

Cambridge Part 2

Vignette: Clare College, Cambridge
January to September 1975



Adrian Hall

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1975

Term 2 (January to March 1975)

These notes were written in 1977 during my travels through Greece...

A rough term in a number of ways – my first full length term at Cambridge. Allowances for my illness and late start had now been made, and expectations and pressure came from a number of different and sometimes conflicting directions [family, Iwerne]... But around this time David C came to the Lord, and it was thrilling to be given the assignment of reading the Bible with him and helping him to find his feet as a Christian...

So reads the note written in haste in 1977 as part of my analysis of 'The first six years'. But this note does not tell the whole story. In 2015, I wrote:

This was indeed a tough term, but one thing I remember clearly, and that was I took up rowing! My memories were awakened by a conversation I had with Lyn on 04/12/15, just as she was finalising the employment arrangements for Laura. Lyn had talked with great enthusiasm about her daughter Vera, in Year 11 or 12 at St Peter's Girls, whose rowing team had come third out of over 200 contestants at the Yarra rowing trials. I told her about my experiences at Cambridge, the Lent bumps etc.

Anyway, as part of my physical recovery programme after TB, I decided to take up rowing, as a way of strengthening my chest, arm and leg muscles. I was a novice in the Clare Boat Club, and learned to row as part of an VIII, initially in stroke position. Being the Lent Term, it was midwinter and bitterly cold, and I seem to remember getting up before dawn and rowing in the frost and cold before breakfast and morning lectures! I don't think hot breakfasts ever tasted so good...

There is a menu I kept from the Boat Club Dinner following the Clare Fairbairn and Novices Regatta, dated 29 November 1975, so I must have kept up with the rowing all through that year, that is Term 2, Term 3 (summer) and Term 4, the Autumn or Michaelmas Term, and the first term of my Second Year.

Letters from family and friends during Term 2

Letter from Virginia, dated 14th January 1975, from Ferme Park Road, London N8:

First of all – just to say how nice it was to see you on Sunday, and looking so much better. What a 'wizard wheeze' for me to come to Cambridge! I'm sorry if I was somewhat 'off' – I'd had one of those (thankfully rare) ghastly depressions on Saturday and was feeling a little blue. Now to business.

Firstly – I don't know if you noticed that M stopped and looked at some glasses in the shop in the street between King's Parade and the Market – a shop on the left hand side. There was a tray or salver with about 6 or 8 very beautiful, rather plain, sherry glasses, I suspect antique (not the very elaborately cut ones which she also remarked). I was wondering if you could go and ask the price, or observe it thru' the window. Alas, I've not had time to look in John Lewis yet, but will do so anon. Nor have I heard from Nick, but reckon that we'd have about £25 to spend.

[The sherry glasses were to be a present from the three of us to mother and father for their 25th Wedding Anniversary on 1st April 1975.]

Secondly, I fear I have to be rather vague about my weekend. The reason is this. I may not go to Edinburgh on the weekend of February 21 to 23, as Tricia might be coming to London. If that is so, then I'd go to Edinburgh on 14 to 16 February instead. So I wonder if you could manage the 22 to 23 if necessary? I will let you know as soon as know. I hope Edinburgh will be 22nd, or otherwise I shall be away for three weekends in a row. But does it make an enormous difference to you if you come the 22nd rather than 15th? Anyway, you

must come one way or another. And do scan the papers for anything you like the sound of in the way of theatre, cinema, music (what about the Festival Hall?) etc. And we can go to All Souls [Langham Place] on Sunday. The evening has got to the stage where bed calls – so I shall conclude with a good night. Hope the term is going well – no, it hasn't begun yet. Do you want to bring Neville down as well?

Letter from my mother, dated 15th January 1975, from Legbourne:

I hope all goes well – busy no doubt, and I have been quite occupied here too. Off to Nottingham for the day tomorrow. On Tony's say-so I have just written a note to Mig – now Mrs Robertson and a widow – her address is 37 Madingley Road, and I do hope you may find time to call. Her first husband was George, the youngest of the Cary's, who died very young, about 26 I think. Mig's maiden name was Phipps, and it is her brother who becomes Bishop of Lincoln next week.... Is there not some CMS connection too? Anyhow I have written briefly about you – also asked her to come here if she visits Lincs. It all arose because I was talking to Tony, rather tired after the double Cambridge drive, and Tony said "you ought to have asked Mig for a bed!" I had not realized she was in Cambridge, and of course it's a lifetime since we met. Anyway, do go round some time, and I have mentioned Neville too. Just making marmalade, so must fly.

[I recall visiting Mig and members of her family at their large house at 37 Madingley Road. It might have been a Saturday lunch because I clearly remember one of Mig's grown-up sons asking me what I was doing that evening. When I said I was going to the CICC Bible Reading (BR) at the Union Chambers, he remarked, somewhat derisively, "That's pretty tame for a Saturday evening!"]

Letter from Richard Rhodes-James, dated 19th January 1975, from Melvill, Haileybury College, Hertford SG13 7NU:

Many thanks for your letter. I am delighted that you will be able to come on 16 March. I enclose the talks scheme. You will see your slot in it. A challenging subject: (i) What the Bible says about the Second Coming and a warning against fanciful interpretations and predictions; (ii) How the fact of the Second Coming should affect our Christian life. I am reading a splendid book on the subject 'The Jesus Hope' by Stephen Travis (Word Books), which you might find helpful. The first meeting here today – over 70, a very good atmosphere. Much talk afterwards. Our immediate needs are (i) Applications for Iwerne – many keen to come; (ii) How to cover the girls – about 10 of them altogether; (iii) How to get a balance in teaching about the Holy Spirit; (iv) The Lent Mission, March 2 to 6, Canon AC Warren, Missions for the Coventry Diocese. I believe he is trying to get the Fisherfolk over. I'm glad you are picking up the ground you lost. I have not seen your squash racket, but I will try again. We are hoping for big things this term, and the strength to sustain them. Blessings to all at Cambridge...

Postcard from my mother, dated 18th January 1975, from Legbourne:

Hope all goes well, and that you got the bill / account sorted out. Busy weekend with Bob Staniland here and people to drinks after church. The 'Admiralty Chart' letter was in the Times on Friday. Did you see it?

Letter from my father, dated 20th January 1975, from Ministry of Defence, Old War Office Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2EU:

You may have missed this in last Friday's 'Times'. It is the one I showed you in draft form in the train the other day. There should be more to follow this week – but I'll keep copies in case you miss them. Hope all goes well with you...

Letter from Virginia, dated 25th January 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

Many thanks for your letter. Please do come on Sat 22nd February. I have just sent off for two tickets for Covent Garden at 7:30 – Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito*, but I may not get them. Re the glasses – I think they're a bit costly for 7 – what do you think? I saw some nice modern ones like *[sketch provided, showing plain bowl, thinner stem with air bubble]*, where the sherry glasses were £1.40 and wine glasses £1.60 each – so 8 of each would be £24 and a bit. Perhaps we could go and have a look when you're here?

Now, about your coming to London. You can get trains from Cambridge to:

1. Finsbury Park
2. Kings Cross
3. Liverpool Street.

The Finsbury Park and Kings Cross are the same line, and that is really *much* easier for me. So I think if you could let me know when you're arriving I'll meet you. I'm not sure of the Station at Finsbury Park but I don't think it's very big so I don't suppose we'd miss each other. So, let me know (a) time (b) place of arrival (preferably and more easily 1 & 2!) and whether you'd like lunch or will have some before you leave. Longing to see you – and lots of love... PS Glad life's so full...

Letter from Virginia, dated 28th January 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

I'm in great haste, as I'm rushing off to have an X-ray for TB! I've just had my ticket application returned from Covent Garden – sold out! Now, there is a new production of the *Tempest* with Paul Schofield as Prospero in which a friend of mine is playing Sebastian. Would you like to see that? Or is it too recently after the Cambridge one? I shall see it anyway, sometime, so don't feel you have to see it on my account. Perhaps you could buy a paper (the Times is good) and see if there's anything you like the look of and list them in order of priority, and I'll do my best. Sooner rather than later. Also, if we go to the Turner Exhibition, have you got a student card? You'll get ½ price!

Postcard from my mother, dated 30th January 1975, from Legbourne:

So sorry to be lax about letters – Charmian here all weekend. Non-stop meetings this week. V on Friday and a lunch party on Sunday, then off to Taunton via London. It's all rather exhausting. Very many thanks for yours. Hope the 'structure' works. How lovely the concert must have been, and I am glad you have met Mig – no relation to the bishop I gather! We meet him next month at the Lynes.

[Ah, the famous 'structure', whose brief was to carry a point load, but was designed like a model railway bridge, to carry a uniformly distributed load – but failed miserably anyway, because not enough attention was paid to detailing the corner connections!]

Note from Richard Rhodes-James, dated February 1975, to the Haileybury Prayer and Praise Meeting (HPPM) group at Cambridge:

Haileybury: Edward Lobb spoke to 60 to 70. He found it an especially warm audience. Many from Hailey, mostly young. There remains a gap in the middle. He had a very useful time with two groups over tea. Neil W remains a tower of strength. This term a house debating competition clashes with the meeting each week. Please pray that this may not affect too many people. Next week there is no speaker, but we hope to arrange something attractive; perhaps a tape ordered from St Helen's [Bishopsgate] which is long overdue. Please pray for Iwerne prospectuses being given out before half term (13 February).

Letter from Nick, dated 10th February 1975, from Malham Court, Quarmby, Huddersfield:

Very rushed as must dash for a train for Leeds. Enclosed is a magazine with an article I've written, or rather set down from an instantaneous dream, derived from 1 Kings 18. Please circulate to the rest of the family. Hope all is well at Cambridge. Do write, and we will, in somewhat more detail...

Letter from Virginia, dated 12th February 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

Speedy reply to yours – I'll try and go ahead with the Tempest. Tho' it did strike me that you might like to go to some Opera at the Coliseum? (Did I tell you that Covent Garden was sold out?) Would you like me to try? Please let me know ASAP and I'll get something organized. I'm sure your NUS Card will let you into the Turner for 40p! Anyway, see you soon...

Letter from my mother, dated 15th February 1975, from Legbourne:

Just a note to enclose this rather nice Bernard Lewis article from The Times. You may have seen it of course. It's been a busy week here, with WRVS meetings etc. and Mrs Price has had 'flu, so I had to spend Thursday having a good blitz. A nice old Mr Smith from 'up yonder' came to see us this afternoon, with a view to doing a bit of gardening! He's going to try coming three mornings a week. It might be a great help. I shall be here all next week, and the week after I go down to Taunton. What is this 'camp' in Devon? And how will you go? Have you a date for the Driving Test? And should I fix more lessons? I am only sad that no one will be here to come to our Bach St John Passion on Palm Sunday – very good soloists, and it is a profoundly moving work I think. Incidentally, I am making very slow progress into [William] Barclay; but have made a Lenten resolution to struggle on! Some of it is fascinating, at other times a bit irritating! Very cold tonight and I must go and do some cooking – will post this on my way to Church in the morning.

Letter from Cousin Iain, dated Tuesday 18th February 1975, from Heswall, Cheshire:

Thank you for your letter, above all for sharing those verses with me. They are very meaningful. Indeed, I have found great comfort and great peace in the Bible and in listening to some Gospel records. On Sunday night I was reading from Isaiah chapter 26 and I found in verses 3 and 4 great solace. I have been listening to 'Godspell' and also the record (borrowed) of 'Come Together'. Have you seen or heard either of them? They are very good. Your Kenya year sounds fascinating. I would hope to hear about it in more detail sometime. It seems as though there must have been many diverse and exciting events – each one giving you a different aspect of life out there.

During my 'convalescence' I am working through all the Beethoven Piano Concertos – Mother has the scores – so I can follow them in detail. I also hope, when the back begins to ease a little, that I will be able to read a lot... As you may know, I am doing English, History, French and Economics – the first 3 requiring a substantial amount of reading. Last term two exciting things happened. Firstly, we did a performance of the 'Mikado' with the local girls school. This was a great success and marvellous fun to do. Also I took my finals at the piano. On Christmas Eve I heard that I had passed – a marvellous Christmas present! I would hope to see you in the not too distant future when we will be able to exchange news in more detail. God Bless...

Letter from my father, dated 20th February 1975, from Ministry of Defence, Old War Office Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2EU:

Unusually I seem to have a few minutes to spare so will dash off a line to you before the next crisis breaks! Mother told me on the phone that she'd received a letter from you recently – and I shall read that with interest next weekend. I gather you are finding life stimulating at Cambridge and are producing good work. That is indeed encouraging and a matter for congratulations. So, well done – but don't overdo it! You have plenty of time ahead and the main thing is to maintain a steady pace. Your own talents will compensate for your late start and will assuredly close any gap that may exist in your knowledge vis-à-vis that of your contemporaries. I was indeed sorry to hear about Iain R's back – which sounds most extraordinary, and very bad luck. People do suffer unexpected set-backs, however, and I have no doubt that he'll get over this (as you did yours) and bounce back to full activity.

I gather you'll be back for Easter – which is good. Presumably you wish to continue the driving lessons – and I wonder if you have heard anything further about the date of the Test? It is all beginning to seem a trifle academic because before long no one will be able to afford to drive a car – let alone own one! You have probably heard that my world-tour (which I had been planning to take Mother on as well) has been cancelled for financial reasons. I am still hoping, however, to do part of it – to Iran, the Persian Gulf and perhaps India (and also, later, to Washington) and on this I await a decision from the Admiralty Board. No wonder the country is practically broke, with people like Foot, Benn, Healey and Wilson in power! The sooner we get Margaret Thatcher, Keith Joseph (and Edward du Cann) back to run the country the sooner we can start on the road to recovery. All for now – but so glad to know life at Clare is good. Long may it last (at least till 1977!)

Letter from Virginia, dated Thursday 20th February 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

Herewith a quick note – which I wonder if it will ever reach you, with British Rail being what it is! I wasn't sure if you had my phone number, so here it is (above) in case. Also, to let you know I will meet the train arriving Kings Cross at 12:50. Stand by for a fair amount of chaos this end. Chris (of the old days fame!) is coming to stay on Friday night, so I won't have done very much in the way of cooking! I thought we'd have a quick lunch here and then go out to the Turner of Michelangelo Exhibition or anything you'd like to do. Now, I did some fairly extensive research into the ticket business. Sadlers Wells was doing Ruddigore, but sold out! Covent Garden did have tickets at £5.80... So I have ended up with some (good) seats for Schofield's Tempest. But I do know someone who's in it who had said we must go round backstage after it finishes, so I trust you will approve, and it might be quite fun to see behind the scenes. I gather from Mother that your bridge collapsed! Back to the drawing board! Anyway, all news at 12:50 on Saturday [22nd February]...

Letter from my mother, dated 23rd February 1975, from Legbourne:

Just a brief note as usual. Thank you so much for letter. How interesting about the Structure, and well done on the Interesting Solutions! It's been the usual busy week here, but included some nice things too – a splendid harpsichord recital on Thursday at the Louth Music Club, and last night we went to the Lynes, at Colby beyond Lincoln, and a swirling fog on the way back. This was a buffet supper mainly to meet the new Bishop and Mrs Phipps – party of about 20, so no time for long converse, and I didn't really meet Mrs Phipps till just as we were leaving. She was most interested in your CMS year – she had been in Uganda herself, and mentioned a book by John Taylor previous to 'The Go-between God' – but alas I cannot remember the title. Do you know the one I mean – would it be a good Easter present for you? Must go and cook, and I foresee a hard gardening session this afternoon, as sunshine has cleared the mist away...

Letter from Robert C, dated Sunday 23rd February 1975, from New College, Oxford:

Thanks for your letter, which was very heartening. As usual my reply is tardy and rather abrupt! However, I was going to suggest that you come over on March 1st to 2nd leaving Cambridge on the 9:00 am bus and arriving at Oxford at 12:00 pm. If I have given you too short notice I could manage March 8th to 9th but that would not be as convenient. I have got rather a heavy work programme on at the moment so to come on the Saturday morning bus rather than the Friday evening one would be most suitable for me (he suggests in true dictatorial fashion!) Anyway I had better post this army bulletin type letter before it's too late, so more news when we meet. Yours in Him, Robert. PS Have you met John B (an Ordinand at Ridley Hall) yet? He's a good friend of mine and paternal adviser!

Postcard from my mother, dated Sunday 2nd March 1975, from Legbourne:

I ran out of time! Many thanks for your letter. Maddening about the Driving Test. Busy week in Taunton and London, and a delayed return due to the railway strike, so am behind with everything. Yes, very sad about Mr Stewart. Are you going to the Memorial Service? Will write during the week...

[Mr WS Stewart, Master of Haileybury died tragically while playing football with the boys on Bigside – as I recall he suffered a heart attack or stroke – news of this was in the papers, and Virginia saw the article and phoned me.]

Letter from Virginia, dated Tuesday 4th March 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

Just a quickie while I finish my coffee. I am off to York for the day, and being picked up in about 15 minutes! Really writing on several accounts – I am so glad you came for the weekend; I really enjoyed it and it was good to have the chance really to sit down and talk in a way that there isn't time or opportunity for at home. I do hope you'll feel that you can drop in whenever you feel like it and need a break or even just a bed in London. And if you ever want to bring anyone – the place is open. Also writing to ask if you could confirm ASAP whether you managed to get tickets for Kings on March 12th *[for CUMS concert, Monteverdi's Vespers?]* I have asked a girl called Vicky T who'd love to come – and we thought we could all have a quick bite to eat beforehand. She'd come up from London by train and we'd drive back afterwards, so no need for a room in Clare (sadly)! Can you let me know (a) if this is OK and (b) what time we shall arrive, eat etc.? Must away...

Letter from Peter O, dated Sunday 9th March 1975, from Melvill, "(Heaven on Earth!)":

Please excuse the felt tip. I am sorry for not having written to you earlier, but... Anyway, 19 is the biggest number we've had along to Melvill Bible Studies, followed by 17 and 13. Robert S has lately shown a degree of interest and Mark and Peter H are on their way back. House Music was lost! "Ought to have won," said Jack Hindmarsh, but old Fogin preferred Trevelyan and Thomason. I suppose you heard about Boot [the Master]; it came as a great blow, but thank God that he was 'saved'. Brian G's mother died last Tuesday so please pray for him, he's such a shining Christian. You must come over and have tea with me next Sunday afternoon, OK? Are any other OH's coming? Paul and Charles C are coming the week after, so it will be nice to see my old fag master!

Letter from Barry H, dated Sunday 9th March 1975, from Melvill, Haileybury, Herts:

During the last few weeks remarkable things have been happening to me. Each day I get to know Jesus just a little bit more. He speaks to me in many wonderful ways – most convincingly through what happens to me, and through my troubles and tribulations. The Lent Missioner Alan Warren made some interesting remarks about Haileybury's spiritual development – not enough LOVE, the centre of Christianity. We aren't loving each other –

and especially we aren't loving so-called 'non-Christians'. Without love, everything is nothing!

The Lord has really taught me, day by day, how to really trust in him. With a mustard seed of faith you can move a mountain – and I have really proved that to myself. It's great having so many Christian friends around you. The peace that I have experienced has been indescribable. At the beginning of this term, I didn't have much idea of what I was going to do for a career, but now I'm certain, as if He's just told me – 'Medicine'! The Peace of the Lord be always with you...

Letter from Virginia, dated 10th March 1975, from Longman House, Harlow, Essex:

Just a quick note to thank you for yours and to say 'First Class' about tickets etc. I am going to meet Linda P at the station at 18:31 so should be at Clare at 18:45 – car can park in King's Parade? I shall be driving Mother's car. If not, I'll leave it the other side of Clare Bridge and walk through. Longing to see you – all news then.

Letter from my mother, dated Tuesday 11th March 1975, from Legbourne:

I'm sorry this will be a scrap of a letter. I had some WRVS dames to lunch, and they have only just gone. I do want to catch the post tonight, in case you are off and away to Devon. I seem to be a bit vague about dates. Please would you let me know, and how long the Easter vac is. I shall have to make an appointment with Dr Glen again, and then we must fix some driving lessons too.

Slight panic – an air letter came for you this morning and I remember re-addressing it, but such is my vague mind now I cannot remember posting it! I *think* it was from Peter M, so do let me know if it has arrived. Horrid weather – rain and more rain, and the park quite flooded. On Sunday it was too much for the ditch drain, so water was almost up to the fence in front of the house. *Lovely* hearing you on Saturday, and well done for the sponsored walk, but hope it was not too much, and that you will be careful – and at Lee Abbey too. Incidentally Iain R is hoping to go there in April. He now has a 'back support' and is beginning to get about, but has to be careful and non-athletic.

Virginia came last weekend, and has swapped cars with me – back on Friday with Penny C. We had the Cave-Bigleys too – who had not been here for 7 or 8 years. Jackie and I drove to Donna Nook on Saturday for a wonderful bleak blow. I find I get more tired than I used to, and visitors take up a lot of time, but when I am on my own I am so very sad still – that is why I have been a non-letter-writer. Busy week with meetings and trips to Lincoln – next week I go to London. Then on 23rd we do the St John Passion. I wish you were here to hear it, but doubtless you will on some other occasion. Must rush to post this now.

Letter from my mother, dated Wednesday 19th March 1975, from Legbourne:

Just back from London. Bitter cold – hope you are being warmer in sunny Devon – there was a white-out with snow in Oxford Street yesterday, most extraordinary – followed by bright sunshine! Your letter awaited here. Lovely to have the news, but I do hope the walk was not an unwise eccentricity! *[I remember that walk: we travelled to the north of Cambridge, it was very cold and wet and the walk was long. Mostly Clare CU folk, including Paul K and James W. We returned via Girton College.]*

Plans get complicated do they not. I have to be at a meeting and reception at Greenwich on Wednesday 26th. I had half thought I might take the car, drive down on Tuesday and back with Dad on Thursday, hoping that perhaps Neil W or someone could come over while I was away. However I could do it by train on the Wednesday if Dad can arrange an Admiralty car to take us to Greenwich this would be the answer. However, here is a list of trains... The Newark change, as you know, is very simple. I have just come up on the 10:15. V came to the flat last night, and all rather late and tired with Dad off to sea at crack

of dawn. We decided not to try a film or theatre, but went and had a birthday dinner [on 18th March] at the Royal Lancaster. I had the previous night been to a most amusing WRVS officers' 'do' at St James Palace, which was great fun. I must now try and get the house warmed up, but haste with this as I expect a man to call about carpets and he will post it for me I am sure. Now I know the vac dates I will fix a time to see Dr Glen. I expect it will be a Friday. I should love to have heard the Brahms, and V said the Monteverdi (and all the evening) just lovely. I am sorry you will not hear the St John Passion...

Recollections of Term 2

Recollecting during the COVID-19 pandemic of early 2020, and reading through the various letters and postcards from family and friends, certain other 'highlights' or 'low-lights' of that tough term come to mind...

1. The bridge that failed – the famous 'structure', whose brief was to carry a point load... I remember the Structures Lecturer (with the tinny voice) strutting up and down the classroom as we were designing our bridges, and saying, "Think about the bending moment diagram" – meaning that the optimum design would be triangular, like the bending moment diagram for a point load. However, my lab partner Doug and I decided to design our structure like a model railway bridge, designed to carry a uniformly distributed load, like the Railway Bridge over the lower reaches of the River Cam. When the grey metal structure was finally put to the test I felt confident, and spoke up with a sense of 'boldness', but the bridge failed miserably, collapsing under a tenth of its design loading, because not enough attention was paid to detailing the corner connections! Imagine the disappointment and sense of failure...
2. My trip to Oxford in early March to visit my close friend Robert C, at New College, who was in his final year reading Law. He came over to Cambridge a week or two later to stay with his friend John B, an Ordinand studying Theology at Ridley Hall. There is a 'famous' photo of Robert, John and another friend taken just outside St Botolph's Church, off Trumpington Street, with beautiful pink cherry blossom – the first sign of spring after a long, cold winter. See Photographs attached.
3. The Cambridge University Music Society (CUMS) Concert on March 12th, *Monteverdi's Vespers* – Virginia came with a friend, perhaps Vicky T. I remember gazing up towards the vaulted ceiling at King's, listening to the ethereal music.
4. The long walk in mid to late March 1975, at the end of term, and just before leaving for Lee Abbey in North Devon – the walk was a sort of 'preparation' for Lee Abbey, helping us not only to get fit, but also to get to know one another, as most of the folk on the walk were from the Clare Christian Union, and many were about to go to Lee Abbey. We travelled to the north of Cambridge, it was very cold and wet and the walk was long. We returned to Cambridge via Girton College, to the north of the city.

Lee Abbey, March 1975

These notes were written in 1977 during my travels through Greece...

Lee Abbey – misgivings at first, but it was here that first entered the Cambridge Christian 'scene', and valuable friendships were forged – David C, Douglas C, Cathy G, Stuart E...

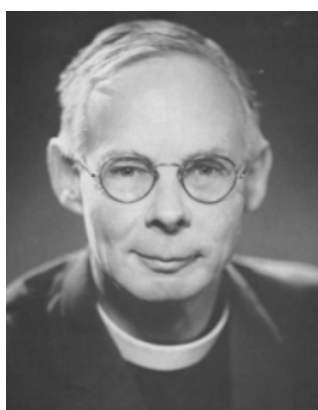
Recollecting during the COVID-19 pandemic of early 2020, and reading through the letters from John H and Professor Charlie Moule, a few fragmented memories come to mind. The week at Lee Abbey took place around late March 1975, after the end of term and just before Easter. We travelled by bus from Cambridge to North Devon.

I remember this was the Cambridge Working Party, and much of the day time was spent in clearing trees from the estate – there were steep hillsides, and on one occasion the wire

cable being used to winch a fallen tree by tractor suddenly snapped, with the broken ends of the cable whipping past my face and missing me by a couple of feet!

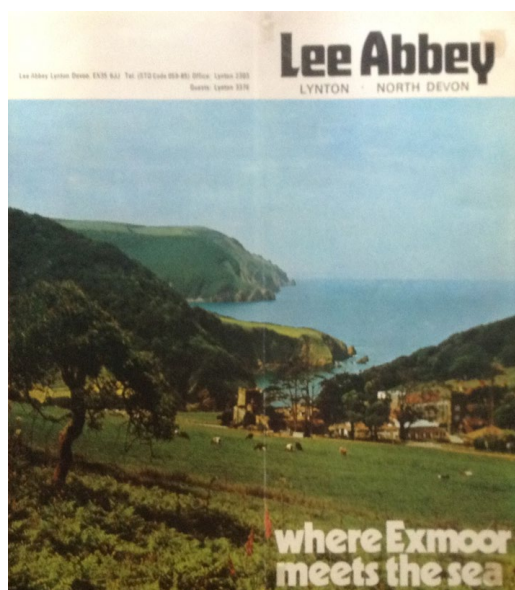
There were 'talks' given by staff members morning and evening, tho' I don't remember much about them. Michael Rees, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge was there, as well as Patsy Evans, the student counsellor, and it was a valuable time getting to know folk from Clare College and from other colleges. On one evening, there was a 'feast or famine' or 'rich man poor man' theme, with a handful of selected participants enjoying a three-course dinner with all the trimmings (the 'rich man'), while the rest of us subsisted in iron rations such as soup and bread (the 'poor man'), which sort of made a point, but one girl got really upset about this, especially given the hard physical work we were all doing during the daytime. On another evening there was a dance, and we all joined in (including Patsy), and that was all good fun.

But the photographs (attached) give the most eloquent story – as they convey the sheer, rugged beauty of the landscape ('where Exmoor meets the sea'), including the dramatic Valley of the Rocks', and the sea surging in white foam about the cliffs, grey-blue in the distance. Here at last was spring and beauty – after the long, cold, damp and dreary winter.



Top left: Professor 'Charlie' Moule

Bottom left and right: Lee Abbey Brochure



Letter from John H, dated 20th March 1975, from Lewdown, Okehampton:

I do hope that the week at Lee Abbey is going really well. This is just the briefest note to wish you the very best of the last few days! I do hope that the Lord is using this time to draw the Clare folk closer to Himself and so to one another, the better equipped to be effective servants and pleasing worshippers next term. Do drop a note some time and say how the week went. Isn't North Devon lovely? All the best for the rest of the vac. Yours ever...

Letter from Professor 'Charlie' Moule (Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity), dated 30th March (Easter Day) 1975, from Clare College, Cambridge:

Thank you for your letter. I am glad you had a useful time at Lee Abbey: Michael Rees has just told me what a splendid number went from Cambridge. I am very glad, too, that you're going to be helping with CMS: Robert told me this good news. I note your efficient programme for next term, and will see that the Latimer Room is confirmed as booked, and that the 'tools' are ordered from the buttery. I can't remember who is actually Junior Treasurer (perhaps Owen as Caterer?) If I am to remain Senior Treasurer (i.e. be responsible for the Society's solvency and honesty in the eyes of the Proctors – which is all a Senior Treasurer is for!), there must certainly be some one specific junior member appointed to this office. Don't bother to write, but tell me when we meet. Just as a suggestion – would you and Stuart be free to come and see me at about 9 pm on Monday 14 April, the day immediately before the start of Full Term? If this is inconvenient, we can surely find another time; but I'll hold that unless I hear to the contrary. Please remember me very warmly to Hedley Warr if you see him. With Paschal greetings. Ever yours, Charlie Moule.

Term 3 (April to June 1975)

These notes were written in 1977 during my travels through Greece...

Still finding my way. Trying new things – overseas students, CMS. Hard work for exams. One evening, Bob B from St James Church invited me to show some slides of Kenya, about being a YSA, for their youth group. There I first met Joan, who was about to go out to Kenya for a year's teaching as a YSA. Looking back, I remember that she did make some impression on me, as we talked at length afterwards – but I dismissed the matter from my mind and thought no more of it. May Week – an unpleasant social rat-race. But the highlights were a walk to Madingley with Lee Abbey friends, and a really long talk with Dave C, and then a long talk with Ed W about relationships and marriage.

So reads the note written in haste in 1977 as part of my analysis of 'The first six years'. But this note does not tell the whole story...

Letters from family and friends during Term 3

Letter from my father, dated 11th April 1975, from Ministry of Defence, Old War Office Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2EU:

Hope you got back OK – all the better for your 'vac' – and that you will have a good summer term (or whatever it is called). I attach Captain Pillar's reply and assume you will now write direct to Commander Edwards at the address he gives. Let me know if you have any difficulty. Yours Ever...

Excerpt from letter from my father, dated 2nd April 1975 to Captain Pillar:

I have a son reading engineering at Cambridge. For Part I of his course he requires 4 weeks' workshop experience and training in the use of tools – and I understand that this can be done at RNEC Manadon during the summer vacation, in September/October. My son tells me there was an announcement to this effect but that he missed it due to sickness at the start of his course.

I now write to ask whether my son (Adrian MD Hall, age 20) could be included on this 4 weeks' course during the coming autumn – or whether he should make formal application by some other means. He has already spent a day at Manadon (during Captain Satow's term of office as CO) and found the place fascinating; he is particularly keen to do the course if it can possibly be arranged.

I am sorry to trouble you personally on this matter but would be most grateful if you could pass the inquiry to the right quarter and let me have a fairly early answer, at my Whitehall office.

Letter from Captain WT Pillar to my father, dated 5th April 1975, from Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon, Plymouth PL5 3AQ:

Dear Admiral Hall, Thank you for your letter of 2nd April about your son coming here for a workshops course in the summer vacation. As far as we are concerned we will be delighted to have him, and I have already cleared the way with the Director Naval Recruiting who arranges who comes on these courses. However, in order to keep things straight and prevent any confusion would you please ask your son to write to the Director Naval Recruiting (Commander CJ Edwards), Old Admiralty Building, Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BE, and make a formal application? His name will then be added to the DNR's list for the course.

The course actually lasts for 6 weeks and not 4, starting on Monday 25 August and finishing on Friday 3 October.

I look forward to seeing Adrian at the College and hope that, if you find yourself in this part of the world, you will call in to see how he's getting on. We would be very pleased to see you.
Yours sincerely, WT Pillar

Letter from my mother, dated 12th April 1975, from Legbourne:

Rather a rushed note as the Penfolds came back with Daddy for the weekend – so back to the Aga any moment! I hope you had a good journey. I found the Denholme hotel easily and after a super lunch we all drove 10 miles or so on to Toft Newton to fish. Rather dull fishing really, just a concrete bowl, but lots of fish and I caught 4! Rushed back to change and the Adlards drove me over to Woodhall, which was a great relief...

I called in at Holmes this morning and Ian Hallgarth will try and get your wheel done sometime this week. Daddy said he heard from Manadon and has sent the letter on to you. I enclose his request, in case you want to keep a file! I gather it's a 6-week course which I hope will fit in. I should certainly go for it anyway – it's a lovely part of the world and lots to do around too! And I think you should [apply] – especially as Daddy has had to ask a favour! I hope your CMS party was fun...

Postcard from my mother, dated 24th April 1975, from Legbourne:

I managed a brief look at this exhibition but the British Museum is in the process of change, so no postcards of note. Very busy week with North Sea Hydrographers, not to mention their ladies. Back at Legbourne for weekend. V comes too. Then down to Taunton, London Thursday and Friday, and back to Legbourne again on Saturday. Barely a week then before our trip abroad...

Letter from my mother, dated 29th April 1975, from Legbourne:

Many thanks for your letter. How lovely Cambridge must be just now, and I am glad you are making time to enjoy it. I do hope Neil is better, and it must have been nice seeing Iain.

This is very brief as I am off to Taunton tomorrow by car, as Daddy wants it serviced, but I shall try and get away early and take my time. We are staying with the Hayters for the night, then to London on Thursday and Friday (for the Hydrographic Society meeting, Dad being the new President – and a supper party on a boat on the Thames!) Back here Saturday afternoon.

Off to Persian Gulf, Tehran and India, flying on May 9th. (I shall leave here on the 8th and V may join us for a 'birthday' supper that evening in the flat.) We get back to England on May 22nd. No point in trying to catch up anywhere abroad. I'll try and write of course, but naval attachés are organizing accommodation etc. so it's all 'go'. But for any crisis contact Dad's office...

As for my birthday, a paperback to read on the plane – one I saw the other day was Gerald Moore's (accompanist) Memoir 'Am I too Loud?' which I believe is very good, and/or possibly a biro or two for crossword puzzles. Mine always disappear! Or a great want. Nice plain hankies – white or service colours? It would be lovely to have anything like that – posted to the flat maybe?

I don't think there is any news of great import from here. Virginia and Heather M came for a brief weekend visit – one night only – and we had rather a lazy time. Good for us after the hectic North Sea Hydrographers' 'do'. My ladies outing went well, I think. Chartwell was fascinating – the country looked lovely, and Greenwich was fun too, with a new exhibition on at Flamsteed House as well.

Ian Hallgarth has finished your wheel and brought it back. It needed a new inner tube, but all is now well, and I have paid him. Must go and start packing!

Note from Virginia, dated 30th April 1975

In hugest haste as usual. I just found this book in a box to go and be burned, so thought you might like it. Hoping to see you – for an evening picnic after I get back from USA. I come back on June 8th, so if you'd like to suggest a date after that? When do you do your exams? Read your letter when at home last weekend – it certainly sounds as if like is pretty busy and fun. Must work...

Postcard from my mother, dated 9th May 1975, from Legbourne:

Thank you so much for the lovely hankies – already in use! I don't know if this is the sort of plane we go in [Viscount 800], but thought the clouds looked pretty. Just off. Lots of love, M.
PS June 4th is a bit doubtful. I have a long standing date on the 5th, so *might* manage it!

Postcard from my mother, dated 14th May 1975, from Tehran:

Bahrain was very hot and humid, but most interesting. Iran cooler after much rain. Marion Newson and I paused in Shiraz, changing planes – and saw the town with its roses and mosques.

Tehran big and bustly, but the Embassy has lent us a car and driver – so we get around, tho' the menfolk are working very hard.

Off to Delhi tomorrow. Back next week...

Letter from Virginia, dated Thursday 15th May 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

I'm just writing a quick note before I leave on my trans-Atlantic jaunt on Sunday 18th! Really to say – good luck for exams and when can we meet thereafter? Laura and I decided we would like to come up one evening in June with wine / cheese / paté / bread for an evening picnic by the river. Plus Neville and Susan? Could you let me know when would be good dates (a few alternatives if possible).

I get back on June 8th (so will doubtless need a day or two to recover from jet lag! I am sailing the weekend Friday 13th to Sunday 15th, but a mid-week session would be fine if it's OK by you – can probably be with you around 6.30 pm or so. Anyway, let me know what your plans are. I gather you say Iain R and co – which must have been fun. I haven't seen any of them for ages – about February I think! Hope Neville has recovered. Anyway – look forward to hearing from and seeing you...

Excerpt from Sailor's Luck: At Sea & Ashore in Peace and War, autobiography by Rear Admiral Geoffrey Hall, 1999 (p 233):

So, with my Chief Civil Hydrographic Officer (Mr Newson) and our wives, we flew out in May to the Middle East - visiting in turn, the newly independent Gulf states, Bahrain and Qatar, before going on to Iran. My main mission in the Emirates was to explain that they were now responsible for surveying their own waters - though we were prepared to continue this work, if they wished, at their expense (which they could well afford). They saw the point, and agreed to consider the implications. (For us, it would mean funding some of our ships - which, otherwise, would probably have to be paid off).

In Iran the situation was somewhat different. At a recent CENTO conference that country had complained that the British Admiralty charts of their waters were obsolete and required updating. We had replied that this would be done on receipt from them of the relevant survey data (which, of course, was non-existent). My job, in a nutshell, was to get the Imperial Iranian Navy to agree to our re-surveying the whole of their coastal and off-shore waters, over a four-year period, at their expense - with on-the-job training for their officers as an additional 'quid pro quo' .

We had a whole series of interesting and constructive meetings with the Chief of the Imperial Navy and his staff, and with the Head of their National Geographic Office, explaining in detail the facilities we would require (e.g. to erect radio-location stations and sounding marks on their territory) - and the upshot was complete acceptance on their part of the whole plan - with the consequent financial aspects to be pursued on an inter-Governmental basis. I was more than satisfied with this agreement, which assured employment for up to four of our ships for several years ahead, and I reported this by signal to the MOD and to our Ambassador. (I think it was the following year that the operation was in full swing - with our ships out there and actually working in their waters - when the Iranian Revolution occurred and the Shah was ousted, sadly aborting the entire project).

From Tehran we flew to India, where we had a wide range of subjects to discuss with their Government Hydrographer, including a new Charting Agreement. He, a Commodore in the Indian Navy, was based at Dehra Dun, in the foothills of the Himalayas - at least 1,000 miles from the sea. It was a most interesting meeting, lasting several days, during which we were royally entertained both by the Commodore and his Staff and also by a Gurkha Regiment based nearby. It was a memorable visit - and a very useful one. A great pity that we could not continue to Ceylon and beyond - and I now turned my thoughts across the Atlantic...

Postcard from my mother, dated 22nd May 1975, from London:

Arrived safely late yesterday, as our flight had to be changed from Delhi. Fabulous 12 days – all a hectic rush but fascinating. Will tell all shortly. Just off to Kings Cross...

Postcard from Virginia, dated 22nd May 1975, from Washington DC:

Thought you might like a picture of the Watergate! This is the most beautiful city I've ever been in. It's very hot and I am taking a short breather before going to meet Marcia. Holiday weekend coming up and I think we may drive along the Blue Ridge Mountains in – Virginia! Good luck for exams...

Postcard from my mother, dated 26th May 1975, from Legbourne:

Lovely to have a chat last night. No time for letters, but thought this might be a Lucky Cat for your exams. Rush now to catch up with everything before leaving for London (Bath service) in the morning. Hope you feel better...

Letter from my mother, dated 31st May 1975, from Legbourne:

I had meant to write at length about our foreign trip, but time runs out. I have a heap of WRVS papers to deal with, and must get my King-Georges-Fund-for-Sailors' coffee morning invitations off this weekend. So it will have to be a case of all news when we meet. I do hope the exams went well. Do you get instant results, or do you have to wait till next term?

Daddy is off to sea tomorrow – night train Grantham and Glasgow, but he should be back here again next weekend – and we may be having a Dutch girl to stay for a bit. She has been with Tony learning English and I have said she is welcome here. But I plan to get to London on June 12th to meet V back from USA and Daddy should get in from Washington on 13th or 14th, so we would come back to Legbourne Saturday 14th pm.

We may possibly go over west (i.e. Preston is where Daddy lands from Woodcock I think on 19th), and if it suits the Rawlinsons, go on and stay with them, but this is all very vague, and I really should be at the Lincoln Show that day too.

I see you have a Driving Test on 23rd – there seemed plenty of time when you arranged it, but now the schedule is a bit tight again, is it not. What do you think? Do you want me to try and

arrange any lessons for you? I trust the Honda is OK for transport, but we ought to be able to get in a few drives in the Renault too. Longing to see you – so let me know your plans...

Letter from my mother, dated 8th June 1975, from Legbourne:

Many thanks for your letter. Did you go to the B Minor? In the end, I *could* have come, as this Dutch girl did not arrive till Friday, but it would have been a scramble, so perhaps it was just as well.

Summer plans seem to be getting a bit complicated, do they not. This week, if I go to London at all, we should be back Saturday. Aga will be on but low, and the back door key in the usual place if you do arrive while we're away.

I think I shall try and collect Daddy from Preston on the Thursday, staying a night or two at Heswall I have arranged a driving lesson on Monday 16th [June] at 0 am – future ones to be arranged from thereon. Looking at my diary – I have to be away on July 2nd going to Taunton for my King George's Fund coffee morning on Thursday 3rd, then Daddy and I are supposed to be staying the following weekend with the Cave-Bigleys at Bentley – to fish. Would that perhaps be a time for you to visit Durham, or Heswall? Or would you like to ask someone to stay here to keep you company?

Iwerne sounds fine, as it looks as though it will coincide with a trip that Daddy has suggested for me to visit 'Herald' in the Shetlands or Stornoway, with a drive to Inverness and back! When do we see Dr Glen? I expect all these logistic problems will sort themselves out in the end. Longing to see you...

Letter from my father, dated 8th June 1975, from Legbourne:

A brief note before I go off to USA this evening (having hardly got back from Scotland last week!) to thank you for yours of 3/6.

I'm sorry you seem to be planning to spend so little of the summer at home. We will certainly be coming back here not later than Saturday 14th – perhaps even Friday evening 13th – so why delay your arrival till Sunday? Why not aim to come back this Saturday?

And is Iwerne really a necessity this year? Why not have a really relaxed bit of holiday here instead; I could do with some help in the garden! Actually Mummy and I will probably be 'up north' (Scotland / Shetland Isles) from 18th to 23rd August, and that may be a factor in your calculations. But I am thinking of all the travelling and other expense involved in your plans at a time when the national watchword should be 'economy'.

Incidentally, how did you vote in the Referendum? Personally I am glad it was held and that the British people have made this historic choice – though personally I believe it was the wrong one! At least they can have no one to blame but themselves for the consequences!

Glad to hear the exams seem to have gone off reasonably satisfactorily – nice to get them behind you. Weather here is simply glorious; can't remember when we last had a weekend like it. Almost as hot as the Persian Gulf – or New Delhi; and doubtless much the same will be the case in Washington – only it will be more humid. Will give your love to Barbara Burns – whom I shall be seeing while I'm there. All the best...

PS Will you be coming over to Heswall 19th to 21st of this month? I will be disembarking from [HMS] Fox at Preston on evening of 19th and thought we might spend a night or two at Heswall before returning here.

Recollections of Term 3

Recollecting during the COVID-19 pandemic of early 2020, and reading through the various letters and postcards from family and friends, certain other 'highlights'...

1. I do not remember very much about Term 3. I think the reason is that I had my head down catching up on the First Year syllabus, working towards the Part 1A Tripos Examination in early June 1975. I pushed hard, and managed to score a 2.1 (upper second class), which I felt was a very satisfactory result, given my late start.
2. I must have given some time to helping run the CMS group, which met weekly at Clare for a bread-and-cheese lunch. I also kept up with rowing.
3. There was a lot of international travel by family members, as part of Dad's last year as Hydrographer of the Navy – but these travels did not affect me directly.

Summer Vac 1975

These notes were written in 1977 during my travels through Greece...

To Preston to meet Dad on HMS Fox. With that and the HMS Herald trip (see below), it was a tremendous privilege to see Dad and be with him on his last voyages as a serving officer of the Royal Navy.

Farming at Saltfleetby. Read and learned by heart 2 Timothy – a very valuable experience and good preparation for the Long Vac Term.

Wrote poem 'In Search of the Mountain' (see January 1974), while farming, pulling out mangel-wurtzels under the hot sun.

Whilst staying with the Rawlinsons, I received a long letter from Dad about careers, my future etc. – parental expectations – including the idea of a short Service Commission with the Navy. I reacted against the idea of service life, and against the expectation to 'do well and become a man of means'.

Read 'Kim' by Rudyard Kipling. In a vac much concerned with winding up the past, little did I realize that this book itself (along with the Jungle Book) was pointing ahead to God's future for me... [I clearly remember sitting outside the summer house at Legbourne, alternately reading Kim and playing my new Dolmetsch recorder.]

Long Vac Term 1975

Coll Rep (= CICCUCollege Representative) and first experience of leadership in the CU, resulting in a greater sense of involvement. Some wonderful times of Bible study on 2 Timothy – encouraging growth and witness within the group.

Witness to Will T, in conjunction with CICCUCollege gospel address. The stimulation of being able to have some kind of ministry among students.

Good, relaxing times with friends, with atmosphere far less intense than in full term time. Beginning to relate closely to people in Clare for the first time.

Iwerne Visit

For approximately 3 days, sandwiched between my 20th birthday and leaving for HMS Herald and Stornoway. In many ways an unsatisfactory visit, though it gave me the opportunity to meet many old friends. It convinced me that this was 'not my scene', and that my Iwerne days, though invaluable at the time, were a thing of the past – as Haileybury itself.

HMS Herald

Tremendous to be with Dad on his last sea-going visit as Hydrographer – to be present at his last mess dinner. Insights into naval life.

Dad's last night at sea... (August 1975)

Excerpt from Sailor's Luck: At Sea & Ashore in Peace and War, autobiography by Rear Admiral Geoffrey Hall, 1999 (pp 234-235):

With all our ships working hard that summer, I made a particular point of visiting all those within reach, and giving a farewell address to their ships' companies, in which I was able to outline recent developments 'in high places' and stress the greatly improved prospects for the Surveying Service arising from them. The last of these visits, in August, was to our new ship *Herald*, then working off the Outer Hebrides. After a big welcome from her Captain, I received lavish hospitality and spent my last night on board. Next day, before being landed by boat, I made my final farewell address to the ship's company on the Flight Deck, and as we drew away from the gangway, to the last shrill notes of the piping party, I watched, with a twinge of pride and sadness, my flag being slowly lowered from *Herald's* masthead...

Though not stated in the book, I accompanied Dad during this last visit to HMS Herald in August 1975, and so witnessed the above events.

Manadon (August – September 1975)

Insights through this naval establishment also. Through these insights I was able to convince myself that the Navy was not for me. I had always thought there was little chance of it being right, but I was glad to have thought it out for myself, rather than be influenced purely by Nick's leaving, or as a reaction against persuasion by my parents. Three reasons in particular: (a) the claustrophobia, especially of wardroom life (no freedom, no privacy, no Quiet Times); (b) all-male environment, unnatural social life; (c) preoccupation with 'keeping the peace', deterrents, using weaponry and possibility of warfare.

However, the highlights of Manadon were:

First-rate engineering course, giving me a feel for workshop skills.

Christian fellowship with the Summers' (Spirit-filled Chaplain and his family), St Pancras at Plymouth. The need to be a part of the Body of Christ wherever it is to be found – we should be as committed to one another as we are to Christ.

Time to think and pray. Tolstoy's War and Peace. Complete involvement. A vision of love.

Personal concordance. Gathering all verses and texts I had personally used. Useful for reference, and as preparation for the evangelism of the next two years. "Abide in me, and I in you... Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15 v 4, 5). "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4 v 13).

So read the notes written in haste in 1977 as part of my analysis of 'The first six years'. But this note does not tell the whole story...



HMS Andromeda, a Leander-class frigate...



Royal Naval Engineering College
Manadon, Plymouth

*RNEC Certificate awarded
 at the end of the Vacation
 Course*

This is to Certify that

Mr A.M.D. Hall

*has completed a Workshop Instructional
 course as noted below*

WORKSHOP SYLLABUS

CIVILIAN UNDERGRADUATE VACATION COURSES

Fitting and Turning	)	Welding	14 hours
Marking off and Measuring Instruments	)	Coppersmithing	14 hours
Drilling and Shaping	) 64 hours	Sheet Metalwork	14 hours
Lathes, Tools and Attachments	)	Enginesmithing	7 hours
Lathework and Screwcutting	)	Metrology and Tool Room	7 hours
Milling	14 hours	Heat Treatment	4 hours
Patternmaking and Moulding	18 hours	Plastics	18 hours
Grinding	11 hours	Electrics	32 hours

Date *3rd October 1975*

S.R. Athine
 Director Naval Engineering

A.R.
 Captain

Excerpts from a letter to a family member written in late 1975:

First of all, thank you very much for such a very enjoyable stay during July – Gosh! I hope I remembered to write a thank you letter after my stay! So much seems to have happened since then. I expect you know all news about Dad's retirement and his (various) letters to the Times, including the one that got the First Sea Lord hopping mad (at least for a day or two)...

I must say terms at Cambridge for me have gone like this [ascending graph], where the ordinate is 'enjoyment' measured to a scale of thrills per second (TPS). Until this term the Long Vacation Term was the best yet: outdoor work in Surveying, fascinating coursework in Machine Drawing and Computing. Fabulous summer evening punting up to Grantchester, and returning at midnight, by moonlight, playing tunes on beer-bottles-filled-with-water!

The rest of the Long Vac went very well. As I expect you heard, Mum, Dad and I all went up (by car and plane) to Stornoway, where Dad and I spent a couple of days on HMS Herald. Fascinating from an engineering point of view, and a wonderful privilege to be present at Dad's final sea-going visit, mess dinner and farewell speech...

I then went down to Manadon to do 6 weeks basic workshop training in the use of tools: lathework, turning, fitting, milling, grinding, copper-smithing, engine-smithing, pattern-making, moulding, casting, welding etc. Came back laden with toolboxes and screwdrivers, brass doorknockers and other things I made. Apart from workshops, we spent a day at sea in HMS Andromeda (quite a contrast to Herald), sailing (in Ohlson 35s) at weekends. I walked on Dartmoor, flew in a Wessex helicopter, played innumerable football matches and read lots of books (including War and Peace!) As far as I can see at the moment, I have no intention of joining the Navy (for either a long or a short commission) – I don't think I would make a very good sailor (discipline and all that), and in the event of war, I might turn into a pacifist!

Letters from family and friends during Summer Vac 1975

Letter from Virginia, dated 29th June 1975, from Ferme Park Road, N8:

Thank you for yours – a very brief reply I fear. First of all, congratulations on your II.1 – you must be very pleased; and I hope all your tutors are too. Bad luck about the driving, but fortunately in that field there's no limit to the number of times you can take the test! I gather you've put in for another one in August. If I'm in Lincolnshire before it we'll go out in the little Imp.

I'm really writing briefly about coming to see you in Cambridge. Are you going to be in your old Rooms in Mem Court? What I'd thought we'd do: Penny and I are driving up to Louth, and since the night are long and light I don't mind getting up late to Louth. We thought maybe we could have a (fairly quick) pub supper with you (and Neville?) from say 6.30 to 7.30 pm. Is there a nice pub by a river somewhere? So unless I hear from you, we'll aim to be at your Rooms about 6.30 on Friday 11th. Have fun...

Postcard from Andrew T, dated 25th July 1975, from Falmouth, Cornwall:

As you can see at the moment I'm with my parents down in Cornwall, vainly trying to sun myself. It was nice to see you the other week. When you come to Quarmby again you must come to Slaithwaite for longer. What's it like being Coll Rep? I do hope the Long Vac term is going well in that respect. Love in Christ, Andrew.

Letter from my mother, dated 25th July 1975, from Legbourne:

Rushed note – very hot, and I have rows of beans to do. J Barker coming for tennis this afternoon. Mr Easton is off to look at a model railway near Gainsborough and will post this for me. Daddy cannot plan Friday at all till he gets to London and sees what the week holds. I suggest you telephone here on Thursday and see what is happening.

Two 'posts' for you which I will keep here – your saving bank book and a card cancelling your driving test "examiner not available", and giving you another on December 18th! Rather a disappointment, but we'll do a lot of driving even so, as I am saving up lost of WRVS visiting for you! Hope all goes well...

Letter from Virginia, dated 28th July 1975, from Longman House, Harlow, Essex:

Many thanks for your letter – I'll be on parade as near 6.30 pm on Wednesday as possible. I'd like to stay in Cambridge that night if there's a space, bed or floor. I'll think of something to bring, but it all sounds fantastic. Busy Monday morning...

Postcard from the W's, dated 28th July 1975, from Mbale-Dabida, Box 1078, Wundanyi, Kenya (picture of Mount Kenya):

This is to wish you a very happy birthday on 7th August, and the Lord's richest blessings for the coming year. It is extraordinary to realize that you have been gone from Mgalu for a year now and even Tom has come to the end of his year. Term finished a days ago. No doubt you will be in contact with Tom next term and will learn the latest from him. We continue to be very happy here. Mbale stays much the same year in and out. The children are fine and enjoying 2 months of holiday, some of which we plan to spend at the foot of Kilimanjaro (unfortunately not up it – and not up this one either!) Our love and blessings to the family as well as yourself, Andrew and Catharine.

Letter from Rev'd David Fletcher, dated 27th August 1975, from Chorleywood, Herts:

This is a brief but very sincere line to thank you most warmly for all your help as a Senior Camper at Iwerne this summer. I realise that you worked very hard, and I want to assure you how much I appreciated it, and how much it all helped in running camp and making it such a memorable time for so many. It was amazing how He preserved, kept and used us through out the summer. I look forward to seeing you next term. With best wishes, Yours ever, David.

Postcard from Nick and Ewa, dated 28th August 1975:

Many many thanks for the [clotted] cream which went well with bread, plum jam, raspberry jam, cake, scones, honey, tea-cakes, cream and tea. Hope you had a good time in the west country and didn't split yourself striding over to the Hebrides in the next breath – or should we say 'gulp of cream and jam'? Hope your vacant vacation cab begin soon! Ewa sends her love. Thanks again...

Letter from my mother, dated 31st August 1975, from Legbourne:

Lovely hearing your news last night – and I am so glad all seems to be going well – and fun! I haven't been up to collect the farm boots [?] yet. It may be simpler for me to post them than try and organize anything from Taunton.

Rain this morning, and we were late getting up, so rather a rush – and are just off to the O's, so I must go and change. I shall be in London this week, probably Monday to Thursday – various functions, and I think I had better start trying to clean the flat!

Do telephone again some time. Too easy when we can dial you back! Hope you have a good trek today on the [Bodmin] moor. I don't suppose you remember it at all – lovely picnics and flying the kite, when we were at Noss Mayo – with the reads!

Postcard from my mother, dated 9th September 1975, from Legbourne, addressed to RNEC Manadon, Crownhill, Plymouth:

Just off to Taunton (Castel Hotel) via Oxford, tho' doubt if I shall look in on the Bodleian! So glad the course goes well, and I do hope the sinus/ear trouble clears up quickly – it can be horrid, I know. Busy time just now. We are back via London on Friday, but off to London (lunch with First Sea Lord) on Monday!

Postcard from David C, dated September 1975:

Many thanks for your letter. I'm sitting in a tourist office in Glasgow: up to Oban tonight and sailing south to an island tomorrow to stay on for 10 days with all the friends. Cathy and I and

8 others; but we're being looked after on our journey incredibly so far – I'll tell you next term. All the best, especially for RNEC – we're thinking of you.

Letter from my mother, dated 14th September 1975, from Legbourne:

Many thanks for your letter. I am glad you are seeing something of Devon and around, and I envy the Dartmoor expeditions – any chance of fishing?

We have had a very hectic week. I drove down to Taunton, pausing for the night in Oxford – and then we had all the farewell 'do's' – speeches and ceremonies kept very short, at Daddy's particular insistence, but some very nice things said – and lovely presents, including one for me, which was so entirely unexpected, and quite lovely – copies of the exquisite water-colour drawings done for chart 'profiles' in 1861 of the coast of Mull, Carsaig and the Treshnish Islands [*the Treshnish Isles is an archipelago of small islands and skerries, lying west of the Isle of Mull, in Scotland*] – and beautifully framed – to companion a very early copy of a South African chart given to Daddy. But his main present is a coffee table, teak – with a chart copperplate set into it and charmingly inscribed, all covered with thick plate glass (hence the need for me to bring the car down!) – and a framed copy of the chart to go with it – one of Lamu, surveyed by Daddy and David Haslam!

We gave a drinks party ourselves in the Castle Hotel on Thursday night, and Virginia came to that – also to a pre-lunch little 'do' in Daddy's London office. We have a to be in London again tomorrow with the First Sea Lord, and Daddy has to make various farewell calls, so I shall start packing the flat, and we'll be back again on Tuesday afternoon. I shall have to concentrate then on some WRVS work – picture in the papers this week of our Cook-in for the Army last Saturday! Cooking now for lunch...

Card from my father, dated 14th September 1975, from Legbourne:

Many thanks for your long and interesting letter of 11.9.75. So glad the course is going well and that you are getting around a good deal – and meeting people.

The hand-over went off very successfully, including formal Mess Dinner, Cocktail Party at Taunton, drinks party at Whitehall, speeches, presentations etc.

I have been given some magnificent farewell gifts – which you will see in due course.

I'm afraid I simply can't answer your queries about Hecla's crest and motto from memory. Suggest you visit the ship next time she's in Devonport and inspect (a) the crest on the front of her bridge, (b) her 'battle honours' or 'coat of arms' outside the wardroom (I think). Love, Dad. PS Will drop a line to her CO [Commanding Officer] (Commander Morris) asking him to send you an 'invite'.

Card from my Richard R-J, dated 16th September 1975, from Haileybury College:

How very good to hear from you; and from a somewhat unexpected quarter.

I enclose a copy of the talks scheme for the term. We started splendidly last Sunday when Andrew Dalton spoke to 75-80. A real sprit of expectancy. It is amazing how the work continues. But we must presume nothing and pray every week through. This term the meeting includes the head of school and four heads of houses. Richard Nichol has joined the start; a splendid young man who knows quite a few boys and is already establishing a rapport.

So glad you were able look in on Iwerne. I came for 48 hours, arriving the day you left. It was most profitable, re-establishing links with that remarkable place and drawing refreshment.

We pray for the new Master coming next term and for the venue of the meeting when we move out of Melvill next July. The Lord will provide, I am sure. I continue to wonder at what He is doing. Yours sincerely, Richard Rhodes-James. PS My wife sends her regards.

Dad's Retirement (September 1975)

Excerpt from Sailor's Luck: At Sea & Ashore in Peace and War, autobiography by Rear Admiral Geoffrey Hall, 1999 (pp 235-238):

Mary came down with me for my last week, and she and my daughter Virginia helped at the farewell party I gave for the Whitehall staff and their wives in my large octagonal office. They also came down for the much larger party I threw at the Castle Hotel in Taunton for the Naval and Professional staff down there. And on my last evening, the Naval Officers fixed a splendid Guest Night dinner for Mary and me in the Officers' Mess at Sherford Camp. That farewell Guest Night dinner was a really superb occasion. We wore Mess Undress and, with our wives in long evening dress, numbered about thirty. Captain John Winstanley (in charge of the Naval Division at Taunton) was Mess President, and Mary and I, as the Guests of Honour, sat on his left and right. As far as I can remember, David Haslam (Hydrographer designate) sat on Mary's left. There were a number of speeches, of course, all heart-warming and rather eulogistic, to which I had to reply. I made a particular point, I remember, of praising the Surveying Service and saying what an interesting, exciting and satisfying career it offered, how greatly I had enjoyed my time in it, and that if I had my time over again, I would do exactly what I had done. In fact, looking back, I had absolutely no regrets whatsoever. But retirement, and the prospect of becoming my own master for the first time in my life, also had its points, I felt, and I was looking forward to it. I think I included all the right 'noises' too, commending my successor in flowery terms and thanking our hosts profusely. Warm applause was then followed by a formal presentation: for Mary a framed colour photograph of a 19th century view-sketch of a scene in the Hebrides, including Mull (which, in the original, she had admired in the Department's archives), and for me, an original of one of our earliest charts (of Algoa Bay, near Port Elizabeth) beautifully mounted in a gilt frame.

Thursday, 11th September was my last day in the Taunton office, and I spent part of it putting the finishing touches to the 'magnum opus' (my parting letter to The Times), which I discussed with David Haslam. Since he might well have to live with the consequences, I felt it important that it should have his full backing. After dictating the letter to my secretary in Whitehall, Freda Filtness, and after David had assured me that he had now 'got the weight', I prepared to take my final departure. My heart rather sank as we approached the staircase leading down to the hall, as most of the staff had crowded on to it and around its foot, quite blocking our exit. A 'ceremony' of some kind was obviously imminent. Sure enough (despite my earlier protestations), David started making a speech. The upshot of this was that I was formally presented with a magnificent glass-topped coffee table on which was inlaid a genuine copper printing plate of one of our charts. Not only was it a chart-plate of appropriate size, but the Department had actually selected a chart based mainly on my survey off Lamu in 1961/62 and partly on David's continuation of it in 1962/63 in H.M.S. Owen. In addition to the copperplate coffee-table, they also gave me a teak framed copy of the chart itself (Mataoni, Manda and Pate Bays and Approaches) to hang on my wall!

Recollections of Summer Vac 1975

Recollecting during the COVID-19 pandemic of early 2020, and reading through the various letters and postcards from family and friends, certain other 'highlights'...

1. For some reason I remember the Long Vac Term (LVT) much more clearly than Term 3. I think the reason is that during Term 3 I had my head down catching up on the syllabus, and preparing for the Part 1A Tripos Examination in early June 1975. During the LVT (which lasted 4 weeks), the CICCUC remained very active, and I was privileged to be appointed as Coll Rep (College Representative). We had some wonderful times of Bible study on 2 Timothy, covering the four chapters. I recall that the meetings took place in my rooms in Memorial Court, and I led the studies, having recently read John Stott's excellent commentary: 'Guard the Gospel'.
2. I don't have much else to add – the various notes and letters cover this period in sufficient detail...

Photographs taken in Spring 1975



Left: Robert C, John B and friend, St Botolph's Church; Right: Clare Bridge, Cambridge



David C and Cathy, Lee Abbey



The North Devon coast near Lee Abbey...



Photographs of Cambridge taken in Summer 1975



Above left and below: Clare Fellows' Gardens; Above right: Clare Memorial Court

Above: Kings and Clare Colleges; Below left: St John's garden; Below right: Clare Old Court



Photographs of Scotland, Legbourne, Heswall and Coe Fen taken in Summer 1975

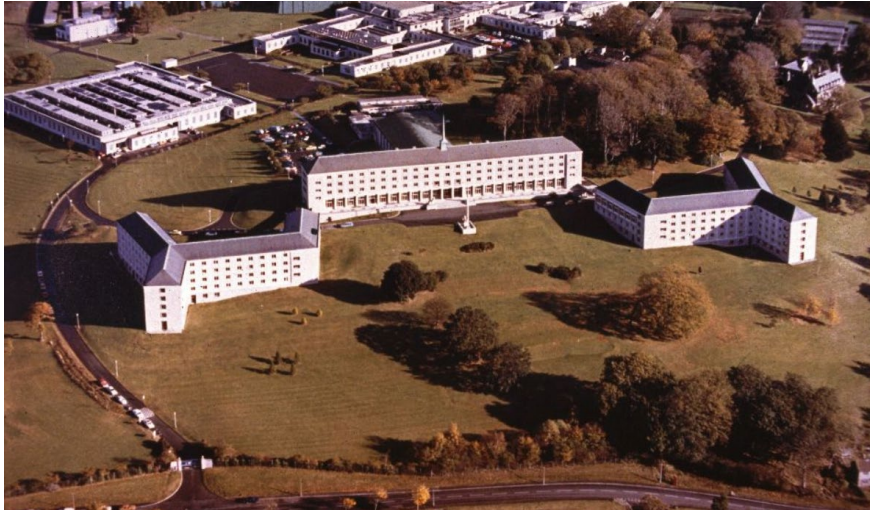


Above: Forth Road Bridge and Scottish Loch; Below: Tennis at Legbourne

Above: HMS Herald; Below: Afternoon tea at Heswall and Surveying at Coe Fen, Cambridge



Photographs of RNEC Manadon and Fowey, August and September 1975 (Source: Google Images 2020)



Above: RNEC Manadon campus; Below: War and Peace covers; Officers Mess at Manadon

Above: Fowey harbour; Below: the chapel at Manadon, and an Olson 35 yacht

