

MY FAMILY'S STORY

By: Harmon David Price

I knew no grandparents of my own, nor do I believe that in my childhood, I ever felt deprived by the absence of such people from my life. We were five children and two involved parents, all linked to community friends, and life was always busy, leaving no room for awareness of missing forebears.

Only much, much later, when I myself became a grandparent many times over, did I ponder the relationship of grandparent -- grandchild, and wonder if I missed anything in my childhood because of this absence. For example in the Asian family, three generations often dwell together, and this must surely give the children a sense of the continuing thread of life -- a feeling that generations begin, mature, and end, in a continuing flow of life -- family following family, ad infinitum! In Western culture the separation of the generations impedes the development of this sense of unity. The grandparents are separate from family; they are folk with whom one exchanges visits -- perhaps to be rewarded with a lucky dip in the sweets jar.

These roving thoughts brought no satisfactory statement on the relationship, which is quite likely to be a fleeting and fragile association, between grandparent and grandchild, dictated by a host of variables -- proximity, accessibility, sincerity of feeling, to name just a few. In addition the ageing of both parties will alter the relationship. There will be in turn a growing together, a growing apart, and if lucky, a coming together again. But best of all there may be moments of "meetings of minds" which for the grandparent can be so exciting, so rewarding, and so precious. It is a pause for mutual recognition before the child hurries on for the acquirement of adulthood, leaving the grandparent with a fleeting glimpse of his own immortality.

One thing however, stands out plainly -- and I have heard this also from other grandparents -- that it is a softer, kinder, more indulgent and relaxed attitude brought to the grandchild, than was possible with one's own growing children. Doubtless the release from responsibility, from the demands of business and ambition, and from the needs of family discipline, helps to mellow the human interaction and adds dimension to the new relationship.

From all these reflections the thought arises that some day my grandchildren may well be wondering about *their* roots, about their forebears, grandparents, great-grandparents and indeed beyond; and I hope herein to provide a small insight into these people. For my own part, it has been only in mature adulthood -- very mature indeed -- that I have felt a serious interest in trying to know more of the people who have contributed to my genetic make-up. What really interests me, and I presume will interest my grandchildren, is to know what manner of people these were; how did they live their lives; did they conform to the manners and mores of their times, or did they have rebel urges -- either openly or covertly? What were their cultural pursuits, their attitudes to social issues; did they have hobbies; would they have been interesting to talk with? Regrettably it is now too late to tap the best source of this information -- my parents. But by drawing on remembered conversations with my folks, and *their* siblings,

and checking data with my remaining siblings, I shall endeavour to set down something more than mere "Births, Deaths, and Marriages".

This task was started at the prompting of some of my children who thought I should write *my* memoirs. However, I believe my father's life was more varied and interesting than my own, and he lived his 86 years through a period of such tremendous social and technological change, that I have for many years nurtured a feeling of duty to try to record something of it for the family. Think for a minute -- he was born to the horse and buggy, when communication by wire was still a novelty, yet he lived to watch on his electronic screen a man walk on the surface of the moon! It took him more than a month by steamship to come from England to Australia, and before he died his son did the same journey in a day. These are but two small examples, from the long list of changes he witnessed. In addition his story will be a convenient access into a biography of my paternal grandparents. Accordingly I have chosen that path to follow, and in telling the latter part of *that* story, some of *my* memoirs will inevitably appear, and provide a structure to build on with some thoughts pertaining to my own experiences. Dele has also started to document a history of her own forebears, so we shall have a large genetic pool by the time it all gets put together!

Before commencing the detailed story of family history, there are a few earlier comments I should clarify or expand. Firstly I said that I knew no grandparents, but at this time my father's father and stepmother were alive and living in England, and he kept up a regular correspondence with them. To me they didn't count; they were remote elderly figures, quite unreal -- probably they didn't remember the names of their Australian grandchildren, and so far as I know there was never any direct contact with us -- the children. It could be truly said that we were as much to blame as they, but I never knew of any encouragement being given us to write an essay for them. As will be told later, Dad, when a teenager had a falling-out with his stepmother, and this may have left a lingering strain in their relationship so that he didn't feel moved to suggest we start a pen-friend relationship with her. At all events, England was many weeks of sea voyage away, and to me they were as remote as the moon.

My second remark -- that I didn't miss such people, is accounted for by the general scarcity of grandparents. In today's cliché" they were thin on the ground" -- one might add "most of them were already under it". Although I remember a lot of friends and families we knew and visited whilst living in Hobart, I have no clear recollection of anybody's grandparent. There may have been some, but they were not around in the way we see them today. The first friend who positively had a grandfather did not come into my life until I was ten. I recall this small unattractive figure who seemed to spend his waking hours in an old cane chair on a bit of old carpet under the elevated house. He wore an old pipe in his mouth but frequently removed it to cough and wheeze and take a poor aim at a spittoon beside his chair. He never had anything to say except an occasional "Good day" to his grandson returning from school. He was just a poor old man waiting for the undertaker. I'm not sure when the latter kept his appointment but I do recall the family going to the beach and the father saying, "Having a bit of a holiday -- now the Dad's gone". Certainly this experience did not make me feel that I

was missing anything by not having a grandfather around -- unless it was a way to get to the beach!

However the scarcity of old people was very real. It is not my purpose to pursue this subject statistically, for we all know that longevity, particularly in males, has increased enormously in this century -- much to the embarrassment of governments charged with the provision of facilities for the aged. But to have lived through the greater part of the century of dramatic advance in all phases of medical science, is to have a window onto the human aspects of the conquest of killing and crippling diseases.

I can still see clearly the look of fear and dread on my mother's face as she stood by the beds while the doctor took throat swabs from her sick children, to be checked for diphtheria; the anxiety when the school was closed by a polio epidemic. I can remember my feelings of uneasy bewilderment when neighbouring boys about my age were stricken -- Brian with Bright's Disease -- dead in a month; Proctor with polio, lying for nine months on his back in a plaster cast reaching from head to toe and half the depth of his body. This agonising treatment was to stop his tendons from shrinking. He lay whimpering all day.

Think of these things today; with antibiotics, dialysis, kidney transplant, Brian might have lived his seventy years, and the polio vaccine could have saved Proctor his years of pain and a twisted body. And so it was that a long list of ailments which frequently carried off the young were either banished or brought under control, thus giving a huge boost to the average life span. Of course the medical miracles didn't stop there. I introduced this subject to indicate why there are more grandparents around today. Keeping children alive certainly increases the pool from which grandparents may grow, but the main impetus I think, comes from two factors -- first, the big improvements in community health regulations and education, and second (but *most* important) the huge developments in surgery and its essential companion, anaesthesia! In my age group and in the community where I live, cardio-vascular surgery is almost an epidemic. At any Probus Club function it is quite astonishing to look around and see the fellows who have had some form of such treatment and to realise that were it not so, they would not be there!

Enough of these lateral thoughts -- though it is fair to warn that there is likely to be a deal of diversionary thinking in my writing. After all, garrulity is a recognised disease of age, and I shall try to curb it. If sometimes I fail, be patient, it may lead to an anecdote of some entertainment or interest.

So to family history commencing with my father, the first Harmon Price. It is necessary to introduce his story with information as to source of material. I recall a dinner-table question to Dad from one of my sisters concerning our Family Tree. He replied, tongue-in-cheek, that he had once researched the subject until he found an ancestor had been hanged for sheep stealing, and he thought he'd better not go any further. However as we all grew much, much older we did persuade him to jot down some of his earlier life and also at Mother's eighty-first birthday celebration I managed

to tape-record a contrived conversation -- which tape I still have. In addition during the war I spent three months in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and saw a good deal of Dad's brother Billy and his wife Peggy. From this association I learnt more of the family, and this was greatly enhanced when Dele and I spent time with this couple during our stay in England in 1969. Very recently I wrote to their daughter, cousin Bunty who responded with yet further facts. From all these sources plus childhood memories I hope to give a well-rounded picture. To commence the story we can't do better than have Harmon -- the First, speak for himself from his "jottings". The title derives from the follow-ons -- Harmon David, John Harmon, Lloyd Harmon, and Beverley's fourth, Lindsay Harmon. I shall intrude only to supply further information where deemed necessary.



The author, Harmon Price, with his wife Dele, in 2009, their 90th year

CHAPTER 1

HARMON -- THE FIRST

“ I arrived on this wonderful Planet called “Earth” on 28th August 1885, just eighty years ago, as I sit writing these memoirs of my Life, on the verandah of our final home at the Garden Settlement, Chermside, a suburb of Brisbane. I was born at Cadoxton a thriving extension of Barry near Cardiff, in County Glamorgan, South Wales, facing the Bristol Channel. Barry Dock was noted as the outlet for the valuable anthracite coal from the Rhondda valley collieries, and this coal was sought by the large American liners tied up at the dock to have their bunkers filled up with this fine steam coal. My father was an Englishman from Monmouth at the east border of Glamorgan, and he settled in Cadoxton to follow up his work as a Builder. He married a Welsh lassie who could not speak a word of English until she came with her family to live in Cadoxton. They ran a business there which was very successful, and lived only a few doors from us. I was often to be found at Granny’s place, and she would greet me with ‘Have a bowl of cawl, Harmony Bach` (“Bach” was Welsh for “Dear” and “cawl” was a soup well laced with chopped up leeks). Granny had five in her family, Uncle John being the oldest, and William the youngest. In between were Aunts Mary and Eliza, and my mother, Martha. When they gathered in Granny’s home there was a gabble of excited Welsh among them all, as Welsh was their native tongue. In fact my mother could not speak English until they left their Welsh village and came to Cadoxton to run a very successful business, as I have previously mentioned. It was a boot and shoe shop, and the business grew so rapidly under the oversight of Uncle John, that they had to open a branch shop some distance away to cater for their many customers. My mother had four children, Billy being the oldest, I was eighteen months younger, Bess was twenty months my junior, then came Baby Blodwen. I was only five years old when tragedy overtook us. My father came one early morning into our bedroom to inform us, broken hearted, that mother had passed away during the night. It was a terrible blow, and it was years later that Bess told me Mother had died of blood poisoning. In those early days medical science was not as advanced as it is today, otherwise her life might have been saved. - - - “

At this stage I shall intrude with data which should help my father’s story. First, Clive and I both recall hearing that our grandmother Martha, died following a stillbirth or miscarriage. The septicaemia arose from that. Second, it seems a good time to provide statistics:- Dad’s father was **William Henry Price**, date of birth 1855 died 1928. Dad’s brother “Billy” was **William James**, born 1884(died 1 August 1973). **Harmon** (one name only) born 1885 (died 14 March 1971), his sister “Bess”, probably **Elizabeth**, born 1887 (died 1962), and **Blodwen**, born 1889 (died 11 October 1976). We shall return briefly to Dad’s narrative, but another interruption is due shortly for some very interesting information.

“Father was now faced with the heavy task of raising a young family of four children whilst being very busy building. It ended with having to hire a housekeeper to look after us children and do the household chores. This did not work out well, and then followed a succession of housekeepers, some giving up the job and others being sacked. - - “

This intrusion is to record an unusual event which occurred during the period of the housekeepers. I shall call it the “Cousin Horace Episode”. During our family life around the dinner table I recall several mentions of Cousin Horace, once in particular

my mother said that Horace was rich, he owned a Rolls Royce! This at a time when we children were inclined to think that such cars were owned solely by Royalty and Maharajas. When I was young these mentions of Horace never stirred my interest at all -- apart from the Rolls. On mature reflection it does seem odd that he featured exclusively, no other cousin being mentioned, yet there were aunts and uncles who might well have provided them. It therefore seems that something special about Horace gave him a close association with my father's family; and sure enough there was -- he was a half brother to Dad and his siblings!

In 1969 when Dele and I were in England, my Aunt Peggy (Billy's wife) told us that our grandfather had married his sister-in-law, in that housekeeper period, and Horace was the product of that union. Such a marriage between a widower and his sister-in-law, at that time in England, was illegal, and subsequently had to be annulled. Uncle Bill knew nothing of this until the 1950's and my father never knew it. When we returned home I explored around the subject and being satisfied that he knew it not, I could see no point in telling him for he was now old and in failing health. Also the story lacked detail and raised many questions, all of which might have been quite disturbing to him. Some of these questions are:-Which sister was Horace's mother? When did she come to the house to look after the family? Was she pregnant before the Marriage? When was the marriage annulled? Which raises the further question, how did they get married if it was against the law? Why did the children know nothing of the Horace Episode?

The last question is fairly easy -- the children were all very young, ranging from Billy probably age nine, to Blodwen a toddler of four. I know from personal experience that boys of that age group are much too busy with their own real world to understand or care about the adults around them. I was nine and Clive five when Beverley was born and her arrival was a total surprise to us. We had not noticed the changing shape of mother, nor did we wonder why we were sent to neighbours for one night -- any curiosity on that score would have been short lived for this neighbour's kid had a fantastic collection of comics, and we were soon adrift in the land of "Rob the Rover" and "Tiger Tims". When in the morning we were directed home to "see the surprise your mother has for you", I sure *was* surprised, and Clive made his famous remark "Gee, Mum, you're not going to keep her, are you?" You see in those days -- my days and my father's -- babies were still the original cabbage-patch dolls, and the general run of children was not told anything about their origins. Questions about "where did I come from?" quickly engineered a change of subject.

As for my father's family, by the time they were old enough to be told about Horace, the whole episode was over and settled and doubtless was regarded as best forgotten. I wish the other questions could be as easily resolved! I have been told that second-cousin Russel Kilmister, in England, researched a Price family history a few years ago, but enquiries he made of the Welsh Davis family received no reply. He felt they didn't want to talk about it or else those he contacted knew little or nothing about the episode.

So let us consider a reconstruction based on known facts embellished by knowledge of human nature. First, the sister! The Davis family, we're told had five children -- oldest and youngest were boys and "In between -- Mary, Eliza, and my mother Martha". It is most likely this is their order of seniority, and that Eliza was close to Martha in age. I think it is reasonable to regard Eliza as the sister who came to keep house, and I shall use her name as *the* sister for this part of the history. The next question is when did she come? Dad says "There followed a succession of housekeepers, some giving up and some being sacked". It is likely she came as a temporary relief while a new employee was found, and that was probably a year or two after Martha's death. Eliza's home was close by, so she would not be a live-in housekeeper (what would the neighbours say!) unless a child was ailing and needed night nursing. Whatever the circumstances, it appears most probable that Eliza and my grandfather "got together" and that she became pregnant. The events surrounding the wedding point to a necessity and urgency to get the knot tied.

Viewed from today's liberal attitudes to marriage and single-mothers, it may seem that I am making too much fuss about this episode. But to know these people, one must interpret the rules they had to live by. In "respectable" society an unmarried woman who became pregnant was a virtual outcast, and the so called "illegitimate" child had a terrible stigma to bear with no rights to name or inheritance; all his life he was likely to be referred to as "So and so's bastard". Even in *my* young days, some of this attitude lingered on, so that I can readily appreciate the panic these two must have suffered, added to which, by now they were probably in love and genuinely wanting to be married.

It is quite likely that before any of this started, they already had a basic fondness for each other, a platonic love as between siblings. I recall such a case told me by an older colleague who claimed that the hardest decision he ever made, was which of two sisters he should propose to. He was enamoured of both and eventually decided by marrying the one closest to his age, It was a long and happy marriage, and throughout there continued this reciprocated fondness for his sister-in-law. With Eliza and William the fondness might not have been of the same intensity as in this case, but it would be increased by the heightened tenderness generated by mutual grieving -- for a lost sister and a lost wife. One supposes that their comforting of each other went further than they intended.

Enter the legislators -- "A man shall not marry his deceased wife's sister!" We know it is not the law today, neither in this country nor England; also that they *did* marry and that the marriage was later annulled. It was puzzling indeed; so I embarked on an enquiry and eventually found most of the answer in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. In brief, the two bars to marriage which concern us here are **consanguinity** and **affinity**. The first is direct blood relationship; the second is between husband or wife and the other's relatives. Commonest occurrence is between a widower and his sister-in-law. The subject is much more extensive than this, having its basis in Chapter eighteen of Leviticus. From this the Church interpreted marriage as making husband and wife one body, and argued that this made relatives on both sides into "blood" relations. In other

words *his* siblings became *her* siblings and *hers* became *his*, and therefore a union of either partner with the other's siblings came within the prohibited degree of marriage. It was canonical rather than civil law and over a long time caused confusion and agitation to have a civil law to clarify and legalise the situation.

The self-governing colonies, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of smaller dominions had all passed laws to legitimise these marriages, and the issue came to the House of Commons in 1850. It met resistance from the church, and did not become law in England until 1907, with the passage of the **Deceased Wife's Sister Marriage Act**. Too late for Eliza and William! However that is not the end of the story. I have spoken of recent contact with Bunty, and in her reply she mentioned this episode with the comment that they married in Jersey. Now why would two people living in Wales need to go to the Channel Islands to be married? Firstly, I believe it confirms the urgency and determination to marry before Horace is born, but secondly, why Jersey? Further research reveals that though the Islands became British about 1066, they enjoyed a special, if partial, autonomy with their own elected Assembly and a Lieutenant Governor. The seemingly global agitation to rectify this troublesome marriage bar, had been active in these Islands also, and their partial autonomy had allowed the rectification process to be advanced ahead of that in England. However the law to give my grandfather a legal marriage in the Channel Islands was not finally passed until 1899; again too late by about seven years. Nonetheless the ceremony *was* performed, and I speculate that the Bill was already through the Jersey Assembly, but awaiting assent and proclamation. Possibly on legal advice in England, they thought their best option was to marry in anticipation of assent, which was believed to be imminent. This served their purpose of legitimising Horace Price (pre natal), and very important in those days.

Regrettably the happy ending was not to last. The "imminent assent" was not imminent at all and in England the marriage was still not legal and could be pronounced null and void. At some time later, presumably after the birth of Horace, the bailiff caught up and served his notice and the chance of happiness for this couple was snatched away by a useless law destined to be consigned to the dustbin. There is every reason to view this as a terrible tragedy -- the second for poor William Henry in the space of a few years. As the story unfolds it will also be seen as a sombre event for the whole family, leading to an unhappy home and influencing the course of their lives.

To be scrupulously fair to the canon law, (which I have condemned as useless) there was a subordinate purpose, in that children of the second marriage would not only be cousins to those of the man's first marriage, but also half siblings. As cousins they could marry each other but not as half brother/sister! In our example, Cousin Horace could marry his cousin Blodwen, but as half brother and half sister they could not marry. The enabling Act got over this problem by instituting "publication of bans". This gave opportunity to a person possessing private knowledge which would ban a marriage to "speak or forever hold his peace".

Shortly we shall return to my father's narrative, but perhaps a word or two first to set the scene for the next significant occurrence. By this time my grandfather was

consolidating a successful building business, and being a man of some independent vision and enterprise, he was not of the kind to pine and mope after lost causes. I would think he accepted they had done everything they could to solemnise a marriage, and had been defeated, without promise or hope of a favourable resolution of their problem. It seems Eliza would have no option but to follow suit, and accordingly they put their aspirations aside, separated, and got on with their lives. The only one who had a happy ending was Horace; he was accepted into the Davis household, eventually inherited the successful family business, and had his Rolls Royce!

At this stage I can imagine my grandchildren asking “But why did they separate? Why didn’t they just live together without marrying?” I can only reply that in those days it simply wasn’t done! In polite society the man would be a renegade, the woman a “fallen” woman, the pair “living in sin”, and inviting eternal damnation. They would be expelled from their church, and former friends would cross the street to avoid contact. Of course it was all hypocrisy -- a man could have a mistress, indeed a second family, so long as it was discreetly done -- but never an open “living in sin” -- *never!* As late as 1956, I struck a case when relieving our District Manager in Cairns. As was the custom, the senior Agent in the district took on responsibility for social entertainment of the relief manager. I was invited to join a dinner party at his house. Before the function he took me aside and after checking the office for eavesdroppers, told me in a stage whisper, that among the guests would be “Jack and Mary, who are *not actually married!* They live as husband and wife, and they’re really very nice people; but they’re (whisper) not married”. I managed to be big minded and not to let Jack and Mary spoil my dinner, but believe me, today’s attitude to marriage is a very recent event, in modern social structure; -- without implying criticism, I might suggest it is a throw-back to a primitive stage of social evolution. It has been remarked that women spent years of effort in getting men to take responsibility for their children, and now they are throwing it all away! Of course this remark takes no account of the gift to women, by science, of the control of conception.

Dad’s story continues after stating there had been a succession of housekeepers, some quitting and some being sacked. “*Father began to think of getting married again and having someone permanent as a solution of the problem! He met a Mary Lewis, who had come from Staffordshire in the Midlands with her parents, who ran a bakery business in Cadoxton. After a brief courtship they got married, and she had the serious task of bringing up four young children who were not her own. However she was a great disciplinarian, and her method was to simply keep a cane like a school teacher, and for doing something wrong she would make us hold out our hands and she would apply to our bare palms six cuts with the cane. Naturally we much resented this form of punishment, although we might have deserved correction. We began to detest her heartily, and behind her back we called her “Steppy”, an abbreviation. - - -*”

This seems an appropriate time to interrupt for an elaboration and perhaps a defence of the stepmother, my role being the Devil’s Advocate in reverse. Dad concedes that Mary had a real task in bringing up four young children -- not her own. But there is more to it than that. When I was about fourteen or fifteen, I overheard a conversation probably between Dad and Uncle Bill (he visited us once from Ceylon) to

the effect that Mary had a stillborn child wedged in her pelvis, and it had to be surgically removed -- not by caesarean section but by dismemberment! One gets a vision of kitchen table butchery, under a whiff of chloroform. It is a wonder she didn't follow Martha to a death by septicaemia or surgical shock! So much for medicine 1890's style. I apologise for another birth accident which I seem to be labouring (no pun intended) but these occurrences were commonplace in those days, as statistics will attest. So there must be no more pregnancies for Mary, and we can imagine the strain upon the marriage and the bitterness she would feel towards the fates which cast her in the role of a half-wife limited virtually to a nanny's job.

Perhaps this explains why her discipline does have more than a touch of sadism about it. The children all learnt the piano and had to practice for a session or two each day. My father has recounted how on cold winter mornings, with their fingers stiff and probably swollen with chilblains, they might fumble a note or timing, and Steppy would come at them and wack the fingers with a small branch of holly -- complete with prickles! A rod of chastisement kept especially for that purpose. Harsh treatment as this no doubt was, in retrospect they probably can all thank her for forcing on them a grounding in music which they built upon -- Bessie gaining a reputation as a singer, Blodwen a champion violinist, Harmon competent as a pianist, organist and choir master, with an abiding love of classical music. Of Billy, I am not sure but I think I have heard him at the piano in recreational mode. A few final comments on stepmother Mary, dredged from my recollections of dinner table conversations. This one would have taken place in the early 1930's after grandfather's death. In his older years he suffered from asthma and spent part of each winter in Switzerland to escape the English cold. He did this alone because Mary was afraid of travel and would never set foot on a ship. To us children this was strange conduct for a husband and wife to separate for some months each year, and perhaps prompted a question about their relationship. Dad replied, "Steppy always said she adored my father, and would follow him to the grave", then he added a wry remark, "I expect she will, " (sotto voce) "but she doesn't seem to be in any hurry". This earned a scolding from mother who was always careful not to appear to be wishing anyone into the grave. She was well versed in old wives tales that were touched by superstition.

The narrative continues with the move to Bournemouth. The trigger was principally that grandfather's business had outgrown Cadoxton, but I suspect that relations with the Davis family had become understandably strained, and a move away from the small town atmosphere was indicated on that score also. Bournemouth was a happy choice being a good place to live, and for the builder, it was at the start of a big expansion boom, like our Gold Coast in 1950. It was a popular watering place with the added attraction for the gentry of having the Royal Yacht at Cowes on nearby Isle of Wight. Here the Prince of Wales did his summer entertaining.

My grandfather bought up land around St. Mary's Road and built houses and shops. As an indication of his forward thinking, he had told Dad, when a boy, "You never build one shop on its own, always a cluster of shops which bring trade to each other." This is the very principle of today's shopping malls and drive-ins. So to the

narrative:- *“Later on we moved from Cadoxton to Bournemouth, a delightful city on the English Channel and very popular with tourists. There Father enrolled us in a fine school called Stourwood College. It was a high school and I got a good education there, helpful in later life. We studied there for the “College of Preceptors” exams, and I passed the junior grade, and finally before I left, the Senior Exam. I was very happy there, and Billy passed top in the seventh form, and before I left I also passed top of the school in the seventh form, so we were both good scholars! It must have been an Anglican school as each morning the scholars stood to attention while the Head Master read the morning prayers solemnly, then said “Sit boys”, after which we proceeded to our various classes.*

When Billy finished schooling he was articled to the Engineer to the Bournemouth City Council for three years as a pupil, for a fee of 100 pounds. At that time I finally fell out with Steppy. I met her on the landing of the steps, where she was waiting for me with the cane for something I had done wrong in her judgment. I promptly snatched the cane and broke it over my knee, saying I was no longer a child to hold out my hand to be caned, and to hell with her! She got a great shock and said she would immediately report me to my father. I guessed he was getting a bit fed up himself, with her bossy ways, but he said would I “for the sake of peace” apologise to her. This I flatly refused to do, and the only alternative was for me to leave home. Fortunately at that time there appeared an advertisement in the daily paper for a pupil required by a Mr. W.T.Howse, the Engineer to the Bexley Council in North West Kent, on the border of the London County Council at Woolwich. The fee was sixty pounds for training as his pupil, and we proceeded to Bexley to interview Mr. Howse. He said he had one other applicant for the position, and turning to his wife he said, “What do you think, my dear?” Mrs. Howse looked me over and then said, “I think Mr.Price has an honest face”. So on the strength of my” honest face” I was selected as his pupil, and my father gave him his fee.

The next step was for me to find somewhere to board. I interviewed the Rev. J. Geddes, the Congregational Minister, and he recommended Miss Ponder, a teacher in his Sunday School. She kept house for her aged father in Oakland Road, Bexley Heath, the business and shopping centre for Bexley. I proceeded to Oakland Road and introduced myself to Miss Ponder. She had a spare bedroom in a very comfortable home, and she agreed to take me as a boarder, for what I considered to be a very moderate charge. She appeared about forty, and looking after her father was drifting into being a spinster.I had bidden goodbye to my father when he returned to Bournemouth and I was very pleased to be on my own now, well away from Steppy. I found Bexley to be a very charming country sort of place, and that was surprising considering it was so near to the outskirts of London. I had always looked forward to one day being able to explore that great City, especially the West End, with Picadilly Circus, Oxford St., Regent St. and Bond St., with its fabulous shops.- - -”

I have already mentioned the tape-recorded conversation we had with Dad during the dinner to celebrate mother’s eighty-first birthday -- which makes him, at the time, 85 years. His memory was still vivid of early events though his dates were a little awry -- thoroughly excusable at any age. I have recently played the tape; it has deteriorated with time and has a lot of dinner table noise to make it, in places, hard to decipher. I shall edit it to chronological order:-Queen Victoria was mentioned; she had her favourite residence, “Osborne House”, at Cowes on the Isle of Wight and took her summer holidays there. It was possibly in 1896 when her Diamond Jubilee was celebrated (60 years on the throne) that she visited Bournemouth and her Carriage drove past Stourwood College where Dad was amongst the pupils lined up to see her.

He says he took off his cap and bowed as she passed and she waved back! To quote the tape, *“So I can say I’ve seen Queen Victoria!”* He also mentions going on a ferry-boat down The Solent to see a Royal Regatta, and there was the Queen, and the Prince of Wales on the Royal Yacht, waving to the passing boats.

The next item is Bexley, and he elaborates on the surrounding countryside. It was all open and cultivated producing strawberries and raspberries for the London market. The pickings were made one day and the fruits taken by dray overnight to London to be fresh for the market at 5 or 6 next morning. There seems to have been a good brotherly bond with Billy, who finished his indentures at Bournemouth and then moved to London and took lodgings in Lewisham. They both had bicycles, and at weekends would ride to each other’s lodgings and explore London and the countryside around. He spoke of riding on Chiswellhurst Common near Bexley, and on another occasion they rode to Brighton, on the London - Brighton Road. He talked about the London theatres, of Picadilly Circus, Shaftesbury Avenue and Drury Lane. He went to a theatre to see Danleeno (spelling uncertain), a popular comedian at the time. He then mentions the Christmas pantomimes played by this same actor, which drew crowds of children from the surrounding Counties to see “Puss in Boots”, “Mother Goose” and other fairy tales.

An item which aroused his memory was the funeral of Queen Victoria. He said that a weeping Sunday School Superintendent came into his class and said, “Boys I have to tell you that our Queen has passed away”. Dad would have been about sixteen at that time, and not yet moved to Bexley, but somehow he got himself to London and found a space in St. James Park opposite Buckingham Palace. The funeral procession must have been a grand spectacle, with the crowned heads of Europe present along with leaders of government, army, church and a considerable retinue of the Queen’s own family. He reports seeing the German Kaiser (Victoria’s grandson), and the new King -- Edward the Seventh -- astride black horses and passing so close to him he could hear them talking. There followed a host of nobility, prominent in his mind being Lords Kitchener, Baden Powell and Roberts, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a retinue of clergy. Then the flag draped coffin on a black hearse drawn by six matched black horses.

It was all grand theatre befitting the longest reigning British sovereign, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the dominions across the seas, and Empress of India. This was the pinnacle of wealth and power of the British Empire, the greatest Empire the world has seen. Such was its global spread, that we were told at school -- “the sun never sets on the Empire”. It is sobering to reflect that not one of those present could know that in little over fifty years, two devastating wars and the national aspirations of dominions and colonies would strip the grandeur away and leave little England a second-rate power!

To return now to the narrative:- *“Bexley was quite a large area and Mr. Howse was allowed an assistant Engineer to cope with the various duties in the Council Offices. Mr.Howse advised me to go to the evening classes at Woolwich just within the London County Council area. The Bexley tram terminus was at the Woolwich border, and I was able to attend the Woolwich Polytechnic,*

to study in particular Building Construction, Sewerage, and House connection to Sewer, etc, as it would be very useful to me in the work I was to undertake. I found the Assistant Engineer, Mr. Fred Nash, a very nice chap, about 25, and I was 17 when I became a pupil. He looked quite dashing as he rode his cycle with his breeches and leather gaiters, and I was so taken with the suitability of the rigout that I followed suit and bought breeches and leggings myself. We rode our cycles with the Engineer around the district to inspect road works, building construction, sewerage construction, etc., and in that way I learnt a lot about the running of the Engineer's department.

I transferred my membership to the Bexley Heath Congregational Church where the Rev. Geddes was minister, and I joined the senior Sunday School there. The school was affiliated with the West Kent Sunday School Union, and I studied hard to be ready to compete in the annual exams in Scripture knowledge. I won the second prize at my first attempt, and the following year obtained the first prize in the whole of the West Kent Union, against nearly two thousand students, which brought the hearty congratulations from our worthy Superintendent! I was presented by the Union with three volumes, beautifully bound, of Tennyson's works.

When my three years expired as a pupil to the Engineer, Fred Nash, his assistant, was left a considerable sum of money by an aunt who passed away, and he resigned from the Council, and moved to Worthing, a beautiful seaside resort on the south coast facing the English Channel. His ambition was to take up a private practice as an Engineer there. Unfortunately he did not get as many clients as he hoped for, so his young wife helped out by opening a tea shop, and the business flourished with the tourists who flocked to this popular seaside place. When they were settled down in Worthing, Fred invited me to come down and visit them, and I quite enjoyed the place, which reminded me of Bournemouth, although not quite so large. I was promoted into Fred Nash's place as Assistant Engineer, and I was glad of the increase in my salary! I was then twenty years of age and the year was 1905.

The Council appointed a clerk to take on the growing amount of clerical work in the office. This freed me to cycle round the district with the Engineer, and I learned a lot about running the Council's work by this promotion. I was particularly interested in the inspection of new buildings, to make sure that the builders kept strictly to the building by-laws in their work. Of course we had our share of the usual jerry-builders, who sought to save a bit more profit by dodging the by-laws, and a strict watch had to be kept to defeat their aims. I recall one instance where I had to instruct a builder to pull down a brick chimney and rebuild it, lining the whole of the interior of the chimney with cement mortar, to prevent the danger of fire, and this he had omitted to do. Another instance was where a builder had a load of loam on the site to make mortar, whereas the by-law stated that only clean sharp sand should be used, so he had to remove the loam and replace it with the correct material.

The Council had a "General Purposes" committee for the Engineer to report on construction of new roads, matters concerning new buildings, sewer extensions, etc. One day when cycling round the district Mr. Howse had a nasty accident, landing him in a ditch with injuries and smashed glasses. I helped him home, and during his convalescence I had to take his place at the Committee and report back to him -- all good experience for me.

I was 25, after serving 8 years as pupil and Assistant Engineer, when I went down with a severe bout of bronchitis during the cold winter. I had been unsettled since Billy had gone to Ceylon as Civil Engineer, the previous year, 1909, and while recovering from my illness I began to think of seeking a

warmer climate. I was attracted to the State of California where the large orchards of oranges and prunes flourished and the fruit found a ready market in neighbouring states. However I did not at all like the idea of becoming an American citizen, and my thoughts turned to the apple orchards of Tasmania. I obtained brochures about the industry from the Tasmanian Agent in London, and after studying them, decided to take up orcharding in the warmer climate of Tasmania. I booked my passage to Melbourne on the Orient Liner "Orsova", and was sad at leaving the comfortable home of the Ponders, where I had been so happy for the eight years with the Bexley Council.

The Engineer on behalf of the Council, presented me with a handsome leather cabin trunk, and I was very pleased with such a useful gift. Another incident pleased me also. I was cycling round the district for my last day in the Council's service when a Council workman came up to wish me goodbye and said in all the time I had been in the Council's service he had never heard a wrong word against me. I felt quite flattered at the compliment from this humble source. Old Mr. Ponder came down to Tilbury Dock, London, to see me off on the "Orsova", and I showed him my two-berth cabin with a porthole to give a view of the ocean. A young Scotsman occupied the other berth, and turned out to be an interesting companion during our five weeks voyage to Melbourne. I also chummed up with another young chap from London, named George Harper. He was a local preacher in the Methodist Church, and he told me that the Congregational Church in Australia was very weak compared with the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. I kept this in mind, as I had always been a Congregational member in England.

It was a cold January day when we left London, and I was very glad when we got into warmer weather entering the Mediterranean after passing Gibraltar. We berthed at Port Said at the entrance to the Suez Canal to take on coal. It was very interesting to watch the coolies at work loading the coal. They went up one plank with a basket of coal on their shoulder, dumped it into the bunker, and returned empty down another plank for a refill. It was surprising how quickly the bunkers were filled by this seemingly primitive method of coaling. After passing through the Canal into the Indian Ocean, our next port of call after ten days sailing was Colombo, capital of the Crown Colony of Ceylon. My brother Billy was now District Engineer at Colombo, and he met the Steamer as we berthed to take on merchandise for Australian ports. He took me to his residence for refreshments, and I was very pleased to see him again. We strolled along the sea front until the "Orsova" was loaded up and ready to put to sea again.

Our next port after ten more days sailing was Fremantle, which served Perth, the capital of Western Australia. There for the first time I set foot on Australian soil, and the first thing I noticed were lovely black grapes on a fruit stall selling for a shilling a pound. This struck me as wonderful after paying so much for English grapes grown in hot-houses to ripen them. After leaving Fremantle we berthed at Adelaide, capital of South Australia. We had only a short time there before sailing for Melbourne, Victoria. This terminated my trip on the "Orsova", which continued on to call at Sydney. I got my trunk and my cabin trunk and left the ship to join a small steamer crossing over to Launceston on the Tamar River in north Tasmania. There I unpacked my bicycle and cycled down the main tourist road to Hobart. I made enquiries about the Huon orcharding district, and cycled down to Franklin on the Huon. There I saw my first glimpse of the apple orchards along the banks of the Huon. It was a beautiful sight with the trees all white with blossom. I proceeded first to seek the Congregational minister at Franklin, and he was most helpful as I explained to him my desire to learn about orcharding.

He introduced me to Mr. Lance Kellaway, who was a member of his Church, who had an apple orchard of about ten acres of trees just coming into bearing (it takes about seven years for young apple trees to commence bearing). Lance's father was one of the pioneers to establish apple growing in the Huon Valley, and since then the Huon District became the chief orcharding area in Tasmania. Lance, who was married with two young daughters, lived in a very nice bungalow on the banks of the River. He decided to take me on and had a cabin built for me within a stone's throw of his house, furnished with a bed, table and chair, and had a fireplace which was very cosy at night. I had abundant firewood near by in the bush, and my first purchase at Franklin across the river, was an axe. I used to row over the wide Huon (about half a mile) for any necessities I required. I had all my meals with the family and Mrs. Kellaway was very nice. She had a cousin about 25, named Beena, to help with the chores and look after the children. She was very helpful and tidied up my cabin each morning and made my bed. - - - "

Up to this point and apart from my numerous intrusions, I have quoted My father's narrative verbatim. When we coaxed him into writing his story, we pressed on to him an ordinary exercise book, as a gesture to get him started. Apparently he deferred use of this book until he was satisfied with the rough notes he jotted down from time to time, on what appear to be spare pages culled from old notebooks. These spare pages are numbered, but there are two sequences and neither is complete -- all very confusing. I think he tired of the job but made the effort to edit what he had done into the exercise book, and it is that part I have quoted hitherto. It ends in the apple orchard where Mrs. Kellaway's cousin apparently developed an unrequited crush on him. Perhaps he didn't trust housekeepers after his boyhood experiences!

From here on I shall have to edit the rough notes and expand them where I have further information. I shall continue to use italics for Dad's words. He goes on with further comment on the amorous cousin:- *"she seemed interested in 'the young Englishman' as I was called by the neighbouring folk. All the young chaps who worked in the surrounding orchards seemed to be born and bred Tasmanians. There was a legendary figure in the old convict days known as Colonel Tom Price and of course they started calling me 'Colonel'. This name stuck to me all the time I was in the Huon.*

In the following nine months I had experienced the rounds of orchard work -- picking, packing, and pruning. So I began to look around to see what I should do next. After making enquiries I came to the conclusion that buying a ten-acre orchard, planted and fully bearing would be far beyond my limited means. I was forced to the conclusion that I would have to look for my future in another field, and was considering applying to the Hobart Council for work as a draughtsman. Whilst wrestling with this problem I suddenly learnt of an English Company studying the feasibility of a Hydro Electric Scheme, using the waters of the Great Lake which was on a 2,000 ft. plateau in the centre of Tasmania. It was said the Lake was in the crater of an extinct volcano and was the catchment for the rain and snow from the surrounding high country. The Company was advertising for a young single man to carry out survey work in connection with the scheme.

I discussed the Scheme with Lance Kellaway, and in all the circumstances he thought I should apply for the job. This I did and the Company replied giving details of the work and pointing out that I would have to camp on the ground in an isolated area, with no amenities, but could obtain supplies from a nearby sheep station. The wage offered was four pounds a week. Lance Kellaway thought this

was a princely sum, saying it was as much as he made working his orchard and also supervising the work on his father's orchard. I was requested to start as soon as possible, and with some sadness I left the Huon after a very happy and carefree time with them all. I thought Beena (the cousin) looked rather wistfully at me when the time came for me to depart.

I rode my bicycle up to the Great Lake and settled on site in a tent. There was an engineer, a Scotsman in charge of the office, and he gave me some draughting to do. The Company's plan was to harness the waters of the Lake as they flowed down the River Shannon, the only outlet from the Lake. The river ran along the plateau and then descended into the Ouse Gorge. The plot required four, 48 inch diameter pipes to be fixed vertically, side by side, to the rock wall of a 900 foot precipitous section of the descent. Then to divert the River Shannon through a canal into these four pipes. The water thus contained, would drive the turbines in the powerhouse to be built at the bottom of the fall. The spent water would then be diverted to the River Ouse along the Gorge. My immediate work was to survey the chosen route for the canal and penstock basin, so that these could be built for the injection of the water into the four steel pipes. It was all very interesting work and my life style was quite agreeable too. I had acquired a gun, and a dog for company, and often tramped the countryside and bagged a rabbit for my dinner. I regarded this time as a brief interlude in my life to expand my experience and save some money; but of course it was not what I would want for a future for myself.

The Great Lake Scheme was started by the English Company but it ran out of money before the work was completed. The Tasmanian Government, which had granted the Company the concession to build the project, well knew the great potential of the scheme and decided to take it over and complete it. The electricity ultimately generated by the power station was sufficient to power Hobart and Launceston, and a line was also constructed to the West coast to supply the Mt. Lyell mines and township.

Meanwhile I had a letter from my father to say he was visiting my brother Billy in Ceylon. My father's idea was to then continue his journey to Sydney, and he suggested I might meet him there. Without further ado, I terminated my work on the Hydro Scheme and proceeded to Sydney. Whilst my father spent several weeks in Colombo and then took ship for Australia, I enjoyed an exploration of the fine city of Sydney with its beautiful harbour. On the appointed day I went to Circular Quay to meet the ship. Father had a good trip from Ceylon and we had a very happy reunion. We decided to take a holiday exploring the Blue Mountains and covered a large area of those beautiful mountains on bicycles. Eventually it became time for my father to continue his journey home via New Zealand and America. He suggested I return with him but I had no wish to go back to England, so he tried to persuade me to come as far as Auckland with him. However I turned the offer down, preferring to explore more of N.S.W. and go north to Queensland. The prospect of the mild winter climate of Brisbane appealed to me, and I thought to settle down there.

My father meanwhile continued his trip, touring the South Island (N.Z.) with its mountains and glaciers. He then crossed to the United States, landing at San Francisco, and on through the Rocky Mountains and visiting Niagara Falls and New York, then home. He was away six months, had circled the Globe, going via the Red Sea, Colombo, Australia, and returning via U.S.A. and the Atlantic. A nice trip! - - "

At this stage of the narrative I think an update of Dad's family is called for. Firstly a comment on **Grandfather**. It is good to see that he has made a success of his

building business. After 17 years in Bournemouth, taking a six months holiday on a first class trip around the World, speaks for itself as an indication of success. After the tragedies of his earlier life I enjoy the thought that he has gained some reward for his undoubted hard work. Nonetheless I sense that he was a lonely man. I have already recorded that wife Mary was unwilling to travel, but quite apart from this aspect, he was probably lonely for intellectual companionship. His attempt to bring Harmon home and the invitation to accompany him to New Zealand suggests this, and perhaps also he nurtured a hope that one of his sons might take over the business he had built. Billy, of course was already settled in his career, and son Horace long gone beyond his influence, and now Harmon has declined to follow him. He would have reason to feel a little sad, a little lonesome.

As he grew older his health began to fail, and he retired from business. He was subject to lung and bronchial problems, aggravated by the long English winters, and that is when he began escaping to Switzerland each year. I have no exact record of his death, however, Bunty suggests 1928/9 and that aligns with a memory I have of a cable from England, and Mum, on Dad's return from work, taking him, telegram in hand, into the bedroom. He was very fond of his father, and emerged a half hour later, red eyed and quiet. It was an unusually subdued dinner table that night.

Billy married Margaret Restarick (my Aunt **Peggy**) in Ceylon on 18 December 1915, and I believe Peggy was born in Ceylon, daughter of a clergyman missionary. She was a handsome lady and during my three months of war service in Ceylon, I saw a lot of them, and grew quite fond of Peg. In her younger days I'm sure she was a rather striking beauty, in fact this is quite evident in the attached photo where she is holding her first born, my cousin Bunty. As has been mentioned earlier, Billy joined the Civil Service in Ceylon about 1908/9. He did very well there rising to the top of his profession as Director of Public Works and Civil Aviation. He was about to retire when war broke out in 1939 and he agreed to stay on for the duration. When Japan made its lightning push down South-East Asia, Ceylon became highly vulnerable, and was bombed twice -- Trincomalee and Colombo.

On top of all his other defence works to defend and protect the Cities and the citizens, he was given the urgent task of making a military airstrip in Colombo, by linking a sports field, a racecourse, and the streets between. Some A.I.F. Engineers Unit must have been made available to him for I remember his comment to me, "Thank God for your chaps, Harmon, they certainly know how to work." I didn't know we had any engineers in Ceylon, but I accepted his compliment with dignity. When he retired after the war Billy was offered a knighthood for his life's work. He declined it but accepted the lesser award of C.M.G.. Later he explained it to Dad, saying that to retire to England with a knighthood would cost him half his pension. "You're expected to be patron and benefactor of every local organisation and to head every charity list with the biggest donation. That on top of regalia and other costs incurred by functions of the Order." So it appears high honours come at a high price -- but not for this Price.

Not long after retirement, Billy was appointed to head a Government Commission of Enquiry into the administration of Jamaica, in the West Indies. I never heard the result of that exercise, but no doubt he acquitted himself well and had a pleasant time of it too. Life in England immediately after the war must have been very austere with high taxation and many lingering shortages. By 1952 Billy and Peggy decided they'd had enough and migrated to Devonport, Tasmania to join Charles and Blodwen who had gone there some years earlier. Both couples, en route there spent some time with my folks, and we all enjoyed happy reunions.

After five years in the "Apple Isle" Peggy decided she wanted to see more of her children and grandchildren, and they returned to England. This statement reminds me that I haven't given details of these two cousins whom I greatly esteem. **Bunty** is the one I have mentioned several times already and this is because we're in touch with her more often. She was born in Kandy, in March 1915, and like all expatriate children at that time, she was sent off to an English boarding school at the tender age of ten. Of course she would spend her main school holidays back in Ceylon, but this annual interlude would be her only family life, during all those important years of growing up. Such were the sacrifices of those in the Colonial Service.

Bunty was named Pearl Myfanwy, but never liked her names and was glad that her baby name of Bunty has stuck to her throughout. She married Alan Angus in 1938. He was a tea planter in Southern India, and they lived on the plantation until retirement about the early 1960's, when they settled in Wiltshire. They had two children, Alister, born in Colombo 1941, and Sandy, born in India, 1945. Alister's wife is Kay and they have a son and daughter, Duncan and Lucy. Sandy's first wife was Penny, and they had a daughter, Samantha, and a son, Damion. Sandy and Penny divorced, and he married Jane, and they have two girls and a boy. Sadly, Alan died suddenly in 1967 and Bunty has remained a widow.

We first met Bunty in 1969 when we spent a few enjoyable days at her place in Worthing. Billy and Peggy were also living in Worthing, so we had some happy times together, as well as sightseeing around that area. Billy died in August 1973, aged 89, and Peggy followed two years later. We again visited Bunty in 1979, and when we finally left London, she very thoughtfully came up for the day and saw us off with a lunch at the Cumberland Hotel -- I remember it well; very pleasant!

Roland was born to Peggy and Billy, in Colombo on 9 July 1925. He was a very bright mathematician and engineer, and worked for oil companies in the Middle East. I recall that he was in Basra for some years. He was later transferred to Spain and worked in Madrid. He married Margaret in 1954, but I don't know where they were located at that time. However they liked Madrid so well as a place to live, that when the company served the next transfer notice, they said "No thanks". Ro resigned and found suitable employment in Madrid, and they are now retired there. They have a daughter named Jenny, born 1957, now married to Harold, (a Norwegian, I think), and living in Sweden. In 1971 Ro and Margaret adopted a Spanish boy named Timothy.

In 1969 Dele and I spent almost a week with them and they were so very kind and generous with their hospitality and sightseeing, we were quite overwhelmed. Regrettably neither Bunty nor Roland has given us the opportunity to reciprocate, despite invitations to come down-under to Oz.

Earlier this year (1997) Roland was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to the expatriate community in Madrid and also for his work with the organisation for Guide Dogs.

Bess is the member of Dad's family whom I know the least. She was born in 1887, which makes her 25, in 1912, when she went to Ceylon, for a holiday with her brother, Billy. Whilst there she met and married Clive Kilmister, a career officer in the British army, who eventually achieved the rank of Brigadier. In the British army, at that time it was probably Brigadier-General, one rank under a Major-General. In other words, he was pretty high up. But this high ranking did not apply to his reliability as a husband. He appears to have been a regular Don Juan, and perhaps to have thrown down a secret challenge to that legendary lover. No doubt there would have been confrontations between wife and husband, warnings given, perhaps promises made and not kept, until finally Bess parted from "Killie", as he was known in the family. Thereafter she lived her life as a separated wife. She had two children, Emily Mary (always known as "Mollie"), 1916, and Phil, 1922.

The only time I met Bess hardly counts, for I was very young and I carry no personal recollection of it. However we had, in the family album, an old photo of Bess with a seven year old Mollie beside her, and nursing a very young baby Phil. When this photo periodically came to light, I thought it was said to have been taken on Maria Island (see account in chapter 3), but Clive's memory of the reference places it in Hobart. Either way, Phil appears to be under 1 year old making it about 1923 which is about the time we left the Island for Hobart. The place is not as significant as the visit itself. This is major travel from India, or Ceylon, or Egypt, (where they also had a posting), to Tasmania under the difficult travel facilities of the time and with such a young babe. It suggests that Bess just had to get away, and felt an urgent need to talk to her brother Harmon about her problems.

I was told once that Bess, in her young single days, was an accomplished singer and had soloed with the Bournemouth City Orchestra under Sir Dan Godfrey, a prominent conductor of the time. Of course she did not pursue a career as a singer, trading it instead for an unfulfilled life with a lot of struggle. To add to her unhappiness, Mollie turned out to be rather unstable, with her father's roving eye, and a very bad addiction to alcohol. In the words of her brother Phil, "She wasted her life". Further comment by Bunty, "Bess had a sad and lonely life, Mollie took every penny off her". Bess died in 1962.

Mollie married at a young age, an R.A.F. officer named "Patsy" O'Grady, but I believe it was an on-again/off again marriage. Of her five children, Moonyeen, our second cousin, is the one I have heard most of, and she is said to be a lovely person; it was she who looked after Bess in her last years. About 1995 we had a surprise visit

from Rory O'Grady, one of the younger children, who was working as an engineer on the big bridges leading to the new airport in Hong Kong. He brought his wife Jane on a holiday to Australia, and had a week in Brisbane with Clive looking after them. We enjoyed a day's visit from them to Tamborine. He was a most agreeable chap and has exchanged Christmas cards since. Mollie died in 1980.

Phil is a very different character from his sister. He had a distinguished war service as a R.A.F. pilot of fighter-bombers, and was awarded the D.F.C. He stayed on in the air force after the war, and for a time flew converted Lancasters on aerial survey and mapping work in East Africa. This and other peace time duties earned him the additional award of the A.F.C.. He married Pat, a quite charming lady, and they have two children, Frances and Russell. In 1979 we got in touch with Phil, who was living at Croydon, and he dropped everything and came straight over to Kew where we lived. He is about a year older than Clive, and at the time there was a lot of resemblance between them. It was just before Easter, and Phil immediately invited us to spend the four days with them. We did this and were very grateful for all the sightseeing trips they gave us. Hever Castle, Leeds Castle, Warwick Castle, plus numerous old Pubs for lunches, all in perfect mild weather and good company -- it was a memorable four days!

We didn't meet Frances, but certainly met Russell. He is an actor, at that time probably on the Repertory circuit, but also does some T.V. work. Years later we saw him play the solicitor representing Mrs. Wilde, in the Michael Gambon portrayal of Oscar Wilde, in one of the films dealing with Wilde's life and trial.

Of **Blodwen**, at this time, I know little. She was a violinist of note but I know nothing of her musical career. Once again, Billy unknowingly played the marriage broker -- Blodwen visited him about 1920, and met Charles Brayne. Two years later she revisited Billy and this time married Charles. They visited us from Ceylon, with daughter Betty (about age five) in the early 1930's and several times after the war, when they, as a retired couple migrated to Devonport, Tasmania. Charles was the Honourable Charles Valentine Brayne, nephew of Lord Lugard, a leading authority on Colonial Administration, whose main work was in Africa. Uncle Charles was in the Colonial Service and at some stage was Administrator of the large Ceylonese Province of Batticaloa. He was the thorough upper-class Englishman with a Cambridge "Blue" for rowing, and had all the manners and mores that these chaps pick up at English Public Schools. You couldn't help liking him, he was great fun and very generous. His first wife had died, leaving him with two daughters, Dorothy and Mary. The latter whom we never met, became a nun, but Dorothy with husband Frank O'Connell and three children migrated to Brisbane after the war, and we became good friends.

Charles Brayne was a clever man, with some original ideas on economic theory, and a very humane approach to his job of governing a native people. He published, at his own expense, a book espousing a novel approach to handling debt. He called it "The Theory of Dwindle", whereby the outstanding principal was reduced each year by an agreed amount, so that it gradually dwindled away. It meant that the lender eventually lost his capital sum, but Charles had some way of justifying this on both

ethical and economic grounds. I'm afraid the book didn't become a best seller; neither did the system gather adherents.

Charles retired before the war and was awarded the C.M.G. for his work. It is ironic, that Charles, I'm sure would have accepted a knighthood without question and would have worn it as his natural right -- as to the manor born! He quite naturally assumed the role of Squire in rural England where he lived, and again at Devonport when they migrated there. But the knighthood was not offered, and Clive, who saw a lot of the Braynes during the war, picked up the story that Charles missed out because he was too much for the "governed" and not enough for the "Governors", and perhaps argued his cases too vigorously!

After the war, and for much the same reasons that later brought Billy and Peggy here, Charles and Blodwen quit England for Australia. They came to Brisbane and stayed with Harmon and Min for several weeks, but could not find what they had in mind, and Blodwen who was very much the "Dresden China Lady" and loved the "grey days", found our sun rather trying. Tasmania was suggested, and they fell in love with Devonport. While they were in Brisbane, we saw quite a lot of them, and found Charles to be a delightful fellow, with a twinkle in his eye, which I think he kept for the rest of his days. I recall one bit of conversation which must have been prompted by a reference to some bewitching lady, and he said, "Well Harmon, if you get too old to notice a nicely turned ankle, you might as well give up" -- twinkle -- laughter. I have thought since, if he saw some of today's bikini girls his *notice* would be somewhat above the ankle!

They did not return to England and Charles died in Devonport, just short of his ninetieth birthday. Blodwen came to live in Brisbane, to be near to her only daughter, Betty. She entered a retirement place and died in October 1976.

Betty, as I have previously mentioned, visited us when she was about five years old, with her parents, on leave from Ceylon. Soon after that she would have been of the age to be sent off to boarding school in England, and I don't recall hearing anything about her until we learnt from Blodwen that she was married with three children, a girl and two boys. Her husband was Peter Root, a pretty smart hydraulics engineer working in the aircraft industry. They decided to follow Blodwen and Charles to Australia, and they settled in Brisbane. At first we saw them quite often, and in particular, Viv was a great help in introducing Betty around and helping her settle. However as time went by a coolness developed, and we drifted our separate ways.

When the children started school they found the Australian kids had great sport with the name "Root". This had such a devastating effect on these English children that the family made an official change of name to Richmond. We occasionally see something in the art magazines or newspapers by or about Elizabeth Richmond, who has been active in arts or crafts, especially pottery, in the Brisbane scene.

This completes the brief sketches of Dad's siblings, their spouses and children, and we should now catch up with *him* and *his* marriage. So back to the narrative:-
"Before leaving N.S.W. I got the old bike out again and cycled down Bulli Pass and started a circular

tour through the south-east part of the state. After going to the beach town of Woollongong then west across to Mossvale and looking in at Bowral (much later to achieve fame as the home of cricketer hero -- Don Bradman), I proceeded to Goulburn and Harden. Turning north I rode to Young -- known for its lovely cherry orchards -- to Cowra, then north-east to Bathurst and the Blue Mountains to revisit Katoomba where I had stayed so recently with my father. On through Parramatta to Sydney once more. It was a most interesting tour, giving me an insight into some of the inland towns of N.S.W.

It was now time for me to pack up my bicycle and take the train for Brisbane. I have mentioned meeting George Harper on the "Orsova". He was the young Methodist local preacher who was going to Brisbane and he had invited me to look him up if I got to that city. This I did through a contact he had given me. He was very pleased to see me again and got me into a very comfortable boarding house at Paddington, an inner suburb with a good tram service to the city. He was staying with some Methodist friends nearby. He got me interested in becoming a local preacher (lay preacher) like himself. The minister at Paddington, the Rev. George Gee conducted evening classes for me at the Parsonage. The book chosen at that time for the guidance of students was "Banks Theology". I completed my studies and passed examinations to qualify as a Local Preacher in 1914. - - -"

I intrude on the story at this point, because the next line is the bald statement, "That was the same year that I took up matrimony!" He makes no mention of who was his bride, where she lived, how they met, or anything about courtship. I can imagine him thinking --- "they don't need any of that; she's their mother, they'll know it all". In fact he was quite wrong so far as I was concerned, apart from Mum's maiden name, I knew very little about her early life, as will be revealed when I record her family tree. But Dad certainly shows huge reticence about such personal matters, even though he was at heart, a romantic fellow who was sensitive to people's feelings, and was always touched by a wistful, sad, romantic tale of lost love or heroic deeds. I regret that I cannot recall either party discussing this period of their lives with the family. However, Vivienne seems to have had the closest relationship with Dad, on an emotional level, and undoubtedly learnt more than I did about this period. I remember her saying how much in love they were, and recounting a story from Dad, how early in the marriage Minnie had to spend a night or two away (perhaps on her mother's death) and Dad missed her so much he draped one of her dresses over her chair to keep him company! He sounds besotted.

Mother was Wilhelmina (Minnie) Dolling. I have presumed they met at the Paddington Church and the courtship proceeded through the church social life. They were married on 14 June 1914; Minnie was just 25, and Harmon almost 29.

This event brings to a close the first chapter in the History. Chapter 2 is devoted to Mother's forebears and her life up to the marriage. "The Australian Price Family" will follow as Chapter 3



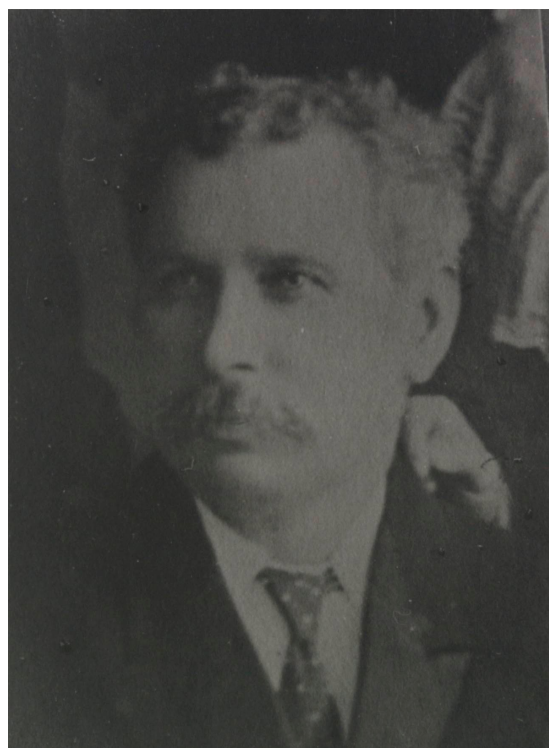
Harmon Price (senior); about 19 years old



Harmon in 1915, aged 30, having enlisted in the Army Medical Corps



Martha Price & her three eldest children: Billy (L), Harmon (R) & Bessy (front); about 1889



William Henry Price, about the time of the author's birth in 1920



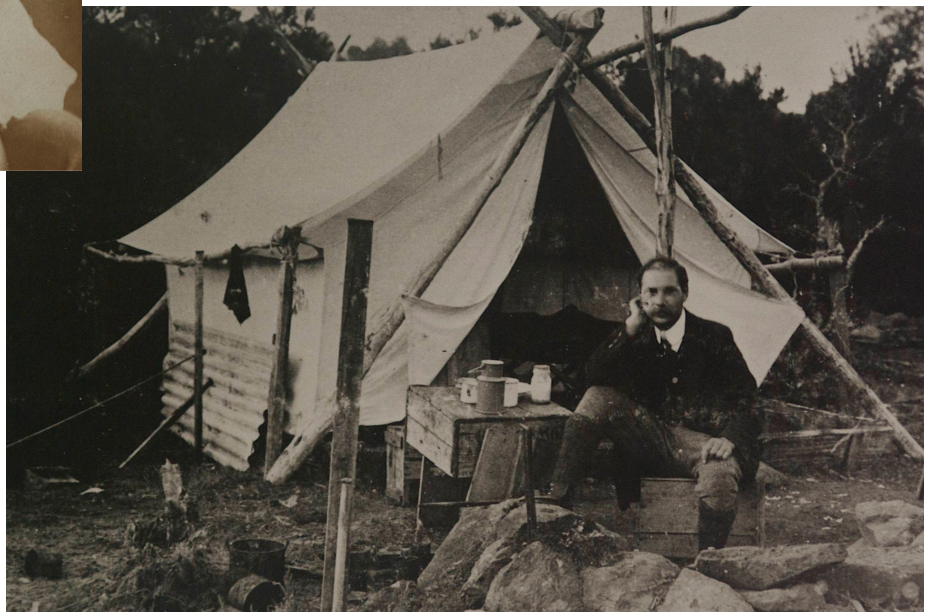
William Henry, Bess L. Harmon, about 1908, not long before his emigration to Tasmania



The hut on Kellaway's farm, built for Harmon: his dwelling for the year or two he worked there, 1910-11



Harmon, Minnie L. Dorothy, 1917



Harmon outside his tent; Central Highlands of Tasmania, 1912



Ruined convict-built windmill, Maria Island

Harmon, possibly his wedding day



Harmon with his four eldest children, about 1925: Dorothy, Vivienne, Clive, with young Harmon in the rear



Blodwen Price

THE MINNIE STORY

CHAPTER 2

When I wrote my introductory remarks to this History, I was fearful that there was little information available concerning my mother's early life and line of descent. Since writing that, I have acquired material from my sister Dorothy, who developed a late interest in Mother's people. On a northern trip she found herself in Maryborough, where Minnie was born, and having a little time to spare she made enquiries of the local records office. However, much more important data later came to her from a wonderful but unexpected source. In 1988, a Mrs. Val Hillier wrote to me to tell me that we had a common ancestor, namely MARIA RAABE. (This later proved to be incorrect due to the name "Maria" appearing in several generations of the Raabe Clan. Val Hillier descended from an aunt of our grandmother -- both Maria Raabe.). That is "by the way", the important item is that Val had for some time, been researching the history of the Raabes who were part of the large migration from Prussia to Queensland, which occurred in mid nineteenth century.

When I received Val's letter, which invited me to one of several Raabe reunions, I was (with later regret) totally disinterested. I sent my apologies and fortunately passed the letter on to Dorothy who corresponded with Val and subsequently, on Dot's next visit here, we four (With Ken and Dele) lunched with Val at her property at Chinghee Creek, via Beaudesert. This was a very hard working lady who had taken upon herself to research the families, and then to enlist enthusiastic help from others of the various tribes. She is still working away to pursue the many lines of descent of these families right to the present day. A lot of this valuable material is now in my possession -- anecdotes are scarce and scattered, making it difficult to "flesh out" these people, but I am much better off than I expected to be, for this task.

Mother's story -- the part within our still sketchy knowledge -- starts in Munchausen, Prussia, with the birth of a first child to Elizabetha Raabe, in 1853. This girl child was named Maria and in due course became my grandmother. Five years later Maria acquired a sister, Catherine, who in my documents receives little further mention, after embarking for Australia. I have not pursued Catherine's life but I know she married one of her countrymen here in Australia and founded one of the lines of descent which featured in the appropriate part of the four Raabe reunions.

The next event in the story is migration to Australia which commenced on 23 April 1865. These were heroic voyages, and ship's manifests and log books make fascinating reading. In this case the manifest records that "*Elizabetha (33 years) with daughters Maria (12 yrs.) and Catherine (7 yrs.) boarded the ship "Sophie", and departed Hamburg*". For the record, the good ship "Sophie" displaced 278 tons; her captain was H.N.Wendt and doctor Edward Ascher. There were 13 crew and 167 immigrants. She carried no cargo, but twenty thousand bricks were used as ballast. "Sophie" made no calls and met no other ships, and arrived in Moreton Bay at 10.30 pm on 17 August

1865. From the captain's log we find the 116 days voyage produced 6 cases of diarrhoea, one of pneumonia, 10 cases of angina and catarrh (throat and bronchial inflammation), one of dysentery resulting in death of a very young child, also a baby girl suffered convulsions, and a 78 year old woman "*wasted away*". There were two births, male and female.

It is not recorded how great-grandmother made a living when she arrived in her new homeland. She was dwelling at Coopers Plains, and it is reported that there she gave her name as Elizabetha Smidt, widow, born at Wetten Hessen, Germany on 7 February 1832. This newfound widowhood might have been invented just to establish respectability, but for the puzzling fact that when two years later, on 9 January 1867 she married Michael Goos, in the South Brisbane Lutheran Church, the marriage certificate shows her as "SMIDT Elizabeth, widow". To use this title officially in a Church wedding has a ring of truth about it! Yet it is unusual for a widow to revert to her maiden name as she did on the voyage. Perhaps she had an early marriage to Smidt, who died without issue and that her daughters had another father whom she could not marry -- but she wanted her girls to have her maiden name. The man she married here, Michael Goos, was age 29, a bachelor farmer, born at Wollen, Germany to Christopher and Gertrude Goos. He arrived in Moreton Bay on the "Beausite" on 7 February 1865 and selected, in 1865/6, three pieces of land totalling 75 acres at Eight Mile Plains. This is believed to now encompass the suburb of Underwood.

In the meantime, grandmother Maria had grown up and moved to Rockhampton where she was employed as a domestic servant. On 10 December 1872, at the age of 19 years she married Hinrich Dolling, age 36 years, bachelor, publican of Rockhampton. I have a photocopy of the Church record (Ipswich Lutheran), and in this document Hinrich gives his birth place as Hoenfelde, Prussia, and his father as Fick Dolling, occupation -- cooper, and mother as Lena (nee) Mohrs. Maria names her mother Elizabeth (the final 'a' has been dropped), and her father as Jacob Raabe, occupation -- carrier. This is the first mention I have of "Jacob" and the unknown researcher, who provided this document, in an adjacent comment adds "probably an uncle". As mentioned above, the evidence indicates that Elizabeth was not married when her two daughters were born, so Maria, presumably in an effort to maintain respectability in the harsh judgmental society of her time, has borrowed the name and occupation of an uncle still in Germany.

The reason why Elizabeth at the age of 33, and with two daughters, was unmarried, is something of a mystery. Speculation is profitless, but thoroughly enticing, and when viewed in the social context of Prussia at that time, could possibly furnish a number of plots for a Mitchner or Wilbur Smith to work into an interesting story. It has intrigued me sufficiently to do a small research on Prussia and its dominant political figure of the time, Bismark. It becomes clear that Prussia and the other separate German states were still in a feudal or semi-feudal social system. Following on the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the spirit of revolution was sweeping Europe, and popular government was gaining a toehold. Probably because Prussia successfully joined with Britain in the victory of Waterloo, a certain

impetus was given to unrest in the country. After 1815, for the next 30 years the State moved reluctantly towards popular government, and the continuing unrest culminated in a revolution in 1847, just as Bismark was emerging as an arch-conservative force. It was said he was a firm believer in the Divine Right of Kings, and for the Aristocracy, a status only slightly less exalted! He spoke sternly against the revolutionary mood of the country, and one can imagine that his actions were equally stern! In such an atmosphere of uprising and suppression, we can see how easily the normal social protocols might be upset, and romantic adventures be snatched regardless of the proprieties.

It is known that many emigrants left Prussia for Australia at this time, and that Elizabeth's parents were among them. This couple named Johannes Raabe and Catherine (nee) Detsch came here two years before she did. The question naturally arises, why did she not accompany them? Did she have a forlorn love interest that kept her at home, perhaps waiting and hoping for the return of a fugitive from Bismark's police? Or, on a prosaic note, was she simply not invited to accompany them, having fallen from grace? The possibilities are numerous and we are unlikely ever to know the truth. But the decision to board the "Sophie" and take her children to a far off land, there to start a new life and a new line of descent, shows an independence of spirit and a vital life force, which I personally salute!

As a small aside at this point, I should record that the above-mentioned parents of Elizabeth, (my great-great-grandparents) both died in October 1871 and are buried in Ipswich cemetery.

Nothing is known of Grandfather Dolling's life before his wedding, except that he was the proprietor of the "Melbourne Hotel" in East Street, Rockhampton. They did not return there permanently after the wedding, perhaps just long enough to sell or lease out the Pub before moving to the Ipswich, Marburg, Lowood area where the other Raabes settled. Whether Hinrich had ever followed his father's trade of cooper, is unknown, but by association with that trade he would know that making and selling barrels was not as profitable as selling their contents. Perhaps this is why he became a publican. Anecdotal information emanating from Val Hillier's reunions depicts Hinrich as a rather flamboyant character, and quite wealthy, who on his better days, to impress his visitors was known to light his pipe using a pound note as a taper!

If this recklessness happened frequently, or even once only, I hope it was alcohol inspired, otherwise it would be a dangerous gene indeed to have coursing the sap of the family tree!

Also anecdotal is the remark that the Raabe men generally, had a great liking for the amber fluid. I could add that some of their descendants have even been known to brew their own -- wouldn't the ancestors be proud! With the Dolling and Raabe blood mixing it is no wonder that two of my uncles on that side, had some bad lapses, and also small wonder that Minnie (a very strict abstainer) many times cautioned brother Clive and me about the "evils of drink". Fortunately we both have come through life

without problems in that regard, though there were incidents during Army and Airforce war service, when mother would have despaired, had she known of them.

I have treated this subject with some levity, but grandchildren take note that I am sympathetic to my mother's concerns, for I too have seen the wrecked lives, the disasters and tragedies that alcohol abuse can cause.

No explanation is documented for the choice of Ipswich for the Dolling -- Raabe wedding, but the page from the Church register of marriages contains three entries. The first, dated August 1872 is the union of Wiegand Raabe and August Zeller both of the Ipswich district. The second does not concern us, but the third entry (October 1872) is the marriage of my grandparents, and the witnesses are this same Wiegand Raabe and great-grandmother Elizabeth, now Goos. So the reason for coming to Ipswich is that the newly wed Raabes of the August marriage have offered to host a family gathering and wedding celebration.

The Dollings' first child, a boy named Wilhelm (later known as William) was born 29 March 1874. Unfortunately place of birth is missing, as this information would shed light on their moves after the marriage. The next, Catherine Elizabeth (known to my family as Aunt Kit) was born on 3 July 1876 probably near Marburg, as she appears on the Marburgh School roll five years after. Kit later is on the roll of Tallegalla School and this is the place where two more aunts were born, Anna Elizabeth (Annie), 7 September 1878 and Elizabeth Magdalena (Liz) on 21 January 1881. With three daughters bearing her mother's name, it seems Maria had a high regard for her mother.

There is no record of how Hinrich supported his family during these years, and this adds substance to the statement that he was wealthy. The sale or lease of the Rockhampton hotel may have provided him with a living, but there is no record of his taking up land or engaging in farming. Perhaps he went into business, ran a shop or something of that kind, but as the story unfolds the "wealth" seems to have evaporated -- perhaps he had been lighting too many pipes!

Elizabeth and Michael Goos however, seem to be coming up in the world. Whilst there is no record of their selling at Eight Mile Plains, one presumes that they did, for in 1876 Michael selected 98 acres at Walloon, and registered a cattle brand for that property. Walloon today shares the same Post Code with Amberley, so this brings the Goos family into that growing area of German settlers -- still occupied by many of their descendants today. Cattle raising was evidently profitable, and in 1880 they bought the Farmers Inn hotel at Tallegalla. The following year Michael purchased the remaining 40 (approx.) acres of portion 524, on a corner of which the hotel stood. The Goos family seems to have found the secret of success; a very large part of that success being, I'm sure, plain "*hard work*". In 1884 they took over the licence of the Beacon Light Hotel in Lowood, and installed son-in-law Hinrich Dolling to manage the Farmers Inn. Again they ventured forth and built the Railway Hotel, the first building in Railway Street, Lowood. They took up the licence in 1887. Regrettably, in June 1888 Michael Goos died. He was only 51 -- perhaps he worked *too* hard!

To complete Elizabeth's story, she continued to run the Railway Hotel and eventually retired to occupy a house in Lowood. For her last years she lived with a Mrs. Beavis (a daughter of the Goos marriage), in Ipswich. A visitor at that time reported her as being "a lovely old lady". She died on 30 January 1923, a week before her 91st birthday. The old and faulty photo included here, still shows a rugged face, telling a story of undaunted courage, struggle and conquest -- a very strong face. I would like to have known my great-grandmother.

In 1890 the Farmers Inn was leased and after a few years was closed as an hotel. Apparently the decline of Tallegalla had already started; situated about seven kilometres south of Minden and Marburg this tiny township may have had prospects of becoming a centre for a rich farming district, but time, roads, and rail have passed it by, and today it doesn't even appear in the official Post Code list. So my grandparents were footloose once more.

Hinrich was shown on the electoral roll for Rosewood and Walloon, when another son, Jacob Michael (Jake) was born to Maria on 22 December 1884. His was not a long life; Jake contracted TB and died, unmarried on 3 January 1912. At some time in the next five years, the family moved to Maryborough, and on 16 May 1889, Minnie was born. It was not a straightforward birth for she was the second of twins, and was totally unexpected. Her sister, Maria May (Polly) was delivered, and some eight hours later Minnie delivered herself! She was named Wilhelmina but always used the contraction of Minnie.

Not long after this the marriage seems to have turned sour. It comes through to me that Maria was an admirer of her mother and the way *that* couple got things done. By comparison, Hinrich appears to have accomplished nothing since his marriage except perhaps to keep Maria in touch with motherhood. I think she turned him out! I recall asking Minnie about her father, and she replied to the effect that she never knew him; that he had gone off prospecting for gold when she was very young and had died when she was three. It turns out that she was five when he died in Townsville Hospital on 29 September 1894, of "phthisis". This is an old-fashion medical term for lung and bronchial disease and was most probably emphysema. Hinrich is buried in Townsville Cemetery. Once again, I think he lit too many pipes! This time with detriment to his physical as well as financial health.

After Hinrich left the home in Maryborough, Maria brought the family to Brisbane, but it is not known where or how they lived in those years. All that we do know is that my mother attended West End School for a time, suggesting they lived in that vicinity. However she would not have started school until she was age five, in 1894, and in February 1895, they were living in Moggill Road, Taringa. Presumably she then shifted to the Brisbane Normal School (Edward Street near Central Station) which I know she also attended.

We know their address in February 1895, because it is shown in the marriage certificate when Maria made her second marriage. The bridegroom was Carl Alfred Moritz INTRUP, bachelor, born in East Prussia, profession - engineer. They were

married in Toowong and gave the address in Taringa as “usual place of residence”. Maria’s last child was born in January 1896, and named Carl Alfred Blackwood Intrup.

My grandmother may well have entered the best phase of her life, with half of her family grown up and a good man to look after her. In one of our family dinner table discussions the character and role of step-parents arose (probably over Dad’s “Steppy”), and Minnie stated very firmly that she had a stepfather and “he was a lovely man, very kind”. Sadly this tranquil state was not to endure. On 15 August 1905 husband Carl died. He was only 45, and we do not know the cause of his death. It seems that Maria now had to return to earning a living.

Before we look at that aspect, it is probably time to check the ages and stages of the whole family :-

In 1905, Maria was age 52 (7 years older than her late husband)

<i>Wilhelm (Uncle Bill)</i>	<i>-31</i>	<i>Jacob Michael (Jake)</i>	<i>--21</i>
<i>Catherine Elizabeth (Aunt Kit)</i>	<i>-29</i>	<i>Maria May (Aunt Polly)</i>	<i>--16</i>
<i>Anna Elizabeth (Aunt Annie)</i>	<i>-27</i>	<i>Wilhelmina (Minnie)</i>	<i>-- 16</i>
<i>Elizabeth Magdalena(Aunt Liz)</i>	<i>-24</i>	<i>Carl Albert Blackwood (Unc.Carl)</i>	<i>-- 9</i>

Wilhelm was married in 1896, to Mary Georgina Nichol of Rosewood. They had five children, two dying in infancy. I know nothing definite about Wilhelm’s early life, beyond his attendance at Marburg primary school. After that he probably worked casually on neighbouring farms. He accompanied the family to Maryborough, and that was his address on the Electoral Roll prior to his marriage. After the wedding they settled in Rosewood where they acquired a large house (a Queenslander on high stumps with verandahs on front and two sides). There Wilhelm (Probably “William” by now) worked for a Mr. Ruhno who owned a large general store in Rosewood.

At some time later parts of the verandahs at home were closed in and partitioned off to make extra bedrooms, and Mary took in boarders -- school teachers, bank clerks, and postal workers were among those seeking accommodation in the town. Eventually, Uncle Bill was, reputedly, asked to leave his job, as Mr. Ruhno discovered him giving the firm’s tobacco to his favourite customers. After this he bought his own shop not far from the house, but his business never got going and was soon forced to close. He obviously had no head for business and probably was as generous with his own stock and credit as he was with Mr. Ruhno’s tobacco. After this he went steadily down hill and frequently took refuge inside an alcoholic haze. I remember hearing of an occasion when relatives were invited to lunch and Uncle Bill arrived home two hours late and much the worse for wear -- to the terrible embarrassment of poor Mary and her guests.

I see parallels with Bill and his father, Hinrich. I suspect the latter drank the profits of the “Farmers Inn”, and that Elizabeth sold the lease of that hotel rather than leave Hinrich to run it. But I feel sorry for William, a nice sort of fellow who really only

wanted people to like him. His favours to his friends were merely a form of buying friendship, just as Hinrich's show-off displays were his idea of gaining respect.

About age 10 or 11, I had some illness, and to aid my recovery I was sent on the train to Rosewood to spend a couple of weeks with Aunt Mary. In that time I never saw my uncle "under the influence", and he was kindly enough to me, but it was a pretty dull holiday. With Aunty and cousin "Tup" busy with their housekeeping, they had little time to find things for me to do; my biggest entertainment was under the house, sitting on the seat of a motorbike (owned by a boarder) and pretending to ride it! Once or twice I accompanied Uncle Bill to his old shop -- a big, unpainted, almost derelict, barn of a place, in large overgrown grounds. All he did for a couple of hours was to take boiled peanuts (in their shells) out of a sack, weigh them into paper bags and put them in the shop window, where they sat surrounded by dust and cobwebs. Nothing else was there, just the peanuts. The shop was well back from the street and I never saw a customer. He probably ended up nibbling the nuts with his drinking mates.

At some stage of his life he had dabbled in crafts and might well have been a very good craftsman. One example I saw was proudly pointed out by Mary. It was on a wall of the dining room, mounted in a glass-fronted box, about 60 cm. X 50 cm. X 7 cm. deep. But how to describe it! Not woodcarving, nor whittling, but more an arrangement of wood shavings; and not just shavings as produced by a plane; more the kind that sometimes emerge from a hand-held pencil sharpener. They were probably made with a sharp knife and pared from a special dowel, and the trick was to produce them, unbroken, and for many centimetres of length. The next step was to make different patterns with them, perhaps geometric or flower shapes and to arrange these patterns to a master design filling the whole box. Well! After that long description I can imagine the reaction, "what a lot of effort to make something hideous"; sure, and that is probably why the craft has disappeared. But it nonetheless required a lot of careful work, and with little outlay of materials or tools -- a basic requirement for a cottage industry in the long cold European winters, from where the craft no doubt came.

I am sure uncle Bill made many more articles. There would certainly be furniture of his making, and many fittings for the house. I remember some chip carving hanging up in the hall, and Clive has one of his trinket boxes with a lid inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Perhaps his life might have been more purposeful if he had developed this line of work as his trade.

In the first half of 1942 William died. In August of that year I returned from the Middle East (war service), and while on leave drove to Rosewood to see Aunt Mary. She was a very sad and broken lady. She talked constantly of William, saying how she missed him and his doing of the domestic daily routines. At every mention of his name the tears fell. Clearly she loved him well and forgot all his failings. She fretted after him to such purpose that she joined him in his grave within a few months. He had to be a good man to earn such devotion.

Catherine Elizabeth attended Marburg and Tallegalla schools but nothing is known of her early life, post schooling. She moved to Sydney and in 1898 registered the birth of a son named Frederick Harry Dolling, with no father recorded. She may have gone to Sydney when she realised her predicament. Some time later she married Samuel Jackson, and produced another son named Eric. They ran a corner shop in Ranwick, and lived in a flat over the shop. I really know very little about Kit. I recall meeting her only once, and Sam. Jackson was already dead. Frederick I never met, and know not what happened to him, but Eric, I recall as a very pleasant fellow who married an attractive girl named Ella, and they had two children. Eric sold the shop and bought a wholesale agency in the Sydney fruit and vegetable markets. Sadly Ella developed a cancer and died, whilst Kit lived on to age 96 -- the longest living member of the Dolling family.

Anna Elizabeth (Annie). At 1905 -- being the date for reviewing the Dolling/Intrup family, Annie was 27 and a widow of six years standing. Her late husband was James Finlayson from the female line of the McWhirter family, founders and operators of the large department store in Fortitude Valley. Some mystery surrounds the death of James, for at one time we were told he was washed overboard from a ship and lost at sea, also that he died at sea and was buried at sea. These stories might have been put around by his family to avoid mention of what really killed him -- TB. This was regarded in those days, as a disease of the poor, caused by malnutrition and overcrowded living conditions, and the well-off didn't like to admit they had contracted it. Thus it was disguised as bronchial problems, chronic bronchitis, asthma or similar "proud" ailments. However poor James did have it, and when he married Aunty Annie, it was natural enough to send them off to Europe on a honeymoon trip and to visit the Swiss clinics which specialised in treatment of Tuberculosis. For reasons unknown, he grew worse instead of better and died at the clinic. He was probably buried in Switzerland and Annie came home alone.

She must have been a sad and lonely figure for some time, and I do not know how she lived her life for the next 9 or 10 years, until she married Walter Joseph Todd in May of 1910. They had three children, twins named Doris and Jack, and another girl named Jean. Annie was a hard working lady who kept her house interior spotless and shiny, like a new pin. She was a case of the typical scrubbed-clean German housekeeper. My recollection though, shows her with a troubled look, as though she was perpetually disappointed with life -- as well she might have been.

Her health gradually gave way, firstly with leg ulcers which would not heal, and then with Parkinson's Disease -- leading to a long lingering demise, accompanied by a persistent discomfort and misery. Annie died in May of 1952, and if ever we might truthfully say that death was a happy release, this was such a case.

Elizabeth Magdalena (Liz) at this time of reporting she was 24 years old. In the course of assembling material for this history, Liz has risen to number one surprise packet! In April of 1927 she married John Gordon Denning and we had always assumed she had gone to the alter a virginal spinster. But not so! Lizzie's unsuspected past was revealed to us because a lady named Marcella Cooke, of the Northern

Territory, was tracing the history of her deceased father. Marcella's research had reached to the Raabe line, which led her to Val Hillier, who put her on to us. She was holidaying in Brisbane and had a long phone conversation with Dele. I shall have to tell the story from when Lizzie was 21. In that year, 1902 she registered the birth of a boy she named Walter Wynnum Dolling. No father is named, but the child's first name gives a clue which will soon become apparent. The boy lived only nine months, dying in December 1902.

Six years later, in November 1908 Elizabeth entered St. Mary's Home, Taringa, and on 16th of that month gave birth to another boy, registered as Carl Dolling. The name would be taken from her step-father and young half-brother, but again no father is registered for the child. The boy was raised in an orphanage for some years and there is a recollection by one of the relatives of Liz making an occasional visit to an orphanage for an undisclosed reason. At the age of seven, Carl was fostered by a family -- Charles Edward and Isabella Daveson, who had two daughters older than Carl. This family ran a dairy farm at Redland Bay, and the indications are that the fostering was successful and Carl reached his majority in their care.

He remembered his mother visiting him at the farm, and also taking him to Overells' Store in the Valley, where she worked. He played there in a playground on the slides and swings. On another visit Lizzie was accompanied by two children, (probably her niece and nephew) who he wrongly thought were *her* children, and that she had kept them, but rejected him. Thereafter he was very bitter towards her and in later life could not be persuaded to take any interest in his forebears.

On or about his twenty first birthday, Carl was told the name of his father, and given the opportunity to choose which name he would legally adopt thereafter. We know not the instigator of this move, nor, if the Davesons, how they learnt the paternal name. Liz was two years married by this time, and we do not know how that affected her relationship to Carl. He chose to take his father's first name, and his foster parents surname and these are endorsed on his birth certificate with the authority of the Supreme Court as a change by Deed Poll to Walter James Daveson, the name he used for the rest of his life. His father was Walter Joseph Todd, and, since Lizzie named her first child "Walter", it is probable he fathered that child also. This, of course is the same Walter Todd who in 1910 married Aunty Annie. It is an unusual situation particularly as Liz lived on in the Todd household up to her marriage in 1927. It takes my mind back to the remarks I made relative to my paternal grandfather and the difficulty of choosing between two highly esteemed sisters. However, as my cousin Jean is the surviving issue of the Todd marriage, and has no knowledge of these affairs, I should not wish to cause her distress by further speculation on this matter. Lizzie died about 1961.

I shall expand the story of Walter Daveson and his interesting daughter Marcella, when I review the cousins of the next generation.

Jacob Michael (Jake) -- age 21 at this time, as mentioned earlier, died of TB, six years later. What a terrible scourge that disease was! He was unmarried, died on 3 Jan. 1912 and is buried in South Brisbane cemetery.

Maria May (Polly) -- Minnie's twin sister, attended school at West End and Brisbane Normal School. As with the other members of the family, nothing is documented of her early life between school and marriage. Polly is the third one to take off for Sydney. From dimly remembered scraps of adult conversation I have formed a sketchy picture of Polly's doings in Sydney. It seems she worked as receptionist for Alfred Buckley who was in practice as a health worker of sorts -- perhaps a dietician, naturopath, something of that kind. They fell in love but Buckley already had a wife. I think things got rather messy, but eventually he was divorced and married Polly.

In 1927 my family returned to Brisbane from Tasmania, and spent a week in Sydney where we visited the Buckleys. Alfred was no longer in health work -- perhaps a nasty divorce ruined his practice. Divorce was not an easy thing in those days, and an affair with a receptionist/secretary, could make him a pariah. Patients would seek a more "wholesome" consultant. We visited them at Manly where he owned a bus run. I can still see in my mind, this largish back yard with three or four old and partly dismantled buses -- quite fascinating for an eight year old boy to clamber through and sit in the driver's seat and pull the steering wheel round imaginary street corners.

I overheard my father telling mother, on the quiet, "they *are* married, he offered to show me the marriage certificate"; so there must have been a breakdown in communication between the sisters during Polly's problems. They had six children all told, but I have no recollection of how many were around at our visit. The children were Sadie, Jack, Jean, Nell, Keith, and Warren. My sister Vivienne, many years later started a correspondence (pen-friend style) with Jack or one of the girls, and it continued for some years. Dorothy and Viv., had a holiday as guests of the Buckleys at one time.

Warren when a young teenager, died in a motor accident, apparently during the war, when I was not around, for I knew nothing of it; but Beverley tells me that Polly was utterly shattered by the tragedy, and her family, to give her a distraction and help the healing, sent her up to Brisbane to stay with Minnie for a few weeks. This seemed to do the trick and she was able to return home and get on with her life again. I am not sure whether she was a widow at that time, but Alfred Buckley was a good deal older than Polly and possibly did predecease Warren. Many years later Polly married Ray Spence, from Melbourne, a widower with 2 or 3 sons. They lived in East Camberwell, where Bev visited them on her way to a holiday in Tasmania. Polly died of a cancer in 1961.

Wilhelmina (Minnie) -- Along with Polly, she was 16 at this time. Since the whole chapter is Minnie's story, there is no need to deal further with her doings at this stage. However, on a moment's reflection, there is an item which belongs in her childhood and therefore should be dealt with here. Mother always wore glasses ever since

childhood. The right eye was the troublesome one; as she grew older the eyelid drooped and the sight deteriorated so that the glasses needed correction quite often. She told me that the trouble started when she was young, at school, perhaps age 5 or 6, when a boy threw a stone which hit her in the eye. Some eye muscles were damaged and caused the eye to turn. She had surgery to repair the muscles/tendons, during which the eyeball was removed from its socket to rest on the cheek while they worked behind the eye. A gruesome business which must have been followed by an agonising recovery period, but considering the standard of surgery and medical facilities then pertaining, I suppose the surgeon did very well.

Carl (Charlie -- later in life) -- was 9 at this point (1905). Again from remembered remarks, I have built an impression that Carl was Minnie's "little brother" emotionally as well as chronologically. She was seven years older, and probably along with Polly was often given the job of minding him and playing with him. I sense she took more willingly to the role than Polly did -- she had a strong maternal instinct, and I think she was fond of him in an enduring way.

He was age 18 when war broke out in August 1914. He was caught up in the general excitement that young men are inclined to feel about being a soldier and going overseas to fight for their country, and he rushed to enlist. "Charles" would certainly have been his name at that time, for he wouldn't go off to fight the Kaiser, wearing a German name. He spent a lot of time in the trenches in France; I don't know whether he was wounded, or whether he was invalided home before the war's end, but he was certainly wrecked, probably shell-shocked, and spent the next ten or twelve years, suffering rheumatism, alcoholism, and general debilitation. He never married. At sometime about 1930 we had advice that he was in Rosemount Repatriation Hospital very ill. On Saturday afternoon Dad went to visit him and took me along for company. I can't remember what he looked like -- just a sick man in a ward of sick men. The next Saturday we went again, and Clive came with us. We were greeted at reception with the news that Carl had died half an hour earlier.

It fell to my father to sign forms and make funeral arrangements, and he instructed me to take Clive home and to break the news to mother. This was not an easy task for an eleven year old with a seven year old brother to shepherd. We had to get a tram to the Valley and then a train home. But I didn't need to tell Mum -- she already knew! "About three o'clock, " she said" I felt him go; he brushed past me and I knew he'd gone." My father was not surprised when later I told him. He replied, "Your mother is psychic, you know", which I didn't, but he assured me there were other instances he knew about where she had demonstrated this power.

The death of Carl, highlights a wasted life, and is itself, a poignant statement on the tragedies of war and its aftermath. In the context of Minnie's story, it concludes the review of her family -- with the exceptions of Maria and Minnie.

It has been one of the disappointments of this family record that it has failed to bring up any real substance of the persona of grandmother Maria. I have no

recollection of Mother telling us anything of significance about her, and no one at the Raabe reunions has described her or her actions. We know that her mother Elizabeth, was a strong character , and it is most likely Maria was much under the dominance of her mum. Nevertheless she did (in my opinion) part with Hinrich, marry at the age of 42 a man 7 years her junior, and in her second widowhood start up a substantial boarding house at Normanby, an inner suburb of Brisbane. These things might reasonably suggest that she had her own strength, and was both personable and possessed of a pleasing personality. Very recently cousin Jean Robinson has produced a photograph without a name. The consensus view is that the sitter is undoubtedly Maria. It has caused me to reprint the photo page , but it is worth the effort to have the three generations represented.

In my younger days I thought of The Normanby (it always had a “The” in front of it then) as being at the junction of Gilchrist Ave. and Kelvin Grove Road, but today’s maps show it as much more extensive and stretching from Petrie Tce. to Kelvin Grove . “Florence House” was the name of the establishment, and was said, in the 1980’s , to be undergoing a restoration. The family home was at 30 Charlotte St., Paddington, but Maria and Minnie who worked for her, would have needed quarters at “Florence House” also. I have no record of when grandmother started the boarding house nor how long she ran it, but there is a definite statement that she had it in 1910 when Aunt Annie was married. Maria died on 18th. October 1915, at Charlotte St., Paddington.

Meantime, Minnie, with a base in Paddington, attended the Methodist Church there, and as was the custom, her social life had its roots in Church membership. One Sunday about 1912 there appeared in the congregation a young Englishman with aspirations to becoming a local preacher, and her heart missed a beat -- or two! As already mentioned our family never heard how the romance developed and the only clue we have is an old photograph of Minnie sitting on the steps of a jetty holding a fishing line and keeping company with her handbag and Dad’s old Gladstone bag which he hung onto for many years. We assume he was busy taking the photo -- he had cameras since boyhood and took photographs wherever he went. In an old album he has photos of Shorncliffe Pier, and we think the fishing might be in Cabbage Tree Creek. The train to Sandgate would be a popular day out in those times. As also mentioned earlier, picnic walks from Paddington to One Tree Hill would be popular too. So much for the courtship, and with the wedding in June of 1914 the Minnie story merges into the history of my parents.

Before closing this section it would be appropriate to detail the cousins arising from the Dolling line. Some I have had little association with and can add little more to that already written. But others, the fates have brought closer, and they form part of my childhood memories. The **Todd** children we came to know well, when we returned to Brisbane in 1927, and stayed with them for a week or two, while Dad found work, and accommodation of our own. The twins, Doris and Jack (born 1913) were six or seven years my senior, whilst Jean (1917) was about Vivienne’s age -- two years up on me. Jack was a sporting boy and at fourteen was shaping up to be a good cricketer. Not

unnaturally he became a bit of a hero to me. Dorothy and Doris, Viv and Jean paired off by age and similar interests, and with exchanged visits and joint outings, the friendships lasted for many years, until new local interests caused divergence of their paths and the friends grew apart.

Jack took himself to Townsville after the war, and with a friend started a hardware business. He married, but had no children. I recall having dinner at his house one evening when I was on business there. His wife was a quiet little lady and they seemed to have settled already into a comfortable, suburban "Darby and Joan" sort of existence. Jack died at an early age, but I know not the cause. Doris had a late marriage to George Shand, a widower with a couple of daughters. George was secretary of the Meat Traders Association (or similar title) and Doris was his secretary for some years. Doris died quite recently -- November 1997. Jean married James Robinson who ran his own drapery store in Redcliffe, where they still live. Their family was Judith, Donald, and Wendy, with dates of birth 1958/61/66. Occasional contact has been maintained with both Doris and Jean -- these days, mainly through Beverley.

The **Dolling** cousins -- Mabel Elizabeth, eldest of the three surviving girls of William and Mary, had a close association with our family by the mere chance of living nearby in the Clayfield/Wooloowin area. Mabel was born in 1897 and married Charles Powers Ward in 1921. He was from Rosewood and started his working life as a blacksmith. He fought in the 1914/18 war and returned wounded, minus his right arm. Under the rehabilitation programme he trained as a livestock auctioneer and worked successfully for one of the big stock and station agencies.

When we as a family returned to Brisbane, we took a house in the high part of Wooloowin, and the Ward family lived a ten-minute walk down the hill. They were either there when we arrived or came soon after. Mabel was only 8 years younger than Minnie, so they made a good friendship and exchanged visits frequently. At that stage Gwynth was their only child and was about five years old, much the same as Clive. What really cemented the friendship was that both mothers became pregnant at the same time -- Mum with Beverley and Mabel with Pamela, and they had this common interest to pursue together.

One incident I well remember was a summer afternoon when, by design of their mothers, Clive and Gwyn were bathed together. Evidently this was arranged because Gwyn had never seen what little boys were made of, and Clive, because his sisters were older was not allowed to see what made girls different. I woke up to what was going on and invented some pretext to enter the bathroom (Minnie in attendance supervising the wash and play), and I stayed long enough for a quick refresher course in the junior female anatomy. Nothing was a surprise to me, so I must have seen plenty of my sisters before, but thinking of this episode much later it occurred to me that at the time, I never wondered why there was a difference or the purpose for it. I was only 9, so I suppose my head was filled with important things, like Cowboys and Indians, and when was I going to get a turn at being Sheriff!

Sex education for children was not invented in those days, and the whole subject was taboo. So the thinking of these two mothers was probably quite advanced for its time. I have recently heard of a similar event recounted by a lady who lived out West, of two rather isolated neighbouring children who were left to play in the bath, and when Mary's mother returned to dry and dress her, the child quite excited, told her "Johnny's got a thing down here, I thought it was a whistle, but it isn't, 'cause I blew it"! You'll agree this is one of those mistakes best sorted out at an early age.

Following the birth of Pamela, Mabel had two more children, Peter and Margaret. Charlie was a capable and ambitious man and decided he should have his own business. The family moved to Rockhampton, and with a partner, he established a livestock agency business which, after some years, was successful enough to be bought out by one of the big operators, and Charlie retired. Peter followed in his father's footsteps as an auctioneer of livestock, and lived on in Rockhampton; Margaret married and is also there, whilst Charles, after some years of retirement, died and is buried there. Gwyn and Pam worked in Brisbane, and never married, and Mabel, after she was widowed, lived with or near them in Kenmore, and lived well into her nineties.

The other two daughters of William and Mary, were "Tup", born 1900 and christened Ivy Penilla, and in 1906, Annie Florence Mary, always known as "Trix". Tup, I knew from my aforementioned holiday in Rosewood, when she would be about thirty. She toiled with her mother to keep their home and boarding house clean, tidy, and provided with a wholesome table. Later when Mabel needed help with babies, Tup moved into their house, presumably being replaced in Rosewood by local help. She was always busy, always looked a bit unhappy with her lot, as indeed she might for Tup was basically a motherly soul, who would, I'm sure have dearly loved to have her own man and children. Duty, however came first, and Rosewood offered few opportunities for a match for Tup. I remember a bit of a stir in our place one day when it was announced that Tup had a boy friend and we were to go to Ward's house to meet him. I have a hazy recollection of a smallish man about forty something, a bachelor who really wanted to stay that way but needed someone to replace his mother. Nothing came of Tup's brief romance except perhaps a bitter resignation. When the Wards moved North, I think she returned to Rosewood and I never saw her again.

Trix was a "Butch" type; she had a deep contralto voice, talked and walked like a man; there's no doubt, the hormones lost their way, for Trix should have been a boy. She mastered the Rosewood telephone exchange for a time, then moved to Brisbane to man the exchange for Black and White, and later Yellow cabs. She must have lived near Wards for we met her there often and I believe she was always quite pleasant. But she was certainly boss of the telephone; all the drivers knew Trix, and she ordered them about without question. As with Tup, we lost touch with her when Wards moved away, except for the rare occasions when we could afford a taxi we would ask for Trixie and get good service. We gradually drifted apart, and I don't know where or how she ended up.

When sketching Aunt Lizzie's life, I revealed the discovery of a cousin we never knew -- **Walter James Daveson**. In 1942 Walter married Marcella Elizabeth Sherwin,

and they lived on the Redland Bay farm for some years before moving to Brisbane, where he worked for the “Telegraph “ newspaper as dispatch manager, until he retired. However back on the farm in 1944, to Walter and Marcella a daughter was born, and she was named Marcella Isabella. So we have two Marcellas, a cousin by marriage and a second-cousin. It was of course, the younger Marcella who did the research into her father’s heritage and I am very glad she did. She seems a very interesting lady, a qualified commercial artist (expanding the number of artists in the family line), an experienced rock climber and mountaineer. She worked as a housemaid all one winter, at The Hermitage, Mt. Cook, New Zealand, and then climbed for six months. There she met Joseph Anthony Cooke a Londoner, born 1941, and chef at The Hermitage. They married in Brisbane in 1968, and left next day for Rabaul, where they owned and operated a restaurant for five years. They spent time in Lae and Port Moresby before sailing a yacht back to Rabaul. They left there in 1973 and travelled overseas for a year, before returning to Brisbane to run another restaurant for a couple of years. They then moved to the Northern Territory where they run “The Four Teamsters Restaurant” and “Cooke’s Tours”. This establishment is at the small town of Batchelor about 100 km south of Darwin.

Now you will understand why I called her an interesting lady; and during all this roving enterprise, they found time to produce a son, Nathan Jon (1971) who is an aircraft engineer, recently appointed manager of Cunnamulla airport. Marcella senior is living in Brisbane, and from a photo I saw recently she is a handsome lady, very well preserved.



Harmon & Minnie Price, the author’s parents: their golden wedding portrait, 1966



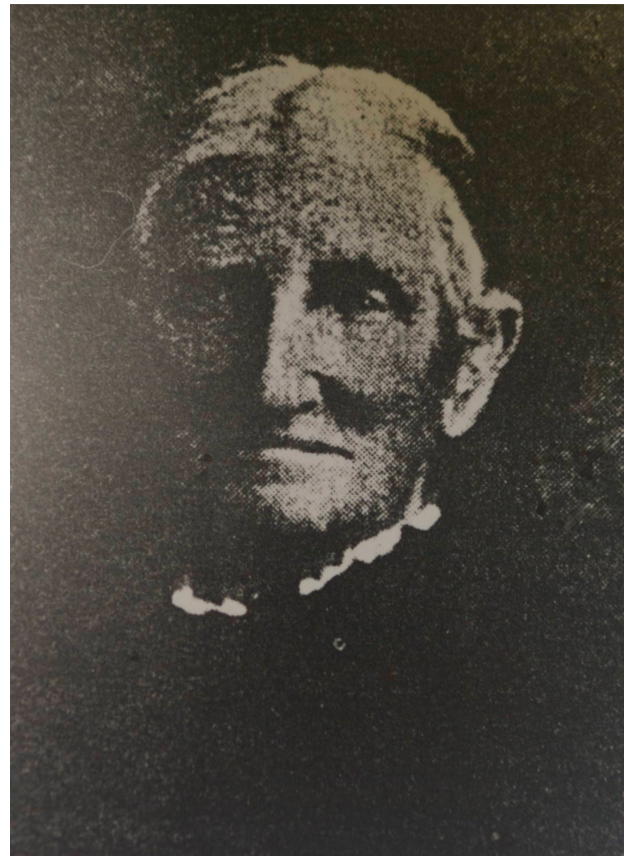
Minnie Dolling, the author's mother, about 21yrs



Maria Dolling-Intrup, the author's maternal grandmother.



Minnie & her twin sister



Maria Raabe, great-grandmother to the author



Harmon & Minnie with their grandchildren: The Arboretum, Sherwood, about 1960

From the left:

Narelle Price; Rob Woodland; Greg Woodland; Warren Price; Bronwyn Gough; Rodney Price; Margaret Brown; Don Gough; Rhyl Price; Phillip Gough; David Brown; John Price; David Gough; Graeme Brown

Sadly, Walter died in 1976; he with daughter Marcella had just returned from a visit to Sydney. They had travelled in an Aero Club plane, landing at Archerfield, and were walking to the hangar when he suddenly collapsed with a massive coronary and died quickly.

I hope before too long to meet our newly found second-cousin; and with this hope I shall bring to a close this chapter accounting for Minnie's family and her life up to her marriage. Chapter 3 will detail some of the experiences of the Australian Price Family.

CHAPTER 3

THE AUSTRALIAN PRICE FAMILY

Now that Harmon and Minnie are forming their own family unit, I take up his notes again. In these he goes on to say that it was a long and happy union producing five children, and he names us in order of birth. The narrative from the notes continues:- *When we married we moved to Wilston, a growing suburb, and lived at the top of Montpelier Street, with a good view over Wilston. Our house was rented from a Dr. Hurworth, dental surgeon of Brisbane, for the modest sum of 16 shillings per week. The Hurworths lived nearby and we became friendly with them.*

It was a wrench to leave Paddington Church, for the two years I spent there were very happy ones for me. I made some very good friendships there [eg. my wife -- editor's insert], such as Norman Evans, choir conductor and local preacher. He was very musical and very friendly and I joined his choir and really enjoyed choir work. Other friends were Peter Daniels, Sunday School Superintendent, George Harper, whom I have already mentioned and Maurice Ferrar who was best man at our wedding. We joined the Wilston Methodist Church where of course I became a choir member. The first folk we got to know there were John and Mary Aitken, and by rare coincidence, 53 years later when we moved into the Chermside Garden Settlement, we found this couple already installed there and it was good to talk over old times,

At this stage I was working as a draughtsman in the Brisbane Water and Sewerage Board, busy just then with the design of a new sewerage system leading out to the works beyond Pinkenba at Luggage Point outfall. - - -" Here is a large gap in the notes so I shall contribute information already known to me. Other things were occupying his mind. War had been declared against Germany in August 1914, and the then Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher committed Australia "to the last man and the last shilling", in support of the Mother Country. But now in 1915 things were not going well and the armies were bogged down in the trenches of France. At the beginning people thought it would all be over in six months, but now Australia was beginning to take it very seriously, especially since being assigned a major role in the Middle East as a blocking action against Germany's ally Turkey. Recruiting campaigns were warming up, and Dad began to feel a duty to enlist. Understandably there was some inner conflict between his religious practices and being part of a shooting war. This he eventually resolved by enlisting specifically in the medical corps, as a first aid/stretching bearer in the A.I.F.. He entered military camp at Enoggera in late 1915.

I can imagine Mother's feelings of anguish at this move, though I'm sure it would have been thoroughly discussed and had gained her reluctant agreement. Her immediate consolation would be the hope that his embarkation for overseas would be some time off and the war might end before then. In fact, it was to be even better than that, for Min. It appears there was a very casual attitude by local doctors to the army

medical exam and a high number of arrivals overseas were breaking down and being sent home for medical discharge. To counter this waste, all men in training in Australia had to be re-examined by a Medical Board and in the process Dad was thrown out for a severe case of flatfeet! I recall the story being told at one time and the Doctors said “As a stretcher bearer you wouldn’t last a week before you’d end up on the stretcher.”

So back to civvy street with his conscience in order -- he had volunteered and been honourably discharged, in February 1916, and Minnie was no doubt ecstatic. His flatfeet continued to worsen all through his life. In my childhood, apart from noting that my father had a characteristic walk with his feet turned outwards (the Charlie Chaplin walk), I never examined them or wondered how they affected him. As I grew older I noticed Dad periodically working on his boots or shoes to considerably alter them. He had tried having special “surgical” shoes made, but they were never a success so he used rubber pads and arch supports which he doctored and adjusted by experiment. His feet must have caused him a lot of pain for the bones from his ankles seemed to be right on the ground. Yet he never complained and never avoided walking. I recall in his last decades, after he’d retired, he’d buy cheaper shoes and after some cutting and sewing, he’d wear the left on the right foot and the right on the left. He was certainly very patient.

The remainder of the gap in the narrative leads me to a certain amount of guess work. I know he enlisted from the Water and Sewerage Board, because his colleagues presented him with a large medical handbook, inscribed with their best wishes. This book, incidentally, was on our book shelves for years and provided fascinating sketches of anatomy and surgery for this growing boy to feast his eyes upon. To my surprise, Clive tells me the book was widely known among his school friends who used to come for play after school and ask if they could have a look at *the* book! Such is the avid curiosity of the growing male. But to the story; it appears Dad did not return to his old job, either because it was filled or he wanted a change.

He took work with a private firm named Brown and Broad. They were timber merchants who had branched into “Ready-to-Erect-Homes”, an early version of prefabricated housing. Their clientele was mainly country folk, the houses being chosen from a catalogue of plans, with certain variations being permitted. The timbers were cut and numbered in accordance with the plan, and bundled up and taken north and west by train. Brown and Broad had their own siding, I think near Newstead, but the firm has long since disappeared. Dad’s work gave scope for a lot of his learning -- draughting, building practice, and some architectural design, and I believe he became very busy.

Meanwhile the family had started with the birth of Dorothy Mary on 24th March 1915 -- nine months to the day, after the wedding. Talk about fecundity! Vivienne Blodwen was born on 14th February 1918, and I followed on 23rd December 1919. Mother once told me that there was a child stillborn, between Dorothy and Vivienne. She said it was a perfectly formed and beautiful boy, strangled by his umbilical chord shortly before birth. I remember a momentary feeling of shock, then sadness for the elder brother I might have had. Much later, Viv told me she had at one time discussed

the loss of this child with Dad, and that he had found the event a shattering blow and had wept long over it. Doubtless Minnie had too.

The next step I have to reconstruct from memory is the lead up to the Maria Island adventure. Since joining the Methodist Church at Paddington, and then Wilston, Dad became increasingly involved in Church affairs that went even beyond Wilston. He was sometime organist, choir member, relief choir master, lay preacher, and doubtless on Church Councils. This meant nights out at meetings, and time needed for preparation of sermons, etc.. In addition, family life must have been a strain (for both of them) , with children's ailments and broken nights. Also at this time of "nest building", he was making furniture for the house -- a supposed relaxing hobby, but as I well know these jobs can become demanding if continually interrupted by other duties, then the hobby becomes a demon driver. He made utility, rather than "arty" furniture -- I recall his piano stool and a glass fronted music cabinet which we kept for years. In my early teens when I started an interest in wood work, I settled on making a silky-oak book case for the lounge. At this suggestion mother told me that the night I was born, she had held (by sitting on them) many parts of a book case whilst Dad drilled numerous holes with a "brace and bit" (no power tools then), the holes being for mortices -- all joints morticed and tenoned. She seemed to be suggesting that I was now responding to a pre-natal influence! Whilst I don't think she took this notion too seriously, it is rather typical of some of the "old wives tales" that stem from her Prussian rural heritage.

On top of all this activity, my father, as a conscientious worker was probably loaded up with extra jobs and overtime at Brown and Broad. This accumulated stress led to a break down in his health, and medical advice was sought. He was told that he was "run down", should reduce his activities and take a holiday. It was also said that coming from a cold climate, the eight years in sub-tropical Queensland would have had an enervating effect, and he should return to a cold climate for a while.

The answer to these problems came in an unusual way. He shall tell it himself with the last of his notes:- *"About that time there was a big scheme for the construction of a cement works on Maria Island (eight or so miles off the south-east coast of Tasmania), and I applied for the job of draughtsman to the scheme. We moved down to Maria Island about mid 1920 and once more I was in Tasmania. My mind went back to my early days on the Huon, learning orcharding, and then up to the Great Lake. Now I was again earning my living as a draughtsman.*

On the Island there were very high cliffs of rich limestone, on the west coast, at half Moon Bay. Samples of this limestone had been tested in England and pronounced highly suitable for the manufacture of portland cement. In the south of the Island were good deposits of clay, also necessary for cement making. A company was floated in Melbourne for this enterprise which was to make good quality cement very cheaply. My job was to produce the plans for the construction work for various parts of the manufacture. We laid a narrow gauge railway for hauling truck-loads of limestone to the crushers and thence to the concrete slurry basin for mixing with the clay. The mixture was then burnt to a clinker in the kiln, and again crushed to produce the final cement powder.

It was an interesting job and as the beach at the Island was sandy, the kiddies had a great time playing there. A small school was built for the children of the workers, so it was just right for our eldest, Dorothy. There was a fishing boat which regularly conveyed the wives of the workers to Spring Bay on the mainland. There they did the weekly shopping as there were no facilities on the island. It was a great place for fishing, and at weekends I used to take a boat and row out a little way and drop in the fishing line. Looking down into the clear water below, the white sand was black with flathead, and I would pull them up as fast as I dropped in the baited line. Crayfish were also plentiful and I used a basket trap baited with a meat bone, and caught all I wanted. - - -"

It was an historic Island named by the Dutch navigator Abel Tasman, who in 1642 was exploring the Australian coast and named Tasmania, "Van Diemen's Land" after his boss, the Governor of Batavia in the Dutch East Indies. This later changed to honour the explorer himself. Maria Island (pronounced Marijah) was named to honour Van Diemen's wife (bit of a crawler, our Abel). It was settled by the British army (from Tasmania) in 1825 as a convict settlement built around the township of Darlington. For the next 25 years of convict occupation, its history records various reports ranging from "terrible brutality, cruel chain gangs, floggings and scandalous conduct" to "frequent escapes, stealing and idleness". It seems these latter reports led to the abandonment of the settlement in 1832.

With the introduction of a new Probation system the penal settlement was reoccupied in 1842 and reached a peak of 600 convicts at Darlington and 490 at a new penal station built at Long Point. A number of Irish "rebels" arrested and transported to Hobart were offered parole if they would give their bond not to try to leave the Colony. William Smith O'Brien was the only one to refuse and was sent to Darlington. After a foiled escape attempt, he was moved to Port Arthur and not long after, he gave in and signed. O'Brien's cottage was close to one in which we lived. It was said the guards, at night would send O'Brien up to the attic via a ladder which they then removed, whilst they kept guard below.

After the convict settlement closed, about 1850, free settlers moved in for a time and cattle-raising and fishing maintained a small population. In 1884 an Italian gentleman farmer, Signor Diego Bernacchi was given a lease of the whole Island for one shilling per year for ten years, on condition he spent ten thousand pounds on development work in that time. Darlington knew a brief boom with population rising to 260 in four years. He had a particular ambition to start a wine industry. Apparently the grapes grew well enough, and wine was produced, but nothing enduring came of the winery as a commercial enterprise. Bernacchi's other hope was to establish a silk industry, but that too fell by the wayside. Nevertheless at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition in 1888, Maria Island displayed products as diverse as cement made locally, stone, timber, fossils, minerals, fish, collections of ferns and mosses, and new wines from the current vintage. At this time there were on the Island 5,000 sheep, 300 cattle, and 50 horses. Clearly the Signor and other settlers had not been idle, but after a few years of rising prosperity, the distance from markets began to tell, and a decline set in. Freehold titles were granted well into the 1920's, but no lasting prosperity came to the Island.

Bernacchi was not yet finished with Maria, despite being a rather senior Signor by the 1920's, he used his earlier geological knowledge of the limestone cliffs to play a leading role in floating a public company to develop a cement industry at Darlington. This was the company which Dad joined as draughtsman. Their authorised capital was over half a million pounds, a substantial company for those days. A very modern complex was built, with a 160ft. rotary kiln, railway, and crushing mill. By 1925 their yearly output reached 30,000 tons; but that was the end of their run. The accessible limestone ran out. They lacked the funds to mine for more, overheads generated by their isolation, and the fear of the looming economic depression, all combined to sink the company. Of course Harmon's design work had finished some years before that and he had taken the family to Hobart.

Before following them there, I should mention that despite the medical advice to Dad to cut down on his activities, he appears to have continued to preach the Gospel. We have a newspaper cutting from the Hobart "Mercury" reporting local news from Maria Island, and in part relates " - - on Sunday evening Mr H.Price conducted Divine Service and gave a most interesting address. He also officiated as organist during the singing. - - -" However the small pastoral duties of the Island's congregation, would not be too taxing on his health.

I am indebted to Clive for some of the historical facts of the Island, being data he had prepared for another enterprise. It gives a more rounded picture of the place which formed an interesting and unusual episode in our family life.

This brings to an end the notes that my father wrote. He was aged 83/84, and had grown tired of the writing. The editing of the notes into the exercise book had already ceased. No doubt the illness which carried him off about two years later, had started its destructive work. What he has left us is a very worthwhile record of his life and times, but I regret we did not coax him to the task about ten years earlier. At that stage he could have written not only a more comprehensive story, but done so with some literary style, some character analysis, some "flesh on bones". He had always read widely, had a good talent for self expression and dramatic impact, with humour never far away. We might say his "life" was a good book never written! Of course, Maria Island, is not the end of his life, he was about 38 years old then, with more than half of his span yet to be lived. I will endeavour to present it and do it justice.

As with Bernacchi, the Price family had not completely finished with Maria Island; we returned there for a holiday about 1924/5. I carry a few flashes of memory of the place, the prime one being my first real exposure to the sun. After a morning playing on the white sands, I stood up and promptly fell over. I was piggy-backed to the boarding house where we stayed, and I spent the next few days in bed. They tell me that my legs became two big blisters from above the knees to the tops of my feet. However , no permanent damage was done, though I have heard that severe sun-burn can be quite serious. Another incident is an acquired memory from frequent family telling. The boarding house served a first course of breakfast either prunes *or* porridge -- not both. The Scottish waitress would come to the table and with a roll of "r"s, (I'm not being rude) would ask "Prrrunes or Porridge Mr. Prrrice?" The alliteration plus

the rolling “r”s caught our fancy and we would wait each morning for a repeat performance, and scarcely stifle the giggles. It remained a family joke for years, and I can still hear Viv occasionally going about the house singing the words to the tune of some popular song including the Marseillaise; she had no French!

It reminds me of another waitress story that was a standing joke in Dele’s family. It occurred in a small country cafe; they arrived rather late for lunch; the waitress approached the table -- “ Everthink’s orf ‘cept corned beef and cabbage, wat’ll yus ‘ave?” You must admit our waiting staff *were* novel, and might have developed into a tourist attraction of themselves! Pity the industry felt it necessary to train them.

This was our last visit to the Island though I clearly remember we had a commitment to holiday there again the following year. Something arose to force a last minute cancellation of that visit, much to the children’s disappointment, and I recall Viv sounding off with ”Now we’ll never get there” which were strangely prophetic words, because the following year we were on our way back to Queensland. What caused the cancellation was probably the weather. As the yachtsmen in the Sydney to Hobart race will tell you, fierce storms can suddenly come up from the Southern ocean and turn the western Tasman into a raging sea. The worker’s wives who did their weekly shopping trip to the mainland decided they’d have a night out to the picture theatre at Spring Bay. Minnie went along, and they set out in the small fishing boat in reasonable weather, but when about midnight, the return journey started the sea was getting very rough and the wind blew harder and the seas got rougher as the little fishing boat battled its way towards the Island, twelve or so kilometres away. It would be difficult to say who was more worried -- a lurching, rolling Minnie or a pacing, nail-biting Harmon, but the boat didn’t get in till three in the morning and I don’t think Minnie ever went to the pictures from the Island again!

We now look in on the family in their Hobart situation. There is a lot I don’t know about their affairs at this time so I must rely heavily on those key facts that I do know, and make a reasonable conjecture. Dad would first seek a job, and he obtained work with the Hobart Council which was then extending the sewerage system into new and expanding suburbs. You may recall how he mentioned his various studies at the Woolwich Polytechnic, and his practical work with the Bexley Council. All that learning stood him in good stead for the rest of his life -- draughting, surveying, building construction and sewerage design and operation -- he seemed always able to find a job in those fields; now the job is to design and control the household connections to the city sewerage facility. I think this largely outdoor work may well have influenced the start of the next venture.

After ten years of marriage they still had no stake in a house of their own, and working in new suburbs and with new houses probably added impetus to the idea of building their own place. I imagine that they came off the Island with a small nest-egg for they probably lived rent free in a company house, and the cost of living generally would not be too high. They bought a block of land in Sandy Bay, one of the more desirable of the new and developing suburbs, and started building. Whether it was done with a contractor or Dad was his own builder, using subcontractors, I know not,

but they apparently moved into their house and got the idea that with more capital they could do this several times and sell their home, after moving to the new one each time. In this way they would soon pay back the borrowed money and be wealthy, just like his father!

It was many years later that Mum told me Dad had written to his father for a loan for this purpose. Grandfather did not give the loan, but made a gift of one thousand pounds to Harmon because he was “having a bit of a struggle and had a larger family than the other children”. (Clive William was born on 7th November 1923 in Hobart, making four children for Harmon and Min.). The money was quite a large sum at the time, and a very generous gift. Dad started to put his grand plan into effect. He bought more land near his home, drew up plans and hired labour. He continued to work for the Council and did his supervising after work or perhaps in lunch breaks if he was near by.

Alas the scheme did not work out well. Dad was much too soft for a supervisor, particularly for one who was off the job most of the working day. He trusted his workmen more than he should have, and Mum told me they stole materials from the job quite shamelessly. Dad knew some thieving was going on but seemed unable to stop it. This of course meant that his houses cost more than budget and made them difficult to sell. He ended up with tenants in them and this tied up his capital and put a stop to the project. I am unsure how many were built and sold; I have vague memories of two we lived in, and firm memories of the third and final one in View Street, Sandy Bay. From this one I started school, and we lived there until we returned to Brisbane. I recall Minnie once saying -- with a tinge of bitterness, “We’ve got to live in this old rented house (in Brisbane) while down in Hobart we own five new houses.” Whether this number was accurate or included one or two that may have sold, I am not sure, but I think the rents that were paid went to the Bank to reduce the overdraft, for we never seemed to have any second income to help with the bills.

To finish off this part of the story I should mention that the Great Depression was looming. The reaction to the austere times of the Great War, had brought a period of spending of pent-up savings, shortages of commodities led to inflation, and so we had the boom years of the early twenties; but the bubble was under pressure and about to burst. One of the early casualties was Dad’s job! The Hobart Council decided not to proceed with further sewerage extensions and he had to look for work. Tasmania’s economy was always small and was now contracting. Queensland still had the reputation of a fast developing State, so it was once again a signpost for Dad -- “Go North, Young Man”.

This move had a few interesting aspects which I shall detail later, but when the depression really burst, with the October 1929, Wall Street crash, panic swept the world, every business and every Government contracted, and unemployment soared to 30%! Governments reduced spending, Public Servants took several pay cuts and in this new mood of **not** spending Dad reduced the rents of his tenants in Hobart. Whether Governments asked for this sort of thing to be done or whether it was simply part of his religious principles I can’t be sure, but I know that he later proposed

to them that if they wished to buy their homes he would credit them with the rent they had paid, as part of the purchase price! This signalled the end of the dream of being a successful developer.

Now to backtrack to our life in Sandy Bay. It is always difficult to know which memories from the very early years are personal recollections and which have been implanted by subsequent family discussions. I have already mentioned my case of sunburn on Maria Island, and I certainly remember the first part of that episode, which occurred on a return visit to the Island when I was about six. By then I would undoubtedly have had a developed memory mechanism. Some prominent men have claimed to carry memories from very early days -- Winston Churchill whose photo-memory was well known, said his first recollection dated from the age of six months, whilst the British novelist, Compton Mackenzie claimed to remember his birth!

I was not in the class of these gentlemen, for my first recollection was from about age four, and concerns a painful medical experience which was surely fixed in the mind by the pain. It seems I was born with a stricture of the urethra which of course made it difficult to piddle. Whenever I think of it, I want to parody the old Scottish saying --"Many a mickle makes a muckle"-- and I think that for me, it took many a piddle to make a puddle! Be that as it may, when we settled in Hobart I was taken to a Doctor who dilated the urethra by inserting a tool -- a longish 'U' shaped springy wire which expanded when released and hurt more than somewhat. Some days later I recall finding one of mother's hair-pins which was remarkably like the dilating weapon. What followed I regard as the first expression of the Do-It-Yourself man within the boy! The results were sufficiently disastrous to ensure that my future medical D.I.Y.s would be limited to digging out splinters.

On the previous page I mentioned that Clive was born 7 November 1923. I was almost four at that time yet my mind is a complete blank on the subject, not only of the delivery which would have been at home, but of having a new baby in the house! The first memory I have of Clive was about three years later when he was put into hospital with suspected appendicitis. Next morning the pain subsided and when some undigested green bean seeds were passed, the problem was solved. Apparently he picked up and swallowed the beans while Mum was preparing dinner. But this incident was kept alive in family lore because of Clive's handling of the medical staff. When the doctors probed his distended stomach and asked him questions, he replied "Shut-up and get out of it, you dirty brat!" The doctors were so surprised and amused at this performance by a three year old they brought colleagues around to hear it and eventually paid him threepence to say it. It is not often that patients can make money out of going to hospital!

There seems to be no reliable date for when we left Maria Island, but Clive believes he was conceived on the Island, and on all other reckonings he is surely right. He attributes his life-long devotion to fishing, to the prenatal influence of the prolific fishing off the Island -- you'll remember Dad's description "the white sands turned black with flathead". Perhaps Dad had just come in from cleaning flathead when he started Clive! This smacks of Minnie sitting on the bits of bookcase the night I was

born. But then, I mustn't be too cynical; the old-wives have been right before today! In any event I think Clive was doing a leg-pull when he made his observation.

Another early memory was a more wonderful one for me -- I saw my first aeroplane -- two of them at once, biplanes with floats, and flying towards me, from the direction of the City. I shouted to Mum and she came running and explained all about them as they turned away and flew back to the harbour. It was a popular public relations exercise in those days for the Australian Navy to visit the State Capitals and open a ship or two for public inspection. This time it was Hobart's turn, and there was quite a carnival atmosphere, with the expression "the fleet's in" on everyone's lips. Hobart had deep water right in the city centre, so the fleet really was *in*, and at night the decorated ships were lit up and their searchlights shone across the sky lighting it up like the rays of the rising sun. The aeroplanes were carried by a Cruiser and lowered by crane into the water where they took off as sea-planes. Aircraft Carriers were not invented in those days.

I also carry visions of winter mornings when Mum would call us to see the new snow on Mount Wellington. The mountain forms a close background to Hobart and is clearly visible from most suburbs. The winters there can be quite severe, and this influences a lot of the life style. As an example young children did not start school until their sixth year, and for the first year attended only during summer. On our return to Queensland, our new school was well aware of the lower standard of education then pertaining in Tasmania, and they started me three classes below the comparable age of local kids! I had to pick up the extra classes over the next couple of years. This I managed, but I can't recall how it was done -- I think I was put up one class every six months until I caught up with my age group. Dot and Viv probably suffered some penalty too, but not as severe as mine.

Despite the Tasmanian pampering of young children with their late start at school, the locals didn't cosset themselves, and indeed had a very hardy attitude to the cold -- they certainly didn't wrap themselves and stay indoors. Minnie, who had always lived in sub-tropical Queensland, recounted her introduction to the Hobart winter -- looking out of her window to snow on the Mountain and ice in the gutters, she was astonished to see two children walking bare foot and licking ice cream!

The Sandy Bay school, not far from home, was known as Princes Street School. We used the back entrance to the grounds, and the final access was across a largish cow paddock which we traversed on a wooden walk-way, fully enclosed by railings, and elevated three to six feet above the undulating meadow. There must have been a dairy nearby, for there were a number of cows always in the paddock and a bull was kept in a fenced-off corner. I had been told that red was the colour that upset bulls and that if you waved a red rag at a bull he would immediately charge you. I wore a small peaked cap to school, and one day I realised that the decoration on the front -- probably the school shield and motto, had some red threads in it! Thereafter when I started across the paddock I kept a hand over the badge, or turned the peak up to cover the infuriating red. One memorable morning there was a second bull loose in the paddock and the resident bull didn't like this at all. He trampled his fence down and was

bellowing a challenge to the intruder. I never learnt how the second bull got there, but there were two men each armed with a long pole, trying to keep the bulls apart. I didn't trust my hand to cover my cap badge, not with two bulls, I folded it and stuffed it in my pocket! Unfortunately we couldn't wait to see the battle of the bulls, the school bell rang and we had to run.

The above may suggest that I was a timid child. If this offends the perhaps preferred image of a hell-raising, swashbuckling grandfather, you may substitute the word "prudent" for "timid". Ogden Nash had no such worries when he wrote that his grandfather was "a timid man and buckled he no swashes, he even wore his over-shoes on top of his galoshes" -- a very prudent man.

Another quite vivid memory of that school, must have been in my first winter there; one of the buildings was erected on a cut into steep sloping ground and the high ground behind it, was topped with a wire fence, on a level with the roof gutter of the building. The big boys would climb up the fence and by leaning over could reach the gutter and obtain a foot or so of ice lying therein. The next step in the exercise was to sidle up to an unsuspecting boy and drop it down the back of his shirt collar! By then it was starting to melt and by the time it was removed one had nice cold wet underwear to sit in for the next few hours. Coming to think of it, this may well have been the basis for the rule that little kids didn't go to school in the winter. They couldn't stand the "ice" treatment!

Tasmanian folk are more reserved than Queenslanders, but when friendships are established, they are good friends indeed. We built friendships with a number of families, and particularly with the Taylors who lived opposite. They had three or four children whose ages were compatible with ours so that there were lots of interests to share. Also the two fathers had a common and absorbing hobby in the gramophone. This was the acoustic machine with a wind-up, clock-spring motor. The only thing "electric" about it was the new method of electric recording, and a great deal of well-deserved fuss was made about the improved fidelity of the orchestral tone, and especially the singer's voice. Prior to this the singer had to shout into the flared end of a trumpet in order to get the sound impressions onto the record matrix.

The singers "of renown" who ruled the world operatic stage at that time included our own Dame Nellie Melba, Tetrzzini, Galli-Curci, Clara Butt (contralto), the Russian bass Chaliapin, Tito Schipa, deResk, and the great Enrico Caruso. It was said that Caruso made the gramophone and the gramophone made Caruso. He was the Pavarotti of his time, and his time was just right. Edison's primitive toy was gradually developed into a serious instrument for bringing the world's great music and entertainment into the reach of the common man.

Many Companies in America, Britain, and Europe were engaged in refining the machine and the manufacture of records. The first big change was from cylinder to disc, which was easier to make, to transport, and to use. In our part of the world the Record Company of England through its famous label "H.M.V." did most for the gramophone at that time, and their trade-mark of the old fox terrier with his

head cocked towards the trumpet of an early machine, listening to “His Master’s Voice” (his master having taken his voice to a better land in the sky) would be seen in most homes. The records played at 78 revolutions per minute, were made of an early plastic, heavy, hard and brittle and easily scratched. They came in two sizes -- 10 and 12 inch -- and were classified by label colour, blue, red, plumb, and yellow, according to the rating of the artist. As I recall it *yellow* was the top quality and cost one guinea.

I remember one evening when the family was dining at Taylors’ house, Mr. Taylor who took himself rather seriously, called the children together and promised that after dinner he would tell us all a wonderful story. We became quite excited guessing what this story was going to be and the suggestions ranged from pirates to cowboys, and from the girls some silly idea about a fairy princess. What a let-down awaited us when the story turned out to be a history lesson on Napoleon’s retreat from Moscow and the whole thing was just an excuse for him to play his new record of the “1812 Overture” complete with cannon-fire. But even the cannon was not enough to redeem it for me -- I was yet too young to appreciate Tchaikovsky’s genius.

For the most part I think we kids got along quite well together, but occasionally older children do run out of patience. Dot and Viv had a neighbouring girl in playing and I must have interfered too much, so they tried to shake me off by running over to the neighbour’s place. They slammed the hardwood gate on me just as I tripped and fell, my face meeting the full force of the closing gate. I remember being taken to the doctor, but he said there was too much swelling and bruising for him to see what damage was done. I have no memory of going back to the Doctor so it must have cleared up without problems, but over the long term I don’t think it did my antrum drainage much good.

My next recall concerns Dorothy, and for this incident I must describe the setting. Because of the practice of boiling clothes using a wood fire, the laundry was in a detached building about the size of a double garage. This also housed a toilet, fire-wood and tool room, and a small workshop, all partitioned off. On this occasion Dot with a visiting girl friend went to the loo, not knowing that Dad was quietly working in the adjoining workshop. He overheard Dot explaining that when the washing-up started, she went to the lavatory and waited there till the dish washing was nearly finished. As time passed Dad made great sport of letting her know that he understood the coincidence that required her to visit the toilet at the sound of the washing up dish, and by repeating bits of the overheard conversation, he had her completely mystified as to how he could know these things.

At that time Dot was only age 10 or 11, but was already experiencing the joys and sorrows of being the eldest child. The “joys” arising from the pride of being the oldest and the first to be “really grown up”, and “sorrows” because of sterner discipline, no liberties granted, and the responsibilities thrust upon her to help with the chores, to set an example, and to guard and guide the younger children. For a large part of her life before she gained independence, she had the role of second mother to the younger family and a very good and conscientious performance she gave. In her teens, Dad

played out the part of the guardian father, and Dot could accept no invitation, nor make any arrangement without father's approval. In her later years Dot confessed to me that she could never completely forget the resentment she felt towards Dad for the tight rein he kept on her in those growing up years.

On a happier note, I remember summer Sunday mornings when Dad and neighbour Taylor would take the older children for long walks. One I recall was to Mount Nelson, a smaller mountain than Wellington and probably just qualified in height. It would be about three or four kilometres each way, and in those days was bush all the way, starting from just behind Taylors' place. Of course we carried a sandwich breakfast for when we reached the top. It was memorable for showing me my first snake -- a five-foot whip snake which was killed by the men and created a great interest for the kids.

Another walk was into the City, to Constitution Dock, which was always interesting particularly if a big ship was in. We walked into one of the warehouses on the wharf and I remember its being stacked high with cases of apples waiting to be loaded. These were wooden cases with plenty of gaps between the boards so that the beautiful smell of ripe apples filled the shed. This triggered our appetites and having brought apples with us we handed them around and started eating. A ripe Tasmanian apple is a wonderful fruit, and I have never forgotten the flavour and the amount of sweet juice that dribbled down your chin when you bit into it. We emerged from the warehouse and Dad said we weren't very tactful to come from the apple warehouse eating apples; if the caretaker saw us, we would have some explaining to do. However we escaped the scene without meeting the watchman and finished our apples unchallenged.

I have already mentioned Dad's work running out, the early rumblings of the onset of economic depression, and the perceived need to return to Brisbane for brighter work prospects. So, we have reached the stage in the story where our house is let, our effects are being packed, and we try to book passage on the one regular shipping line between Hobart and Sydney. But to no avail; the ship "Riverina" is fully booked for the time we wish to travel! It is explained that this is the week of the Sydney Show when all the business people go to Sydney with their order books, and *that* trip has been fully booked for months. So, we sign on for the next trip, and the good friendly neighbours accommodate us for the week's waiting. This was all novel and exciting for the children; to be sleeping and eating at their friends' place was a great treat. The time was April 1927, and the Sydney Show was always "the Easter show", so whatever was the date of Easter that year was the time of our waiting. But the *reason* for our waiting changed dramatically over night. The "Riverina" through bad weather and bad navigation ran aground on Gabo Island, off the east coast of Victoria. She stuck fast, defied all attempts to get her off, and as far as I know her rusted remains are there to this day.

There was no loss of life from the grounding, but passengers were taken off one at a time, in a "britches-buoy"-- a flying-fox rigged from ship to shore -- all luggage was lost, and it was an anxious and stressful experience for everyone. I am sure that Minnie and Harmon were very grateful for having missed the shipwreck. Plans had to

be altered and we travelled the long route -- train to Launceston, boat to Melbourne, train to Sydney and Brisbane. Our heavy luggage and furniture, including the grand piano which Dad hung on to for fifty years, had to wait for a cargo ship, and it was probably five or six weeks later before that reached us in Brisbane.

I mentioned that our move took place in April 1927, and students of Australian history will recall that the next month, May 1927 saw the official opening of the first Federal Parliament House in Canberra. Since Federation in 1901 Australia's Parliament met in the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. During the first twenty-six years of Federation the site of the National Capital was chosen, the design for the layout of Canberra was decided from a world-wide competition, and plans were drawn for a temporary Parliament House. There is an old saying that nothing is as permanent as a temporary measure, and true enough the building was in use for over sixty years before being replaced and having its name changed to "Old Parliament House".

But back in 1927, events of the magnitude of installing a National Parliament in its new home required a Royal presence, and such was the national devotion to the monarchy, that had not King George V been aged and unwell, nothing less than his presence would have sufficed. In the event, he sent the Duke and Duchess of York as his representatives -- these two later became King George VI, and the Duchess is of course, the present Queen Mother, in her 98th year as I write this. In such an operation today, the Royals would fly to Canberra, say their piece, visit a hospital or racecourse, and fly home again. In 1927 they travelled in a battleship -- "H.M.S. Hood" (for many years I had a commemorative badge with a photo of the ship). With support and escort vessels this would build into a small fleet, and such an imposing Royal Progress might also extend to a visit, en route, to other parts of the Empire -- India, Ceylon, and almost certainly New Zealand.

In Australia every State capital was visited, and each city tried to outdo the others with its decorations and welcoming ceremonies. The foremost decoration was the ceremonial arch, made of wood and completely covered with the State's main produce; Hobart had its apple arch and pear arch. These were built across the main streets of the Royal procession. The public welcome was usually held in the exhibition grounds and school children were drilled to perform gymnastic and eurhythmic displays as part of the official welcome. Imagine sitting through half a dozen of these, along with the same old speeches, and then having to make the same old replies -- who said the Royals didn't earn their keep?

All these preparations for a grand Royal tour were going on whilst we were preparing for our move to Brisbane, and we saw the city decorations of Hobart before we left, then again in Melbourne where we stayed a night or two, again in Sydney for a few days, and by the time we reached Brisbane I think the excitement of a Royal tour was wearing a little thin! In addition in both Sydney and Brisbane, as mentioned earlier, we had the distraction of meeting cousins we had not known before. All told, the whole of the transplant from Tasmania to Queensland was a great adventure for us children.

In Brisbane we stayed for a fortnight with Todds (Annie, Walter, and their three children) in their Paddington house. Dad was fortunate in getting work almost straight away, as a draughtsman in the “bridge design” section of the Main Roads Department. This job he retained for the rest of his working life. We moved temporarily to a rented house near Woolloowin railway station, but soon shifted to a bigger place in the high part of that suburb where it borders on Clayfield and Eagle Junction. It was closer to Eagle Junction School and to the Methodist Church which was to play a dominant role in our family lives for the next 8 years. The rented house in View Street, (a coincidence that we left View Street in Hobart) proudly wore the name “Parrawai”, and was of the style which has since become known as a Queenslander. It stood on large grounds, high at the back and gave good views to the north and west. It had verandahs on three sides and adequate bedrooms. The grounds hosted a number of large trees, including a magnificent camphor laurel which taught us boys all about tree climbing, fortunately without serious mishap.

Along the back fence was a wire-netted fowl yard leading from a shed which was originally built for a stable. We soon filled this with black and white Orpingtons, and a neighbour gave us some Bantams which were already in possession of the chook-run, so the neighbour really only made a virtue of necessity, for he couldn't keep them in any more than we could -- as we were to learn. The hen had a secret nest in a clump of cactus and when the eleven chickens grew up the whole family used to fly over the wire fence and roam the yard, and when night came they would all fly up the camphor laurel and roost way up in the top of this great tree.

So this was the house which gave me shelter for the major part of my childhood, on the whole, a very happy time covering those interesting years of development towards young adulthood.

The first experience was enrolment at the Eagle Junction State School. Before Dad began his new job he took Dot, Viv and me to the school at nine o'clock one morning, and met the Principal, an elderly dignified gentleman named David Bell. By coincidence, eight years later his son Oliver Bell taught me science at Brisbane Grammar in *his* first year at that school. I have previously mentioned the lower standard of Tasmanian schools, and the Principal, by questioning us did that sorting out of which classes we should join. I suppose this process intimidated me, and also we had been away from school and constantly in family company for some weeks, so that when Dad took his leave of the head-master and Dorothy and then Vivienne were taken to their classes, I suddenly experienced a terrible feeling of abandonment. I was alone and near panic; I still remember struggling to hold back the tears as I was led away to join my class. Fortunately the mood soon passed and I had no trouble going back to school next day.

Eagle Junction was one of the big schools of Brisbane at that time, and one of the premier schools for academic standards. But it is an example of how cities grow, of how outer suburbs become inner suburbs and how young populations move out to the spreading suburbs. Ten, perhaps twenty years ago, I was surprised to learn that Eagle Junction had become such a small school it was in danger of being closed altogether

-- and perhaps it has been. But in those days it was a bustling and thriving place with all teaching being structured to get the highest number of pupils from “first babies” as the five year olds were called through to “scholarship” and to pass that exam to gain Government financial assistance into a secondary school, or into the workforce.

A few paragraphs back I mentioned this period as being a “ mostly happy time” -- the qualification was occasioned by some dismal aspects of school. All of our schools at that time were stern and earnest places; you were there to learn, and by gum, you learnt or you suffered. The cane was not reserved for the head master; cane and ruler were the weapons of enforcement of every teacher, the cane was for the palm of the hand when you were hauled out in front of the class to receive it, and the ruler was carried by the teacher who prowled around the desks, and if displeased by what was seen over your shoulder, rapped the backs of your knuckles with the sharp edge and very firmly.

I am not entirely against corporal punishment but the way it was handed out in those days it was often very counter productive. One class I was in at age nine or ten had a session called “mental arithmetic” every day after the eleven o’clock break. The problems were simple, involving a subtraction and division or a multiplication and addition, they were spoken to the whole class and one pupil was asked for the answer. If wrong, out front, hand out, whack -- perhaps two of them if the teacher had indigestion. This went on for fifteen or twenty minutes. I struck a bad patch which lasted a week. I could do the arithmetic but all this caning got me very nervous and I fumbled the answer, and took my punishment. The next day a repeat performance, and the next, till the teacher must have realised my brain had seized up and she decided to pick on someone else.

I don’t remember any joke, any humour, or any fun in class; the boys were all called by their surnames (not sure about girls) , and the teachers all “Miss” and “Sir”. No informality or fraternising was allowed. You learnt by rote -- 2 times table up to 9 times table, and the same for history and geography. I can still recite the rivers which flow into the Wash (East coast of England) - The Witham, the Welland, the Nene and the Ouse -- so you can’t say I didn’t get a good education. Some years ago I heard the schools of my day referred to as “sitstilleries” and that’s a pretty fair summary of what my primary school was like.

Strangely I never recall complaining at home about the harshness of school. I expect it was the same for my sisters and perhaps even worse for our parents, so any complaint would be turned away by the simple philosophy -- “that’s what schools are like, and you’ve got to have an education”. However it was a different story when some kid sitting near me complained to the teacher that he had lost some money, probably sixpence or a shilling of pocket money, which he thought someone had stolen from him. For some reason he thought I was the culprit, and the teacher hauled me out and questioned me sternly, and gave me the impression she thought I was a thief. Of course I denied it but the mere suggestion cut me to the quick. I brooded over this all day and when home, blurted it out to Mum. She looked me in the eye, and asked me *did* I take the money. To be asked twice in one day if I was a thief, was too

much, and I was pretty upset as I vehemently denied it. “Right!” said Mum, as she became the tigress defending her cub, and immediately got a writing pad and wrote a letter blasting the teacher for “accusing and upsetting the boy without the slightest shred of evidence. We were a church-going family whose children had all been taught the virtue of honesty, etc., etc..” I handed the letter to the teacher next morning and never heard another word about it; nor do I know if the kid ever got his money. After that incident I found a little more respect for my Mum.

Other memories from that school include a visit from a martial arts man, but that term had not been invented then, and I think he was billed as a Jujitsu expert. He was given permission to hand out leaflets to the older boys at lunch time, announcing an after school demonstration somewhere in the school grounds. He of course was trying to recruit enough kids to start a paying class on Saturday mornings, which I did not join, but I certainly came to the demonstration. It was really mind-boggling to me to see how easily you could throw over your shoulder a bigger fellow who was trying to do you in. Of course the attacker had to be cooperative in just how he approached you and just where he put his hands on you, but if he was a good sport you could grab his arm, and lever with your hip while you threw your leg and twisted your body in such a way that he went flying through the air, and landed on his back completely winded -- I know, because that's what Clive did when I got home and showed the family what I'd learnt. Clive at the age of five or six was very cooperative, but Mum, after assuring herself that Clive was still alive, declined to pay for Saturday classes, which was a pity because that's when we were to learn how to throw the uncooperative ones. So I never earned my black belt.

Whilst on the subject of physical combat, I recall “the big fight” held one afternoon in a vacant allotment near our place. I had a sort of personal interest in it as one of the contestants, the favourite, had a young brother in my class. These two brothers named Lulham, had some family background in boxing -- I am not sure what it was, perhaps an uncle was a boxer, and taught them how to take care of themselves. But they were good blokes, never pushy or looking for a fight, but quite self assured and gave the impression that if they were picked on they would give a good account of themselves. The elder was about three years on from us and one of the big boys at the time. I really have no idea what the fight was about, but probably some kid who fancied himself threw out a challenge. Well, the whole thing was beautifully done, it was after school, away from the school, the allotment was chosen, a referee appointed, and a square marked out. The only things missing were boxing gloves; this was depression time and people couldn't afford such luxuries. Word had spread and a large crowd of kids filled the allotment. Lulham was a well-built lad with a good reach and before long he had put a mark or two on the challenger. The fight lasted only three rounds when the bare knuckles had given the challenger a bleeding nose, he gave in and the fight was over.

The really interesting aspect of this episode, and it impressed me even at that young age, was the organisation behind it. These kids were about thirteen, but they knew how to handle a tricky situation with finesse, and I believe the Marquess of

Queensberry would have been proud of the way they went about it. I have repeatedly noticed, throughout my life, how undistinguished, ordinary people find the native talent to rise to an occasion and organise to manage an unusual situation. Perhaps this is what civilisation has given us -- or is it the other way around? Is it the need and ability to create order and structure that has enabled us to civilise?

I should mention too that the kids in the “the big fight” situation didn’t have the visual instruction of television to show them how, neither would the movies have been much help at that primitive stage when the first “talkie” was not yet made. Cinema was the great adventure of this time of my life; there were three within walking distance, but the one near Woollooin station, hardly counted. A big galvanised iron shed without roof except for the projection box and the screen, it had frequent break-downs and if storm or heavy rain occurred, the programme was cancelled. It showed only silent films, and had in front of the screen, a loud piano on which a competent pianist played music suited to the mood of the scene. When the talkies became established that cinema closed. Another was at Kalinga, and being further away we never visited there at night, but occasionally on Saturday afternoons, when special programmes for children were shown, we might line up with our sixpences. I saw the original “King Kong” there, and many cowboy films starring Tom Mix and Buck Rogers.

Our real cinema house was at Clayfield; “The Savoy” had class about it and was one of the forefront suburban theatres. The school concert and fancy-dress ball were held there, and best of all, often on a Friday afternoon someone from “The Savoy” was waiting at the school gate giving out free cinema tickets for kids if accompanied by a paying adult. Then it was a race home to see if Mum or Dad would come, and an agonising wait till Dad got home from work. By this time he was heavily involved with the Church, so often we had to forgo the pictures because Dad had a meeting scheduled. There is no doubt, in the days of its innocence, the cinema, for a very small fee, brought into our lives excitement, laughter, sometimes tears, drama and romance, and was a great antidote to the depressing, worrying times of economic stringency, of terrible unemployment and the fear which many had of not knowing where the next meal was coming from.

In following up my school days and cinema adventures, I have bypassed a very happy and exciting event. On the 21st. December 1928 Beverley was born. Earlier in the story (page 5), I made mention of this and stressed that Clive and I knew nothing of the impending birth, had been told nothing and noticed no change in mother’s figure. I also quoted Clive’s question to Mum, “You’re not going to keep her, are you?” I always thought this was a charming remark from a child who was only just turned five, and had been suddenly hit with this tremendous surprise, but I sense Clive would be happier to have his mature-age explanation also quoted. When we were both shown into Mum’s bedroom to meet the “surprise”, the midwife was still present and Clive thought the baby belonged to her. His vision of Mum sitting up in bed, nursing the babe, suggested a try on to check whether this one would do! He didn’t realise that

“try before you buy” wasn’t available then. Anyway, whatever the reason, I still think his response to the situation was exquisite.

For me to have a baby sister in the house was a sheer joy; I had no responsibilities in the matter, I didn’t have to wash nappies, and she didn’t wake me in the night, I was free to just enjoy her. Bev grew into a pretty little girl, and I remember taking her by the hand and walking her with great pride at Sunday School picnics and similar outings. I might also add that she was a good introduction to some older girls whom I had started to notice. In due course Bev attended Sunday School and came home with some beautiful questions. She asked what were the “thinemiez”? Pressed for the context, she explained that God made Heaven and Earth and all the thinemiez. Of course it had to be explained that this was bad diction on the part of the teacher, and the proper expression was “and all that in them is.” Another question arising from the Christmas message that Mary was the mother of Jesus, Bev asked was this the same Mary who had the little lamb? It is as well she got these things straightened out, because she told me recently that she had been appointed a Church Elder, at the same church and that her duties included occasional Bible readings in the service. Think how embarrassing if she mentioned the “Thinemiez”.

Saying that Bev is an Elder in the church of her childhood, is taking some liberty with the strict truth. First, the old building was demolished some time ago and replaced by a more imposing structure, so I am told. “Methodist” has been replaced by “Uniting”, and though the location is the same, its address is now Clayfield instead of Woolloowin. The church owns a large piece of land between Old Sandgate Road (now Bonney Avenue), and View Street. The Church and Sunday School Hall are still side by side facing Bonney Av., whilst the Parsonage is still behind the Church, and facing View Street. In our day there was a caretaker’s house beside the parsonage, but Bev tells me this has been removed and its allotment turned into a car park for the church. A pedestrian lane used to run between the parsonage and the caretaker’s to give Woolloowin parishioners easier access to the church, and in my day the public also used it as a passageway between the two streets; we used it to go to and from school. The lane has been re-positioned to the other side of the parsonage. Our house in View Street was almost opposite the caretaker’s house so we were practically part of the church community. Incidentally, in the introduction to this history I mention the first boy I knew who had a grandfather -- this boy was Harold Wilks, the only child of the caretaker couple.

Dad seems to have taken a holiday from church activity whilst in Hobart. Perhaps he was too busy with his house building or he was taking seriously the earlier medical advice to restrict his activities. Whatever was the reason, it was about to be discarded and he was to be plunged deeper and deeper into church activities. Now living in close proximity to the church it was inevitable he would be drawn in, once it was known he was a qualified local preacher, but in addition it is probable both parents felt that their growing children should be involved with a church -- and involved we were, to the extent that our entire social life was provided by church activities. Dad had the Welsh gift of fluency and drama and could rouse a congregation and hold their attention, and

he was soon in demand for services in other churches also. He was good with kids too, and received a lot of requests to be guest speaker at Sunday School anniversaries.

I have always believed that a preacher, indeed any public speaker is best if he has a sense of theatre, and Dad was an actor -- as will be told later. The first expressions of this side of the man came to light by giving humorous monologues at socials and concerts. These he made up himself by stringing jokes together with some patter, using hand and body movements, and adopting different voices and accents. I must say they were corny old jokes by today's standards, but for *his* audience of *that* time and place, he was most successful and was on frequent call as a humorist. I must have heard him preach many times, but only one occasion stays in my mind and that was at Taringa church when I was about eighteen. At the start of the service he was seated in the pulpit, head bowed, then he rose quietly, gave a welcome, and almost apologetically, announced the first hymn, and he proceeded through the service, the Bible reading with the voice slowly gaining authority, and then the sermon! The voice rose with dramatic effect, followed by quiet passages and again it thundered forth -- you couldn't go to sleep, you were in and you stayed there to the end. Yes, he knew his stage tricks and he knew he could hold his audience, and he virtually played with them.

I recall a conversation when I was much older; how it was started I don't know but it had to do with measuring success in life, and Dad acknowledged the achievements of the captains of industry and the rewards they earned for themselves, but he said, there are also sensitive people not equipped for the rough and tumble of commercial life, but who could relate to others, who could reach an audience and give them comfort and hope; such people he felt, had a valuable part to play. Of course this was self-justification on his part, and perhaps an apology to his children for not providing better for them in a financial sense. I never thought he owed *me* an apology, but at certain times of our lives, for example my further education which he couldn't afford, perhaps he reflected on his self-made successful father and his successful brother, and I think he may have felt he had failed us, in that part.

The gramophone records came with us from Hobart, but not the gramophone. Dad may have thought he would replace it with a better machine, but when we were settled and he wanted it, the money wasn't there. Not to be outdone, he set about building one. All his effort was spent on the design and works -- the appearance was nothing, just a big box standing on four plain legs, with a lid on top at one end, and a big hole at the other end, the hole being the flared end of a big brass French horn. He discovered a shop which traded as "The Instrument Hospital" and which repaired all sorts of musical instruments and sold rebuilt ones in exchange for those beyond hope. It was from the latter source he was able to get his parts. However he did buy the latest HMV sound-box which was the crucial part in producing what passed for high fidelity sound. The result was truly remarkable. He had put together several sections of brass instruments so as to make one long curved trumpet with amplification several times the volume of the best gramophones on the market. Along with the special sound-box it really filled the whole house and half the street -- people were asking where was the music coming from. But it soon was too much for Mum, and she insisted it must be

reduced. She tried stuffing an old dress in the flared end, but the the fabric was too dense and caused a kind of feed-back which distorted the sound. So Dad made up a ball of old silk stockings and the open weave of the stockings allowed the sound to pass but shortened the trumpet and reduced the volume. I don't claim that we invented the expression "Put a sock in it!", but that was said if someone was playing the gramophone au naturel.

I am sure Dad would have loved to play it to our ex-neighbour, Taylor, but I'm equally sure the latter was too "proper" to accept the "box" for a piece of lounge room furniture. However it served us well and gave us all a knowledge of opera and other classics that could not have been obtained as easily in any other way. Every night when Dad was home, arias, ballads, and overtures lulled us to sleep, and when in my late teens I went to my first Operas -- Cavalleria Rusticana, and Pagliacci, I was rather astonished and certainly pleased to find that I knew nearly all the music. Prior to this I knew the music but not its origin or context.

As a family we all had an appreciation of music, and to varying degrees, an aptitude for it. We all had a go at learning the piano but weren't disciplined enough to practise (we needed "Steppy's" holly branch over the knuckles) and I don't remember whether any of us carried our playing into adulthood -- I certainly did not. We were quite good at imitating the singers on the records and also at harmonising and improvising parts and we used to have great times around the piano with Dad playing the accompaniment. The one who carried this singing the furthest was Dorothy. But her peak performance carried within it the seeds of its own destruction -- there is a background I must first relate.

In 1923 in England, was a boy soprano who had attained local recognition as a choir boy in The Temple Church, London. On a particular Sunday morning the adult choir was to perform the Mendelssohn duo "Hear My Prayer" and "Oh, For The Wings of a Dove", with this boy, Ernest Lough, singing the solo part. The Record Company of England, (HMV), on impulse decided to send its mobile recording van along to make a record of the performance. Upon release this record immediately went to the top of the hit parade, as they say today -- they didn't have such a thing at the time, but it quickly became the biggest seller that H.M.V. had made and it stayed in that position for many years. Just about everybody who took their gramophone seriously owned a copy and only recently I heard an enhanced version of the original record played on A.B.C. fm.

Our family record ended in my possession and before I gave it away, I managed to copy it to tape and still have it there. It is a beautiful piece of music and was played a lot in our house, and was imitated especially by Dorothy who at the age of about sixteen was developing a promising soprano voice. She was at this time learning the piano from the church organist and choirmaster, Will Stay. He had built up a good choir and was becoming ambitious to make a mark with it. Having heard Dot do her Ernest Lough party piece, around the house, he decided to train his choir to handle these now well-known pieces and he asked Dot would she do the solo part. She agreed, so the rehearsals and training went on and the performance was set for some

special date, probably a church anniversary. The great day came and the performance went off perfectly. I was only a kid, but I have always had a very good ear for tune, and I was bursting with pride as Dorothy's pure notes went soaring up to the organ loft whilst that instrument and the choir built a swelling base to support her. She gave a rendition every bit as true as Ernest Lough, and with musicianship to match. She was the toast of the day and everyone predicted a great singing future for her.

Will Stay persuaded Dot and our parents that he should become her teacher and take her voice in hand. When this was agreed he forbade her to sing again until he thought her voice was ready for it, and this was a fair enough stipulation for her voice was still very immature. However, something weird went wrong and I have never found out just what it was, but I don't believe I ever heard Dot sing again. At first she was asked to sing and she had to explain why she couldn't; whether this enforced silence gave her ambition nothing to feed on or whether Will Stay was a hard taskmaster and she wasn't prepared to accept the discipline, or whether her self-confidence ebbed away, I am not sure; but it always seemed to me, to be a terrible shame to have made an almost spectacular start and then have no follow up. However the friendship with her teacher remained and he was subsequently guest organist at her wedding, and she later sang regularly with her church choir in Sydney.

Vivienne was good at harmony with her contralto voice supplying the alto parts. In her young days she was not a soloist, but she had a late flowering as a singer with concert parties, and soloed as a mezzo with a pleasant voice for ballads and modern popular songs. Viv was the serious one of our children; she listened enraptured to visiting missionaries talking at Sunday School or from the pulpit, and at one stage was completely dedicated to the missionary life; when old enough she was going off to darkest Africa to save the heathens from purgatory. She grew out of this intense stage, but remained totally committed to the faith, and was greatly troubled in young adulthood to see me drop out of church life. I have already mentioned that she was closest to Dad on the emotional level, and she urged him to speak to me, but he was wise enough to know that religion and faith had to come from within, and he told her that chiding me would do no good.

In view of all her seriousness it is surprising that Viv had a great sense of humour even tending at times to ribald humour, and quite enjoyed doing some daring thing considered to be not proper for a young lady. One such item in her mid-teens stays in my mind -- our house had a central hall running from the front door to the bathroom at the back. There was a social function at the church hall this night and Viv was a little late in the bathroom. By this time she was pursued by a number of young fellows, and one suitor thought to advance his cause by coming to the house and escorting her to the function. The boy was in the lounge talking to me, and Viv not knowing this thought she could save a minute by not donning her gown and making a dash in her bloomers and singlet down the hall (through the lounge) to her bedroom. She just might have gotten away with it if she hadn't accompanied her passage with some snatches of caterwauling song drawing full attention to herself. The embarrassed boy withdrew quickly and quietly, and when Viv met him later at the social, she suggested

that the incident didn't really happen, did it? I think he had the good sense to answer, "What incident?"

The events I have just related are not necessarily in the order of occurrence for I find it difficult to fix dates and ages, and this is largely due to the fullness of life in a five member growing family, when something was happening all the time. These of course were the times of the great depression. We were fortunate that Dad was in employment all through, and though he suffered at least two pay cuts as part of the Government's efforts to reduce Public Service spending, we always had enough to keep food on the table, pay the rent, and clothe ourselves. Many were not so fortunate, and families were often broken up whilst fathers were forced to travel on the lookout for work in other towns, and often children had to be sent to better-placed relatives to relieve their family's struggle. The biggest tragedies that we sometimes saw were when firms failed, and local managers blamed themselves for imagined mismanagement, and committed suicide.

Apart from such major events, we were not greatly disturbed by the depression, there were constant reminders in the form of hawkers selling clothes props -- slender branches of saplings cut in the local bush and delivered by horse and cart. These were to hold up the back yard clothes-line, long before Hill's Hoist was invented. Also the common caller with his small case of matches or shoe-laces to sell. These were often returned soldiers from the First World War, sometimes with war caused disabilities. But for the most part we got by with lots of commonsense economies. The church became an unofficial trading centre for cast-off clothing and surplus food, so that homegrown vegetables, fruit and eggs were available to those in greater need. I can't recall ever having new clothes in those years; I would wear hand-me-downs from bigger boys in the parish and mine were passed to Clive or other small boys.

These were the years when Clive was catching up to me, and his friends and my friends were able to share games together. He and I shared a bedroom and had established a good mateship. Before going to sleep at night we would make up stories together -- one would propose a scene for our imaginary hero who always had the same incredible name, something like "Fronce", and it originated from our attempts to pronounce the few words of French which we had heard. The stories involved remarkable deeds which continually changed as we authored alternate paragraphs. I doubt they were very original, probably based on the many comic book heroes we occasionally read. When either one failed to take up his paragraph, the other knew that he'd gone to sleep, and listened for a while to Dad's music which gradually faded as sleep took over.

We were often told that school days were the best days of our lives, and if you'd had a hard day at school you might think, "If this is the best of it, heck! What's the rest going to be like?" I wouldn't say mine were the best days but, on reflection there were some very good days. One learnt to put the domination and occasional stress of school into a compartment, and real life was outside that -after three thirty, particularly on a Friday, and more particularly if the Friday was breaking-up day for Christmas holidays. We had a good bunch of friends, and we entertained ourselves, sometimes

with football and cricket, but mostly using imagination to play out the cowboy v. Indian, or cops v. robbers situations.

I dressed up once using the black cover from an old umbrella for a cape, got an old hat pulled down over my eyes, and some burnt cork for beard -- the kids reckoned I looked the part for a bank robber. I picked up the tomahawk which we kept on the wood heap by the copper, and the praise from the boys was so extravagant I decided to have a look at my handiwork. The only full-length mirror was in the front bedroom and since we never locked the front door, the quickest way there was around the house and in the front door to mum's wardrobe. I was practising brandishing the tomahawk as I disappeared into the bedroom, just as Dot crossing the rear end of the hall, glimpsed this black clad figure with arm raised entering the bedroom. She stifled a scream and alerted Mum. The next thing I knew as I admired my image, was another image with arm raised and about to bring a rolling-pin down on my head. It was not that my Mother lacked a sense of humour but it was at least a week before she could bring herself to laugh at that adventure.

Elsewhere in the story I made mention of my lack of curiosity about the physical difference in the sexes. Perhaps I was a late developer in this regard, because when a boy at school told me what his big brother had said about the thing boys did to girls, I simply didn't believe it, and told him his brother must have been "having him on, 'cause that would be stupid, why would a boy want to do that?" There was no education given to me on the subject, and I learnt later that my father believed that you learnt these things when you were ready to understand them -- a fortuitous tutor appeared when you said "ready". In fact, the sexual awakening is often signalled by some unscheduled, accidental event.

It was a popular outing for mothers with their children, to meet for a picnic in the Botanic Gardens during summer holidays. The Gardens contained a very small zoo consisting of several quite large cages, at least two of which contained monkeys. In one, the usual bunch of small monkeys were always playing their games of climbing and jumping, and begging peanuts, but in the adjoining cage was "Jacko", a solitary baboon with a nasty disposition. It was probably because of his malevolent expression that the kids love to stare at him and tease him. We had eaten our picnic lunch and Clive asked me to take him to see "Jacko". On the way we came to the new wading pool, filled with splashing children, when suddenly a girl slipped and fell full length. She emerged, dripping wet and went to her mother's picnic party where the mother really blew her top. Of course she brought no spare clothes for the girl and would have to travel home by tram or train, with a wet and shivering child.

Whilst angrily shouting all this to the girl, she stripped the clothes from her and spread them on the grass to dry. Much discomfited, the victim wandered around hoping to dry herself. The girl was no toddler, she was at least my age, and for me to suddenly see a totally naked girl walking in the Gardens, was at first a big shock and then an overwhelming fascination. Clearly, in Dad's terms, I was "ready to learn", and just as clearly Clive was not, for he was tugging at my sleeve, and asking me to come and see "Jacko". I couldn't tell him I'd rather stay and see "Jillo", but just then one of

the mothers produced a cloth as a wrap for the girl and my unexpected voyeurism came to an end -- but I knew a change had come into my life, bringing a new and exciting vision, and when we lined up before "Jacko's" cage, all I could see was a naked girl sitting on his perch! Thus was I awakened.

I can't remember much of my early days at Sunday school, which met in the afternoon. I must have accepted it all as something we did on Sundays, and no doubt enjoyed the Bible stories. We sat for Scripture exams once a year, on a Saturday afternoon, and I recall being awarded a book prize on at least one occasion. The book I won when I was twelve or thirteen was "First over Everest", the story of the Astor/Huston expedition to fly an aeroplane over the Mountain, for the first time. It was made possible by the invention of the engine "super-charger"; before that the thin air was unable to support the combustion of fuel at that height, so flight was limited. It was a great book to have at that time.

Soon after joining Sunday School, I was deemed old enough to join my sisters in Christian Endeavour. This was a separate service for young people held about ten in the morning -- a sort of youth church service. If you were a youngster and went to this one, you didn't have to go to church also. The people who ran it were no doubt worthy and well meaning, but they were the most boring lot. The only thing I can remember about the services was a section called "chain prayer." We all formed a circle and the leader started off with something like "God bless Mrs. Smith and make her well again soon". The next one in line, "God blessed" another invalid, and then the next one, until we got back to the leader. If we had fifteen or twenty kids in the chain we soon ran out of subjects, so once we'd got through the chronic invalids, we had to use a few malingerers, and then we had to get really inventive, and give a few people minor ailments like ingrowing toenails so we had something to "God bless". To be passed over in the chain was to lose merit in Heaven ; if you did that for a couple of Sundays, you'd be in deep trouble. When eventually Clive joined Christian Endeavour, the variety of ailments grew alarmingly, but one day the foundations rocked -- at Clive's turn he announced "God bless me". There was a stoppage in the chain, the leader unwisely asked "Are *you* sick, Clive?" He replied, "Yes, I'm sick of Endeavour." I can't remember the sequence of events; I think the chain got linked up again, and later at home Clive was chastised for disrespect during prayer.

It was not long after this that he and I decided we would not go to Endeavour this particular Sabbath, and when we arrived at the Church grounds we just kept walking and ended up at Kalinga Park. There we did nothing more exciting than throw a few stones in the creek, and then dawdled our way home to a reception we began to worry about. Mum had been told about our disappearance, and when we admitted our truancy, she scolded, then said we would have to see *Father* about it -- Not "Dad" but "Father", things were serious! However Dad must have remembered how he snatched a cane from "Steppy" and broke it over his knee, and perhaps he felt a sympathy for a bit of healthy rebellion. We heard no more about the episode.

It would be about this time that I discovered books and the joys of reading. Dad had some fine books gained as prizes at school and Sunday school. They were

beautifully bound and illustrated, and included “The Swiss Family Robinson” which I read several times, “The Last of the Mohicans”, “Hereward the Wake” and other classics. I had also collected quite a few myself and began to spend a lot of spare time with my head in books. Our school “readers” had a lot of short essays, all politically correct (for the times, not for now) and with transparent morals behind them, and of course the poems were even worse in this respect -- “She’s somebody’s mother , boys you know”, and “Barbara Fritchi” (spelling uncertain) -- “Shoot if you must this old grey head, but spare your country’s flag! she said.” Its a long time since I saw a school reading book, but I’m sure they no longer serve up the sentimental mush and jingoistic jargon that we got, although they are more politically correct, even to the extent of rewriting history, from what I hear.

Enter the Chapmans. These were parishioners at Wilston who befriended Mum and Dad when they were first married. In particular Mum was fond of two sisters and the wife of one brother, and she renewed the friendships on return from Hobart. One Saturday afternoon our family boarded a train at Woolloowin and travelled to Sherwood to visit one of the sisters and her husband. To our surprise another brother, Ben, was also visiting with his family -- Murray and Doug, and in between a girl who swept me off my feet and left me in that state for the next five or six years. Heather always had a lovely smile, and incidentally, at the age of seventy-seven she still has it. But about sixty-seven years ago it lit up her whole face, and she was the prettiest girl I had ever seen and I went home from that visit with the firm resolve that she was my girl for ever more. One problem was that she lived at Shorncliffe, and I had no idea when I would see her again, but I knew I would.

Sure enough a year later, I was astonished to see Heather and Doug in the playground at Eagle Junction School. They had moved to a house at Clayfield, and in due course also attended our church and Sunday school. The fates had spoken and to show my gratitude, I saw my girl every time I possibly could and went to her house after school -- to play with Doug, so I told Mum, even though Doug was closer to Clive’s age than mine. Such are the deceptions we employ when in love. Of course the love affair was completely innocent, and didn’t even reach the stage of “touching” for another five years. I was terribly shy in Heather’s company, and have no idea what we talked about, all I wanted to do at that time was to look at her -- she was so beautiful! I must have been a terrible bore. I seem to think that Heather did most of the talking; she was very lively and full of fun.

Meanwhile the years went by, and brought changes in the family. Naturally these had to do with education and employment. Primary school ended with the Scholarship Exam (about age fourteen) and a pass entitled one to enter the State secondary school, or to receive financial assistance paid to a private school of one’s choice. After two years at secondary school, one took the Junior Public Exam, and the successful applicants were given assistance to the Senior Public (two more years), and a pass from there gave matriculation to University. The only help to University was from the Commonwealth Government which gave scholarships to the first twenty five in the

State -- you had to be good! So in broad terms only the well off could enter University.

Dorothy was the really unfortunate one. After passing Scholarship she attended the State Commercial High School, but this coincided with the worst of the depression and also with a stressful time for Mum. We had a large house to keep clean, a big family to manage and a new baby who would naturally add to the work load, and bring broken nights just when a good night's sleep was most important. We simply didn't have the money to employ help in the home, so Dot had to quit schooling and be that household help, with pocket money as her only wage. No wonder she felt some resentment at her fate. When Vivienne reached Scholarship, things seem to have improved, and she was able to attend the State High School from which she passed "Junior" two years later. Soon after, she got a job as a clerk/typist in the A.M.P. Society. I am not sure how long Dot worked at home but it was about this time that she also found an office job with a Mercantile Agency. I remember this quite well because Dot got me *my* first job -- a Saturday morning once a month helping to wrap a business circular, which her Firm sent to its clients. I think they paid me three shillings, which added to the sixpence I earned for mowing a neighbour's lawn each morning, before school, put me in the well-to-do class!

With the extra money coming in, from Dot and Viv, I imagine Mum was able to get some help with house cleaning, but I don't remember details. By 1935 the country was beginning to recover from the Depression, and when it came to my turn for secondary school Dad was able to pay the fees, (on top of my scholarship) for me to go to Grammar School. This extra effort was made for boys because their education was considered to be the foundation of their future career, whereas girls worked only until marriage when they were required to resign. The Brisbane Grammar School opened a whole new world to me. A school with a big tradition, with fine buildings in the style of old England, new subjects to study, and new facilities for learning. Sports were encouraged and though I never took to cricket, I played football at form level, and learnt a lot about team spirit. Above all there was a stimulating broadening of interests from the new friendships I made.

As we boys got to know each other, there was quite a lot of home visiting and it was great to see their hobbies which were sometimes quite developed technically, and I learnt a lot from this interchange. Some of these fellows did well for themselves in life. Mathews and Byth became judges, the Meyers boys, Jack and Rod did medicine -- their father was Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Alan Payne who always knew he was going to be a naval architect, was the designer of "Gretel" which nearly gave the New York Yacht Club collective heart failure when she came close to taking the America's Cup from them. After our first year (Form 3) we were graded by our results, and the top thirty or so were put into Form 4c -- known derisively to the also-rans, as "the suck form". We of the intelligentsia, ignored this sobriquet, and with some justification because life wasn't all study. Looking back I realise we did some harebrained things, which I suppose is pretty normal for growing boys at some stage of development.

Alan Payne lived at Bulimba, on the side of a hill overlooking the river. Jack Meyers and I went to his place one day in the holidays. We had decided we'd make a bomb, and he had taken a couple of his father's shotgun cartridges in anticipation. These we emptied into a matchbox, passed a fuse wire through the box and wrapped it tightly in newspaper and old rags. After attaching two heavier wires to the fuse wire we took it to the footpath where the house drainpipe emptied into the street drain. We then stuffed the bomb up the drainpipe and rammed another wad of paper in front of it. The two protruding wires were taken across the footpath and under the fence, which screened us while we huddled round a battery and waited for an unsuspecting passer-by. Our luck was in, a baker's cart was coming up the hill. Through the paling fence we monitored its progress and the signal was given. Whether the trigger man got stage-fright or fumbled, I know not but thankfully the cart was well clear when the bomb went off. Glimpsed through the cracks in the fence, it was spectacular -- a great roar and a sheet of flame and burning rag and paper went flying across the road while smoke poured out of the pipe. If the horse had been opposite, he'd have thrown the cart and bolted down the hill. There's a saying that Providence looks after drunks and children -- I think we should add "and boy bombers". If things had gone according to our stupid plan, we could have been in some serious strife. On the lighter side, I told a fellow this story many years later, and he countered with his similar experience in a Sydney suburb. With his mates he had pushed a lighted double bungler up a drainpipe, and when it exploded an irate man thrust his head and bare shoulders out of an upstairs window and shouted "You hooligans, you've blown the plug out of my bath and let all the hot water go"!

About this time I acquired a bicycle; an old thing that my Uncle Walter had finished with, and I soon had it apart and refurbished, and it did sterling service for many years. It was great to have my own transport for getting around the suburbs, and as I grew older the bike and I ventured further afield (usually with company) -- even down to the South Coast (not *Gold Coast* in those times). We would spend the night wrapped in ground-sheets on the beach, and return Sunday afternoon. Later, when I had left school, another chap and I did a four day trip on the Downs; first day to Toowoomba, next to Warwick, then Harristown, and home. It was a long weekend at New Year 1939, and so hot we were burned to a frazzle. Despite the sunburn, it was an interesting excursion and we soon recovered. That was the longest bike trip I did -- nowhere near the marathons my father had done on far worse roads.

But I have jumped ahead a little and have a few items to record before 1939. School work kept me busy; we took ten subjects for Junior Exam, and the only one that gave me no joy was Latin. I really couldn't get interested in it and in second year I got written permission from my parents to drop it. However the headmaster, Mr. Stephenson, himself a classics scholar in the tradition of the masters of old English Public Schools, first called me a "squib", and then blackmailed me by saying I would have to leave Form 4C if I did drop Latin. He said it was a wonderful mental exercise, the foundation of the English language, and no man's education was complete without it! Whilst not disputing the truth of these assertions, one must note how times have

changed -- no Latin in medicine, none in the Mass, and no fish on Fridays! What are things coming to? I didn't want to leave my friends in "4C", so I stuck to Latin but got my revenge by failing it at the Exam -- the only failure in ten subjects.

I think Physics was my favourite subject and gave me most entertainment. I found it all-absorbing to learn the laws and the structure behind everyday things that we take for granted -- gravity, electricity, magnetism, energy, engines, air pressure, vacuum, hydraulics, light, and prisms, and the list goes on and on. There were so many experiments, and things one could make at home, to demonstrate laws and principles. Engines were a growing fascination for us boys and we learned from each other how different engines worked -- two-stroke, four-stroke, and the number of cylinders. Steam engines were very interesting -- old Beam engines and "one lungers", and there were some beautiful model steam engines; I had a twin-cylinder model passed on from cousin Jack Todd. It really worked, and with a metho lamp to keep the water boiling, it had a great turn of speed. There were lots of boy's books on the world's railways and the different engines were known to us.

I travelled by train from Eagle Junction, and one morning waited on the platform about where the engine would stop, and I asked the engine driver would he take me on the engine . It was against regulations of course, but he checked with the fireman who said "why not", and he wiped the soot off one of the seats and put my school bag up on the coal heap, and away we went. It was one of the old "Thomas the Tank Engines"(not christened in those days) and was a terribly rough ride, but was very interesting to see them stoke the boiler, check the gauges, work the levers, and toot the whistle before leaving each station. When I got to school and reported my journey, I was king for the day.

It was early the following year that the family quit Woolloowin and moved to Taringa. Exactly what prompted the move, I do not know. Probably it was a combination of several things. For example, the Methodist Church normally moved its parsons around every three years. We had three different ones and perhaps Dad's working relations with the latest one may not have been satisfactory, and he wanted to pull out of his involvements. The house at View Street was old and getting older, so that Mum wanted something newer and better equipped. Maybe the company and friendships were getting stale, now that we were growing up -- the girls working and me at Grammar, certainly I recall no protests from the children. I didn't mind because my girl interest had gone to boarding school in Toowoomba that year, so I had no ties at Woolloowin, only a lot of fond memories which I took with me.

Dad and the girls transferred church membership to Taringa Methodist, but I think their integration was much less than before. I'm sure Dad kept out of church management, but was still active as a preacher to the churches in the district -- which puts me in mind of an unhappy incident. Dad never owned a car; by the time he could afford one, any ambition to become a driver had ceased. For preaching, if public transport was not available he was collected by a parishioner, which was fair enough since he received no financial recompense for his efforts. On this occasion the destination was Chapel Hill, which in 1936 was really out in the country. The lady

making the booking was unable to provide a pick up, and Dad said he would manage somehow. The thought forming in his mind was to borrow my bike -- after all, he had cycled a thousand miles and more!

He was forgetting that it was perhaps fifteen years since his last ride, and though one never forgets how to ride, it takes a little practice to again master the art, and this he did not do. In his Sunday suit with my bicycle clips around his trouser cuffs, he mounted the bike as we saw him off at the front gate. He shot straight down the hill on a gravel road, into a pocket of loose gravel and into a somersault. Poor father, he was really shaken up with broken glasses, gravel rash and torn suit. I raced down to help him whilst trying not to show concern for my bike, and he limped home and sagged into a chair. Mum took over the nursing job and Dot made the phone call to advise the organising lady that Dad could not make it. The lady was most upset, not for Dad, but, "What am I going to do now at this short notice!" Dot, apologised, and explained that if she had only known the accident was going to happen, she would certainly have rung her yesterday!

At Taringa, I know that I attended church services sometimes but have no recollection of any other church activity on my part. Clive however, seemed to have overcome his rebel urges and found some mates in the church group and joined the Methodist Order of Knights. This organisation was very loosely based on the Masonic Orders, with its signs, hand shakes and ritual, and was aimed at the young men to give them their own exclusive group for Christian social development. I had joined the one at Woolloowin, and quite enjoyed the visiting speakers and other activities, but I didn't join at Taringa. This may have been signalling my gradual disaffection from the Church, but I think not, for I still regarded myself as a committed Christian -- albeit of the Methodist variety, and firmly believed that there were front seats in Heaven reserved for the Price family. However I found there were a growing number of things outside church matters and church company that interested me far more. Nonetheless, and despite my basic feelings, I think the skids were under me and I had started that down hill slide -- as a staunch churchman told me some years later, I was a Methodist back-slider! At first I thought he said "*back-sider*", and didn't know how to take that, until he corrected me.

This year saw the twenty-first birthday of Dorothy, and no doubt she received many congratulations and some presents. But the present of greatest importance came from her boss in the form of a dismissal notice! I believe it was not entirely unexpected, as it was a common practice for small firms to employ juniors until they qualified for the adult basic wage, where upon the axe fell. Dot was hoping it would not happen to her, because her work had always been satisfactory, but she was the victim of a commercial decision. It was hard for her to be philosophical, but she pressed on with the search whilst studying at a business college, to improve her stenographic skills. She then won a job as secretary to the manager of Kitchens (soap makers) who had been or were shortly to be taken over by the international Company, Levers (now global company, Unilever). Here in time she met an industrial chemist

from Adelaide, and again in time, this chap was to play the biggest role in her life's story -- but more anon.

The year's end brought my Junior Exam, from which I emerged with a respectable pass -- nine out of ten subjects with a couple of "A" grades, but I really didn't know what I wanted to do thereafter. I was willing to go on to Senior, and by aptitude should have aimed at architecture or engineering, but having a couple of mates set for medicine, I thought I might like that course. Whether I could have managed any Tertiary study remains unknown -- I never regarded myself as a really good student when compared to some others in my classes, and I think it would have been a hard slog for me. In the event it was never put to the test. Dad might have afforded another two years to Senior, but University, never! He was pondering how he might raise or borrow the money, when Mum intervened in her practical way, with recent examples of professional men who had to carry their swag round the countryside looking for odd jobs, to gather a few pounds for their families, whilst they themselves, begged their bread and tea, and slept under road bridges and in railway sheds. The Depression was too recent for Mum, and I can still hear her saying, "Get a job in a bank or insurance office and you can have it for life; *they* didn't put staff off when business was bad." I started work in A.M.P. in January 1937.

The building where I worked was newly completed in 1934. It was built in the traditional style of the Bank of England, in order to convey to present and prospective policyholders, a solid and conservative image of permanence. Situated on the corner of Edward and Queen Streets, it is now called Macarthur Chambers, the A.M.P. having moved to new premises in Eagle Street in 1978. The new name of the old building is to commemorate its occupation for his headquarters, by General Macarthur, when directing the war in the South West Pacific. From this building he conceived and executed his plans which halted and then repulsed the Japanese southward drive.

However all this was a long way in the future, when I reported to the Chief Clerk and then the State Manager. The latter was Mr. A.E. Webb, ("Call me Sir") a stern but fair man who turned out to have some advanced ideas for male staff development -- not for girls, they were regarded as just passing through. Three or four boys were taken on at the same time and we were given some brief talks on what life insurance was about, how the Society was started in 1849 and what working for A.M.P. meant to the employee. The Australian Insurance Institute conducted annual examinations in two parts, each of six subjects. Passing Part 1 conferred Member of the Institute, and Part 2, Fellow. The Society required its males to pass Part 1 before age twenty-one, but Part 2 was optional. The subjects in Part 1 were interesting and informative -- Anatomy and Physiology dealt with the effects of diseases on body organs and life expectancy. Insurance Law was quite a big subject covering contracts, status of master/servant and agent, and so on. Investments concerned how the Office dealt with the huge amounts of money received each year as premiums, and it taught the five canons of investment and other prudent practices which Offices should apply in handling the monies they held in trust for their clients. The other three subjects were related to the technical

work of accounting, loans, new business, claims, lapses and surrenders. I passed Part 1 in my first two years.

The *annual* salary for first year males went up that year by five pounds, to sixty five pounds -- wasn't I lucky, a whole fiver a year extra. It was an impossibly small wage, and when I got it each fortnight, (\$2.50 a week as decimal equivalent) I handed it over to my mother, and she fed and clothed me and gave me fares and pocket money. At this time there was a huge difference between junior pay and that paid at age 21, when the State's Basic Wage set the minimum adult pay for all workers. The low pay for juniors was I think, a transitional move from the apprentice and articled clerk system, where employers were paid to train juniors in their jobs, and it was not until after the war that an explosion in junior pay scales put money into that section of the population and had a considerable effect on merchandising and marketing. A large body of receptive young people were now able to buy what they wanted. An example which stays in my mind is worth quoting -- I was entitled to two weeks annual leave, but not until I had served a full year. When that happened Mum shouted me a week's holiday at Binna Burra (more of this shortly). Forty years later, a junior who had served only *seven* months in one of my Departments, told me he was starting his *three* weeks holiday next day. I asked if he was doing anything for the occasion and he replied that on Monday he was taking off for Fiji! I thought of my little week at Binna Burra.

There was one saving grace at A.M.P.; it had its own salary scale above award rates, and satisfactory performance was rewarded with annual increments towards adult rates, and of course continuing beyond that to provide a much higher salary scale than outside awards. Other benefits offered were a staff cafeteria dispensing subsidised lunches, free consultations with the house doctor, a subsidised pension scheme for retirement (long before superannuation and even government age pensions were introduced), a home purchase scheme on very low interest rates, and a long-service plan giving six months paid leave after twenty years service and three months after a further ten years. All told the Society was a generous employer.

However the whole package sometimes made me think of Winston Churchill's phrase, "Selling your soul for a mess of pottage" -- a steady diet of straight clerical work can be deadly dull, and I often wondered what my soul was worth! The situation was much improved after the war and over the next twenty years, when changes in the industry greatly widened the scope and variety of work, indeed some jobs that developed were so new to an insurance office that no one at the Society in 1937 would have believed that they belonged there. In my first few years the situation was made tolerable by the social life of a large office. There were probably twenty boys and girls under age twenty one, and there was always some event, a dance, a concert, tennis at weekends and nights, and in summer a few who had cars would load up after work and off to Redcliffe for an evening swim, a meal round a fire on the beach, a sing song, and home by ten. At Christmas time we always raised a choir to practise carols and perform at a staff Christmas party.

As part of the manager's staff development plans, he had a debating club started and after extensive practice among ourselves we joined a debating organisation and competed around -- as far as Toowoomba one weekend. This was good for us and I quite enjoyed it. But the real fun was when the boss wanted to improve the boys' speech. A local lady, Marjory Mant, having arrived back from England where she was gaining acting experience in repertory theatre, set herself up as drama and speech tutor. Mr. Webb engaged her and "invited" the boys to join the classes. We paid sixpence, and the Office the rest. It certainly did us some good, making us aware of clear enunciation, overcoming lip laziness and so on. But poor tutor, she did have her leg pulled and pretended to ignore it, while we went around the class asking the brown cow how now? But we really went a bit far with "The Plumber dropped his tool in the cool pool". When this went round it was soon "accidentally" changed to "The plumber dipped etc." and the only one with a straight face was our tutor, but I must say she took all the fun-making in good part. Marjory later married an A.D.C. to the Governor, and they opened and ran the Johnson Art Gallery in the old Mant house in Bowen Hills.

The most interesting character I met there in my first days was the doctor, Alec Marks. His main job was to examine proponents for insurance, and to advise on the acceptance of risks, on normal or loaded terms, or rejection if too unhealthy. He also advised the staff on their health problems, if they wished, and he lectured to the students of Physiology. If one worked in the Department which processed new proposals, there was a lot of contact with the doc, and he was full of yarns and amusing anecdotes. I recall two items he said came from his days in med school -- the first was a couplet concerning ever occurring new treatments, "Be not the first by whom the new is tried, nor yet the last to lay the old aside." The other was two assets for a young doctor -- A bald head and piles. The bald head gave a venerable look and the piles, that slightly anxious expression.

The A.M.P.'s lifts were the latest technology of 1934, and I was very intrigued to work out how the automatics functioned. I did a lot of observing and some experimenting when alone in the staff lift -- things like stopping the lift between floors by opening the inner door, then triggering the lock mechanism by hand and making the lift start again with the door still open. All fairly elementary stuff but each venture pushed the curiosity level a bit further till I convinced myself that I had to make a model which would replicate all the functions. This I did at home over many weeks. I made a skeleton lift shaft, using mostly meccano parts, vertical rails to run the lift cage, and the same for the counterweight. I had three floors each with a sliding door, and on top of the shaft was a six-volt model motor. I found the trickiest part was designing and making all the switches, because some had to have delayed action facility to register a call which would not be effective until the lift door was closed. These I made with small electro-magnets and bits of clock-spring, they would make only part of a circuit, while the closing of the door completed it and the motor worked, winding the cage until it hit a trip switch and cut the current. I don't remember if I ever finished the model, but certainly did enough to satisfy my curiosity.

I previously mentioned that Vivienne worked in the A.M.P., but she was in the Industrial Department which had limited contact with the Ordinary Department where I was. Her work was on the seventh floor; mine the Ground. Industrial insurance many years later had a name change to Collector insurance to better reflect its main characteristic, which was a large staff of agents calling door to door to sell, and to collect premiums -- usually for small amounts. The bulk of the office work was done by women, the only males being manager and accountant. There were a number of elderly spinsters who ran the place, some with reputations as harsh disciplinarians. I know Viv had occasional difficulties with a couple of them. She and a few of the young girls joined our social activities.

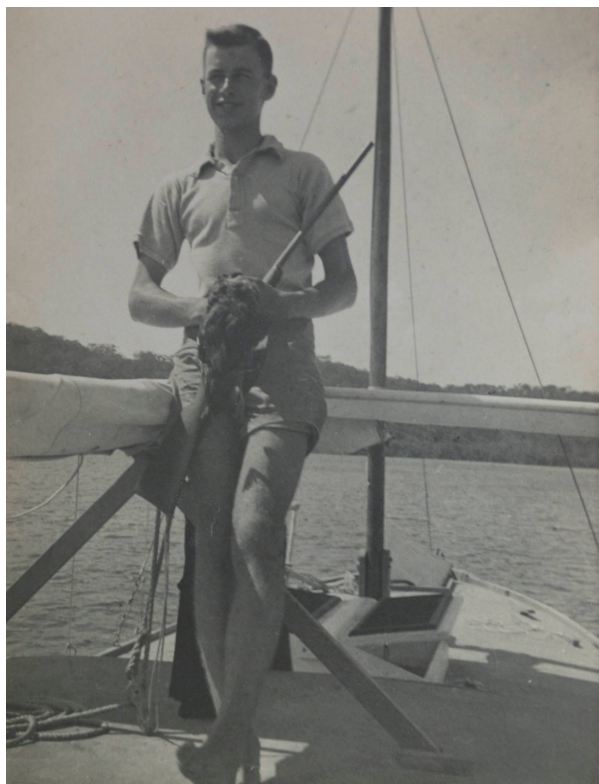
All the social life, involving as it did some fun-loving, and very pretty young girls, brought about some troubled conscience for me. After all, I already had a girl, one I had resolved to cherish for evermore! I had heard that Heather had finished boarding school and was now working at the City Electric Light Coy., at Petrie Bight, but I felt oddly shy about going to see her. One day I determined that after work I would go to her office and ask for her. I got as far as the front door of C.E.L. and I stalled! What would I say to her? I hadn't seen her for two years, and we were strangers. I turned around and walked away and the further I went the more angry I got with myself. Not long after, Dorothy, Vivienne and I were invited to a party at Chapmans, and Heather and I did get together again. I was overjoyed to see that she was more lovely than ever -- I had not been just imagining it. After this we kept in touch and I rode my bike to Clayfield some evenings and took her to a local picture show, (not on my bike) -- we either walked or took a taxi, but of course I had to cycle home again to Taringa.

The next disturbance in my developing love life came from the girl next door. Mavis was a year or two older, and she and her young brother were friendly with our family in a general way, the boy playing with Clive and Mavis socialising with Viv. But suddenly, and no doubt between boy friends, she looked at me with new eyes and decided she would take me up. I suppose I was flattered by the attention of an older girl and went along with her play, accepting invitations to all sorts of activities including picnics and days out with her family. Mum didn't like this at all -- probably thought that girl was going to manoeuvre her boy into an entrapment! Mavis was given to painting her toenails, whilst sitting on her back steps, dressed in very brief shorts. Mum would see her from our kitchen window, and mutter in disgust "That girl painting herself like a Jezebel"! However she need not have worried, it was just part of growing up. I never fell for Mavis, but I learnt a lot from her. When a new boy friend turned up Mavis switched off me and we were just neighbours again.

Doris Todd (cousin) discovered Binna Burra, and incidentally Arthur Groom as well. It was an occupational hazard for Arthur G. that nearly all the girls who stayed at the Lodge fell for "Groomie" and I'm sure he loved every minute of it. Also it was good for business for they kept coming back. Doris had a wonderful holiday and couldn't stop talking about it, to the extent that we had to try it ourselves for a weekend, and returned sharing her enthusiasm. This is how I came to my one week at Binna Burra, for my first holiday at work. As luck would have it there was some

exceptionally congenial company there, being the three Dolby children, Mary (22 'ish), Nan (perhaps 17/18 --just right for me) and John (about 15). I had a glorious time. We walked and climbed all over the National Park, and sang as we went -- all the popular songs of the current shows. The Dolbys must have enjoyed it too because at the end of the week they rang home and asked if I could come with them the next week, when the family was going on a friend's boat , cruising Moreton Bay. They invited me and I jumped at it -- the second week of my holiday filled with another adventure!

This was my introduction to Moreton Bay, at a time when it still had a lot of its pristine beauty and was not overrun by screaming powerboats. The Dolby parents were very agreeable and the friend who owned the 35 foot launch, also a good scout. I owned a .22 "pea" rifle, and was told to bring that with me. The Bay was officially a wild life sanctuary but the regulars used to go ashore in duck season and bag their



dinner of wild duck without any compunction. Of course they took a good look around for any sign of the one and only fishing inspector's boat, but if that was not visible they walked to the lakes on North Stradbroke and lay in wait. John also had a rifle and the men, shotguns. When the ducks were sighted the signal was given to the rifles who took sitting shots, and the guns fired when the birds rose from the water. The fishing was also good but we never aimed for more than a meal or two at a time.

Nan was an attractive blond, with a kindly nature and an appealing husky chuckle. I grew very fond of her, and saw her quite often. She worked in the building opposite A.M.P., and we met perhaps fortnightly, for an early meal, and a cinema show. Then I would take her home by tram to

Hawthorne and after a cup of tea, would find my way home on the last tram. If we went to a show on a Saturday, the whole outing ended much later, and more often than not, I missed the last tram and train, and had to walk home. I would go through South Brisbane, past the establishments of "ill repute" and decline their invitations, "are you coming in tonight, love?", across Grey Street Bridge to Milton Station. There I would get on to the railway line and have a level walk on the sleepers to Taringa. I usually made it by two in the morning. I really liked and admired the Dolby family. Mrs D's mother lived with them, a very old and completely senile lady, who took a lot of looking after, but they all seemed to willingly share the effort which was a *real effort* for she was totally irresponsible.

I observed that the Dolbys attended no church and didn't seem at all religious, and this made me wonder just how important was this church business? From what I could see these were "salt of the earth" people, and it was inconceivable that they should be barred from Heaven just because they didn't call themselves Methodist or even Anglican -- the Methodists didn't regard the Anglicans as fully qualifying for salvation, after all they took alcohol, had a flutter on the races, and above all they went to dances! Very puzzling! And I think the skids already under me, got another small push. I was also troubled about this propensity I seemed to have for falling for girls. Where did Heather fit in all this? She was still *the* one for me, yet I felt so happy with Nan? Also very puzzling! I decided to talk to Nan about *us*, were we going to be serious or not? Nan settled it by saying that she was fond of me and enjoyed my company but her heart was elsewhere! So, Nan had a *male* Heather! Neither of us had spoken about these secret loves before. As it turned out she married her Ken, and from time to time, many years later we bumped into them and exchanged talk about our families.

John, in partnership with two or three local friends owned a 22-foot sailing boat named "Wind Song". She carried a six-foot pram dingy appropriately called "The Belch". I sailed with them many times, on the river and in the Bay. Christmas and New Year of 1938/9 I spent in this way. I was the only one working at the time, John and another were apprentices (on holiday) and Bob Hay, was about to start a medical course. They waited for me to knock off on Christmas Eve, and away we went down the river and into the Bay. We shot duck for Christmas dinner, and added a few goodies we'd brought with us, but it was not my best festive meal, I must admit. We sailed to Southport to put me on the train for work, and they picked me up again when I returned for New Year. I remember that Nan and a girl friend were at Southport and they came aboard for some day cruising. By this time I was very keen on photography, and I took a photo of Nan and her friend lying on the beach with heads and shoulders raised to the camera. I entered it in a holiday snap competition in the newspaper and won seven and six pence. It was not very profitable however, when I took them to a celebratory dinner it cost me twice that.

On the family scene Clive passed scholarship and started at Brisbane Grammar in Jan. 1938. Dorothy had met a young fellow and after a brief courtship became engaged to him. Vivienne became fed-up with the domineering ladies at the A.M.P., and quit her job. Beforehand she arranged with Dot for a job at Kitchens, so she was not unemployed at all. She was fancy free, and making the most of a large circle of admirers. Her final choice was Ken Gough, whom she met on some group excursion to the skating rink. Ken had an old Austin 10, tourer, at a time when young fellows with cars were in short supply.

I recall an occasion when Heather and I, joined Viv and Ken for a weekend at the Eagle Heights hotel, Tamborine -- all very proper of course, sleeping arrangements strictly segregated. There were also several times when we made up mixed parties for a weekend at Binna Burra. They had a bus which left the City about 6pm. Friday and arrived at the Dump a couple of hours later. The Dump was the end of the road, luggage being loaded on the flying fox and wound up to the lodge, while passengers

walked up the last two hundred feet to a hot supper in the dining room. We young athletic fellows demonstrated our prowess by using Tarzan's Track, an almost vertical path from the Dump to the Lodge. To be smugly waiting in the dining room drinking your second cup when the others straggled in was always a modest bit of show off -- something like those African natives who do those vertical jumps to impress the ladies with their great strength. Dorothy's engagement did not last long. She began to feel she had been too hasty, and that this was not the man she wanted for the rest of her life. The poor fellow was devastated, and became seriously ill after the break. Dot suffered pangs of guilt, but in time things settled down, and her conscience cleared. A year or so later we heard that the boy had married, so the episode ended not unhappily.

A year ahead of me at Grammar, was a boy named Arvier. I knew him, not only by sight, but because he was a member of the school Cadet Corps with a reputation as a crack rifle shot. He stayed on at school for Senior, and in Jan.1938 joined A.M.P. staff. His first names were Astley Chevard, but because of the French connotation, was already nick-named Maurice after the popular French entertainer Maurice Chevalier. At the office we soon became good mates; he had a bicycle and rode over from Bardon to Taringa quite often. After he had met Vivienne, the "quite often" became "*very often*" for he was infatuated with her. I fear it was not requited; his serious bearing and unusually deep voice and stilted talk made him a figure of fun to Viv and she couldn't take him seriously. However his principal role in my life was to enlist me into His Majesty's army! Maurice went from Cadets straight into the militia, at that time called Commonwealth Military Force -- C.M.F.

By this time, Britain and the European countries were taking Hitler's megalomania very seriously, and ultimate war with Germany began to be seen as a real possibility. Mussolini was also gaining strength and building a modern army. He saw himself as the new Caesar with a mission to rebuild the Roman Empire. He had started by invading Abyssinia which both he and Hitler saw as a good practice range for trying out the new techniques of war, principally by using aerial bombing in conjunction with ground troops and armour. All this martial activity stirred the British into reviewing their defence forces and of course this spread to the Empire also. For Australia it was decided to greatly increase the C.M.F., and a recruiting drive was started. Those already in , such as Maurice A., were asked to persuade their friends to join, and I, with another office mate, Norm Ham answered the call. Artillery was our choice, eighteen pounder field guns of the Fifth Field Regiment. I was in the 15th. Battery, and Norm in 17th. Battery. So, under the name of Gunner Price, I became a toy soldier but the toy part was to change before long.

We met for a parade at Kelvin Grove barracks each Monday night for two or three hours, and apart from some half hour of drilling, we had instruction on harness care -- applying a heavy grease called "dubbing" to preserve the leather and keep it supple -- also the parts of the gun, the limber, draw-bar, and swingletree, and horse care! I never saw a horse near the place, for the decision to scrap the horse, and to mechanise the army had been taken, but no one had got round to altering the training programme. I suppose this was understandable because we had nothing to replace the

horse except Jacksons' lorries. Jacksons was a big firm of carriers, and the first weekend bivouac I attended, a contingent of flat-tops from Jacksons arrived and we hitched the guns behind them and the gun sergeant sat with the driver whilst the rest of the crew sat on the bare boards of the jolting truck. The iron tyred gun wheels could not move fast on the bitumen, so we trundled sluggishly through the suburbs to Enoggera, our noise drawing householders to their front gates, where they waved good naturedly, and with that humour which seems native to the Australian ethos, one wag yelled out, "Don't worry Mum, we'll save yuh", and the remark seemed to sum up the whole ridiculous scene.

Heather had a party each year in December -- I suppose a pre-Christmas affair where all her friends could meet each other. She had a large circle of friends, of both sexes; and though I knew she was going out with several other boys, I never felt jealous. I do not know whether this was due to my confidence in the "fates" which bound me to her, or whether I was maturing sufficiently to recognise that this broad mixing of partners was a big part of the "life learning" process. Undoubtedly the "maturity" notion was correct, and my growing up was eroding the childhood idea of the "fates". Strangely, she and I never discussed our friendship; we both seemed to take it for granted that we were good mates who had known each other a long time, and could always pick up again from where we left off at the last meeting. Briefly, going forward about fifty years, on one of Heather's visits from South Africa, she surprised and pleased me by saying in open conversation "Of course, Harmon was my first boy friend". It was the first intimation I'd had that she regarded me in that special way, and I wondered whether in childhood, she'd had the same deep feelings towards me, as I had felt for her. For me it was an innocent, wonderful, and tender thing with an element of fantasy which endowed my childhood with a treasured memory, and I would not have missed it for anything.

But the passage of time with its revelation of wider horizons was fading my love affair for Heather; and the event that was to close it in the next couple of years was her party of December 1938, and her friend from Fairholme boarding school, whom I met there -- Adele Parker! Dele, I thought, resembled Loretta Young, a popular film star at the time, and certainly a favourite beauty of mine. From our first dance I found her full of fun and lively conversation, and I decided that this was a girl I wanted to see again. But I was now experienced with girls and I was not to be swept off my feet any more, and when I learnt that Dele lived at Ipswich -- heck! that was too far, and I was not going to walk the railway sleepers from Ipswich for any girl; and that's how matters stood for the next twelve months.

War was being openly talked of now; Hitler had reclaimed parts of Germany ceded to France as reparations after the 1914/18 war, he had taken over Austria, and Czechoslovakia, and British Prime Minister, Chamberlain had returned from visiting Hitler, waving his infamous bit of paper and crying "Peace in our time". Hitler assured him that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe, but few people trusted Hitler's word, spoken or written in his bit of paper. For me the first result of all this was to spend more time in military camps than at the Office. A.M.P. took seriously its

responsibility to national defence by helping staff to fulfil their obligations. Leave was automatically granted and pay was made up when army pay was below office salary. Also annual holidays accrued regardless of attendance at camps.

The first camps were at Caloundra, on the high ground above Dicky Beach. It is now covered with houses, but the rise where the camp was, is officially named Battery Hill, after the Artillery which occupied it. It was a very healthy life, we rose at six, donned swim gear, marched to the beach for a half hour of P.T., then into the surf. After shower and dressing we ate a large breakfast. For training, we had the usual drill session, weapon training, gun drill, and an optional swim before evening meal at five o'clock. After this we'd often walk into Caloundra township and by eight o'clock we'd sit down to another dinner of steak and eggs at a cafe. If not on duty, weekends were free, but rather than go home, some of us would arrange transport to the Glasshouse Mountains, and climb them, spending Saturday night in a ground sheet on the side of which ever mountain we'd chosen for the climb. It was a very different life from an A.M.P. desk, and small wonder I put on weight and felt as fit as a fighting cock!

Camps ended with a live shoot on a firing range behind Currimundi Creek. Before breaking camp, we'd sometimes sneak back to the range and look for exploded shells which had left the brass nose-cone intact. These when cleaned and polished made nice souvenir paper-weights. But they could be very dangerous, as they contained more than one detonator, and depending how and where the shell landed a detonator could remain unexploded even when the shell blew up. This I discovered after my first camp when taking the cone apart to clean it. The timing rings were badly jammed, so I put the cone on the gas stove believing heat would free it up. It was Saturday afternoon and I had the house temporarily to myself, which was fortunate. While it heated I dashed down stairs to get another tool, again fortunately, for there was an almighty bang! I returned to a kitchen filled with acrid smoke, which cleared to reveal a hole in the stove recess -- the "freeing up" had been most successful, the free piece had put the hole in the wall and must have landed in the back yard, but I don't think I ever found it. I had a quick cleaning and patching to do before Mum came home.

Things had been moving along on the family front and by this time the industrial chemist from Kitchens, by name Kenneth Brown, had taken an interest in Dot and he was up to the home visiting stage. He was a good bloke and the family generally seemed very pleased to see him around the place. He was also a good tennis player and at this time we were all regular players on a court which a group of us rented. We also entered a team into competition in an organisation we called "Church Tennis". Just what this was I don't know but by the name, I guess it was formed by church sportsmen who thought it a good idea to accommodate young people in both sport and church. Lots of churches had tennis courts on their premises, and we travelled around the suburbs playing fixtures in different places each Saturday. I fear I could never take sport seriously enough to be a really good player. Occasionally I'd play an "A" grade shot, but soon after I'd loose concentration and fall by the wayside.

Clive was now at Brisbane Grammar in fourth form, with Junior at year's end (1939). Vivienne had teamed up pretty seriously with Ken Gough who was, as a

consequence also a regular visitor. Ken's father ran a shop in Albert Street, City, selling principally, paint and related hardware, but also glass and picture framing. Ken was set to take over the business which had been started by his grandfather. As with most businesses it had suffered badly in the depression and as retail started to improve again, Woolworths opened its first chain store in Brisbane and again cut into Gough's merchandising. Eventually Goughs had to close and Ken joined the opposition, and got himself onto Woolworth's executive training programme. Bev was now ten but as I was so much older and spending half my time away from home, I had little close contact with her and am now entirely dependent on her for a record of her doings. I expect at the age of ten and eleven she was not doing much of importance.

As the country gradually emerged from depression, Government employees had progressive restorations of salary towards the levels from which austerity cuts had been made. This meant that Dad was getting more money, and with three children working and paying board, Mum was enjoying an easier time in managing the house. They had not had a holiday for eight years of depression, and about this time they took off for a rest at Darts boarding house on Montville. I remember them coming back from there looking well and happy, with endless talk about the Dart family and the great holiday they'd had.

This was about the time we acquired our first console radio -- a Stromberg Carlson set, in a handsome walnut veneer cabinet, and with a twelve-inch speaker. Radio serials were popular -- the equivalent of today's T.V. "soaps". "Blue Hills" and "One Man's Family" were two I recall and they gave Mum, in particular, a lot of entertainment. I have omitted our earlier adventures with wireless -- as it was called before the slick name "Radio" took over. It was of the "crystal set" variety these being elementary receivers usually made up as boy's hobbies, from instructions in boy's books. The crystal (galena or carborundum) had the property of rectifying alternating currents, and a fine springy wire (cat's whisker) was used to find the best path for the current to pass in one direction through the crystal. A long outdoor aerial was needed and the set had to be grounded to a water pipe, so I operated mine under the house. Special headphones were used, and one probed around the crystal until the loudest reception was reached. There was not much on the air at that stage and certainly not riveting stuff for a young boy except the brief children's session with "Uncle Jim".

As time went by, great improvements were made, the crystal being replaced with a variable condenser, glass valves were invented for amplifying the current, batteries were added to power everything and to drive a loud speaker. Now, there was something to install in a house and sit around and listen to -- it was becoming civilised! Mind you, it was still a very crude collection of pieces, the batteries being lead-acid in glass containers (plastics were in their infancy), a box for the coils and valves, and the speaker was really a big ear-phone with a large flared horn coming from it, (reminiscent of the early gramophones). All these bits were connected by wires and the aerial and earth wires were led into the room from outside.

A neighbouring family with older boys had such a set, and in the early thirties invited us to listen to what was possibly the first of the Royal Christmas messages,

broadcast by George V to the Empire. At first the boys had a lot of trouble getting tuned in; wailing static was a constant threat to clear listening but at last a voice was heard, accompanied by much crackling and occasional siren noises. But I can still see my father's face, eyebrows raised in great astonishment, as he whispered, "To think that the King is speaking to us all that way from London, its unbelievable" -- and of course it *was* astonishing, but nowhere near as astonishing as what he was to hear *and see* before he died; I refer of course, to his television screen showing a man walking on the face of the moon!

Neville Chamberlain was about to throw away the piece of paper which Hitler gave him, guaranteeing "Peace in our time". Hitler was starting his, by now, familiar tactics to establish good reasons for invading a country, this time accusing Poland of terrible oppression of the German minorities in their country. Even Chamberlain had now woken up to what Hitler was about, and with the French issued an ultimatum to Germany to cease aggression against Poland. This was ignored, and on 3rd of September 1939, Britain declared war on Germany. Australia followed immediately. It is strange how certain happenings, sometimes trivial, sometimes of major significance, remain vividly in the mind possibly for the rest of one's life; such an incident was this -- I carry a clear picture of our lounge at the Taringa house, on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, Mum was there, my sisters, and a visitor, I was there because of a prior warning of an important announcement by the Prime Minister. Then it came, and it finished with the momentous words, "and consequently this country is at war with Germany", followed by the National Anthem which was also the Empire's anthem, "God save our Gracious King, etc". Mum was weeping, she had been through a war and knew the cost in lives and misery. She also knew she had one boy ready to go, with another to follow.

As with everything else in life the spectacular soon became the commonplace and we all settled down to the unreality of war. It was unreal for various reasons, and I hesitate to give priorities to those reasons -- high on the list would have to be Australia's remoteness from the place of dispute, then there was a period when nothing was happening between the new combatants; doubtless there was much covert activity, but nothing the papers could publish to get the people stirred up. Hitler had made a non-aggression pact with Russia and they carved up Poland between them in quick time, despite a gallant defence by the ill equipped and old fashioned Polish army -- horse cavalry against armoured tanks! The British and French were still thinking of war as it was fought in 1914/18, a static, defensive war where the two sides slogged it out toe to toe. The French had built the Maginot Line, a huge system of interconnected forts that ran from Switzerland to the Belgian frontier in the north, and both those countries gave guarantees of neutrality. The Germans matched it with the Siegfried Line, an in-depth system of pill-boxes, ditches and tank obstacles. I recall old soldiers telling me "It won't last long, men can't stand that endless pounding of shell fire; those big French guns will blow the Siegfried Line to pieces and the German's will have to sue for peace!" And so the "Phoney War" as it was termed, went on for six months.

The Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) was launched with the formation of the Sixth Division, and recruiting was under way. A lot of C.M.F. people went to A.I.F. and recruiting was done for C.M.F. as well. I had gained two stripes by this time and by year's end was promoted Sergeant, with my own gun and crew. I have lost count of when I was in camp and when at the office, but about this time I had to take holidays which had mounted up. This coincided with Dad deciding he should sell the houses he still owned in Hobart, so it was suggested I go with him. We duly got to Melbourne by train, and whilst looking around that city and waiting for our ship for the crossing to Launceston, we got a big shock to hear that another vessel plying Bass Strait foundered after striking a mine! Our first encounter with the war -- a German raider had sneaked in and mined the Strait, which was immediately closed for about a week while mine sweepers cleared it. I didn't have time to wait for the opening of the Strait, so after a further time in Melbourne I returned via Sydney, and Dad went on to Hobart.

Earlier in the story when describing my father's activities, I mentioned his talent as an actor. His histrionics started a late-life flowering round about this time. How this started I'm not sure, but probably his church concert performances were spotted by a member of a theatre group and he agreed to join them. I know that Rhoda Felgate was running the "Twelfth Night Theatre" then and she was glad to use him. Early in his thespian career he performed in a couple of radio plays for the A.B.C. -- these would be the only ones for which he was paid, and very small pay it would be. He continued acting for three or four years, and I have photos and cuttings of his playing the vicar in "Lilies of the Field", the grave-digger in "Hamlet" and a part in "Androcles and the Lion". There were probably others of which I have no record. Hamlet was the only one I saw and he gave a quite professional performance in that.

Between camps I kept in touch with the army through the regular weekly parades, and once a month we had a C.O.'s. parade. This was a full dress affair where we "fell in" by Troop, then Battery, with the Troop commander reporting to the Battery Captain, who reported to the Battery Commander who reported to the Regimental 2 I/C -- all done to smart marching, stamping of feet and exaggerated turns, ending in standing stiffly "to attention". To add to the drama the Commanding Officer (a Lieutenant-Colonel) usually left us standing this way for a few minutes till he emerged from his office, to take the salute and receive the report, "All present and correct, *Sir*". Although we were now mechanised we still wore the leather leggings of the horse days, and for C.O.'s. parade, these and our boots were highly polished. On one such occasion I remember an amusing incident which I have often seen as a cartoon joke, but which was never more hilarious than when played out in this pompous, ritualistic parade -- a neighbourhood dog wandered onto the parade ground, made straight for the rigid 2 I/C and used his polished leggings as a lamp post! It seemed to take the micky out of everyone, and there was a lot of "tenshun" sounded by subordinate commanders to call the parade to order.

Once recruiting for the A.I.F. began the oft-repeated message from the C.O. concerned our duty to join and go overseas. A recruit had to be eighteen years old but

until he was twenty-one, parental consent was required. I had discussed my position at home and Mum made it very clear that she would not give her consent. She said that if I did not come back, or returned in a smashed up condition, she could not live with herself, if she was part of the mechanism of my going. When I was my own man it would be *my* responsibility, not hers. Obviously she was remembering how her little brother returned from his war. So, I bided my time.

What with friends from the army, friends from the office, and the tennis and Binna Burra group, and siblings and friends of all these friends, it almost seemed as if I knew half of Brisbane's youth. Certainly social life was very busy and when I think back to the Ball seasons of this period, I marvel that I could go to four balls in a week, take a girl home and get myself home at four in the morning, up at seven and at work on time. What a waste of recuperative energy -- how I wish I had some of it now! Heather's pre-Christmas party came up and I wondered if Dele from Ipswich would be there again. She was, and I saw again her resemblance to my favourite film star. We danced a lot, and I enjoyed her effervescent nature and sense of fun. A young fellow who lived at Sherwood had borrowed his mother's car for the occasion, and he took me home. Through family marriages he had some distant connection to the Parker family, and when I disclosed my impressions of Dele, he assured me she was the nicest girl he knew! A good reference, I thought, but how could I court an Ipswich girl without having a motor car? Before long I found the answer to that problem, but at the time I could never have guessed it!

Heather had fallen under the spell of an older boy, a very popular fellow who was enjoying playing the wide field open to him. At first she suffered some pangs of jealousy, such as all young lovers know, but in the years to come, this boy brought her great pain and sorrow, in the course of which she fled to Perth. After some time, she met and married a South African naval officer and became a citizen of that country. I will always be grateful to her for two things -- a rare and beautiful childhood fantasy, and an introduction to her friend -- Dele Parker. Perhaps that was her predestined role in my life.

The long weekend of New Year 1940 was the time of my four day bike ride on the Darling Downs, and during the month of January, the family upped stakes and moved to Torwood. It came about when an older girl-friend of Vivienne said that her ageing parents were moving to a smaller house and wanted a tenant for their big family home. In our family discussion of the proposition the children were all for it, because it had a tennis court which Clive and I undertook to maintain. We visited the place, high on a hill in a steep street which faced the suburb of Torwood, and this was the official address. However the property was large and the back entrance was to another street, a short distance from the Rainworth tram terminus, so that we thought of the house as being in Rainworth.

We moved at the end of the month, during a severe heat-wave which caused a few dramas with the carriers. Leaving Taringa, because of an unformed gutter the loaded pantehnicon came perilously close to capsizing. At Torwood it couldn't climb the steep hill and after several attempts and delays to cool the engine, the driver turned it

around and crawled up backwards. There were six steps from the road to the property line, a sloping path and twelve stairs to the front verandah. The men needed frequent stops to cool off too, and keeping water and cups of tea up to them was a major task. It was a fine house with wonderful views and when we were settled in we had a great time there. Mum employed a live-in maid who helped reduce the housework to manageable proportions. It was a great pity we couldn't have moved there sooner, because time for the family unit was running out. With the maid, we were a household of eight; within eighteen months that number was cut in half and the house was too big. But of that eighteen months there are several stories to be told.

The "Phoney War" came to an end in the northern spring of 1940. Hitler didn't know that it was not considered "cricket" to send your armies into neutral countries, and because of his appalling bad manners, Holland and Belgium were used as a short-cut to Paris without having to slog it out with that tiresome Maginot Line. The new form of mobile war which the Germans called "Blitzkrieg" was unfurled to the world. The British Expeditionary Force which had been building up in France, and comprised the bulk of Britain's army and armaments, was in grave danger of capture. It was fortunate for them that even the Germans were astonished by the speed of the French surrender, and in the resulting chaos most of the British army escaped to England. This was due to the magnificent efforts of the navy, and every private boat owner who answered the call to cross the Channel to Dunkirk, and bring back soldiers. All of their armament was left behind!

Suddenly our hopes for a quick ending to the war were dashed and discarded. Winston Churchill, the new British Prime Minister, told the nation he could promise them nothing but "blood, tears, toil and sweat", and the nation believed him, and braced themselves for a long hard fight.

After this sombre statement of Britain's plight, it seems trivial and frivolous to talk of everyday matters at home. But the ordinary routines of life went on, as they always do, provided there is no conflict with security. The maintenance of morale is dependent on this very fact -- business as usual! So we went on playing tennis, going to parties and dances, though for the sake of the war effort certain economies were introduced.

In June 1940 I was selected to attend an officer training course at the Australian School of Gunnery at Holdsworthy, N.S.W. I have forgotten exactly where this was but Richmond and Penrith were in the vicinity. A few other sergeants also went, Norm Ham and Neal McKenzie are the only two I remember; but the students were from all over, so there was a class of thirty to forty. The staff were permanent army Warrant Officers of the Army Instructional Corps, and in charge was a Full Colonel, (no reflection on his drinking habits, just a rank above Lieutenant-Colonel). The course was for six weeks, the first four being in the classroom -- the science of gunnery, mathematics, map reading and navigation, leadership and command, strategy and tactics, and several other interesting subjects.

The last fortnight was putting it all into practice and the Colonel was going to make us *earn* our commissions! By now it was July, and in that part of New South Wales, by midnight ice formed on everything left outdoors, and then it got progressively colder until the sun was well up next day. We took turns at every job for running an artillery troop in action in the field. Food was brought to us at any time the “enemy” allowed it, and we slept in our clothes whenever we could sleep -- we soon learnt to do this, for we never had an unbroken night. There were no sleeping bags, just a groundsheet and three blankets plus the great-coat. We would crawl under a vehicle and just have time for the ice to form on the blankets, when the balloon would go up; we’d be given map coordinates, hitch up the guns and go careering off in the pitch black night getting lost up farm lanes and having to unhitch and turn around and start over again. This is when I learnt why smokers loved their cigarettes. I had tried smoking and didn’t care for it, though I might have one occasionally if pressed to do so. However, when I left Brisbane, Heather came to the station to see me off and gave me a tin of 25 Craven “A”. In the first part of the course I had to remind myself that I had cigarettes and should smoke one. But after being wakened three times in a frozen night to move a gun around the country, and then have a cup of hot coffee, I needed no reminder to light up, and I started looking to buy more. At the end of the school I was an addict!

Our progress in the Course had been judged by the instructors and before we finished we were given results. I had passed and was advised that I would be recommended for commissioned rank. At that stage, being thoroughly beaten up, I thought they must be getting awfully short of officers!

No sooner had I got back to the Office, than the army advised that while waiting for my commission to be gazetted, I was wanted as an instructor at a new camp on the Show Grounds at Ipswich -- IPSWICH! The fates had spoken again! After a few days of settling in and looking around, we realised that the small town of Ipswich was a very quiet place by nine pm., and if it went on like that we’d have a very boring time. It was then that I announced to the fellows that I knew a girl in this town and she’d have a lot of friends, for sure. A phone call to the Parker household, and the next night, I took a few mates to Chermiside Road, and we had the first of many, many evenings of ping pong, dancing, and just good fun over a cup of supper. Dele’s mother felt a duty to entertain “our” soldier boys, and her father who liked to keep regular hours including early nights, began to think it was going to be a long war. He had a neat trick of coming out to the verandah where we played, carrying an alarm clock and standing there winding the clock and saying, “I suppose you chaps have got to start early in the morning?” We would take some time absorbing the hint, and would usually depart by ten.

Dele and I seemed quite naturally to pair off, and before long we went on our own to a picture show, and after bringing her home, we kissed our first goodnight. I hung on to her, and I recall her remark, “Just the right height!” -- which was a very reassuring thing to hear; like Bassanio choosing the right casket for Portia. It would never have done if I’d had to double over, or worse still if I’d needed a step-ladder!

But it *was* true, we had many similar attributes and ways of thinking, and we matched well, and in the ensuing weeks I realised I had fallen in love for the last time, and when I knew the depths and sentiments of that, I realised it was also for the *first* time. It was early spring and for the rest of that camp Dele's gang and the army boys spent a lot of time together. One of the boys had a largish utility truck which we'd load up with food and go off to College's Crossing, a popular picnic spot at one of the nearby river crossings. There we'd sing, talk, joke and generally enjoy ourselves.

Then our commissions came through and we went off to Victoria Barracks and got our pips, caps, and swagger sticks, and I guess we did a bit of swaggering for a week or so. But the camp came to an end, and I went back to the Office. It was hard to settle down to office work for I knew it was only temporary. December was approaching and that would bring my twenty-first birthday, and I had resolved to switch to the A.I.F. when that happened. Dele knew my plans and we wanted to make the most of the time before I went overseas. She came to Rainworth and met my family who gave her a warm welcome. Mum was inclined to be a bit choosy about the girls I brought home, but reckoned that Dele was someone special -- a sentiment I couldn't dispute.

Meantime, other romances had been developing in the family; Viv and Ken Gough had announced their engagement some months earlier, and had plans to marry in December of that year. Ken had joined the C.M.F. in the newly formed infantry regiment -- Cameron Highlanders, being a re-creation of the old Scottish regiment. The C.M.F. was not mobilised at that stage, and apart from an occasional training camp Ken continued his normal work. Dot and Ken Brown were engaged in Sept/40, and about this time Ken was transferred and promoted to assistant factory manager in Sydney. Glycerine, a vital component of explosives, is a by-product of soap manufacture, thus making it a strategic industry and placing Ken in a reserved occupation. December came and I was twenty-one -- a man at last. I didn't want a party, but can't remember what I did to celebrate the event. No doubt Dele played a big part, but what we did, or the family did for the occasion, I have no idea. Of course my birthday is always badly placed just two days before Christmas, and on this occasion Viv's wedding was two days after Christmas so I guess Mum was a little preoccupied.

The Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Divisions had now been raised, each with an artillery regiment, and I had missed out on each. The Sixth Div. with the 2nd /5th Field Artillery, had gone to England, but not to France. Following Hitler's "blitzkrieg", it was clear that a new weapon specifically to kill tanks had to be made and a new regiment called "Anti-tank" was added to the Artillery Brigade. It was equipped with lightweight guns, firing a two-pound armour-piercing shell. In the A.I.F. the first of these regiments was created out of the 2nd/5th, whilst in England, and it required reinforcements to bring it up to strength. Norm Ham and I enlisted as reinforcement officers to this Anti-tank Regiment. All units of the A.I.F. were prefixed "2nd", because they were re-creations of the first A.I.F. (1914/18). But there was no Anti-tank in that war, so strictly we were "first", but for uniformity we were named 2nd/1st

Anti-tank Regiment and after a short time, for psychological reasons, the name was changed to "Tank-attack" -- so instead of waiting for the tanks to come at us, we were supposed to go out looking for them! In addition, the Germans, having proved the tank, started making them much heavier and better protected with special steel, so that the small two-pounder guns were useless against them. Before long a six-pounder was produced and the regiment was re-equipped.

I entered the A.I.F. camp at Enoggera on 4th January 1941 and met up with some of the contingent I would be taking overseas. We could not do much practical training for there were no guns available to us, not even the superseded two-pounders. All new weaponry was reserved for re-equipping the British army in England. However we were not around long before being sent on pre-embarkation leave for two weeks. For this I hired a small car which enabled me to divide my time between home and Ipswich. Dele earned her living as a colourist in Whiteheads photographic studio in Ipswich. There was no colour photography at that time -- all colour portraits were tinted by artists. This was not the limit of Dele's art, she also did a lot of sketching and water colour painting. I think Whiteheads must have been generous with time off, as we seemed to have a fair amount of time together. We eventually got to discussing our relationship and agreed that in view of the uncertain future, our youth, and our short acquaintance, it would be wise to put our affections on hold and make no commitment for the present. We promised to keep in touch and see how the future developed. And on that note we had a long and lingering farewell.

Norm and I were sent to Sydney as an advance party to arrange allocation of accommodation for the Queensland contingent which would arrive within the week. The Harbour was a great sight with the really big ships docked at Woolloomooloo. We were on the "Aquitania"; the "Queen Mary" was there, The "Mauritania" and the "New Amsterdam". These were really big ships; their respective tonnages (to the best of my memory) were:- 58,000, 85,000, 45,000 and about 35,000. What a convoy we made, when we steamed through the Heads escorted by the cruiser "Hobart" and a couple of destroyers. On the "Aquitania" officers had cabins on the boat deck. Ours was a suite -- sitting room, bathroom, and a bedroom with twin beds which Norm and I took for our own. A further six bunks in two tiers had been built in the sitting room and when these were occupied, the suite lost a lot of its luxury. We also had cabin service, and the steward told us some of the famous names which had travelled in that suite over the years. I remember Lord Derbyshire, The Aga Kahn, and Greta Garbo, and I sometimes wondered whether I was sleeping in Garbo's bed and whether I would be visited by her ghost image telling me she "wanted to be alone"!

Dele was twenty-one on 9th February when I was sailing across the Bight, having rounded Tasmania, giving it a wide berth. I could send my greetings only by telepathy -- I hope she got them. However I could and did silently toast her in the finest champagne -- officers dined in the first-class dining saloon and the ship still had some of her pre-war larder and cellar. Thus was I introduced to smoked salmon and caviar, and the very best French and German champagnes which we could buy for seven and six a bottle!

So far you have had the “good news”; there is another side to our war-time cruise -- as indeed there should be. Just before we sailed, officers were summoned to a meeting in the first-class lounge where an elderly Major introduced himself as the O.C. Troops. Apparently it was usual for a retired Major or Lt. Colonel -- too old for active service, to be installed on troop-ships and to travel back and forth, in command of all troops aboard. Here was a crusty old bloke, who immediately informed us that this was no luxury cruise and he would have tight discipline from officers and men. Any breaches would result in a court-martial of the offender -- and so forth. He then listed a host of duties, which included drills, physical training, boat drills, submarine patrols, tours as Ship’s Duty Officer, and the absolute necessity of carrying your life-jacket at all times -- any person seen anywhere without his life-jacket was to be immediately put on a charge-sheet!

I soon learnt that there were good reasons for the stern attitudes of the Major. The Sydney contingent contained some of the toughest characters I have ever met and their reasons for enlisting were far from patriotic. Most seemed to be escaping from something -- wives, creditors, crims, police and even jail. A number were “draft-dodgers” -- A.W.L. from previous embarkations and delivered aboard by military police. A lot were old enough to be my father and doubtless regarded a young subaltern as “wet behind the ears” and not to be taken too seriously. These were testing times for me and I had to develop a psychology for handling them. Of course my personal responsibility extended to only a small portion of the total complement, for there were many units and reinforcement drafts aboard. The bad eggs were scattered through all the groups.

The duty-officer, had to carry out roving inspections with the duty-sergeant. These extended all over the ship and included the sick bays, mess decks and kitchens, and after dark, the wet canteens. One night, about nine o’clock I entered a canteen; these places were hell-holes, situated on lower decks often below the water-line, in ships built for Atlantic crossings, not the Indian ocean in summer, their lack of ventilation turned them into sweat boxes. Packed full with bodies mostly stripped to the waist and dripping perspiration, the air thick with tobacco smoke, beer fumes and stale sweat, the men shouting to make themselves heard -- you would never visit there unless compelled by duty. On this occasion I was looking around when there were some angry noises across the way. A fellow was punched, and his reaction was to smash his glass beer-mug against the steel bulkhead, and jab the jagged glass into the face of his opponent.

I yelled to the sergeant to come with me to take charge of the scene, send for medical assistance and arrest the attacker; but I could make no progress through the crush of bodies, and I suddenly realised that I was being deliberately walled off. The sergeant who was much my senior in age and life’s experience, was evidently tipped off by one of the mob to get me out of it, and he took hold of my arm and said, “Better we leave it to them, they know how to handle it.” I was shocked and remonstrated that we couldn’t leave it, the fellow might bleed to death or lose an eye. But he insisted, “We’ve *got* to go, *Sir*, this could turn ugly.” With that, he virtually pulled me to the

door. Outside, he explained that some of these fellows don't like official interference in brawls; he said they are taking the victim to the sick bay and they'll say he was drunk and fell with a beer glass in his hand. If they judge the attacker to be too far off side, they have ways to pull him into line. Finally, if the victim wasn't satisfied he'd bide his time and eventually even the score. That's the way they handled trouble. Rough justice, but probably as good a result as a magistrate would give, and certainly a lot cheaper for everybody. I reflected on this, and realised they'd tell a court martial the same story about a drunken fall, and how would we identify the attacker? It could have been anyone, and by *their* story it was *no-one*. Having learnt another lesson on how the other half lived, I decided to be a bit more flexible in dedication to my duties.

On a happier note, I was surprised one day to be given a ship's telegram which took me a little time to sort out, because I knew there was radio silence throughout the convoy. Then I saw that it was sent from the "Queen Mary" by signal lamp and came from Fred Stahl and Maurice Arvier, (A.M.P. mates) who sent greetings and best wishes to me and Norm. Fred was a signals officer and no doubt organised it with one of the ship's officers, but I never found out how he knew we were on the "Aquitania". I felt I should try to reply, so made my way to the bridge, which on the ship, is the holy of holies -- even above the Captain's table -- and explained the position to the officer of the watch. He agreed to my request and I gave him my written reply and saw the signaller sending it on his lamp. We often saw these lamps winking their Morse code from ship to ship, but I'd never thought to send a personal message that way. It was a beautiful blue day with a fine view of the convoy from the bridge and I lingered there awhile taking an interest in how they did things. The helmsman stood, legs apart with his arms straddling the great wheel and constantly adjusting it to stay within certain tolerances. Then I made the terrible mistake -- I asked him a question about his compass. He looked uncomfortable and hesitant, and made a quiet and very brief reply, which I asked him to repeat. Then the stern voice of the officer on watch broke in, "You never speak to the helmsman on duty"! I asked him to forgive an ignorant landlubber, and made a hasty and humbled retreat from the bridge.

The next point of interest was a message to all hands, to be on deck at seven next morning to farewell the "Queen Mary" which was leaving the convoy. We were not told her destination, but it was not hard to guess that she was going to Singapore. It was a beautifully fine morning when we lined the railings to see the "Mary" still on station in the convoy, but at seven o'clock she lifted her bow and as she gathered speed a great bow-wave creamed up her flared sides. What a wonderful sight she was, close to her top speed she made a complete circle of the convoy, probably ten miles around. She gave us a great deep-throated blast on her siren, and as it rumbled across the water, she peeled off to the north and a great cheer went up from us, and could be heard coming from the other two vessels also. It was a sight and sound I have never forgotten -- she was a magnificent ship.

When she left us she took no escort, and no doubt kept up her high speed at which she could outrun an enemy submarine or raider. Later in the war she made many troop crossings of the Atlantic at top speed and without escort. We missed her

in the convoy; she was always an attractive vessel to watch, her bow rising and falling as she ploughed her way through the waters. A ship's officer told me that in a normal sea -- an ordinary ocean swell, the "Mary's" bow rose and fell *seventy feet!* It didn't look that much as we watched her about a mile away, but of course the whole ship was so huge it was simply a matter of proportions. At the human level, the tragic significance of the departure, which we could not know at that time, was that our friends were being set up to become prisoners of war of the Japanese. The next time I was to see Maurice Arvier was after the war, in a Brisbane hospital where he was being treated for beriberi, malnutrition and general debilitation -- and he was one of the lucky ones!

A few mornings after the "Mary" left us we noticed a change in the even beat of the propellers. This slowing down occasionally happened when the convoy did anti-submarine manoeuvres, but this time it continued, and a visit to the deck soon gave the reason, for on our starboard bow was land "Ahoy"! As expected this land was Ceylon, and we soon anchored in Colombo Harbour. Being three large ships, we were well separated, and about half a mile off shore, whilst the escort patrolled around us. At that time neutral Portugal owned Goa, a small colonial enclave a little over halfway up the west coast of India, and it was widely suspected that German U-boats secretly used Goa for night refuelling. Accordingly security in that area had to be very tight. Communication with shore was by harbourmaster's launch and by lighters which brought supplies and mail. I felt rather frustrated to think that my Uncle Bill and Aunt Peg were just across the water and I had no chance of seeing them. After eight or ten hours we cleared the harbour, keeping well away from the Indian coast, and heading for Bombay.

Up to this point we of the Sixth Division reinforcements, believed we were destined for England. But now rumours began to circulate that Sixth Div. had left there and were heading for the Middle East, via the Cape of Good Hope. This proved to be correct, and on arrival in Bombay we were told our destination was Palestine. However the journey was not continued without a further interesting deviation. Italy's North African adventure had left her in possession of Eritrea, which meant she had air command of portion of the Red Sea. Accordingly the Admiralty would not risk our three big ships in that area. The total troop complement of the convoy was divided into three parties, the first going aboard five smaller ships and departing forthwith to Suez, the second party moving to a staging camp in Bombay to await the return of the transports, and the fortunate third which included me, was put aboard a train and sent off to Poona. This town had entered our colloquial language some time ago, through the line, "When I was in Poona in '08", this being a take-off of the very 'pukka' British colonels who bored everyone with tales of their Indian campaigns. So, we were very amused to think that we would be able to join the colonels with our adventures "in Poona in '41" -- and adventures we did have!

In rough terms of distance and elevation, Poona is to Bombay as Toowoomba is to Brisbane. It had a drier, cooler climate than the stifling heat of Bombay, and the British could escape from the humid coast to Poona more readily than to the northern hills. Politically it was a "hot spot" for Gandhi's independence movement and perhaps for

this reason also, the British army had built a very large barracks and regional headquarters there. This area was known as the Cantonment and was quite separate from the native town which had a population of some millions. We were accommodated in an unoccupied part of the barracks and were told immediately that the native city was strictly out of bounds to all troops. Of course such an order is automatically accepted as a challenge by some blokes, and within days a couple of men swiped a car and dashed off to the native quarters. They hit a cow (all cows being sacred), wrecked the car, and were pursued by an angry mob. They were chased into a swampy area by the river and the mob set fire to the dry reeds surrounding the swamp. They were rescued in time by the local police, and handed over to the military police.

I should not be too harsh in condemning these fellows because one night near the end of our stay, after dining and wining too well at the Poona Club, a half dozen officers ventured forth into the town and we also had a sticky time of it! Mention of the Poona Club reminds me that part of the extravagant welcome we were given, included, for officers, honorary membership of this very pukka establishment. The British army wives got together and organised a number of entertainments for us. One such event was the most amazing magic show "that ever I did see" (apologies to Samuel Pepys). The magician was an Indian who operated usually on the side-walk, and with the assistance of only one small boy. This show was performed in a meeting room in the barracks, with a mat or two thrown on the concrete floor and without a backdrop. I can't remember the entire programme which was no doubt padded with fairly standard magical routines, all very competently carried out, but tricks which could be reasonably explained as clever palming and sleight of hand, but there were two outstanding acts -- one was "the mango tree", where a largish flower-pot filled with soil, was placed on the floor; an ordinary looking mango seed was produced and displayed between thumb and forefinger for all to see, then planted in the pot, watered from a watering-can and covered with a coloured silken cloth. A minute of music, Indian style, was played on a kind of flute, the cloth removed and the seed had sprouted a leaf or two. Again covered, more music, cloth removed and the seedling was six inches high and carrying a half dozen leaves. The process was repeated once more and ended with a two-foot tree, apparently growing in the pot. After the show this act was discussed at great length, but no one could make a satisfactory suggestion as to how the trick was done. It really was magic!

The final performance was the famous "Indian Rope Trick". This has been mentioned in travellers' tales for many centuries, and no one has explained its mechanism. Only recently I read a treatise on this subject in a scientific magazine which reported a series of experiments to demonstrate that a rope of certain specifications can be made to remain standing if the base on which it stands is vibrated vertically at considerable speed. This may well be so, but when our magician performed, there was no way he could employ such a mechanism. He simply produced the rope from a bag, threw it on the floor, or mat, played his flute and the rope began to rise. When it reached about six or seven feet, the small boy assistant climbed a few feet up, -- tradition says that at this point the boy climbs to the top of the rope and

then disappears, but my memory seems to be that the boy jumped down from his couple of feet and the rope then collapsed on the floor. A really mystifying spectacle!

As a youthful traveller on my first visit to the mystic East, I was keen to pile up the new experiences and I distinctly remember saying to myself, "Well now! I've seen the Indian Rope Trick!" I have found that making such an observation to oneself is like pressing the "Save" button on the computer, the event "saved" seems to go into the subconscious whilst the comment remains fairly fresh in the mind. This leads me to an interesting speculation about this trick. Many years later at a dinner party, the Indian rope trick arose in the conversation. Present was an ex-army fellow who had called into Bombay and had seen the trick performed; he said, with some hesitation, "I think I've seen the Indian Rope Trick -- I think -- I have." I joined in with, "Yes, I think I have too." Then the comment I made to myself all those years ago, came clearly into my mind, "Now I've seen, etc.", and with that the whole scene came brightly into my mind and I added, "Yes, it was in Poona."

The two of us then discussed why it was that we had become so vague about this performance yet we had clear recollections of other events of those times. I'm sure that without my earlier comment -- "now I've seen the trick", I would have remained doubtful about seeing it, and even dismissed the notion as something I'd read or dreamed. This feeling led on to the suggestion that we may have been the subjects of mass mesmerism? Did the boy simply hold the rope up but never leave the ground? Did we, under the influence of hypnotic suggestion, believe that we saw him climb the rope? The scientific journal I mentioned earlier, reported that many years ago a substantial prize was offered to anyone who could perform the trick before a panel of judges. Such a trial would undoubtedly be photographed, and since a camera can't be hypnotised, it would therefore reveal that hypnosis was used on the audience! Is this the reason why nobody has ever claimed the rich prize? Despite all this conjecture, and however the Trick was done, the show was a fine performance and great entertainment.

The troops also had their entertainments and recreations, including a bit of football and cricket. It was difficult to keep the men working, for we had no equipment for training, and after morning P.T. there was nothing to do but a route-march out into the countryside. Because of the spread of habitation, it was difficult to find new directions for the march, so after six days of the same thing it became a pretty tedious exercise, and the time at Poona began to pall -- for the men, not for us; we seemed to have plenty to keep us going. There was one period of three days when the artillery officers joined an Indian army brigade on war games. We were observers and umpires of the mock war between the "Green" force and the "Yellow" force. We ate and slept in the field with the Brigade but they gave us our own tent and stretchers, and the two sides called a truce at sunset, so it was quite civilised -- in fact *very* civilised when I compared it to our officers' school at Holdsworthy! Having completed that school I felt better equipped to act as umpire, and to do so with some authority, in this situation. However I did have a food problem; at the barracks in Poona, we were served European food, but in the field we all ate from the same kitchen and the menu

was curry and rice three times a day! I have always had an aversion to highly spiced food but this curry was *so* hot it set my mouth and throat on fire and I simply couldn't eat it. Even the rice had been boiled up with the stew and for me was inedible. By the second day I was feeling hungry so I picked out some chunks of meat and had them washed in boiled water, and with some white bread I was saved from starvation! A lot of fuss perhaps, but how these Indian fellows, from childhood, could wolf this stuff down, is beyond my ken. It would be interesting to know the national rate of abdominal cancer.

Another entertainment worth mentioning was an afternoon out with a gentleman whose name I can neither spell nor pronounce, so suffice it to know that he was High Priest of the Parsees of Southern India. These people are followers of a very ancient religion originating in Persia (now Iran). When Islam became the official religion of Persia, they suffered persecution, and emigrated to India, first settling around Bombay and spreading out from there. In time they became bankers and traders, and the sect grew very wealthy. His offer was to take six officers on a sightseeing excursion and to afternoon tea. He duly arrived at the barracks in a Cadillac stretched-limousine with liveried chauffeur and footman. After introductions it was found we were one too many so the footman was dismissed and told to walk home.

We drove around the hills of Poona and saw the points of interest all to lively comments from our host. He especially pointed out the "Towers of Silence" which form a basic tenet of the Parsee religion, for disposal of their dead. Although these structures are referred to in the plural, I think there was only one in Poona, but they all follow the same pattern, being large stone circular buildings about thirty feet high and the same in diameter, and with a high parapet to obscure the bodies which are laid out on the open top of the tower. It is their belief that all living matter is interchangeable and that dead bodies should be devoured by other bodies, in this case by the vultures. It is said that the birds can spot a Parsee funeral approaching the tower from miles away, and they gather on the parapet ready to do their duty! He told us this with mock horror, saying, "Shocking! Isn't it", followed by a hearty chuckle. We finished the excursion in a restaurant where he ordered drinks all round, accompanied by cakes and savouries and more drinks, then he grew very jovial, and as we sat around two separate tables, he suggested that "This table will drink that table under the table" and he laughed his head off. Being good guests we joined his jolly mood but we didn't take him up on the contest.

By now we had been in Poona about a month, and our transports had arrived in Bombay to take us on to Suez. The only item to record at this point is that we picked up an A.I.F. subaltern who had been left in Bombay by a previous troop ship, to be a witness at a court martial being held there. His name was Owen Smith, and he was destined for our regiment as a reinforcement officer and would by this have joined the regiment, but for the interruption in his voyage. When we arrived in Palestine, we found that our regiment had already gone to Greece, and two officers and a number of troops were to join them there almost immediately. I would have been one of the

officers, but Owen had seniority over me so he went and I stayed in the staging camp in Palestine!

The A.I.F.'s Greek adventure was not a glorious feat of arms and is probably not well known to today's generations. Greece was neutral in the war until Italy, now part of the Axis, invaded it. The Greeks fought back with such ferocity, they were about to throw the Italians out. To avoid this embarrassment to his junior partner, Hitler sent his panzers in, and Greece was soon being overwhelmed. Churchill, to make a gesture of help to an old ally, ordered that an army be quickly put together in Egypt and sent to Greece to oppose the Germans. Australia's Sixth Division was part of this force. The gesture was doomed to failure -- the enemy was already in command of a large part of the country, while the British were still trying to bring troops and equipment in under constant air attack, and there was probably no coordinated or cohesive plan to make a defence line, let alone any counterattack. Our regiment was engaged and a number of men were taken prisoner and spent the rest of the war in P.O.W. camps in the Balkans. By this stage it was obvious the cause was lost and the order to withdraw was given. The reinforcement draft which I had missed, reached Piraeus, but was among the first to be brought back to Egypt. As the pace of defeat and withdrawal increased, troops were evacuated to Crete, which the Germans soon flooded with paratroops, and before long the island fell and more P.O.W.s were taken.

The remnant of my regiment eventually reached Palestine into a camp adjacent to the staging camp; so it was almost true to say that the regiment joined me rather than the other way around. We had to meet our colleagues and be officially taken on strength, and move into their tented area. The men were handed over to the Sergeant Major and were allotted to their Troops, whilst the Adjutant introduced the officers to the C.O. and Battery Commanders. The C.O. (rank of Lt. Colonel) was an imposing figure, tall, well built -- perhaps best described as "handsome of face and figure". As I learnt more of his life in "civvy street," it seemed the war might have been his finest hour. Apparently he never found his niche in civil life and drifted from job to job and ended up before the war selling second-hand cars. His good looks and natural charm assured his success with the ladies, and he was also rather fond of his liquor. To sum him up, he reminded me of Rex Harrison's portrayal of the film version of "The Rake's Progress". However, for all practical purposes he was a good enough soldier and Commanding Officer. My Battery Commander was Major Nim Love of the Isles Love auction-room family in Brisbane. Nim was a very pleasant fellow with a lot of interesting knowledge in many diverse fields. We got on pretty well.

It is amazing how word gets about, but well before we joined the unit, we were warned by some with better sources than mine, that our officers' mess was a pretty hard-drinking lot who liked to say, "We work hard and we play hard". I thought it sounded like a line from a John Wayne film, and was probably a bit of bombast. To some extent it was bombast, but there were times when some did stay late at the bar. Our first night in the mess was one such late session -- but not for me! I was still a very abstemious drinker and despite my champagne dinners on the "Aquitania", I knew very little about alcohol. Beer was not to my taste and spirits had no appeal. I had got

the impression that because gin, lime and soda was popular with the ladies it must be mild, and was the safest drink for me. So when four new and nervous subalterns were invited to drink with the Colonel and the Majors, I ordered gin, lime, soda, and another gin, lime, soda, and more and more of the same. Fortunately we broke for dinner and I could make my wine glass last the whole meal, but after that, came the port which is almost a ritual in an officers' mess, then after a short break, back to the bar for the new Lieutenants to shout. I stuck it out till about ten o'clock, and before my knees buckled I excused myself, and concentrating hard on the entrance to the mess tent, walked steadily towards it -- I think. When the night air hit me I suddenly felt violently ill and lost my dinner and all that *mild* "gin, lime and soda". Somehow I found my tent and collapsed on the cot, and passed out. I have never tasted gin since and can't stand the smell of it.

We arrived in Palestine at the end of the northern winter, and as spring emerged the country came alive with Flanders Poppies, and was suddenly transformed from a treeless, arid land into a green and red tapestry. The southern central part of the country, for thousands of years has been harshly treated by its people in a constant plunder for fuel; the trees had no chance of regrowth. The east was real desert, and the only attractive parts were the narrow coastal strip, and the north with its higher mountains and greener waddies (gullies). The agricultural story presented some very unusual spectacles, and incidentally introduces the Zionist story, which even in summary will take up a large paragraph, which I'll defer till later. The spectacles I referred to occurred when an Arab was ploughing his field, using an ancient wooden plough pulled by a donkey and a camel hitched together as draught animals. The adjoining paddock at that time was likely to belong to a Jewish settlement (kibbutz), and would be worked with perhaps a disc plough drawn by a tractor. The contrast in efficiency was enormous and at first sight brought condemnation of the Arabs as a lazy backward people. To some degree this might be true, but most peasant Arabs were desperately poor, and the social and economic structure of the country kept them in that state with no hope of upgrading to modern methods. The kibbutzim on the other hand were well funded by world Jewry and had expert guidance in production and marketing. The war closed a number of their markets and the citrus fruit rotted on the ground so that the settlement invited us to send in a truck and take as much as we wanted off the trees -- I have never seen or tasted such big and beautiful oranges.

Not long after joining the regiment, Norm Ham and I were given a week's leave to visit Jerusalem. It is appropriate to tell of that crowded week right now and to leave the Zionist story to a later section when another event will suitably introduce it. We went as ordinary tourists and despite the war there were plenty of those folk, for this was the week of Easter, undoubtedly the holiest of holy times for Jerusalem! The bus ride alone was a 'never to be forgotten' experience -- the vehicle old and clapped out, the engine and gear-box making roaring and grating noises, and while negotiating the Seven Hills on the approach to the Holy City, the Arab driver kept his accelerator flat on the floor and seemed to hand over the bus to Allah. Up and down and round and round the many curves, I hung on and fervently hoped that Allah wouldn't take the

opportunity to get even with the infidels he had aboard. Allah was generous and we arrived in one piece but very shaken! We secured hotel accommodation by sharing a room, and in the succeeding days by donkey and on foot we saw all the shrines, churches and holy places most sacred to the Christian faith. On Good Friday we watched the candlelight procession of pilgrims along the Via Dolorosa, and the supposed original Stages of the Cross in the narrow alleys of the old City. To all the hundreds, perhaps thousands of pilgrims seeking a soul saving experience, I am sure it was an adventure of the spirit never to be forgotten, indeed the purpose of such journeys is to gain the assurance of whatever their faith promises them, and thereafter they will walk with the certainty of attaining Nirvana, Paradise, or Heaven.

One of our ministers at Woolloowin church had made a visit to Palestine (as part of a church group) and thereafter every sermon contained at least one reference to "When I was in the Holy Land" -- it was his accolade which added authority to his pronouncements. I remembered the minister's quote as I made my tour, and though I felt a reverence for the great antiquity of the land, and I wondered at the huge number of feet that had trodden the paths I now walked, and I speculated on the owners of those feet and what diverse fates had visited their lives over the millennia of its ancient history -- but I felt no up-lift of the soul, no blinding vision like Paul on the road to Damascus. Perhaps I was programmed in too pragmatic a mould to be influenced by the passion play. Methodism was an undemonstrative religion, in that it required no kneeling for prayer, no making of signs across the body, and certainly no histrionics of raising beseeching arms to heaven. It preached against graven images, and against garnering riches in this world, and I remember being amazed by painted life-size statues of the Virgin Mary which wealthy pilgrims had adorned with gold and diamonds, to buy their way through the pearly gates. This plus the superstitions such as Christ's "footprint" on a rock on the top of The Mount of Ascension -- one is solemnly told that the obviously weathered fissure a metre long is the footprint where He sprang into space.

On top of this was the conflict -- not just the conflict between Jews and Arabs, for a truce between these two had been arranged for the duration of the war, and in fact *their* conflict during the thirties had been a sporadic, small affray when compared to the hostilities of the next fifty years. No, the conflicts I refer to were the never-ending ones between the schisms of the Christian church! The three powerful elements were the Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and Roman Catholic -- in that order, which surprised me to see that Rome had the smallest presence and influence. Such were the jealousies between these three that none would allow the others the honour of being gatekeeper and guardian. They resolved this contretemps by employing an infidel, a Muslim, to mount guard over their most sacred sites -- such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre!

Looking back, I have to say that my acquaintance with the Holy City, did nothing to strengthen my hold on religion or religion's hold on me; rather did it sponsor a rationale -- that one received from that kind of experience what one *wanted* to gain from it, and that *want* had to be deep and strong, and needed to be the driving force of the pilgrimage. I was just a tourist, and what I saw were the relics of a rich and

fascinating chapter in the intriguing history of mankind -- just as I later witnessed at other places and times, relics of other chapters of that marvellous story!

It must be time for an updating of items on the home front -- matters which proceeded on their allotted paths, unaffected by my absence! Dorothy married Ken Brown, on 9th of April 1941 -- an Easter wedding while I was visiting Jerusalem. After the nuptials Dorothy moved to Sydney where she and Ken made their home. Someone in the family sent me a copy of *Walk About* -- a high society magazine of the day -- and on the "bridal page" was a reproduction of a formal studio photograph of Dot as a bride. Some days later on entering the officers' latrine I was astonished to find there another copy of this magazine from which I promptly removed the page with my sister's photo, thus saving it from an ignominious fate!

Viv and husband Ken rented a flat in Toowong and Ken continued to divide his time between work and soldiering. Clive was still at Brisbane Grammar School, now in sixth form, with senior exam at the year's end. Bev was a twelve-year-old school girl.

As related earlier, the family household at Torwood was now reduced by half. In December 1940 with a live-in maid, there were eight of us; in quick succession Viv married, I departed, Dot moved south and the maid left and was not replaced. The house and grounds were now much bigger than required and sometime in 1941 the family gave up the lease and moved back to the Woolloowin / Clayfield area not far from the old house which I called "home" during my early boyhood.

On the war front the Regiment was officially resting and regrouping after the mauling of Greece. While we awaited the arrival of further reinforcements and new equipment, training went on and this included theoretical work in tactics and discipline in convoy movements -- anything that didn't require the use of our absent guns! The mention of "convoy" brings to mind the Zionism incident, the telling of which I previously deferred. The mechanism which triggered this experience, started by the G.O.C.(Major-General Herring) becoming alarmed at the increasing rate of accidents when units were travelling in convoy, particularly in black-out conditions after dark. To tighten driver discipline he ordered that all convoys should be patrolled by an officer on a motor bike. Those officers not licensed for bikes had to learn and be licensed forthwith! I was one such officer; although widely experienced with a pushbike, I had never been on a motor bike.

Our Regiment had five or six dispatch riders, each equipped with a big, heavy motor bike. My Battery had a Norton, and I went with the rider outside the camp to an area with a number of rough waddies with crude tracks going down and through them. I was instructed about starting, stopping and gear change, then set aboard to put it into practice. After three or four sessions of this I was beginning to gain confidence, when the order came for the Regiment to move camp. I was detailed to patrol the convoy! It was my first ride on a road and not a great distance, but long enough to get into trouble. We came to a place where a military police fellow was indicating we should turn off the road into fields where we would find the new camp site.

I stopped and waited for a few vehicles to make this turn, then finding a small gap in both lines of traffic, I gunned the bike to cross the road and make a quick turn off it. I wasn't accustomed to the enormous acceleration of a big and powerful bike, which promptly skidded in loose gravel and charged off in another direction completely out of control. This part of Palestine is very flat and to drain off the water of the wet season, deep trenches line the roads -- in places two metres deep and wide; they are deep enough for wandering Arabs to use them for latrines whilst remaining out of sight. My bike became airborne and landed upside down with me underneath it. For some minutes I just lay there trying to work out what had happened, then I smelt petrol and made frantic efforts to move but found I couldn't! From the hips down I was numb and I remember thinking "well, if it burns I'll burn with it!" Fortunately men from the convoy were soon on hand, lifted the bike off me and lifted me up, and by the time I got to the medical post the feeling was coming back into my legs. The doctor pronounced no bones broken but ordered a thorough clean-up particularly of the bad gash to my knee, but also because to add insult to injury I had landed in a pile of "excreta Arabia".

I tell this story to explain why I was on light duties for the next month; and because I was on light duties I was given the unusual task of leading thirty soldiers on a week's tour of six Jewish Kibbutzim. First a brief essay on the Jewish position in Palestine at this time. The Jewish people were for centuries the most scattered nation on Earth, but had long nurtured a fervent hope that one day they would find a national home -- a new Israel. Zionism was the worldwide movement founded to promote this aim and its fulfilment in Palestine. After the 1914/18 war, Britain was given a League of Nations mandate over Palestine and having, by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, promised support to the Jewish cause, now had to do something about it.

The difficulty was that during the war Britain gained Arab participation against the Turks in the Middle East, and had encouraged the notion that she would support the fusion of Arab tribes into an Arab nation in which Palestine would naturally be a central feature! She now had the problem of bringing Jewish immigrants on to Arab land. The British art of compromise developed a plan of staged immigration for Jewish settlers on an annual quota system. However this was too slow for the Jews and made the small number of settlers too vulnerable to the hostile Arabs. The Jewish quotas were constantly exceeded by smuggled illegal migrants, and Britain started deporting those she could find, to concentration camps on Cyprus. This led to two things -- terrorist bombings in London by the militant side of Zionism (the Stern Gang), and the running ashore of overloaded, rusty old hulks at various points along the coast, the immigrants then demanding entry as ship-wreck survivors. Thus was the quota system hopelessly overdrawn.

The Jewish settlers formed communities (kibbutzim) which they fenced and guarded with armed patrols, and the Arabs responded with increased aggression -- Britain had got herself a real problem! She created a special police force, the *Palestine Police* recruited largely from England's police forces, and housed in small forts dotted all over the country. These fellows did a good enough job of trying to keep the peace,

but must have been very relieved when a wartime truce was arranged. That was how matters stood when I was there.

The Zionist organisation was very active in explaining its mission and endeavouring to gain sympathetic understanding of its cause. Their P.R. officer had the idea that the numerous Australians seemingly idle in Palestine at this time could be a propaganda cadre worth cultivating. Accordingly he called at Brigade Headquarters and offered to guide and accommodate parties of soldiers on tours of settlements if the army would provide transport. The Brigadier raised no objection and our regiment was offered a tour. We accepted and I was given command of it.

The P.R. officer was Mr. Richter -- a cultured man of wide knowledge and experience and a good conversationalist. He interpreted for these people as most came from Europe and were peasant farmers with no English. I had to make several speeches thanking our various hosts for accommodation and entertainment and I recall the novelty of being translated -- the pauses being very convenient for thinking up what to say next. At this time the settlements had been progressively established over twenty years so they were at different stages of development. Their aim of course, was to gain self-sufficiency as soon as possible, and they seemed very good at this. Establishment costs and initial equipment were provided by the organisation and the job was to increase fertility of the soil and to raise cereals, vegetables, fruit and dairy produce. We were shown around the oldest kibbutz and their methods were modern and they were in touch with the latest scientific developments in agriculture and animal husbandry. Before the war they had established export markets for a lot of their fruit and dairy produce. All very impressive; but as I mentioned earlier, most of their important markets were closed off by the war.

These immigrant people were the fortunate ones who had got out of Europe before the war, thus saving themselves from the terrible fate of slave labour and worse. Some would have come for religious or patriotic reasons -- to be founders of the new Israel. Others would be recruited by the Zionist organisation; still others were far-sighted and knew that life for Jews would be untenable if Hitler went to war. Also there had been Jews living in the Middle East from Casablanca to Aleppo for many, many years, and in some cases young people from Tel Aviv and other cities had joined the movement. Because they were better educated and fluent in English, they did most of the clerical and administrative work in the communities. We could converse with some of these of an evening at the "getting to know you" sessions. I remember one interesting conversation with a young woman about my own age, on the subject of the Jewish assessment of Jesus. No doubt she had been taught long ago the standard answer for this question, but to me at that time, it was fascinating (also rather shocking to my Methodist precepts) to hear her views that Jesus was a well-meaning man who comforted the poor and oppressed people of his time and gave them hope for a better life in the next world. She also said that the Romans feared he would lead a peasant revolt, and *they* are the ones who crucified him, not the Jews. We had been taught the opposite.

Apart from the more serious side of our visit -- that of seeing at first hand the monumental work of founding a new nation -- there were also lighter sides such as the evening entertainments when the young people of some settlements performed their national dances in full costume. These dances, they had brought with them from the villages of Poland, Bavaria, Czechoslovakia and other parts. These were lovely youngsters in early teens -- many of the girls, lithe and sprightly, with long blond hair, and with handsome partners -- who put on some delightful shows. Mind you, this early flowering did not last long; the only smart and attractive girls in their twenties, were city bred. The unremitting work load of the peasant farmer of both sexes, was not conducive to beauty treatments and fashionable dressing, and they soon became full blown and frowzy. The daytime dress of these same dancers would be khaki shorts, shirt, and heavy boots, and the girls would work like the men, driving tractors, handling cattle and picking crops. They also took their turn at carrying the rifle on security patrol day and night. But these people were building something they believed in and they worked with a will.

Some kibbutzim practised "trial marriage". I imagine it was officially encouraged to hasten the build up of native born population, but I never heard this admitted by anyone. In those days it was considered rather scandalous because it smacked of "free love" -- a philosophy espoused by some free thinkers over many years, but strongly condemned by the bulk of society. Our Mr. Richter explained it to us as giving young people the chance to sort out their feelings before committing to marriage. He said that about seventy per cent moved on to a permanent union, and for those who separated, the community offered to adopt and raise any children born in the trial period. Looking back to this aspect from today's changed attitudes, it all seems like a storm in a tea cup, but of course it was twenty or thirty years before the invention of the simple, reliable contraceptive, which has greatly influenced society's thinking.

This one week, as guests of a dedicated people on the threshold of an inspiring task, was an experience I remember well to this day, and I rate it among the privileged happenings I've enjoyed. As for Mr. Richter, he could count me as a supporter of his cause and I'm sure that most of my thirty charges were impressed by what they saw. Alas, how time changed the perspective! What *we* saw was the heroic efforts of a dedicated, mostly refugee people, to establish a series of small settlements on land acquired from Arab owners. But with a post-war recognition from United Nations of the Jewish people's right to establish the State of Israel in Palestine, the whole scene changed. The Arab nations backed the Palestinians who naturally were unwilling to give up their land, and loudly threatened to drive the Jews into the sea. The Israelis with technical help from the Americans, responded with lightning speed and it soon became apparent that among them were fanatics whose aim was to take for their State all the lands that God had promised Moses -- the *Promised Land* of Canaan. The rest is history, and my readers may well know more of it than I do.

So back to work at the regiment!

Following the surrender of France, the Germans occupied the north-east part including Paris. The rest of the country was put under a puppet government of

collaborating Frenchmen, with a capital at the town of Vichy, and was known as *Vichy France*. This apparently generous treatment by Hitler was of course a ploy to try to keep the country docile and to entice the French armies and possessions abroad to align with Vichy France rather than remain as allies of Britain. This possibility was a real inconvenience — if not an actual threat — to Hitler’s long-term plans, for almost immediately a movement called *Free French* began among expatriate French, to continue the war against Germany under the leadership of General Charles de Gaulle. One of the earliest incidents applied particularly to the French navy which Hitler wanted very much. This navy at the time of French capitulation, was at the naval base in Dakar, capital of

Clive Price, at the time of his RAAF enlistment, 1943

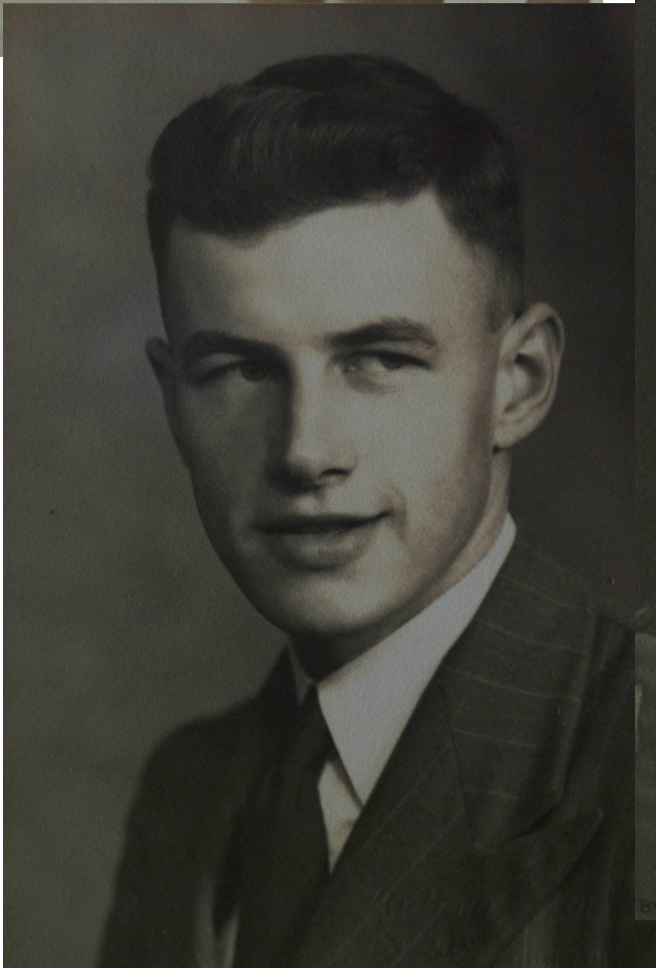


Senegal, the French west African colony. The French administration there announced intention to side with Vichy, and the British let it be known that any attempt by the navy to return to France would be resisted by the Royal Navy! As I remember it the British did engage them in Dakar,



Dele Parker & Heather Chapman at Binna Burra, about 1938

neutralised the navy and took some ships as prizes.



Harmon David Price as a young man



Harmon & Dele, 1942: wedding & after



*Left: the young officer, 1939.
Above: christening of John Harmon, 1944*

The foregoing sets the scene for Syria and Lebanon. Following the 1914/18 War when the League of Nations granted Britain a mandate over Palestine, France received a similar mandate over Syria and Lebanon. After the defeat of France, the administration in Syria, decided to recognise the Vichy Government and make peace with Germany and Italy. This would give the Germans virtual free access to Syria and Lebanon whilst to their north was Turkey, which though neutral, was believed to favour Germany. Now that she occupied Greece, Germany had only to put pressure on Turkey to achieve a land bridge to the Suez Canal – that vital link to the eastern Empire! Such a situation was intolerable to British security in the Middle East and accordingly an army of British, Commonwealth and Free French forces invaded Syria in July 1941.

The A.I.F. sent the Seventh Division, but after some weeks our regiment (Sixth Division) was also sent up to deal with a Syrian bandit force on the fringe of the eastern desert. These fellows having acquired some armoured-cars from the French were making hit and run raids on neighbouring towns. Our job was to track them down and shoot-up their vehicles. We found no sign of them, and soon after our arrival Damascus was occupied and the French surrendered -- the action in Syria was over.

As I close the foregoing paragraph, I'm reminded of the questions put to me by my school-age sons usually following Anzac Day talks at school -- "How many Germans did you kill? – Did you shoot anyone?" and so forth. When they were very young, I responded that "once German intelligence knew *I* was at the front, they withdrew their army and attacked somewhere else". The first time I said this I think they believed me, but after that it must have come to them that their old man was a wash-out – fancy going to war and not shooting anybody! Thereafter when their mates told how their fathers machine-gunned whole battalions of Huns or captured tanks with hand-grenades, they would have to change the subject, or quietly slink away!

Other questions I've been asked were, "What was it like? -- Were you scared?" The latter question is a hard one to answer – if you say "No", then you're boasting, or a bit of a liar, and if "Yes", you're a squib! A great deal has been written about war and courage, and I like particularly the following, "War is long periods of boredom occasionally relieved by short periods of intense fright". This is crisp and cynical and very often true. But "War is Hell" is also true, and depending how the fates decree, the individual can suffer "all Hell" or enjoy a "bit of a breeze". In 1914/18, trench warfare in the winter mud of Flanders fields under constant shelling for weeks – this is Hell (no wonder the "poppies grow" in soil sown with blood and bone), or in a P.O.W. camp for years, underfed, brutalised and forced to slave in a tropical jungle – unremitting Hell, or bomber crews who for thirty nights flew their "trips" delivering cargoes of destruction onto enemy industry. This was brother Clive's lot – "often shot-up, but luckily not down" he says and talks of limping home, and the long wait for mates who don't get back, and wondering if *your* luck will hold tomorrow night, and the one after, and the one after that. This is courage, knowing doubt and fear, but also knowing it has to be faced – it goes with the job.

BOOK NUMBER 2

A well trained Unit teaches each member his job, and his responsibility to the other members, so that the Unit is shown as an interdependent body. This welding is reinforced by extra curricula activities both on and off duty, such that the feeling of belonging to a proud Unit which can be relied upon to perform, becomes paramount in a member's mind, and often fathers the "courage" that he needs to overcome the panic sparked by the demands of "self preservation". I have been in a few situations of potential danger, and have found the quiet urging of discretion to "get the hell out of here", quite impossible to follow while mates were in danger and counting on support. There is also an extra element for a young subaltern needing to prove himself. All of this may well portray an anatomy of courage -- but it doesn't stop you from being awfully scared!

Whilst dealing with these sober reflections it might be appropriate to record my acquaintances with death. In my introduction I mention a school friend and near neighbour, Brian, who died of nephritis about a month after the disease was discovered. It was a bewildering experience for me at age ten; it seemed that one moment we were playing games after school, then Brian was sick and couldn't come out to play, then the next minute (so it seemed) Brian was dead! He was buried in the ground, like we sometimes did with a lizard or a sparrow we found dead! I wondered how he felt about it – terribly dark and musty-smelling down there -- and I'd shiver. For a time I'd see him about the place, keep bumping into him, but time passed and I'd forget to look for him, and gradually Brian faded as a presence, became just a memory, a memory of a boy who used to play with us.

For the next death, I was a couple of years older, and the event was more natural. Several houses down the street in a big old house lived an old man and his wife. One day we were told old Mr. Gilmore had died. In those days undertakers didn't have cold rooms for keeping bodies, so the deceased were "laid out" at home on a table in the front room – the parlour, or lounge, and relatives and invited friends called to view the departed and to pay their respects. I felt no mystery about it this time, just a fascination for the fact there was a corpse in the house, and I couldn't resist dawdling passed the house and calling in on a nearby friend and remarking what he already knew, that there was a dead body over there!

What induced me to write of my experiences with death was a bizarre occurrence in Syria before the armistice there. We came upon a place where a skirmish had occurred a few days before. In war, bodies are buried twice, first in shallow graves on the battlefield, with all particulars recorded, then subsequently they are recovered and moved to an official war cemetery. On this occasion there had been heavy rain after the temporary interment causing the loose soil to subside and leaving hands, arms, booted feet and half legs sticking up at odd angles out of the ground -- a virtual caricature of death – a macabre burlesque of a graveyard!

Also in Syria was a very sad case which shook me up quite a bit! I was bringing up the rear of the Regimental convoy, which had just passed through a small village lined

with the usual square shaped mud-brick houses. As my vehicle entered the village I noticed a gathering of people on the roadside. The centre point was a woman seated and holding in her lap a child. With her Arab dress, the immediate impression was the Pieta --- especially the child, as totally relaxed as Michelangelo's Christ. Alas the woman was not Mary; as we drew close one could hear the anguished wailing of *this* mother for her six-year-old son. I stopped the vehicle, and fortunately for me a French army car was there with the French officer already in possession of the facts.

With a smattering of each other's language, I learned that as our big gun-carriers went through, the boy had run in front of one and had been struck on the head by the heavy steel bumper bar. The Syrian men were talking to the French officer and seemed to blame no one. But not so the poor distraught mother. As I came close to examine the boy's injuries, she changed her wailing into screams, put the child aside and flew at me with hands extended like a tiger's claws. *I* was the embodiment of the evil that had killed her child, and but for the quick restraint by the onlookers and my driver, I'm sure she would have marked me for life. The child, although undoubtedly dead, was almost unmarked; there was no blood and a small sharp depression on his forehead was all I could see. This would have been caused by one of the protruding bolt-heads on the bumper. Eventually I made my report to the army inquest and I believe the death was found to be accidental, the driver of the gun-carrier being free of blame. In due course some financial compensation would be paid to the father.

After the Syrian situation settled down, we returned to Palestine, and a ration of leave was offered to the Regiment. The leave was to Cairo and given to one officer and a couple of other ranks. The officer who accepted it was Henry; he had come over as a reinforcement officer on our ship and we knew each other quite well, but without being close mates. The transport provided by Brigade H.Q. was a utility truck, army pattern, hard of springing and of seating. It was a long way from Cairo to our camp in Palestine and after his tour of Cairo and the Pyramids, etc., Henry was no doubt feeling tired. Half way home, he asked the fellows lying on the mattress in the back of the truck, if anyone would like to sit up front for a while, so that Henry might have a stretch on the mattress. This was duly done and Henry was dozing off with his head in the rear corner of the tray when another army truck misjudged his overtaking, clipped the rear corner of Henry's vehicle and cracked Henry's skull, all in one split second.

When I heard the news, I was deeply shocked. It was just so far from any expectation, as to be almost unbelievable. I spent the rest of the day in a stunned state telling everyone I met how I couldn't believe it, until one of the older subalterns told me very roughly to "shut up about it – it's over, it's done with, forget it"! Thus began for me the desensitising process which soldiers must have in war. When at any time, death may be a constant occurrence, mourning cannot interfere with fighting – that is for afterwards, ever afterwards – hence Anzac Day.

However I was not allowed to "forget Henry" so quickly. Of the Regiment's officers, I had the longest acquaintance with him and was given the job of burying

him. Henry in his coffin, travelled in the back of my vehicle, all the way to Tripoli in the north of Syria, where he would be buried in the newly commissioned war cemetery. I also took in another vehicle, a firing-party of a half dozen soldiers. We arrived late in the evening and I met the local padre who would perform the service in the morning. I spent that night alone in a tent with Henry sleeping in the next tent, his coffin resting on two trestles. It had been a tiring day and I think I slept as soundly as he did. Next morning the standard service was read, the soldiers fired their salute and the coffin was lowered. We set off immediately for Palestine and reached camp by nightfall. On with the War!

So far as we were concerned the war at this time was in the north African deserts where Rommel was taking over from the defeated Italians and sweeping all before him. The allied defenders withdrew to Tobruk which they fortified and used as a base to sally forth and harass his lines of communication. This delayed his advance on Egypt but his design was clearly part of the plan to form a pincer movement on the Suez Canal. The northern arm of the pincer I outlined when describing our involvement in Syria. Our counter plan was to set up a defence structure in Syria and virtually to duplicate Tobruk in a suitable location between the coast and the Lebanon Ranges.

This took us back into Syria/Lebanon where we set up camp in the Lebanon valley outside Baalbek, an attractive town centred in an orchard area, producing stone-fruit. The town goes back to Roman times and has several well preserved ruins including a very large temple. Here we spent several months, first surveying the topography, then siting gun emplacements with interlocking fields of fire. It was interesting work but never used because the war did not come that way.

Two other things *did* happen – one was that someone discovered the French had an army hospital in the town and the military staff had gone over to the Free French. The staff included at least a dozen nurses – real, live, females and French! Our fellows had been long starved of girls' company, and quickly proposed that we put on a cocktail party and invite the nurses. As secretary of the Officers' mess it became my job to make the approach and arrange the catering. I presented at the nurses quarters of the hospital, introduced myself, and in my well rehearsed fourth-form French issued the invitation. There was a squeal of delight and an enthusiastic response, "Ha! Parlez vous francais? Jabber, jabber, jabber, " – an unintelligible stream of language which could have been Greek or Arabic, and I had to ask if she had any English, which fortunately she had. She also had a good sense of humour, and took favourably to the idea of a party. She checked with others and gave me a number to work to. The party went off well and everyone seemed to have a good time.

The other event was the northern hemisphere winter! The Lebanon Range is quite high, over seven thousand feet and on top has a permanent snow-line year round. But the real winter is brought with the wind that funnels down from Russia. The Lebanon valley lying between two mountain ranges pointing north/south, is a natural wind tunnel which brought us snow and ice, and a white Christmas but also took the roof off the officers' mess on X'mas eve! It was the coldest winter for forty years and at

first, for us, the novelty made it all very attractive. Then a brief thaw and the vehicles churned up mud and that froze again, and this went on a half-dozen times, and the place became an ugly mess. It was also cold, very cold and with no relief. Our buildings were issued for use in north Africa. They were unlined, draughty, and unheated. The toilets and showers had two feet of space at the top and bottom of the walls and no one wanted to wash. The medical officer became worried about hygiene, and a shower parade was ordered. It was the fastest shower those fellows ever had, a rub with wet soap and a dash through the shower. Later, the artificer section (mechanics for the vehicles and guns) scrounged some iron pipe and made up a radiator with a “producer gas” burner under it (sump oil and water dripping on a hot-plate). This took the freeze off the water and eased the problem. Before spring arrived we were taken out of Syria and brought back to Palestine.

Japan was now in the war! Our time and destination were now in the hands of the politicians. Whatever the Generals thought and planned, was now subservient to the thinking of the War Cabinet. With an A.I.F. Division captured and Japan rampaging through the East Indies, the people *and* Cabinet wanted the other three Divisions back home, fast! But when you have allies, they too must be considered. Britain had the Ninth Div. allocated to a new offensive in North Africa, and wanted this to stand – especially as our new ally, the U.S.A. was moving troops into Australia, setting up a base for operations against the Japanese. A compromise was reached to leave the Ninth in the Middle East and bring the Sixth and Seventh home – but not directly home. Strategically it is better to stop the enemy before he reaches your shores, so we were to go to Sumatra and oppose the Japanese advance there. Our equipment was loaded on a freighter and set off ahead of us; I never heard where it ended up – possibly at the bottom of the sea! Before a troop ship was available for us, Sumatra was captured by the enemy, and our destination was changed to Java.

Finally we embarked on the *Laconia*, an old Cunard liner built for the Atlantic and consequently uncomfortably hot under black-out conditions in the Red Sea! That took us to Bombay where we moved to a staging camp for some days and then our Regiment was put on the *Katoomba*, an old coal-burner which plied the Australian east coast in the pre-war years. Sailing down the west coast of India had special hazards in the shape of submarine attack. Goa was an old colonial enclave of Portugal, and though neutral in the war, it was widely believed Goa afforded Germany naval-base facilities for its cruising U-boats. Accordingly we stood well off the coast and zigzagged through the nights whilst officers were rostered on submarine watch throughout.

Before leaving Bombay advice reached us that Japanese planes had bombed Trincomalee on the east coast of Ceylon. When we were two days out of Colombo we were startled to hear the Japs. had done the same thing to Colombo. When we got there, though the damage was not great, coaling facilities were smashed up and the coolies who were an essential feature of the bunkering, had disappeared. *Katoomba* needed coal to continue the voyage, so anchored in the harbour, and we hoped the bombers wouldn't return while we were aboard. Meanwhile, Intelligence information

indicated the Japs. would launch an invasion of Ceylon at any moment. At the request of the G.O.C. Ceylon, allied governments had again been talking, and it was decided to use the Regiment to man coastal defences with eighteen-pounder guns which the G.O.C. guaranteed to supply.

This was a most unexpected development for us and I must say a very pleasant one also, for the island is a truly beautiful place of lush tropical growth, very scenic terrain and pleasant people -- small wonder that legend has it as the site of the original *Garden of Eden*. Furthermore the invasion didn't come, so the work wasn't at all arduous. As already told, my Uncle Bill (Dad's brother) and his wife Peggy, were still living there and I soon made contact. They were most welcoming and invited me to all sorts of entertainments, and of course Peggy extended the welcome to, "Any of your friends, Harmon." I took some along to various functions including the Colonel to a dinner party which Peggy hosted. I remember Bill and Peg being amused by the Colonel's addressing Billy as "Sir", throughout the evening. Of course I had told him of my Uncle's exalted rank in the Administration. The entertainments were centred on the idea of "meeting the county" -- so to speak, and I recall Peg wanting to introduce us to local girls, and apologising that so many were away because of the war. The social set-up in the colonies was present here as one would expect -- high government officials were at the top of the heap, just beneath the Governor, then the planters (owners) then mercantile managers. Intermixing was permitted but only after a thorough vetting.

Our job was to site the old eighteen-pounder guns, at possible landing places on the east coast from north of Colombo to Galle in the south. Incidentally Galle would be one of the best preserved sixteenth-century colonial quays you could find, cobblestone wharves complete with specially shaped stone bollards, and authentic cannon installed on a rise behind, each with its pyramid of cannon-balls beside it. I hope it is still preserved, it was a lovely picture. One day I was on a trip to Galle inspecting our gun sites en route, when an amusing incident arose. It revolved around an official Royal visit to show the flag in Ceylon. The Duke of Gloucester was the personage, and I knew from the papers that he also was visiting something or other on the south coast that day. I was reminded of this by the gatherings on the roadside of flag waving school children in every little village we went through. They saw my military vehicle approaching, and presumably word was passed along "here he comes", and the flags went into a frenzy of waving.

It seemed to me a pity to be disappointing these kids who might have been standing out there for an hour or so. My vehicle had a canvas hood over the front cabin so I rolled this back and stood up with one hand on the top of the windscreen and lifted my cap in a regal gesture of goodwill. Great cheers went up and I felt I'd really done worthy service for the King. This went on for half-a-dozen villages and I was really enjoying hamming it up with variations of the royal wave when in the middle of a village the sudden wail of a siren right behind us announced the arrival of two motor-cycle military police who impatiently waved us to a halt at the side of the road, before they tore on to clear the way for the real Duke! It was a bit

humiliating, but not to be outdone I stood smartly to attention and gave a disciplined salute as H.R.H. flew past in his Rolls limousine. I reckon the villagers who saw two Dukes that day said they much preferred the first one.

After three months waiting to be invaded, the General must have been persuaded that there would be no enemy landing for the present and he had no right to hold us any longer. So we said farewell to Ceylon which was now well into its monsoon season, and set sail due south through a grey, rough Indian Ocean, under a leaden sky, all the way to the antarctic circle. From about that latitude the ship did a big loop first east, then north into the harbour at Fremantle.

We had always had good service with mail, and Dele and I had been exchanging letters regularly. The one delivered to me at Perth advised that Dele was awaiting a call-up into the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, and this could happen any day. It seemed to me that the irony of arriving home to find her tied up as a new recruit in a camp perhaps miles away, was something I couldn't take too willingly! I promptly sent a telegram asking if she could postpone her call-up. When I told my friend Vic Perkins, what I had done, he exploded, "Boy, you'll be pooled"! I think I'd made up my mind that I wanted to be *pooled*, anyway.

After a short stay in Fremantle the ship sailed to Melbourne where we disembarked. A train-ride to a staging camp at Seymour gave us a miserable week of Victorian winter while arrangements were finalised for a fortnight's leave. Finally a long train-ride to Brisbane and home again — but at a different address from the one I'd left. Mum was a bit worried about me, I was rather thin and quite a bit run-down. I'd had several bouts of dysentery and attacks of what we called "Sand-fly fever". Nobody seemed to know what sand-fly fever really was though I recall one medical officer thinking it was related to malaria. I think dengue would be a closer guess, but whatever it was it certainly was uncomfortable, with high fever, and general debility, enduring a week at least. The only medicine they gave for it was aspirin, and to bed if a severe case.

I had a bad attack at sea between Bombay and Colombo, when the officers had their submarine watch to keep. I was on watch from midnight to four am., on the day the fever started, and my temperature was high enough to cause repeated hallucinations wherein I saw extraordinary images of Spanish galleons riding the waves just a short distance from us and looking most realistic. Though I knew they couldn't be there, I'll admit that if another watch-keeper had been within talking distance, I'd have asked if he could see anything unusual. That morning the M.O. put me into the ship's hospital where I stayed for the next few days. Following Mother's remarks I remembered that Aunt Peg had said the same thing when we met up in Ceylon — so I must have lost a noticeable amount of substance.

Whatever my state of health, I was most anxious to meet up with Dele and to find out if she was still of the same mind about *us*. We boys had heard all sorts of stories about the Yanks taking our girls from us, so that there was just that little bit of doubt which had to be dispelled — and of course it was! We were together most of the next

week and decided to announce our engagement. Both families seemed very happy about it, and Mum and Dad took us to Binna Burra for the weekend. In the next week I suppose my health was benefiting from home cooking, but we were on the go all the time and keeping late nights, so that I was certainly not fully repaired. Towards the end of the second week I developed abdominal pain which the doctor diagnosed “Query appendicitis”!

They took me to the military hospital which was overcrowded, and after a preliminary examination sent me home with instructions to call an ambulance if things got worse, otherwise they would call me when a bed was available. Dele had postponed her call-up but was still working at the Coleman studio in Brisbane. I now had a couple of weeks resting at home and eventually a week or two of thorough investigation in Hospital. The Regiment had now gone to New Guinea and there was some reluctance to send me there whilst the appendix was unresolved. While they dithered, I was fed on egg-nogs and similar foods designed to repair the ravages of dysentery and fever. Eventually I was discharged to report to Victoria Barracks for movement orders to New Guinea.

Instead of travel vouchers to New Guinea I was given a train ticket to Charleville! In answer to my queries I was told I would stay at the re-allocation camp there until a unit (any unit, infantry, machine guns, even a pioneer regiment) required a replacement for a lieutenant. I replied that I was sure my unit hadn't replaced me, why couldn't I go there direct. But no, I had to be reallocated, then I could apply for a transfer to my old unit! This was something I hadn't thought of, and I didn't want to start afresh in a regiment I knew nothing about.

Some months back I was transferred from my Battery to the Regiment's H.Q. to a job titled “Intelligence Officer”. With this in mind, I asked the Staff Officer at Victoria Barracks if I could look for a posting myself, and mentioned that I was the Intelligence Officer for my Regiment, and I would like to work in that field if possible.

At this time the U.S. General Macarthur was setting up his Supreme Headquarters in the A.M.P. building, and his operational Land H.Q. at St. Lucia University. Land Headquarters had a large intelligence division with many specialist groups one of which was ATIS, the acronym for Allied Translator and Interpreter Section. The unit was under command of an American Colonel and was staffed by army, navy, and air force personnel of the three nations, U.S.A., Britain, and Australia, all of whom were accomplished in speaking and/or writing Japanese. The Aust. contingent under command of a Major, was responsible for administration. By great good fortune for me, it was just the previous day that the Major came looking for an adjutant, and the fellow I was speaking to sent me off for an interview. I got the job and found the unit was being established at Indooroopilly, quite close to the railway station. Building was still going on and offices had to be furnished, and staff recruited and established. I got involved in this right away which meant I was busy from the start. A very unusual feature of the job was that I had the right to buy on behalf of the U.S. army, and this

being my home town I knew where to buy and was able to produce results in quick time

There were some very secret aspects about this unit because Japanese prisoners-of-war were brought there for interrogation. The first concern was that if the residents of this built-up suburb learnt that the captive enemy was in their midst, they might protest to their politicians about having “dangerous” prisoners housed nearby, and the resultant fuss would be most unwelcome. As we had numerous armed guards there, we were instructed to refer to the place as a Military Police Depot. However the main concern for secrecy was the vital importance of the valuable war intelligence generated there. If the enemy learnt of the Unit’s function and location, it would become a prime target for destruction by any means at their disposal!

Under the Geneva Convention a prisoner-of-war was required to reveal only his number, name and rank. The Japanese were not signatories to the convention, but more important than that, their hierarchy insisted that it was their duty and honour to *die* for the Emperor, rather than surrender and be taken prisoner. Having been told that, they could not then be instructed how to behave as prisoners. Accordingly our interrogators found them to be a willing and fruitful source of information, especially when certain prisoners were placed together in cells which were bugged and their conversations recorded. This procedure was also useful as an early warning of trouble, for not all prisoners were happy to be out of the war. Some were troubled by conscience and felt they could never face their families again, having failed the Emperor. I remember one such case where a fellow told his cell-mate he had decided to commit suicide, and would take some of his guards with him!

The translation of captured documents, including personal letters was also a rich source of information. Perhaps the greatest coup of the Pacific war came from this source; it has been publicly revealed before, so I give away no official secrets, but believe me at the time it was the most “top secret” item that the Pacific war produced! I refer of course to the Japanese naval officer whose ship or submarine was sinking and was run ashore on an island recently occupied by the Americans.

This officer was responsible for the safety of the ship’s code-book and the thought of *destroying* it never entered his head, so he waded ashore with the most secret Jap. navy code-book under his arm! The crew was captured and the book taken with other documents, but so enormous was the coup that it took some time for the captors to realise what a treasure had come into their hands. After testing it and finding it was not a “plant”, the United States had the luxury of knowing much of the Japanese naval movements, in advance, for a large part of the war. I was told the battles of Coral Sea and Midway were fought with foreknowledge of the enemy’s plans.

At Indooroopilly the officers mess and living quarters were in nearby houses commandeered from the locals. This was where I lived at the time, but of course I spent a lot of my spare time with Dele. After some months it became apparent that I would be located at this place for a considerable period, even allowing for the

uncertainties of war movements. Accordingly we decided to fix a date for our wedding. I managed to rent a small house in Indooroopilly, and we were married on 19th December 1942. We had a frugal honeymoon at Caloundra in a unit building appropriately named “Harmony Caught” -- sorry, spelling error – “Court”! I was reminded of my friend’s admonition that I’d be pooled when I telegraphed from Perth, but the laugh was on him. He came down from New Guinea on leave, and married on the same 19th of December, a girl I knew from pre-war days. They joined us in our flat for a day or two of a “pooled” honeymoon.

Not exactly as a wedding present, even though the timing was right, I received a promotion to the rank of Captain.

For the family record, Vivienne with David, her first born, lived in a small flat not far from Mum and Dad. Ken had been called up and was sent to New Guinea to the Milne Bay area. Ken owned an Austin tourer, which he invited me to use rather than leave it on blocks. I put it back on the road, got a petrol ration, and used and maintained the car until Ken returned.

Clive having passed the senior exam, took temporary work with the Main Roads Department, while waiting call-up to the Air Force. He went to training camp near Sydney in Oct’42. Bev was still a school girl.

At this point in the story, I shall pause for insertion of a [link](#) to the family photographs appropriate to the Australian Price Family. After that I will write Chapter 4 in a different format. When I started this “book” I did not set out to write personal memoirs, but rather a history of my father. This grew into Mother’s story, and then the family’s story. My memoirs evolved of their own volition as the family’s story matured. Chapter 4, I propose to present as an epilogue summarising the lives of the family, including my own – which I expect will again engender some “first person” memoirs and comments.

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CHAPTER 4

EPILOGUE

It was my intention to place myself at the end of this “summary” Chapter, not the beginning, and I shall still do this, but there is an item which occurred in our early married life, and I think it fits best right here and now. When telling my father’s story I mentioned my Aunt Blodwen and her husband Charles Brayne, and their visit to us in 1932. About this time astronomy had become a passion with me and , to a lesser extent with a younger Clive also. I yearned for a telescope, and with a plan from some boy’s journal I tried making one -- the cardboard tube with magnifying glasses at each

end -- not very successful. At the end of the Braynes' visit, Charles announced he would like to give a present to each of us as a memento of our meeting. I had an English magazine on astronomy, and it carried an advertisement for army signalling telescopes, war surplus and very cheap. I probably pressured Clive into it but we asked if *our* present might be the telescope. Charles agreed and sent off a cheque on his London bank, and after a very long six weeks the telescope arrived. Though not designed for astronomy, it did a very good job and we had wonderful views of the moon in different phases, the rings of Saturn, and Venus as a crescent, just like our moon in first quarter, but of course much, much smaller.

Having set up our own home at Indooroopilly, I gathered some of my things from the family house, and the telescope came to light. I showed Dele the moon through it, and later I remembered Venus and wondered if it still appeared as a crescent. So next day, just after sunset, in the western sky there it was, a crescent again – but what was that bright line appearing beside it? I thought it must be an aberration, some reflection on the lens, and I cleaned both lenses but it made no difference. The 'scope had a retracting hood to prevent side light on the object lens but again the line remained – it was a finite line, both ends being clearly in the field of view. Size of course was impossible to assess, but in my field of view its length was three or four times the diameter of Venus. This strange phenomenon stayed in my mind for days and every time I looked the same picture presented itself. Though I puzzled over it and thought of ringing the newspaper to inquire about it, I did nothing because the war-time newspaper was short of staff, and were concerned with war and war emergencies and I was sure they would not be helpful. In time I forgot about it, until a few weeks later in the newspaper I happened on a small paragraph headed, "New comet discovered"! It then stated that a South African astronomer discovered this comet and it could be seen in the evening sky close to planet Venus! The discoverer had it named after himself, as is the custom with newly discovered comets. So this was the answer to my "bright line" in the telescope, it was a comet and through ignorance and inertia I had missed my chance at immortality! To think I could have had my very own comet flying through space for evermore with Comet Price written on it!

As is now well known, there are countless comets in the universe, each with its own irregular trajectory, the best known to us being Halley's which revisits our solar system every seventy years. Some come near us once in a thousand years and others we never see and never will. In recent times astronomy as a popular pastime has grown and with great advances in technical equipment, amateur astronomers have proliferated and some have done excellent work. The comet search has become a special department, and some operators look for nothing but new comets and there are surprising tallies credited to a number of them. But I will always remember that I let one slip away from me through lack of knowledge!

So the lesson which this item illustrates is the value of *knowledge*. Knowledge is *power* – not just political power, but the power to open doors along the path of life, to banish boredom and acquire riches for body and mind. The first thing we should

know is that a “little knowledge is a dangerous thing”; but armed with that warning, a *little* is better than *none at all*, for life is too short to acquire expertise in everything. Whether the enlightenment is obtained from formal study, from the general experiences of life, or from informal reading, make sure it is done with a broad brush sweeping a *wide* canvas, and *question* everything. The sum of human knowledge has been achieved by an add-on process – whenever we feel we have got the answer to a stubborn problem, a bright and searching mind has found a flaw in the accepted thinking, and has taken our understanding another step forward. The great Sir Isaac Newton, when receiving an honour from the Royal Society, said, “If I have seen further than other men, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants”. A modest statement from a brilliant mind but a recognition that knowledge grows on knowledge.

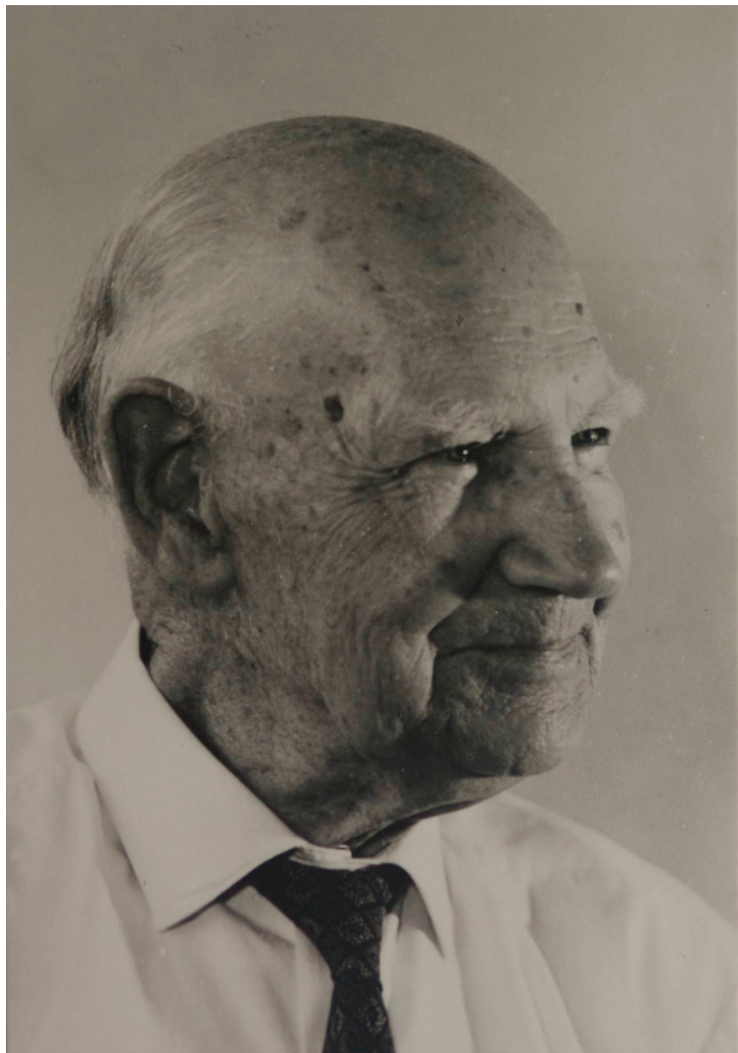
HARMON and MINNIE

My father had a busy time during the war with his work as road-bridge designer and draughtsman for Main Roads Department. When the Americans arrived many strategic roads were built to move armies and supplies, and this put great pressure on the Bridge Room. On top of this some staff had already joined the services so the Department was short handed. However, with the war’s end he enjoyed much better times. The salary cuts that applied to Government employees under the general moratorium of the depression years, came to an end and full salaries were restored. In addition the draughtsmen formed some kind of union and gained recognition as a professional body and lifted their general pay rates. Dad’s step-mother died during the war and the remnant of grandfather’s estate was distributed, enabling Dad to buy his own house – the first home they had owned since leaving Tasmania in 1927.

This was the period when he enjoyed his late flowering as an actor, and at work he had seniority and a better status and I think he was content to stay after reaching the usual retirement age. He eventually retired at age sixty-eight and entered on a new career as the arch potterer. With no train to catch to be at his desk by nine, he had lost his self-starter, and would drift from job to job at the slightest distraction. If moving through the house he would check if the gas stove needed turning up or down, which put him at odds with Minnie who would bundle him out of the kitchen. If he came upon a newspaper he would stop to read it no matter what date, in fact last week’s or last year’s paper had a compelling fascination for him; and so the day passed, and he left a half dozen jobs half finished until nearly dark when he would suddenly get a go on and try to finish everything before dinner. This was not senility, but rather an inability to cope with the sudden release from responsibility and discipline. He should have retired earlier while his mind was more flexible. Nonetheless he did make some adjustments, like joining the local bowls club, and taking up rose culture which he did quite thoroughly, and successfully, and he became the household shopper with a keen interest in the “specials”. He gave up the theatre, but kept on with local preaching, though on a reduced scale.

Overall he was quite happy with his lot except when a family health crisis, which I’ll detail later, overwhelmed him and he suffered a nervous breakdown, which put

him in hospital for some weeks and caused us all a good deal of worry. After a time he made a good recovery from this, regained his sense of humour, and carried on with



his daily routines at the house in Sherwood. This was the house of his retirement but was not the one bought with the funds from his father's estate. That was in Shorncliffe and proved to be something of a disaster in which Minnie was the central figure. I shall reconstruct the probable reasons for that move.

Dad had retained an interest in fishing, but was seldom able to indulge it. Shorncliffe was the most practicable venue for him, because of its railway access, and probably with retirement in mind, and his inheritance in hand, he decided to purchase his house there. Doubtless he imagined himself as a man of leisure, throwing in a line from the pier, every day of the week! I am sure that Minnie agreed to this move, but with some doubt and reluctance. With Dad still working she was alone all day, in this big, old house and felt cut off

from her friends and her shops which she always loved to visit. The stress built up and before long she developed a positive hate for the place, and her health began to suffer. This culminated in a heart attack and for many months she was a very sick lady. Beverly at that time was making good progress with a nursing course but had to interrupt her career to be with Mum and help her recovery. It was quite out of character to have Minnie seriously ill; in my memories of childhood, she was the strong one who was never sick -- or perhaps she was but carried on regardless.

The illness was the catalyst which precipitated their move back to the city, this time to Sherwood. Here Mum found good neighbours, good friends in the church, a short train ride to the city, and she flourished again. Sherwood remained their home for fifteen years, and for the most part they were happy years with many holiday trips -- once at least to Tasmania while the Braynes were at Devonport and several times to Sydney to Dot and Ken, and to Bev at Tamworth. But the happy, benign years have a way of terminating themselves, and Dad began suffering a wheezy chest. Eventually

this was investigated and he was found to have cancer cells in his lungs, thought to be secondaries, but in consideration of his age, a search for the primary tumour was not pursued. For a time he carried on at home but began to lose strength and they sold the house and moved into a cottage in the Methodist “Garden Settlement” at Chermside. It was here that he wrote the notes of his early life, and how grateful we are to have them. Incidentally, I have already sent a draft of the first chapter to Bunty with an invitation to pass it around the family, and feed-back indicates it is much appreciated, for surprisingly the English cousins seem to have little knowledge of their grandparents.

Dad’s decline was slow but steady. It was hard to know how much he suffered, as



he was a patient, uncomplaining man and his chief worry seemed to be the trouble he was causing the family in having to come to Chermside to visit him. He was moved to a private room in St.Lukes Hospital when Mum could no longer nurse him. This being part of the settlement, she could spend most of the day with him. About ten o’clock on the night of 15th March ’71 I was called to the hospital -- Dad had taken a decisive turn. Vivienne travelled independently, and Dad was already unconscious when we arrived.

We sat with him for a few hours as his breathing changed into the death-rattle, and when it became certain that he would not rally Viv took her farewell of him and left. Although it was pointless to stay, I felt compelled to do so while life was in him. About 2am. on the 16th with a gasp and a sigh, he expelled his last breath. I took my

leave of him, reported to the duty sister and agreed to let Minnie sleep on to be told when she woke, and I drove home through the deserted streets of the 3am. suburbs. I couldn’t feel sadness, but rather a satisfaction, yet disappointment – something of the feeling of finishing a good book, and I was searching back in my mind to the favourite chapters I must read again. Perhaps that’s when I decided that one day I would write his story!

Mum lived on at Chermside for another ten years, and for much the greater part of it she remained active, physically and mentally. She knew the birthdays of her seventeen grandchildren, though she may have faltered when it came to her numerous great-grandchildren, but the telephone numbers of her children and closer friends were remembered and readily recalled. In her 91st year she suffered a small stroke and under the regulations at the time she was classified “At Risk” and moved from her two-bed room to a larger ward. She recovered quickly from the stroke, but seemed not to worry about losing her small bit of remaining independence and privacy. She no doubt thought that those things didn’t matter any more. Her time was running out, and she knew it. One day when I visited her alone, she said to me – quite out of the blue and unrelated to our conversation, “I’ve been a good mother, haven’t I?” I assured her she was the best, and thought no more of it, at the time.

About eight o’clock on the night of 11th March I was told that Mum was unlikely to live through the night. Dele and I met with Clive and Val at the nursing home and to my dismay she was on her bed in her usual ward with beds and other inmates all around. We asked wasn’t there some room she could be moved to so that she might die with dignity alone with her family, but no, she had to remain where the ward sister responsible for her nursing, could monitor her. So we all had to endure this solemn time with about six other inmates coming and going, getting into bed, out of bed, and chatting amongst themselves. Mum, wet with the sticky sweat of death, needed frequent sponging, and sips of water. Wide awake and with all faculties working, she seemed distressed, with an unquiet mind. I suddenly remembered our recent conversation and her question whether she was a good mother, and I realised she was troubled about judgment day and how she would fare at the pearly gates. What a cruel doctrine to impose on a blameless old lady who should be slipping away from this life with a tranquil mind.

About ten o’clock the ladies in the immediate neighbourhood were past their bedtime and began to undress and go to bed. We felt most uncomfortable and spoke to the nursing staff who said there was no point waiting as she could last till morning, and that our presence was disturbing to the other people. By now Mum was settling down, her breathing more laboured, so we said our farewells, I kissed her goodbye and urged her not to worry about anything. We drove home sad, and very angry that such barbaric conditions still applied and I felt ashamed that I had not foreseen this and arranged something more congenial for her passing. At least she didn’t suffer for long, soon after we arrived home the nurse rang to say Minnie had died. It was 11th March 1981 – two months short of her 92nd birthday.

The huge difference in the environment of the two deaths of my parents begs some comment. There was a ten year period between them, and during that time the escalating cost of health services, including nursing homes, was an increasing worry for governments. In Dad’s case of a terminal illness with prognosis of a short duration, admission to the hospital was automatic – the private room may have been a favour for long service to the church which in this case ran the hospital. For Mum, although the illness was final, it was of indefinite duration, and would not qualify for

admission to a hospital. As for a temporary room where inmates might spend their last hours, well, rooms and their furnishings cost money, and how many such rooms? – two or three might be needed at the one time. So the pragmatic decision is made to eliminate such rooms under the comforting thought that most old people die in their sleep anyway, and don't have pesky family members around to clutter up the wards!

Minnie was a tough lady, a great survivor, a practical mother of down-to-earth wisdom and a natural foil to Harmon's more romantic nature. Although she always took a back seat to his outward show of talent, she had strength of purpose and he depended a lot on her ministrations which made his path easier. I recall once in my rebellious teens being cranky with Dad for some reason, and complaining to Mum about him. At first she was sympathetic, but then I went too far in my criticism, and her tone changed, making it very plain that he was her man, and a good man, and she wouldn't hear things like that said about him! All told, they were a mutually supportive couple who made a pretty fair job of parenting, and I'm very grateful to them.



HARRY and GERTRUDE PARKER

Dele has written some notes of her family history, and her writing will be added to the end of the “book”, along with a considerable collection of photos. However I want to record my own association with the Parkers, first as a new son-in-law, and then as an ongoing member of their family. They had only the two daughters, Dele and her young sister Joy, and had therefore missed the experience of raising a boy. I began as a novelty in their family being the first “son”, and was welcomed – perhaps over-enthusiastically by Gert, and it was inevitable that a reaction would develop with the passage of time. My independent nature, different background and family culture was bound to meet resistance from a lady of strong mind and some dominance in her family. When Dele presented their first grandchild, John, to them, Gert started a love affair with him, which lasted the rest of her days. There was nothing wrong with this of course, but it did tend to a possessiveness which often expressed itself in an “I know best” attitude which occasionally led to friction.

In telling what could be described as the “breaking-in” period of our relationship I must not give the impression that it was the typical comic book attitude to mothers-in-law. Far from it – on the whole we got on very well, and the Parkers were good, generous and considerate parents. They provided invaluable help when the children were young, and in their retirement often took a house at the beach where Dele and the children were invited to join them – I was included in this but could not always get away from the office.

Harry was a quiet, kindly man always motivated by good intent. In his youth he trained as a cabinet-maker but never practised the craft, preferring instead to join his father in the art of tailoring. Their shop in Ipswich became *Parker, Son and Coy* and built a reputation for fine hand-made suiting. Before he retired Harry employed between twenty five and thirty staff, so he had been successful in building the business from very small beginnings. He was a keen golfer, and in his later years the bowling green occupied a large part of his time. As a young man he was a keen photographer with his own darkroom where he dabbled in trick and creative photography. Much later he developed a talent for oil-painting and specialised in Australian country scenes which were mostly portraits of gum trees -- occasionally achieving a very attractive picture.

Both Parkers were musical, Gert was competent on the piano with an ability to play a tune by ear. She also had a pleasant contralto voice. Harry developed an ambition to play the violin and splashed out on a quality instrument, but alas never quite mastered it, and Menuhin and Heifetz were able to relax with no fear of challenge to their leading virtuosity. In fact his practice sessions became a rather cruel family joke.

He had a tenor voice, rather thin and trembling, but we did have a lot of evenings round the piano with impromptu harmonising just as we did at my family home; however the choice of song was rather different. Harry’s singing developed in the era of the sentimental ballad, usually Irish in origin, and lamenting the death of a loved

one – as in “Speak to me Thora --- I loved you in life too little, I loved you in death too well”. Another example is the lament of a wife for her drowned fisherman husband – She scolds the sea bird “Hush be thy moaning bird of the sea, thy home on the rock is a shelter for thee. Thy home is the angry wave --- *mine* but the lonely grave!” then she calls to her lost husband with a tear in her voice “Turn ye to me”. The trembling tenor voice suited these songs a little too well.

Sentimental though they were, often to the point of being mushy, the songs of the day had melody, often beautiful melody that gladdened the heart regardless of the lyrics. When I hear the popular “music” of today, I am saddened for the young people who are missing the soul-satisfying melodies that linger in the mind to be recalled with pleasure even fifty and sixty years later. At this very moment I think of *Danny Boy* and *The Rose of Tralee*. and the lovely tunes spring forth to be hummed or whistled. . Do our

youngsters today really know what a haunting tune is? Of course musical taste is a cultivated thing and is primarily developed by the kind of music one is exposed to – often by subliminal exposure. Thirty years ago a Swedish film – a sweet, sad version of a true love story, played the slow movement of Mozart’s 21st piano concerto with swelling volume during highly emotional scenes, and as this film, *Ehira Madigan*, swept round the world, thousands upon thousands sought the music. The only recording available at the time had to be pressed in huge numbers and became the largest selling record of the year. This piece, so rich in lovely melody, merged with the visual impact of an intense emotional experience, and viewers absorbed the music by its attachment to that experience. This instance is not isolated and I can think of other films which promoted other music in the same way. Doubtless the reader has also enjoyed the sensation.

Joy, my new sister-in-law was nineteen at the time of our wedding, but to me she seemed a lot younger. Perhaps it was the “kid-sister” image, but also she was a little shy and perhaps somewhat in the shadow of her elder sister with the more outgoing personality. Joy had her own circle of friends, and after the war renewed friendship with Edwin Esler whom she married in 1948. She was more of an academic than was Dele, and when her three children were grown, she became a mature-age student and gained an Arts Degree from University of Queensland.



Dele & Joy Parker, about 1940

With both daughters living in Brisbane, Dele's parents quit Ipswich about 1952 and bought a house in Corinda not far from us. They had twenty-one good years there with friends around and family in close reach. They used their car a lot and often exchanged visits with the Sydney relatives. Gert's health was the first to suffer, first a small stroke from which she made a good recovery, but a gradual decline in health and strength, eventually forced them to leave their house and move into *Hopetoun* retirement place at Corinda. Gert's next problem was a severe heart attack. Again she recovered well but about a year later, on 3rd March 1974 died suddenly of heart failure. She was 82 years old. Harry lived on at *Hopetoun* where he found the environment congenial and convenient, but he was ageing rapidly and he died suddenly on 9th May 1975, at the age of 87.

DOROTHY and KEN BROWN

Dot moved to Sydney following her marriage and spent the rest of her life in that city. Ken with his science degree and specialising in the chemistry of soap, needed more scope for the employment of his ample talents. This scope he found in the science of *management*, and soon was gaining qualification in that discipline and playing an active role in the running of the Institute of Management. All this activity fed his career and he made a steady progress up the ladder in Unilever, ultimately becoming the Personnel Manager for Australasia – a very big job!

With Ken's work making heavy demands on his time and requiring his frequent absence on business travel, Dorothy no doubt carried the main burden of bringing up their children. Of these three children two have remained in Sydney whilst Graeme, the eldest, is Deputy Head of Brisbane Boys college, thus keeping alive the Brisbane connection. David is a successful businessman with a finely honed entrepreneurial flair. Regrettably, Margaret's marriage failed and she has done a wonderful job of bringing up her three girls on her own, with of course, help from the family -- in particular, support from Dorothy. As the family grew, Dot was able to accompany Ken on some of his tours, thus picking up some reward for all her devotion to the family welfare.

In retirement, Ken with a long-standing interest in education, joined the N.S.W. Schools Commission where he did useful work in the employment of his accumulated experience and management skills. He chaired the Commission for some years and in recognition of his services, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal.

During their more active retirement years, we exchanged visits a number of times, and they seemed to enjoy particularly a week at Tamborine whenever they came north. As the years passed Dorothy began to show the symptoms of Parkinsons Disease. Drug treatment kept the tremors under control, but her memory began to fail, and her conduct became erratic so that Ken and Margaret served as her constant carers. Eventually she needed full time nursing, and had to move into a nursing home, where she gradually declined as the periods of sleep increased until she was in a comatose state for most of the day. She died on 2nd July 1998, age 83.

Ken lives on in his retirement village, still driving his car, still with an agile mind and as I write this he is 87years old and in reasonable health.

VIVIENNE and KEN GOUGH

Of my siblings, Viv and of course, Ken had the strongest association with us during the young married years – the early child raising period. This came about because we were closest in age, both living in the western suburbs of Brisbane, and because Dele and Viv got on well. We picnicked together, sometimes shared holiday accommodation, and often socialised together.

After the war Ken moved on from Woolworths, and tried other work, eventually following his father's main interest – the paint business. For most of his working life he represented a large paint company, and in his spare time he set up a minifactory at home , registered a company named *V.K.Toys* and proceeded to make and market small items -- quoit boards, dart boards, black boards, cork boards for kitchen memos, and other things, all of which generated a handy boost to the family income. In the long term *V.K.Toys* could be credited with helping to put all four children through tertiary education – quite an achievement!

Vivienne produced three boys and her longing for a daughter became acute. Her next pregnancy ended in a miscarriage with serious haemorrhages requiring transfusions. She was rather sick for a time, and her next pregnancy -- with the benefit of hindsight, and from the physical health aspect, was probably too soon. However she carried full term and a baby girl – Bronwyn, was born. Ken and the boys were very happy and Viv was over the moon! Sad to say the elation lasted only a few days when Viv reacted and slid into a deep withdrawal. This was diagnosed as Postnatal Depression and commenced an illness which lasted most of twelve months.

During this time Ken did a remarkable job of carrying on with normal routines and keeping the family together, until the poignant day arrived when Vivienne suddenly recognised her baby daughter , and put the seal on her recovery. There followed many happy years of useful activity and community involvement. As the children grew and left home, Viv and Ken moved to a house at Chelmer, not far from the River! In 1974, the house was *in* the River, with the flood reaching half way up the walls. We were living at Corinda on high ground, but had a number of friends in the Chelmer area, all flood-affected, and we were heavily involved in the helping with the clean up. Being “flood affected” means a lot more than having a wet and muddy house. It is a terrible violation of one's home and all the precious things that go to make up and reinforce a large part of one's life.

The long term affects of this devastating experience would naturally differ with the person. It struck deeply into the roots of Vivienne's self assured and settled way of life and there followed an unsettled period which saw them restore their house and sell it, rent another house temporarily and build a new place at Chapel Hill. During this time Viv suffered several small bouts of depression which the local G.P. was able to contain. For a time she enjoyed furnishing and decorating the new house, but started again to endure depression. On a visit to her about this time, in reference to

her health, she said “I’m alright, I know what to do about it now”. Little did we know what her remedy was! On the early morning of 23rd of August 1980, David rang to say that Viv had taken her own life. This was the greatest tragedy our family had known, and it hit very hard.

I was not privy to the note she had left, but was told it was a calm, rational and logical statement. From this, and from what I know of the person I believe she made her brave decision as the only way to avoid what she perceived, as a future riven by serious lengthy illness from which she might never recover. Rather than endure that, and cause long suffering and worry to Ken and her children, she would depart while she could manage the order of her going -- a courageous decision by a gallant lady.

Ken was devastated and felt he would never get over the terrible shock he had suffered. But time, the great healer, smoothed the path of life for him and he became very friendly with Nita Buchanan, a co-worker of Viv’s in the “good works” associated with their church. Eventually Ken and Nita married and have been very good for each other. It is great to see Ken a happy man again.

CLIVE and VALERIE

In the last chapter, in a family update, I left Clive at his first training stage at Bradfield Park near Sydney. He became part of the Empire Air Training Scheme, the major part of which was carried out in Canada. After that he moved to England and joined a bomber squadron as air crew in *Lancasters*. Elsewhere I’ve mentioned his completion of thirty “trips” as they were called – in his case night bombing missions over Germany. These duties earned him the rank of Pilot Officer. If one survived thirty of these hazardous journeys, the Air Force felt he had done his duty, and could be assigned a more comfortable job. The end of the European war was now in sight, so Clive was sent home – not discharged, but to be used in some capacity in the Japanese war. That ended suddenly with the dropping of two atom bombs and before long Clive returned to civvy street.

He now faced the big decision of what to do with his life. Age 23, with no experience, trade, or profession, employment prospects were bleak. He took advantage of the Government’s rehabilitation scheme, and chose to become a Forester. After four years at Queensland University and The Australian Forestry School he emerged with a Science Degree in Forestry. At age 28, he was beginning to worry about finding a wife. In this, the young sister, Bev, provided the answer with an introduction to Valerie Beck. They were married in a short time and started to enjoy country life together, at State Forests centred on such towns as Monto, Gympie, Imbil and Yarraman. Tragedy struck in May of 1954 when Val was prematurely delivered of a baby girl who survived only four hours. The baby was named Ida.

The secret to enjoyment of country town life was integration – involvement in the social life and community projects of the district, and this they both did. They had two adopted children, and as these grew to school age the scope for community involvement grew with them. As repeated career moves placed them in another town,

they swiftly became members and leaders of the various communal activities in their new location. Val also took a scientific interest in cooking and combined this with a writing talent to enter and win many competitions in popular magazines.

As Clive gained seniority in the Department, he was brought back to Brisbane to the responsible job of Queensland Fire Protection Officer, including Industrial Safety. When National Parks ceased to be a section of Forestry and became a separate Department, he was given the position of Deputy Director, and retained this until retirement. Freedom from work simply meant more time for other activities -- his Air Force Squadron Association, Wood-workers Guild, Probus Club, Men of the Trees (also wrote an official history of this organisation), were among the “good works” which won him a Premiers Award. In succeeding years many other activities were deemed sufficient to win him an Order of Australia Medal for services to the Environment and the community. His active and witty mind and writing talent are given regular expression in the letters column of the Courier Mail, where he has acquired quite a cult following.

As I write this, Clive and Val are still active and wearing the advancing years quite well. Of their adopted children Warren is a National Parks ranger in North Queensland and has given them three grandsons, whilst Narelle lives close by and is a great comfort and support.

BEVERLEY and JIM WOODLAND.

Because of the nine years difference in our ages, there have been times when Bev and I have had very little contact – hence the scant references to her in my memoirs. It was only from her potted history, prepared at my request, that I fully realised the busy, varied and productive life she has had.

She started secondary school at Clayfield College in Jan. 1943, and after two years commenced Maternal and Child Welfare Nursing. She did so well in this sphere, and liked nursing so much that she decided to study general nursing. Bev topped her first year, but this coincided with Mother’s heart troubles and she felt she had to postpone her training to help at home. In her spare time she attended business college and became proficient in typing and book-keeping. As happens so often with interrupted study, she did not return to nursing, but went to work as a dental nurse. After a few years she moved on to a job as head girl in the sales side of a dental supply company.

For recreation she joined the Brisbane Services Choir, and there met fellow chorister Jim. He was a pleasant, good looking boy with a melodious baritone voice. They became friendly and announced their engagement in February 1952. They married on 18th April 1953. Bev ceased work a year later and Greg was born in October 1954. Rob followed in September ’56.

Jim had now joined the permanent army and they were posted to Singapore. This was while Britain still owned Malaya, and it was during what they called “The Troubles” – being part of the local move towards independence, but was really a

communist uprising led aggressively by well organised communist forces. Britain favoured an orderly, gradual hand-over to an elected government, and would not deal with communist guerillas armed and supported by neighbouring countries. The British brought considerable forces in , and the country was virtually in a state of war. Australia aided Britain with an Air Force presence based on Butterworth, and this in turn was supported by our army detachment – hence the posting to Singapore.

They returned from abroad in mid '58 and Jim took his discharge from the army and joined the sales force of Unilever, operating in the Tamworth region. In the month of December for the next three years Bev produced three more boys -- Tony '58, Lindsay '59, and Paul 1960. A fine family of five fine boys who have all done very well for themselves.

Jim's next move was a transfer to Sydney, and after six years there he quit his job and they moved to the Gold Coast and then to Brisbane where they ran mixed businesses. Regrettably Jim had developed an alcohol problem and also had severe chest troubles from years of heavy smoking. He was unwilling or unable to modify his habits and with much regret Bev decided to quit the marriage and they agreed to a separation. After six months there was a reconciliation which was not successful and Beverley finally left Jim in May 1988. However the dedication to his welfare remained, and six years later during his last weeks in hospital she was constantly at his bedside. He died on 23rd October 1994.

Bev leads an active life, has been very involved in her Probus Club including a year as President, and followed this with a stint as representative on the local association of Probus clubs. As reported elsewhere, she is an Elder in her church and has taken on other responsibilities as well. Last December she celebrated her seventieth birthday with a large Price family reunion, but it took me some effort to appreciate that my little sister was now a septuagenarian!

MYSELF and DELE

The end of the war saw us with two children – John Harmon born 19th January 1944, and Rhyl Joy (registered as Cheryl, which she dislikes and never uses) born 6th September 1945. To have acquired a family of boy and girl in good order and quick time was a great blessing, bringing both joy and responsibility, for which we had a ready appreciation, and to which we both brought a seemingly natural aptitude.

My job at the A.M.P. was waiting for me, but I was reluctant to return there – the memories of the pre-war office desk were too depressing. After six years of adventure and a position of command, I wanted to do something for myself, and the one business which seemed possible to start with very small capital was to become a manufactures' agent. I visited Sydney and Melbourne and through various avenues secured agencies for a number of firms. However the deciding one was the sole Queensland agency for a large English manufacturer producing household electrical goods.

There was very little of this material made in Australia during the war and a huge market was waiting to be satisfied. Armed with the firm's catalogue I had no trouble booking large orders. Delivery was another matter – postponements kept coming and finally I had to get from them a firm statement of their capacity to produce. They confessed that conditions for industry in England were far worse than they had believed possible. There were post-war shortages of every kind, electrical power, coal, metals, even paint. The two winters that followed the war were very severe, and without adequate heating, and with continuing food rationing the already exhausted people suffered badly.

I had counted heavily on this agency to be the solid foundation of my business and without it I could not make a sufficient living. I could not wait for English conditions to improve nor could I start afresh to recruit replacement business. So back to the A.M.P. and on with living.

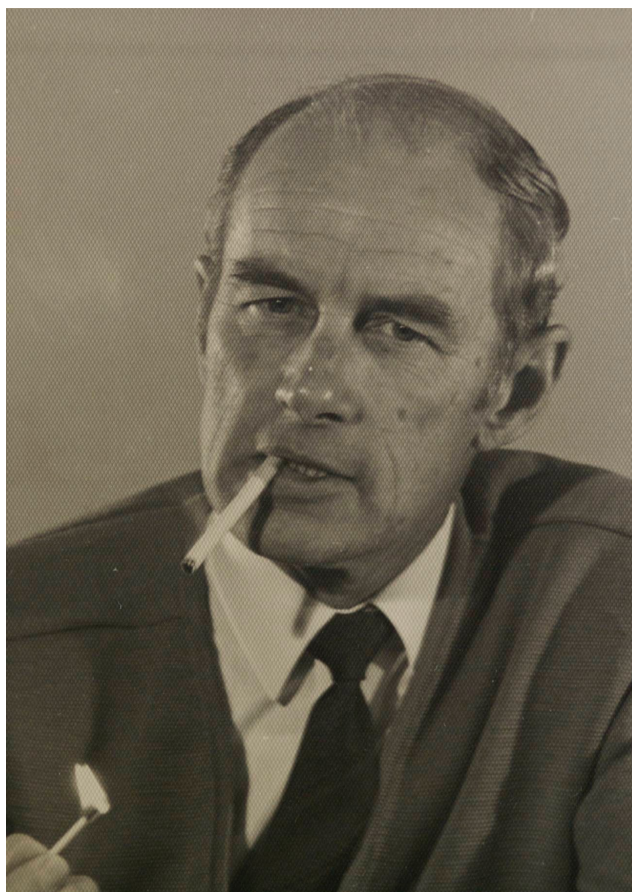
Towards the end of the war we had purchased a good block of land in what is now Hawken Drive, St. Lucia. At the time this street was a bush track and was named Coronation Drive. It is hard to realise that such a large area of prime residential land, very close to the city and with fine views of the river and metropolis, could remain undeveloped. The reason was lack of transport. A glance at the map will show that St. Lucia is bounded on three sides by the river – the only practical access is by land through the suburbs of Toowong, Taringa and the back-blocks of Indooroopilly. The railway connects these three suburbs and development was of course, along the train line, and pre-war was slowly spreading to the edges of St. Lucia. Also at that time, the area was given a boost by the University starting to build the present campus on a huge piece of land donated by the Mayne family.

Now that I was back with A.M.P., I was eligible for the generous home building scheme available to staff and we began planning a suitable house on our block – a block we nearly lost! This is the story -- that piece of history forgotten by most people. Not long after we bought we received an official letter advising that the State Government had resumed all the land from the University to, in effect, the edge of current development – which included our block. The declared purpose was “for future expansion of the University”. At first we were shocked, then also disappointed, as we were looking forward to living there. Other land owners started ringing around and we arranged a public meeting to consider a protest. Opinion was expressed that the area taken was huge and could never all be used for the declared purpose. Privately it was suggested by some that this was a land grab by politicians who could see a booming future for St. Lucia land. How simple at later dates, to decide that certain portions were not required and to quietly sell off these lots– their friends, families and nominee companies would be the new owners! We arranged a deputation to wait on the Lands Minister but were given short shrift. We were reminded of our public duty to put aside our selfish wishes for the future good of the University, or words to that effect. Fine sentiments, but were they genuine?

One of the land owners, Noel Wanmer was a reporter on the Telegraph newspaper, and he got us some publicity through the paper, but to no avail. As an

incidental comment, this was the beginning of a friendship with the Wanmiers, a friendship which has endured to the present day.

They say the night is darkest just before dawn, and in this matter I was the dawn! I was talking socially to a legal officer over lunch, and mentioned the unpleasant business of land resumption. He said there was something in the War Moratorium Act about a serviceman's land being resumed! After lunch we looked it up and, *inter alia*, the glorious words appeared *resumption by any authority requires the prior consent of the Federal Attorney-General*. I wrote immediately to the Attorney-General asking if he had consented to the resumption of my land. We then called a meeting of land owners, and advised them to write on behalf of any family servicemen whose land had been taken. About a month later we all received letters advising the resumption had been rescinded. The fact that the Government did not gain the Attorney -- General's consent, and that they did not try again to resume, after the war, tended to confirm that there was indeed



something spurious about the whole episode.

We built our house there in 1948, and had a happy few years in a rural setting -- wallabies in the back yard in the early morning, occasional snakes in the garden -- *and the house!* I would often take a net to the

riverbank and return with fresh shrimps for lunch. All this is difficult to believe when one views the bitumen roads, orderly gardens, shops and traffic of today. It was the increasing rate of development and the rising real estate values that decided us to sell out . We made a very handsome profit and were able to pay cash for our next house at

Corinda. This house required an extra bedroom – we now had three children, Rodney Parker Price being born at St Lucia on 4th June 1950.

Work at the A.M.P. slowly evolved into more interesting fields as the industry itself expanded its enterprise and invested in new financial products. I did much the same at home, finding outlet for creative energy in altering and enlarging the house, building furniture, and starting a small manufacture of shadow box pictures. These were inspired by the 3-D pictures of interiors of Swiss cottages, imported presumably from Switzerland and popular at the time. I decided a similar thing depicting Australian country scenes would be novel, and in cooperation with Dele designed four or five farm scenes which I mass-produced as far as possible, and Dele painted the art work. We even had a sales agent, and for many years later occasionally found one hanging on the wall of some house we visited.

Also built a darkroom and took up photography again – an interest I'd had since my teens. In the Middle East I had bought a Leica – the outstanding small German camera, but sold it to an American to buy our St Lucia land. Huge developments had taken place in Japanese cameras since the war, and I got one of these, joined the Brisbane Camera Group and really learned something about photography. As the family grew, Dele too was developing her arts, attending schools and classes in aspects of painting, in pottery and embroidery.

The most interesting and enjoyable job I had at the Office was that of Staff Training Officer for Queensland. In this position I was able to devise training courses of all descriptions – orientation, letter writing, telephone handling, public relations, work study and many others. Following this stint, I was promoted to Executive rank and as time passed moved up into fairly senior status at the Branch. All told it wasn't such a cruel fate that decreed my return to the old Society!

When Dele's ageing parents needed to leave their house in Corinda, our own family having left home, we decided to sell and to buy their place. It was at this house that I retired from work in June of 1977.

Having enjoyed an extensive excursion through Asia and Europe on five month's long-service leave in 1969, we felt it was time to revisit some of our favourite places. In 1979, through a botanist friend, we were offered the opportunity to mind a house in Kew Gardens (London) whilst the owner, a famous botanical artist worked in America for three months. This was a wonderful holiday – undoubtedly the best I've ever had. Although it started in a cold bleak winter, soon the season changed and we watched the glorious arrival of an English spring, with its succession of wonderful signals, crocuses, daffodils, prunus, bluebells, tulips and roses and the unfolding of the yellow-green and copper leaves of the beautiful trees. On top of this, was London within easy reach, the British Museum with all its departments, the art galleries, and the rest of marvellous historical London. Our house was warm and richly stocked by our cultured hostess, with books of all kinds to read, and a collection of paintings and bric-a-brac to please the eye. What more could one ask?

We followed this with a month's travel on the Continent then returned home to decide what to do with our non-working years! We had never wanted to spend our retirement in the suburbs but while Mother Minnie was alive we felt an obligation to stay nearby. For the next few years we looked around the hinterlands of North and South Coasts, and when Mum died in 1981, we chose Tamborine Mountain as our future home.

There we spent seventeen very happy and useful years, involved in community projects. Dele practiced her arts in various ways but particularly with the Natural History Association's cataloguing of the endemic plants of Tamborine. Inspired perhaps, by our sojourn in the house of Kew Gardens' one time chief botanical artist, Dele offered to paint the catalogued plants in the three stages – leaves, flowers and fruit. It was a large undertaking lasting about three years, with spotters bringing her specimens at short notice and having to delineate the material before it wilted. She painted about one hundred and fifty plants, which for years were displayed in folios at the Visitors Centre. When the originals began to show wear from handling, full colour laser copies were made to take their place and the Queensland Herbarium offered to take the originals into protective keeping. Dele declined the offer for fear the family would lose access to them. They are now stored at home. She was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the Natural History Association for her work.

I, who am not usually a joiner of Clubs, was persuaded to become first President of the newly formed Probus Club of Tamborine, and I had a very enjoyable year, as well as many to follow as an ordinary member. However my biggest undertaking which became an ever increasing task, was the building of the newly founded Historical Society, both as a society and a museum. It was, of course, the best thing I could have done as a retirement activity, for it offered scope for creative works which I was enthusiastically seeking, and for which I had some knowledge and experience. There was also a social element in the project – we always had a useful work group who gave help and often technical know-how outside my range. This group was cooperative and supportive and by working together we achieved a high rate of success in turning planning into reality. I was President for some years and Planning Officer for most of the time and was awarded Life Membership for those efforts. At the end of my time with the Society the Royal Historical Society of Queensland awarded me a McGregor Medal for my long service in preserving and displaying Queensland history, as applicable to Tamborine Mountain.

On 1st August 1998, we took up residence in Cleveland Gardens Retirement Village, and as I write this I am reminded of the opening lines of my father's memoirs – "*I sit writing these memoirs on the verandah of our final home, at the Garden Settlement, Chermside.*" The word *Final* sounds a little ominous, but I think we would both prefer this to be our final home rather than endure another move. The great advantage we have gained in our new location is easier access to family, this being of some moment when the years are mounting and mobility reducing.

After the mild boasting in the foregoing paragraphs, it occurs to me that in the extended family there are far greater achievements, and perhaps a brief summary

might be in order:- Uncle Charles Brayne --- C.M.G., Uncle Bill Price --- C.M.G., Ken Brown --- O.A.M., Roland Price --- M.B.E., Clive Price --- O.A.M., John Price --- Medical Award (for service to community medicine).

It is worth noting that these awards are all given in recognition of service to the community in one form or another. I am sure there will be more to add to this list in the years to come.

FINIS

THE HOUSE OF PARKER

By Dele Price

Why, oh why, didn't I ask my parents more about their ancestors? Perhaps I would have been told only what I *needed* to know, and not the whole story which I would like to know now! At the advanced age of nearly eighty, my curiosity is really aroused and I am discovering names, places, marriages and deaths, but can only conjecture what those people who owned the names, went through in their lives, and what they were like as people.

Unlike Harmon, I *did* know grandparents – paternal till I was ten, and a maternal grandmother till I was twenty two. However beyond these people, I am having fun and some frustration trying to fit together the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle!

First, my father's forebears:- Great grandfather, is as far back as I can go – he was Parker, tailor, of London who married Cecelia (nee) Worley. They produced Thomas Parker (1852) who eventually married Jane (nee) Mewes of Benfield Side, Durham. These two became my grandparents. They migrated to Australia from Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1884, and brought children with them, but the number and names of the children become rather puzzling as will be seen later in the story.

I have Grandfather's diary covering part of the epic journey, and this gives some insight into his character and how he handled the trials and hardship of the voyage on the good (?) ship *Dacca* – steamer, outfitted for the carriage of migrants. Before embarking, the family travelled around England for a farewell visit to friends and relatives, including "Grandma" who of course, never saw them again. They set sail on 17th January 1884, from the Royal Albert Docks, London, with "700 souls". His diary for the 18th, reads, "*The arrangements on board are not much to suit our fancy, although we cheerfully make the best of it. The ship's company is divided into messes of ten persons presided over by the first on the list. I happen to be the first on our list and have to seek the provender for them, and look after the cleaning of the dishes – and such cleaning there is! On deck about forty men scrubbing away at the dishes, trying to get them clean with cold water, but we hope to have hot in the future. The*

food has been very fair so far and more than enough, -- Breakfast, porridge, molasses, coffee, bread. Dinner (midday) – soup, meat, potatoes, tea. Tea – bread and butter.”

They called at Plymouth and took on eighty more passengers. From there they sailed through the Bay of Biscay and sighted the coast of Portugal. The ship rolled causing much sickness as they passed the Rock of Gibraltar. *“Janie was laid up at bedtime – children sick too”* Conditions became much worse when an Irish family of four had to share their quarters. The food deteriorated too. *“Breakfast, coffee, bread. Dinner, salt pork, potatoes and pea soup, with rice for Theresa and warm water to wash children.”*

Next they entered the Mediterranean, and *“took on coals at Malta.”* Here they were allowed to go ashore and shop for sun hats and fruit – 18 oranges, 3lbs. Apples and 4 water melons (6d. each). Tobacco was 1/- a pound and cigars - 6d to 1/- a box. [doesn't say if he bought the latter].

He found the Suez Canal surrounded by *“interminable deserts of sand and for the most part devoid of interest. Here and there were native people and houses.”* They went through two large lakes and ran aground three times, and reached Suez after passing a *“goodly number of ships. Suez was a pretty and clean town with more vegetation, cottages and palm trees”* – a far cry from today!

There were concerts given by passengers and Divine services presided over by the doctor. Many felt the heat stress. At Aden they bought more fruit, and cheap ostrich feathers. On shore they were accosted by cab drivers, money-changers, and beggars, while walking round the town and enjoying themselves. They spent five days there feeling the heat, while waiting for the ship “Siam” with Australian mail.

Crossing the Equator they experienced their first tropical nightfall – sudden night without twilight. *“There were many complaints about the state of provisions – salt beef and pork, rancid, and very few vegetables.”* Imagine, no refrigeration! Even bread was rationed – ‘tis a wonder they kept the children alive. *“One night when they were missing their meal, we got a little arrowroot from the Shopkeeper and Janie made them a little pudding.”*

They ran along the Island of Sumatra and saw several high mountains and a volcano then docked at Batavia harbour, and Grandpa *“succeeded in fishing up with a net several pieces of lava. Storms nearly every day.”*

On the 4th of March they steamed into the harbour of Thursday Island and reported *“a little paradise with about two dozen white houses and tropical flora.”* They then set off down the coast to Cooktown on March 6th, and arrived at their destination, Townsville, on the 7th, but he reports briefly, *“not able to land”*. On the 8th they left the *Dacca* at 11.30 a.m., *“To the cheers and best wishes of all. Put up at a shanty called the Depot, and had to sleep in the open air in a blanket, Janie and the children being inside.”* Sunday 9th *“Walked through the town looking for a house, the Depot being unbearable and the children taking badly with it.”*

Monday 10th, — *“Succeeded in getting work at Walkers, as a trouser-maker, and found a house near a place called Carrier's arms, of 4 rooms, at a weekly rent of 15/- where we shifted to.*

Getting wife and children there by 9 at night. Thoroughly tired out we laid on a blanket and slept amid a swarm of beetles and insects of all sorts."

Tuesday 11th, -- "Today we got the boxes up to the house and set them up as furniture -- sleeping on the floor." Wednesday 12th, -- "Started work this morning."



Thomas Henry & Jane Parker in their later years, about 1925

Unfortunately the diary stops there but resumes on November 24th, in the same year -- 1884. Before quoting from it, I would refer back to the dilemma I faced concerning the children. The passenger list of the *Dacca* records Thomas (30) and Jane (34) Parker, plus *two* children aged between 1 and 12 years -- Florence and Henry, (plus William Mews -- adult brother of Jane).

Grandpa mentions Theresa in his diary. The Townsville list records *one*

male and *three* female children, again with only Florence and Henry named. Cecelia and Theresa must have been the other two girls. At no time does the diary mention Henry and we can only assume that he died in Townsville perhaps of some tropical fever. This might also explain the long pause in the diary -- a major episode too painful to record!

The November diary continues, "Left Townsville, leaving Janie and children in charge of Bill (William Mews) Tues 25th, Bowen by midnight. Wed. 26th, Mackay, 28th, Rockhampton -- fearful storm lasting all night." He gives a very detailed and graphic description of that eventful night on the old ship. "Storm abated next day but heavy sea all day. No breakfast or dinner could be cooked. At tea we had to hold on to the cups and dishes. Sat 29th, landed in Brisbane by 6a.m. Sun. 30th, Went to Chapel and saw Mr. Lamb and presented letter of introduction. Mon. 1st of December -- looked about the town. Tues 2nd, Introduction to wholesale houses who promised to look out for me."

That sadly, is his last entry. He must have secured a position, and sent for the family, as I understand they lived in Brisbane for a couple of years.

My father, christened Thomas Henry (named after his father and dead brother?) was born in Ipswich on 18th of April 1888. Throughout his life he was always known as Harry. The Ipswich electoral roll of approximately 1908 lists Jane and Thomas

Parker and adult children, Florence Worley, Emily Theresa, and Cecelia Abigail, all of Ann Street Ipswich. Dad would have been 21 in 1909.

We know that Grandpa worked with his father at Parker and Son, London, where he no doubt learned his trade, and later he was tailoring at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He was a lay preacher in the Methodist church and “saved men from the curse of alcohol”. He played the organ and conducted the choir. He worked as a shirt-maker at the Ipswich woollen mills before establishing a tailoring business in Brisbane Street, with Mr. Goertz, in 1903. The Jubilee History of Ipswich, 1800—1910, published 1980, makes comment, “Parker and Goertz built up an extensive and constantly growing patronage. The firm makes a speciality of ladies’ garments, and caters for the best class of working men’s trade.”

There was a falling out between the partners, and Grandpa started Parker Son and Co. in Nicholas Street with my father as the Son.

Their home, *Hereward*, was built in the early 1900’s in Briggs Road, of single walled timber with an attic and cast iron railings. It featured a small balcony off the front bedroom plus a semi-detached kitchen (because of fire risk). It is now listed by the National Trust.

I, of course, have only childhood recollections of these grandparents. “Little Nana” was quietly there doing her wifely duties, but she doesn’t emerge with any



TH (Harry) Parker, Dele’s father, 1895

personality. Grandpa on the other hand played the organ (two at *Hereward*) and apparently the flute (I have the remains of an old wooden flute). I also have an ebony and silver baton presented to him as a farewell gift from UMEC (?) Gloucester Street, Newcastle, Choir, in 1883. He was conductor of the Ellenborough St. Methodist Choir for many years. He was good at drawing. I have a certificate from the Department of Science and Art (London) to certify that Thomas Parker has shown Proficiency in model drawing of the first grade at annual exam of children in Elementary Day Schools, in May 1866 (at 14). Other very fine detailed pencil drawings (copied) have come to light. He passed on a large telescope with which he enjoyed studying the heavens, and a collections of books on astronomy. He also left leather-bound encyclopaedias, books on science and literature – many of the pages still uncut. He was an avid collector of curios (e.g. the lava at Batavia), and brought with him from Townsville two native spears (now

in Tambourine Museum) and two large, heavy clam shells which sat at the foot of the front stairs at *Hereward*. Joy and I now have them.

There is also a primitive electric current generator for treating rheumatism, and a stereoscopic photo viewer with a number of stereo photographs from different parts of the world. Among his collection were fossils and Zulu artefacts (an aunt visited South Africa) most of which are lost along with an album of old postcards and greeting cards (these could have been a help to me now). He used to bring out these to entertain us youngsters plus a wooden hinged doll on a stick that danced when tapped. I recall sitting on his lap and being allowed to pull his chained watch out of his vest pocket. We have a beautiful old vest of his (how slim he must have been).

I can't say I remember either of my grandparents laughing, but surely they must have had their own private jokes. They were very strict Methodists and would not buy so much as a newspaper on Sunday. When we dined around the big cedar table for Sunday tea, I can only remember cracknel biscuits (puffy, floury cushions) and tinned peaches with white bread and butter. I loved the bead curtains which guarded the parlour door and the bisque angels round the light globe.(Rhyl has one). Framed mottoes such as "God is love" hung on the walls, and also a large ornate leather frame holding a number of portraits from Newcastle.

Dad was the only son with four sisters, only one of whom married. Theresa married Harry Durbin from South Africa and they had an apple orchard at Cottonvale, Stanthorpe. Their children were Myrtle, Monty, Hazel and Daphne. I was fond of Hazel (my age) but she died of diabetes at seven – my first experience of death. We later saw less of this family, due to a falling out.

Of the single sisters Florence and Cecelia worked for their father as tailoresses, but the youngest, Winnie, stayed at home to help with the housekeeping.

Alas Winnie was not very bright, due it was thought to the fact that her parents were first cousins. I have Florence's fob watch (1920) and a lot of beautiful embroidery the aunts did – including hardanger work. I remember they also did a lot of bead work.



Harry Parker, about 1906

Grandpa invested in a car in the early 20's. A "Fabrique Nationale" with brass kerosene lamps. I still have one of them. I vaguely remember being on a Sunday afternoon drive with them, when there was the most almighty "BANG"! The big-end had broken and I don't think the car ever went again.

When grandpa died in 1930 from pneumonia, heart failure and exhaustion (not surprising) Little Nana must have been quite lost. Just one month later her heart stopped.

Dad was never an ardent church goer. I think he was put off by so much religion in the home. He attended school in Ipswich but wasn't a keen student and declined his father's offer of Grammar School education. He did an apprenticeship with Arthur Foote, joinery works before (unwillingly at first) joining his father in tailoring. On his father's death he took charge of the business and built up a proud reputation, not only in Ipswich, for quality work. "We do one thing, tailoring, and do it well", was the firm's motto. Upstairs in the workroom were thirty employees, mostly girls with Mr. Jim Grant in charge. He used to sit cross legged on the table to hand sew. Bill Mallion was the presser. Suits were built up in layers with suitable padding and several fittings were required. Dad, and later Mr. Grant did the cutting (I have a pair of his large scissors). Dad was the front man being very good with people and he did the measuring too. A large wall of the cutting room was lined with brown-paper patterns on pegs, for each customer. There were many shelves of serge which would be brought out to the front counter for the customer to choose. Joy and I occasionally went to the "Shop" after school. From the backyard of the shop we could enter the back of Cribb and Foote – a fine old building with a grand timber stairway. Such a pity it was destroyed by arsonists some years ago.

Joy later left her job at a bank and worked as secretary for Dad (unwillingly she says but he was a very tolerant boss).

Dad courted mother for several years. I have a postcard of *Hereward* (taken by him), dated 28th February 1910, in which he sends her his greetings. They didn't marry till 16th November 1916, when their home *Kurrawong* was built. He was a very keen photographer with his bellows (folding) camera on a tripod, and in his youth produced postcards (some hand tinted) for pocket-money. Later at *Kurrawong* he had a large darkroom under the house, lined with shelves of glass negatives. I was a much photographed child but pressure of business must have taken him away from his hobby by the time Joy came along as there aren't nearly so many records of her earliest days.

Now that brings me to the "Harrison Saga".

The Harrison Saga or Pilgrim's Progress

My mother's mother, Fanny Harrison (nee Pilgrim) lived till I was 22, and died at *Kurrawong*, Ipswich, in my mother's care. I always knew her as "Big Nana" and if I

had asked her more questions I wouldn't be left with so many unanswerable enigmas now.

The first puzzle arose when I looked more closely at a photograph in Nana's album of a family tombstone in Waverly cemetery (Presbyterian section). The first recorded death was of Elizabeth Juliff who died 29th January 1888 age 52 years. Below this was Florence Elizabeth Tucker (Mother's cousin), Grandchild of above, died 2nd September 1892, aged 2 years 9 months. Also Leila Florence Harrison (Mother's sister) born 9th July 1895, died 28th December 1897. Also William Tucker, born 29th May 1815, died 19th March 1907 (Mother's uncle). Also, William Fredrick Harrison (Mother's brother) born 12th June 1879, died 31st March 1908. Also Walter George Tucker birth not legible, died 5th September 1901-“Suffer little children to come unto me”.



The wedding of William Harrison & Fanny Pilgrim, 1878

The stone beside it commemorates the death of Sidney Arthur Tucker (Mother's cousin) who died 20th May 1909, aged 25 years 9 months. What a sad saga! But why was the grandmother named Juliff? Her death certificate reveals the answer. She was born Elizabeth (Bessie) Hutchinson in 1836 in Paddington, London, and married in 1855 age 19 to my great grandfather, George Pilgrim (builder) who I believe was a widower with children. Their issue were Elizabeth, 1856, Fanny 1857, and George 1859. Her second marriage was to James Charles Juliff in Sydney in 1878 (no issue). Her death in 1888 at 172 George St., North Sydney was from chronic bronchitis. I wish I knew which photo was hers in Nana's album.

My grandmother (Fanny – Big Nana) told me that she and her sister migrated to Sydney as young women, but she never mentioned her mother. Her father must have died when they were young, as she said they were not educated as well as the children of his first marriage. Her sister Lizzie married a Tucker (probably the William on the tombstone who was much older). I don't know if any of their children survived.

Fanny (Nana) married William Harrison (butcher) born Kent 1853, (son of John Harrison tailor, died N.Z. 1887) in the Anglican Christ Church, Saint Lawrence, Sydney, 18th July 1878. Their family were, William 1879-1908, Bessie 1883-1961, Alex 1885-?, Claude 1887-?, Gertrude (my mother) 1891-1974, Leila 1895-1897.



Gert Harrison as a child, about 1901

My grandfather had migrated to New Zealand with his parents and siblings some years before. I don't know when he or Fanny arrived in Australia. Their wedding photo, 18th July 1878 shows her in a brown silk tiered and fringed dress with umbrella and hat. Grandfather is wearing a long coated dress suit, bow tie and walking stick. He wore a long beard, had pale blue eyes and was a lay preacher. She was 21 and he 25. Nana confided in me that she hadn't married for love but for the necessity of support. (no social services in those days!).

Mother doesn't remember much of her father as he died in 1896 of a cerebral haemorrhage during a migraine attack, when she was only six. In the eighteen short years of their married life they had produced the six children. In 1888 they lived at 91 George Street, West Sydney and Grandfather ran a successful retail and export butchery business in Pitt St., Waverley. He was later forced into bankruptcy by bad

debtors.

Being left a widow with six children and no legacy must have been particularly hard in those days. Nana probably took in boarders as she did later in Brisbane. From a postcard written to mother from my courting father in 1910, the family were living at Russel St, South Brisbane, and from Uncle Claude's letter to his mother from Egypt (World War 1) their address was "Waverley", Gloucester St., S. Brisbane. Staying with them as boarders were Ruby Harvey and Nellie Logan who became life-long friends. Nana also sewed well so maybe she did some dressmaking too.

Mother attended the old Normal school in Sth. Brisbane, but was afterwards kept home to help with the housework till Bessie married in 1915. She loved the twelve months she spent working at Whitehouse Music Store till she married. She had a love and talent for music, having learned piano from Bessie.

Bessie and Sam went to live in Townsville and later Rockhampton where he was Postmaster for many years. Their three daughters, Dorothy, Phyllis and Marjory were like an extended family to us.

Uncle Alec and Auntie Bell had a farm at Brookfield for a time and later lived in West End. Nana lived with them in her later years as she didn't get along well with her daughters. Their son was William (Billie).

When Uncle Claude (who I gather was a good looking rake and too much for his mother to handle) married a Catholic, such was her bigotry (quite common in those days) he was banished from the home and as far as I know never saw them again. (how sad!)

I recall “Big Nana” as an erect, well built, dignified woman who had many trials which she had met and overcome. She died at *Kurrawong* in 1942, age 85, in my mother’s care after a short illness.

The T. H. Parkers

My parents, Thomas Henry Parker , tailor, 28 and Gertrude Harrison, just 25, were married in Albert St. Methodist Church, Brisbane, on 16th November 1916 after a long courtship of about six years. They honeymooned at Capo di Monte, a boarding house on Tamborine Mountain. They travelled by train to Canungra spending the night at the hotel there and next day were transported by buckboard up the western side of the Mountain on a steep, winding, deeply rutted, dirt road which today is vastly improved and bitumen surfaced, but still known as the “Goat Track”. Their driver was Barney Geissmann, son of the proprietor of the boarding house, and one of the notable pioneer bushmen of the area.

They always had a soft spot for Tamborine and spent many happy holidays and picnics there during their life. They named their first home *Kurrawong* after the birds which proliferated there. At the boarding house they met a lady named Adele McDowall and four years later on 9th Feb. 1920 when I was born they borrowed her name for me. In keeping with the practice of the day, I was born at home with a doctor and midwife in attendance. After three more years on 3rd May my little sister Joy arrived, but this time mother was sent to Oakdale Private Hospital because of a breech presentation. She was required to stay in bed for three months afterwards. Joy was plump and curly haired and I was probably jealous of her. We fought a lot as youngsters -- she had a bit of a paddy and once threw scissors at me! Thank goodness we grew out of that.

Kurrawong at Chermside Road, Ipswich, was built of fibro cement sheeting (the latest thing), with wide front and back verandahs, and red fibro “slates” on the roof. ‘Twas such a pity that they leaked and had to be replaced with iron. The front door had lead-lights, and the side windows of the dining room were of coloured glass. The kitchen table and chairs plus a dresser and draining board were of pine (unpainted) and were regularly scrubbed with sandsoap and lemon to keep them white. There was a wood stove in the recess and at first the house was illuminated by kerosene lamps and gaslight (Ipswich was behind Brisbane with electricity). Sewerage was also slow in coming to Ipswich. The earth closet (toilet) was in a small sentry-box type building in the back yard. As toilet rolls were not available we used cut up newspaper suspended from a nail on the wall. The draught-horse drawn Council cart came weekly to replace the pan, with the covered full one being carried by the operator on his shoulder!!! What a job! We used chamber pots under the bed at night, and a large jug and basin

for washes (made of porcelain and some very decorative – collector’s items today). For baths, we had a chip-heater and later a gas geyser over the bath. There were not many hot water systems around till after the war.

Dad’s apprenticeship at the joinery works paid off when he made most of the furniture – a solid silky oak bedroom suite -- bed, dressing table with winged mirrors and free-standing wardrobe. The silky oak dining suite was with them to the end of their lives. There was no carpet on the floors -- linoleum throughout except for the lounge which had a large square rug surrounded by stained floorboards. There were no vacuum cleaners in the early days, just carpet sweeper, mop and bucket and the bedside mats were taken to the clothes line and beaten with a carpet-beater.

Monday was always wash day and a fire was lit under the copper boiler after Dad chopped the hardwood (he must have risen early). Sunlight soap was shaved into the copper bowl while the white clothes were boiling (all sheets were white) and they were agitated with a wooden copper-stick. Then they were lifted into the concrete tubs and rinsed three times with “blue” in the final rinse – a beautiful snowy white. Finally they were fed through a hand wringer and some were starched (solution made with starch chips and boiling water). Coloureds were hand washed, then all were carried to the clothes lines in a wicker basket and hung on the lines which were supported by long forked clothes props. Men made a living by cutting these from trees, and hawking them round the streets calling their wares. When washing machines first made their appearance after the war many housewives were against using them as the clothes weren’t white enough. They were right, but who would want to go back to that performance!

Tuesday, was ironing day. All the ironing was dampened and rolled first. In the wood stove days ”Mrs.Potts “ irons were heated on the stove and a detachable handle was attached to each in turn as it reached temperature. They were rubbed over with a cake of beeswax and after ironing, all was hung to air on a large folding clothes airer on the back verandah. Then came cleaning day and baking day. No wonder house wives did not go out to work! Furthermore nurses, office girls and teachers all *had* to leave work when they married. This didn’t change ‘till after the war when “affirmative action” became law.

The ice-man used to call with large blocks for the ice chest. We also had a large hanging safe in the cool under the house (no household refrigerators at that time) . The grocer called once a week for his order -- delivered next day with a cheerful “Grocie, ocie,ohoh!” and a paper cornucopia of boiled lollies for the children. The baker, butcher and milkman also called in their horse drawn carts.

Some of my earliest memories:- When I was three , watching Dad changing a wheel on our car, I somehow got two end fingers of my right hand, caught in exposed cogs. They are scarred, but at least I still have them. Also that car had carbide lamps and I can still smell the gas given off by the white powder when it was emptied. Another early recollection was a holiday at Laguna House, Noosa, right in Hastings St., with the ocean just across the road. In those days the place was infested with

mosquitoes and sand flies and we were badly bitten. It wasn't until they drained the swamps and eradicated the pests that Noosa went ahead – and how!! I believe most of our early holidays were spent at Redcliffe – a favourite haunt of Dad's in his single days, as his cousins, the family of Will Mewes lived there. My memories of the occasional trip to the South Coast, a day's journey over bumpy dusty roads and long waits for ferries at the Coomera and Logan Rivers, were not happy ones.

Dad was not accepted by the army in the 1914/18 war, because of his asthma. He was later cured by a concoction of marigold? The only sign of allergy was his sneezing bouts – they came by the dozen! We would hold our breaths in church when we realised one was coming on. He never knew what it was to have a headache. However he had a greatly enlarged heart from a childhood attack of rheumatic fever. He was a strictly moral man with a cheerful disposition and liked his little jokes. He was slightly built, about 173cm and always the gentleman and formally dressed in Parker suits for work and plus-fours for golf!

Mum was a slender 170cm in her younger days, and the attractive gracious lady and very capable. She was the dominate partner. Unfortunately she inherited her father's migraines and suffered occasional severe attacks. For days she would shut herself in a darkened room till the vomiting stage gave relief. Otherwise she didn't have much illness and never had any surgery. She played her part in the social life of Ipswich, was a good hostess and played a good game of golf and bridge. Joy and I remember the lavish afternoon teas on bridge days, and the bridge and golf post-mortems.

Mum had a good contralto voice and Dad was a tenor , and they sang solos and duets with mother accompanying on the piano. Dad's favourites were "I love you truly", "Mountains of Morne", "When you and I were young Maggie" and "Where ere you walk". Together they rendered "Softly awakes my heart" from Samson and Delilah, and others. Some of my happiest memories were all of us singing around the piano. On Sunday nights we sang the old Methodist hymns plus favourites like "Annie Laurie", "Charmaine", "Look for the silver lining" and Mae Brae's children's songs. Both parents had been members of the Ipswich Cambrian Choir under Leonard Francis. Dad also sang his heart out in the shower. During the war I sang with the Choir for a short time , but as singers, Joy and I were a disappointment. We both learned the piano but Joy showed more talent and continued her studies for some time after I had given up. Mum on the piano also accompanied Dad while he played the violin. In later years when he was practicing with great feeling, but not always on the note, she preferred him to do it when she was out.

As a family we played children's card games such as "Snap", "Strip Jack Naked", "Happy Families", "Animal Grab" and "Memories". With a penny concealed in our hands we played "Up Jenkins". Another self-entertainment was playing with the doll's house which Dad made us. I would spend hours making doll's furniture out of match boxes, and making the dolls converse with each other. Also we were encouraged to read and were given children 's classics such as "Peter Pan", "Water Babies", "Anne of

Greengables”, “Polly Anna” and “Emily of New Moon” – all very moral and innocent. There was never any time to be bored.

For many years from 1925 we had a maid who, I think was at first, paid 10/6 a week. She came by the day but would baby-sit when needed. When Mum advertised she was bombarded with mothers begging her to take their daughters – it was the great depression and jobs were very scarce! The last lass we had was May Langer – quite young and inexperienced, but Mum taught her well. She was a very fine person and married Tom Jones, who became an executive of Cribb & Tootle. It was a great disappointment when no children arrived and even sadder when Tom died quite young after a bout of hepatitis. We always kept in touch with May and our John attended her during her last illness – cancer. Harmon and I visited her at John’s suggestion, near the end, and she conducted herself with great dignity.

At age 5, I was enrolled at Miss Stevenson’s private school in the old Congregational Sunday School building in East St.. It was very small, and I don’t remember learning anything. In 1926 I started at the Girls Central State School in Grade 1. We had boys in the first couple of grades. We used slates and slate pencils and cleaned them with wet sponges which we carried in tins around our necks. I can still smell the musty odour of those most unhygienic sponges. I seem to remember being good at spelling bees, English and drawing, but not at mental arithmetic. The boys were separated after “infants” and went to the boys school next door. We were not allowed to talk to the boys. I joined the “Brownies” on Saturday afternoons. With friends we made the long walk through the Park to the Scout Hall in East St.. Marion Bostock was our “Brown Owl” and read us the “Pooh” stories. In due course I was able to introduce these delightful creatures to my own children.

Along with the Haenkes and Footes we attended Sunday School at Ellenborough Street, Methodist Church on Sunday afternoons. At first in the “infants” we sang “Hear the pennies dropping”, “Jesus loves me”, “Away in a manger” and other well known hymns. Each brought home a card with a text to learn. At the older school we were divided into classes. My favourite and most influential teacher was Miss Marj Foote, a particularly fine lady. She later made my wedding bouquets with her sister Sibby. After Sunday school most times our parents collected us and we all went for a family picnic to College’s Crossing. That was a highlight of the week.

We always looked forward to the visits of our cousins from Rockhampton, Dorothy, Phyl, and Marj, daughters of Aunt Bessie and Uncle Sam Chapman. A year was such a long time in those days – how they fly now! They usually came during the Christmas holidays – such fun. I looked up to Dorothy, six years older and so charming, Phyl was only three years my senior and we were close friends, I thought she was so glamorous. Marj was Joy’s age and they were great mates. Sadly only Phyl is left now and in very poor health. I remember one year we all spent Christmas at the boarding house “Stella Maris” at Coolangatta. The Chapmans were great performers and organised us into giving a concert for all the guests.

At the end of grade 8 we sat for the Scholarship – the exam conducted by the Department of Education, a most important hurdle. The year I sat was a particularly hard one, and a number of my friends didn't make it. I just scraped through and proceeded to the Ipswich Girls Grammar. Of course it was much smaller then, and the Head Mistress was Miss Armitage (strict and not greatly admired). I needed only to walk down Chermside Road. To my shame I didn't take studies too seriously – favourite subjects were, art, art of speech, French and English. Needless to say I did not distinguish myself but I find I have a Junior Art prize. In 1935 I managed to pass the Junior exam also run by the dept. of Education, with average results.

Mr and Mrs Foote and my parents decided to send their two daughters, Maibrey and me, to Fairholme College, Toowoomba, as boarders to “finish us off”. I soon recovered from homesickness to settle into a most enjoyable year. There I made two lifelong friends, Merle Maiden (Pack) and Heather Chapman – the same one who is mentioned in Harmon's memoirs. Our Head Mistress there was a very fine lady, Miss Daisy Culpin, who took a personal interest in all her girls, and I'm sure had a lasting influence on most of us. She read to us boarders from the classics round the log fire on winter evenings. Shakespeare came alive when she coached us in performances of excerpts. The most memorable was the court scene from the “Merchant of Venice”. Heather (Chappie) was Shylock -- complete with wobbly beard that gave us the giggles when she said “Come prepare!”. I was Antonio, and on another occasion I recall orating Lady Macbeth's “Out damned spot”.

Highlights were the occasional visits from our parents when they took us out to lunch at the Picnic Point kiosk. On Sunday mornings we were marched in our tartan skirts to the Presbyterian Church in the city, eyes to the front and no talking to the Grammar boys. We always dressed for dinner – in winter in black velvet and summer in cream fuji silk. We were allowed two shillings a week pocket money to spend on fruit and sweets – kept in our lockers along with gifts of fruit cake etc. from our families. I learned shorthand and typing and we gave demonstrations with covers over the keys, of “rhythm typing”, to the strains of Colonel Bogey, and other marches. The year was 1936 and over the radio we learned of the death of King George V.

We “old girls” visited Miss Culpin after her retirement to Tamborine, a couple of times. She loved the birds and wildlife around her cottage in Knoll Road. We never dreamed that Merle and I would one day live on the mountain. I had the opportunity of visiting Miss Culpin in hospital not long before she died and was able to tell her of her part in my love of literature.

After leaving school Chappie and I were enrolled at Nunn & Trivetts Commercial College in George St. Brisbane, where we studied shorthand, typing and bookkeeping. I travelled daily by train from Ipswich, walking to and from East Ipswich station – at that time, an all station train took one hour and 45 minutes. Chappie started work at the City Electric Light Company and I was offered a job as a trainee photographic “artist” at Whitehead's Studio Ipswich, starting at 7/6 a week, and I never used my commercial skills (?). My friend Barbra Whitehead taught me “working-up” enlargements, and colouring. In those days retouchers took out all the wrinkles and

blemishes from the negatives – no colour photography then. Dad may have driven me to work some days, but usually I walked through Queens Park and up Brisbane St. and home again in the afternoon – about one and a half km each way.

About this time (1937/8) I had my first big romance. He was a good looking boy belonging to a large family – one brother and four pretty sisters, but he was a *Catholic* -- there was no family support, the bigotry still lingered on! We parted after a time, though I carried a torch for him through numerous other “friendships“ until Harmon came on the scene.

Chappie and I spent long weekends and holidays at our favourite haunt “Binna Burra”, travelling on their night bus. We were unloaded at the “Dump”, at the base of the final steep knoll and climbed up a track, guided by Arthur Groom carrying a hurricane lamp to the Lodge. There were just a few slab cabins and an old house which served as dining room, playroom and kitchen. Our luggage came up from the “Dump” by flying-fox activated by Bill and Dick, his old horse, walking round and round a large wheel (windlass) which is preserved outside the present dining room. Arthur Groom had built the cabins with large slabs of timber which he had felled, split and dressed with the adze. There were two bathrooms served by a furnace heated hotwater system – wonderful steaming baths to ease the aches from long treks. The cabins were unlined and winds would blow through the walls and doors, but we were young and “tough”. There were chambers under the beds -- emptied each morning by staff who brought around jugs of hot water for a wash. The tariff was very low but we all took turns at the washing up after the hearty meals.

I happened to be there when the first car (an old ‘ute) was hauled up the cliff by a number of men using a series of cables around the trees. It was used between Groom’s cottage and the Lodge for many years until the path was widened mostly by Groomie and cars could drive to the Lodge. Before the war, walks were led by guides, Tarzan, Gus, Basil and “Groomie”, and we had great times. At dinner, “Groomie” sat at the head of the one long table and entertained all with tales which became ghostly and bloody late into the night around the blazing log fire. His wife Marjorie and her three little boys, Tony, Don and Richard, living in the Groom cottage, some distance away, saw little of him. We were later to hear tales of infidelity but we knew nothing of them. Marjorie eventually left him and he remarried. After his premature death, and numerous unsuccessful managers, Marjorie and her grown up sons returned to manage “Binna Burra” and to re-establish the old Groom traditions and the character of the place. It remains to this day a great source of renewal though not so remote and very much up-market.

On the 3rd September 1939 I was staying at a friend’s house when we were alerted by radio to stand by for an important announcement – on came the voice, relayed from the B.B.C., of England’s Prime Minister Chamberlain giving us the terrible news, “- - - this country is at war with Germany!” I’ll leave further details to Harmon’s memoirs.

Harmon was already in the Militia artillery (will let him tell about that) and in the early days of the war he and his friend Neal McKenzie were sent to the Officers School of Gunnery at Holdsworthy. After that, and while waiting for their commissions to come through, they were sent as instructors to a temporary army camp on the Ipswich Showgrounds. He remembered that he had met a girl from Ipswich and contacted me. He and his friends visited “Kurrawong” regularly and no doubt were fed and entertained. A group of us went out for picnics to Colleges Crossing and during that time Harmon and I became more than friends. From our first kiss I knew I was hooked!

I can recall the day his commission came through and he and Neal walked in with their caps, pips and swagger sticks. After his 21st birthday he joined the A.I.F. and in early February he sailed with a contingent of reinforcements for the 2/1 Antitank Regiment. Before leaving home there were tearful farewells with promises to write and “wait and see!” We kept a regular correspondence backed up with parcels of fruit cakes, plus balaclavas, scarves and socks, all hand knitted, from my end and exotic parcels from his. When I heard that his ship, the *Aquitania* had not dropped them off in Singapore with the *Queen Mary's* “cargo” (in which was Edwin Esler my future brother-in-law), I was disappointed – but not for long! Singapore fell soon after and all those fine young men were taken prisoner by the Japanese. Harmon’s ship landed at Bombay where they spent a month waiting for smaller ships to go on to Suez.

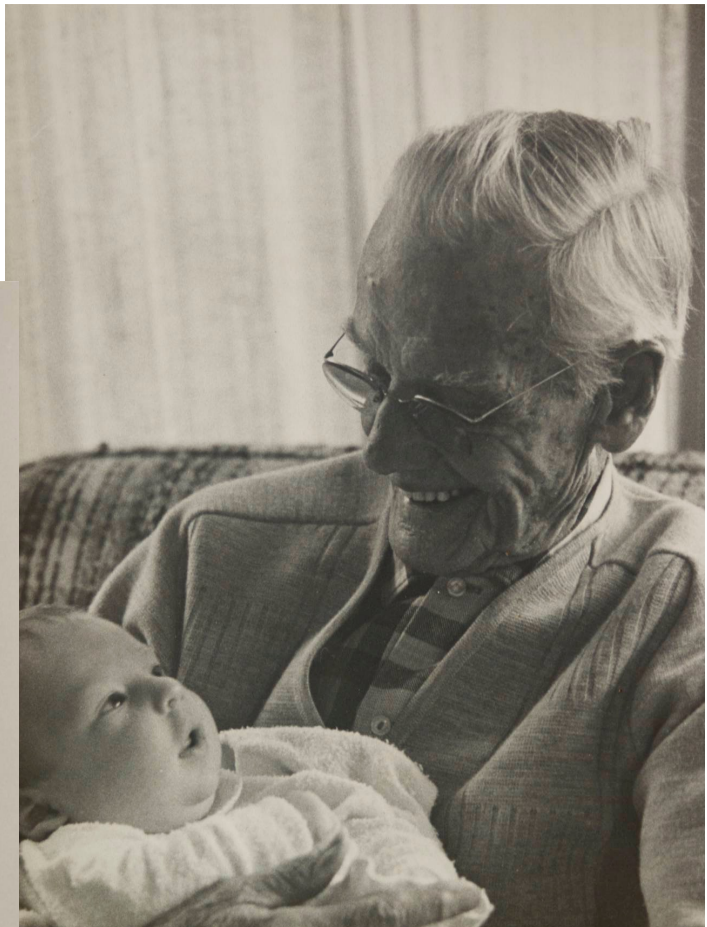
My 21st birthday was celebrated soon after he sailed. Shortly after I got a job as photographic artist at Dorothy Coleman’s studio, corner of Queen and Edward Streets, Brisbane. For a time I travelled from Ipswich by train and in the process met up with Mildred Agnes Lambert (MAL) and have been close friends ever since. By coincidence, I had coloured her picture at Whiteheads and thought, “ what a lovely face!” Before long the travelling became arduous and I found board in Brisbane. I stayed with a Mrs. Muller in Woolloowin, who took in a few boarders. The Price family and the Chapmans lived not far away, so it was handy to them and close to the train.

Mrs. Coleman was a very volatile lady, charming and kind one minute and the opposite the next. We always knew which by the tone of her “Good morning”. In her best moods she could be very generous and shout us all to dinner at Haddon Hall or Princes. From my window I could see the A.M.P. opposite and when America entered the war, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in December '41, General Macarthur (Supreme Commander Pacific) and his team, commandeered most of the building. I could sometimes see him enter and depart. The city was then alive with Yankee soldiers. Many local girls lost their heads over these smartly dressed charmers with their gifts of nylon stockings and other luxuries not available here. Dad’s business flourished with tailored uniform orders for the officers at Amberly. The photographers were busy with orders of pictures of wives and girlfriends for our servicemen overseas. All clothing and petrol were rationed, also meat, sugar, and butter. We had to husband our ration cards carefully though we didn’t really suffer the great privations that Britain did.

Meanwhile Chappie's long term on and off love, Col. Walker, son of the Methodist Minister, flew off for air training in Canada before entering into the war zone. She adored him and they became engaged before he left, and they kept in touch for four years. Mal's fiancée Des. Goldsmith was fighting in the Middle East and Northern Africa, and we saw a lot of each other, as her family had moved to Brisbane. I used to go home sometimes for the weekend to Ipswich and Chappie or Mal would join me.

In July '42 Chappie and I decided to apply to join the W.A.A.A.F.s (Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force) and passed our entrance tests. While waiting for our

*Gert & Harry Parker late in their lives.
Harry holds Lloyd Price in 1974.*



call-up I had a telegram from Harmon who, after a stay in Colombo on the way from the Middle East, had landed in Perth and got my latest letter. The telegram read, "Arrived Aust. Postpone call-up please". His friend Vic. Perkins warned "you'll be pooled", but before long Vic was caught too.

Amidst great Jubilation we were united and soon he "popped the question". I scraped up enough coupons for a wedding dress, and wedding preparations went ahead. Harmon was now stationed at Indooroopilly (see his story) so we were able to

see a lot of each other in the five months till December. On the 19th we were married in the Congregational Church, Ipswich by the Rev. Clare Palmer. Harmon's army colleagues stood by him. Joy and Bev were bridesmaids (In borrowed dresses) and Jenny Ryan, Phyl's (nee Chapman) daughter was flower girl. The reception took place on our back verandah with Mum doing the catering and – no grog! (much to the army pals disappointment).

We honeymooned at Caloundra at the “Harmony Court” flats, one of the old buildings still (shabbily) standing amid all the modern unit blocks on Bulcocks Beach. We were joined there by Vic and Betty (nee Staples) Perkins who were married on the same day. Harmon had managed to rent a house in Railway Avenue, Indooroopilly, and we settled down to married life.

A few months later Mal heard from Des that he was to return to Australia briefly before being sent to New Guinea to oust the Japs. They decided to marry and she had little time to prepare, but she borrowed her cousins wedding dress and I was matron of honour in mine. That dress was to serve well as Merle and her sister-in-law Sybil Maiden wore it for their weddings (clothes rationing still on). Some years later Mum altered it with a new lace top for Joy. Des and Mal had only a week's honeymoon before he left for New Guinea, but thank goodness he returned.

Chappie was not so lucky as Col wired his father -- as she was preparing for her wedding on his return -- to the effect that he was marrying a Canadian girl “tell Heather please” -- the rotter! She was devastated, but while recovering with friends in Perth, she met Jim Meredith, a South African in the Royal Navy, and married him soon after. She had a wonderful life in Capetown , two children and lots of servants. We have had many happy reunions.

EPILOGUE

Both my parents lived into their eighties. They left *Kurrawong* about 1947, and bought the Gordon Cribb mansion on a large allotment on Denmark Hill. This house, named *Warham*, they turned into four flats and lived in the front one while they built their new home on a front piece of the land. Dad retired at 60, and sold the business to Jim Grant and his son. Shortly after, my folks decided to move nearer their families and in 1951 moved to 41 Grace Street, Corinda. They had 21 very happy years there, but in her 79th year Mother's health began to fail after a series of small strokes. Dad was not able to cope, and on doctor's advice, made the very hard decision to move into *Hopetoun* in 1973. The following year Mum died suddenly after a massive stroke. It was mercifully quick, on 3rd march 1974 at the age of 83. Dad stayed on at *Hopetoun*, having settled in there very happily. He sang in the choir, played canasta and scrabble and kept on with his painting. He had to give up bowls a couple of years earlier, having played with the Super Veterans. His very much enlarged heart finally stopped beating on 9th May 1975. He was aged 87, and active to the end.



Gert Harrison: wedding day, 1916

Dele with her father, 1923



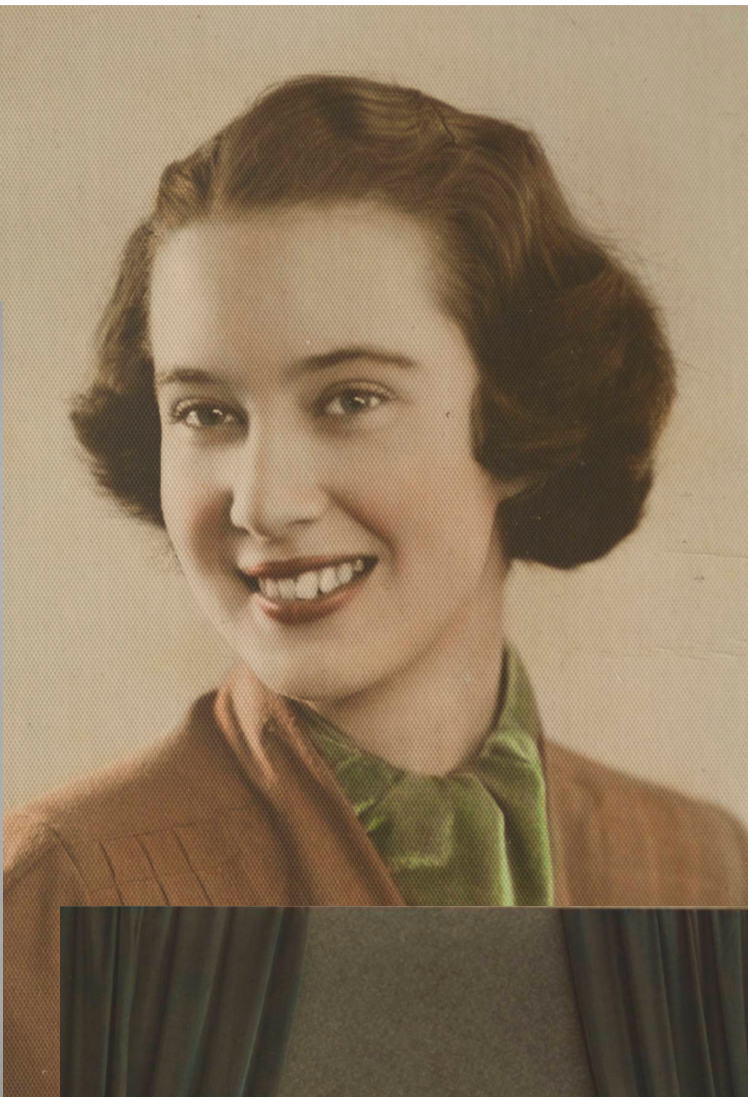
Dele, with 'Nelson', about 1929



Dele and her mother, 1922



*Dele: aged five, and nineteen;
wedding portrait, December,
1942; with John, 1944*





Dele's maternal grandmother, Fanny Harrison, at her West End house



From left, Bessie Chapman (nee Harrison), Phyl Chapman, Granny Harrison, Dorothy Chapman, Dele, Granny Parker, Gert Parker; at Kurrawong, 1923



'Hereward', Briggs Rd, Ipswich: built by Thomas Henry Parker, in about 1901, and extant.

JOY

Thank goodness Edwin Esler survived the horrors of prison camp. He and Joy were married in September 1948, while he was studying medicine. He went on to become one of Brisbane's leading obstetricians and later, administrator of the Mater Mothers Hospital. Their three children, also talented, produced 11 grandchildren.

DELE

Now after nearly fifty-seven years of marriage I reflect on my lot and count myself very fortunate. With three fine children who've grown into responsible and talented adults, and provided us with thirteen splendid grandchildren of whom we are equally proud. We've managed to ride the rough spots and sail into calm waters and enjoy watching the young ones develop. I often think how proud our parents would have been of them all.

----FINIS----