - he was killed in W. War I

Victor (Sherman) for one week in Switzer-
 land, non-stop dancer - left for
 Calcutta reluctantly, eventually
 married + retired to Vancouver.

Alex (Picket) - super dancer for several win-
 ters, then cooled off, married a rich
 girl became a skeleton and is
 still living.

Lancelot (Ingham) Double 1st cousin +
 3 years younger, so romance
 frowned on from all quarters!
 married Irish girl, + had 3 brainy
 children. → Ret. as Captain, went abroad + died
 of yellow fever at Lagos. 1937. —

Matt (Hall) - my husband, and
 one of the best.

Leonard (Reed) - Switzerland 1913-14. An
 excellent dancer - no money + has
 to support aged mother! at Graydon

Peter (Truce) a very, very dear
 person + friend - end of romances

George? not a bad record! + delightful man,
 1100 charms.

The Standard Friday 27 June 1969

DEATH OF MRS P. M. HALL, OF LEGBOURNE

MRS Phyllis Mary Hall, who died at her home, Legbourne Abbey, on Thursday, was the eldest daughter of Brigadier General Cooper Penrose, CBE, RE.

She was born in Sydney, Australia, where her father was employed on the fortification of the harbour against possible attack by Russia towards the end of the last century.

She was of Anglo-Irish descent on both sides of her family, and spent her youth in military circles, mainly in England, Ireland and India.

Her connection with Lincolnshire began in 1912 when she became engaged to Arthur, younger son of the Rector of Manby (Rev Frederick Dickinson Hall).

MARRIED IN 1915

They were married in 1915, and had two sons, Geoffrey and Roger, the younger of whom was born at Abbey Park (now the Abbey House), near Louth.

Mr Arthur Dickinson Hall, her husband, held a permanent commission in the Regular Army and continued to serve through the First World War and for 12 years afterwards—almost entirely overseas.

Mrs Hall accompanied him on service in Malta and India, but during some of his absences lived with her children at Sutton-on-Sea, Seacroft and Wainfleet.

On Major Hall's retirement from the Army the family returned to Lincolnshire, settling at Seacroft, Skegness.

In 1936, with one son in the Navy and the other in the Army, they moved to Tumby Chase, Marcham-le-Fen, and two years later to Legbourne Abbey.

ACTIVE SERVICE

During the Second World War, with her husband commanding the Louth Battalion, Home Guard, and both sons on active service, Mrs Hall was active with the WVS and WI

Mr Roger Hall (sons and daughter-in-law), Miss Virginia Hall (granddaughter) and Mr Robert Staniland (nephew). Mrs Hall was afterwards buried in Legbourne Churchyard.